

PATHFINDER SOCIETY PLAYTEST SCENARIO #1 TIER 1



PATHFINDER
PLAYTEST

THE ROSE STREET REVENGE



BY LEO GLASS, THURSTON HILLMAN,
JOE PASINI, AND LINDA ZAYAS-PALMER

Development Lead • John Compton
Authors • Leo Glass, Thurston Hillman, Joe Pasini, and Linda Zayas-Palmer
Contributing Artists • Kenneth Camaro and Kiki Moch Rizky
Cartographers • Jason Engle and Corey Macourek
Creative Directors • James Jacobs, Robert G. McCreary, and Sarah E. Robinson
Director of Game Design • Jason Bulmahn
Managing Developers • Adam Daigle and Amanda Hamon Kunz
Organized Play Lead Developer • John Compton
Developers • Eleanor Ferron, Crystal Frasier, Jason Keeley, Luis Loza, Ron Lundeen, Joe Pasini, Michael Sayre, Chris Sims, and Linda Zayas-Palmer
Starfinder Design Lead • Owen K.C. Stephens
Starfinder Society Developer • Thurston Hillman
Senior Designer • Stephen Radney-MacFarland
Designers • Logan Bonner and Mark Seifter
Managing Editor • Judy Bauer
Senior Editor • Christopher Carey
Editors • James Case, Leo Glass, Lyz Liddell, Adrian Ng, Lacy Pellazar, and Jason Tondro
Art Director • Sonja Morris
Senior Graphic Designers • Emily Crowell and Adam Vick
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Warehouse Team • Laura Wilkes Carey, Will Chase, Mika Hawkins, Heather Payne, Jeff Strand, and Kevin Underwood
Website Team • Brian Bauman, Robert Brandenburg, Whitney Chatterjee, Erik Keith, and Andrew White

HOW TO PLAY

Pathfinder Society Playtest Scenario #1: The Rose Street Revenge is a series of short quests for 1st-level characters. The first three adventures can be played in any order, while the last quest can be played only after completing at least one of the first three quests. You can find more information about running these quests, pregenerated characters, and feedback surveys in the "Providing Playtest Feedback" section on this page.



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PROVIDING PLAYTEST FEEDBACK

The Rose Street Revenge is designed to test the newest edition of the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game, from combat encounters to exploration to the overall gameplay experience. The goals are to create a fundamental understanding of the game and to test if the revisions to the rules still allow for the same types of storytelling and adventure roleplaying that everyone has come to expect from Pathfinder. You can build your own 1st-level characters for this adventure, or you can download a selection of pregenerated characters available at paizo.com.

Contribute your feedback through the survey at pathfinderplaytest.com. In addition, be sure to check out other playtest adventures, including three additional Pathfinder Society Playtest scenarios as well as the seven-part adventure *Doomsday Dawn*.



Paizo Inc.
 7120 185th Ave NE, Ste 120
 Redmond, WA 98052-0577
paizo.com

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THE ROSE STREET REVENGE

The city of Absalom, nicknamed the City at the Center of the World, is perhaps the largest and most influential city of the Inner Sea region. In the millennia since the now-dead god Aroden raised the Isle of Kortos from the sea and built Absalom atop it, dozens of warlords, pirate queens, archwizards, and more have besieged the metropolis. Only a year ago, Absalom repelled the Fiendflesh Siege, the first concerted attack on the city in more than a century. Although victorious, the city withstood the assault only with the help of several dedicated demographics. The first was the Pathfinder Society, an organization of explorers, scholars, and adventurers based out of Absalom who cracked the enemies' system of codes and sowed confusion with miscommunication. The other group consisted of the city's slaves, whom Siege Lord Wynsal Starborn manumitted in return for their aid in defending their home—in the process ending the decades-old Flesh Tax, which legalized one of Absalom's crueler industries.

However, a much smaller and illegal slave trade has sprung up, led by those unwilling to surrender their lucrative business in mortal servitude. Even with only a shadow of their former power, these slavers have lashed out at those they believe brought about their financial ruin. In some cases, the slavers have attacked the Pathfinders, as it was a band of Pathfinders who read out Wynsal Starborn's mandate to free the slaves in Absalom's Misery Row. In other cases, the slavers have struck against other liberation-minded individuals who continue aiding the manumitted souls.

One of these independent agents was **Wennel Ardonay** (CG male half-elf cleric of Milani), who had spent years rallying political support to revoke the Flesh Tax. After the siege, Wennel dedicated himself to helping the freed slaves find jobs, homes, and the means to live comfortably in Absalom. The slave traders had never liked Wennel, and when their inventory suddenly became free citizens, they utterly loathed the half-elf. It didn't help that Wennel was on the cusp of uncovering one of these secret slaver cells. In the end, the slavers cornered and killed the cleric, throwing his body into the sewer.

Wennel's corpse spent the better part of a week being picked over by looters and scavengers as it flowed downstream. His gnawed bones at last settled toward the bottom of a sewer canal where they animated as a restless undead creature. What remained of Wennel's memory was spotty. He knew that he had been murdered and that he craved revenge, yet all he retained was a burning recollection of more than a dozen names: his liberated clients. Thinking these must be the people who wronged him, he has prowled Absalom's shadows since, stalking, abducting, and killing his manumitted friends one by one, leaving little trace. One of the first victims disappeared shortly after turning onto Rose Street in the Petal District (partly due to Wennel's residual fascination with Milani's holy symbol), earning the anonymous criminal the moniker of the Rose Street Killer.

This hasn't gone unnoticed. Many of the newly freed had friends and employers who are worried about the disappearances. One of the missing had joined the Pathfinder Society only months ago, and her disappearance is cause for concern. At the same time, several other disturbances have arisen, and Society leaders are concerned that there may be some connection. Hoping to learn more, Venture-Captain Ambrus Valsin has assembled a team to investigate the matter, learn who's been targeting these freed slaves, and rescue the missing Pathfinder, if possible.

EXPLORING ABSALOM

This adventure takes place entirely within the city of Absalom, a cosmopolitan metropolis with hundreds of thousands of inhabitants and nearly 5,000 years of history. Most of the action takes place in the districts closest to the harbor, including the Puddles, the Docks, and the Precipice Quarter. A map of the city and several key locations in the adventure appears on page 5. For more information about Absalom, see *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Inner Sea World Guide*, *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Pathfinder Society Field Guide*, and *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Guide to Absalom*. These products are available in bookstores and game stores everywhere and online at paizo.com.

“Snippets” takes place primarily at the edge of Absalom’s Docks district, at a barbershop called the Smiling Cut, just south of the city’s Coins district.

“Dragons” takes place in the sewers that crisscross the underground of the city of Absalom. Along with its expansive sewer system, Absalom is also known for various subterranean bunkers and vaults, many of which connect to the sewers in an ever-changing web of architectural oddity.

“Puddles” takes place within a district called the Puddles, where an earthquake several decades ago caused the entire neighborhood to slowly start sinking below sea level. The area floods several times a day, and some parts are never entirely dry. As a result, many residents have moved out, leaving vacancies for those with little coin.

“Haven” takes place within the Precipice Quarter, once a high-end neighborhood known as Beladrin’s Bluff. The same earthquake that sank the Puddles caused a large chunk of this district to break off and collapse into the harbor, and a series of sinkholes and ravines caused nearly everyone to flee. Now it is a haven for vermin, haunted ruins, and occasionally thrill-seekers.

RUNNING THE ROSE STREET REVENGE

Pathfinder Society Playtest Scenario #1: The Rose Street Revenge is a series of four quests: short adventures designed to take about 40 to 60 minutes each. Collectively, the quests tell a cohesive story that involves playing the first three adventures (“Snippets,” “Puddles,” and “Dragons”) in any order. The last quest (“Haven”) serves as a final showdown with the story’s main villain.

When beginning the quests—or between quests, if someone joins the story partway through—read or paraphrase the following.

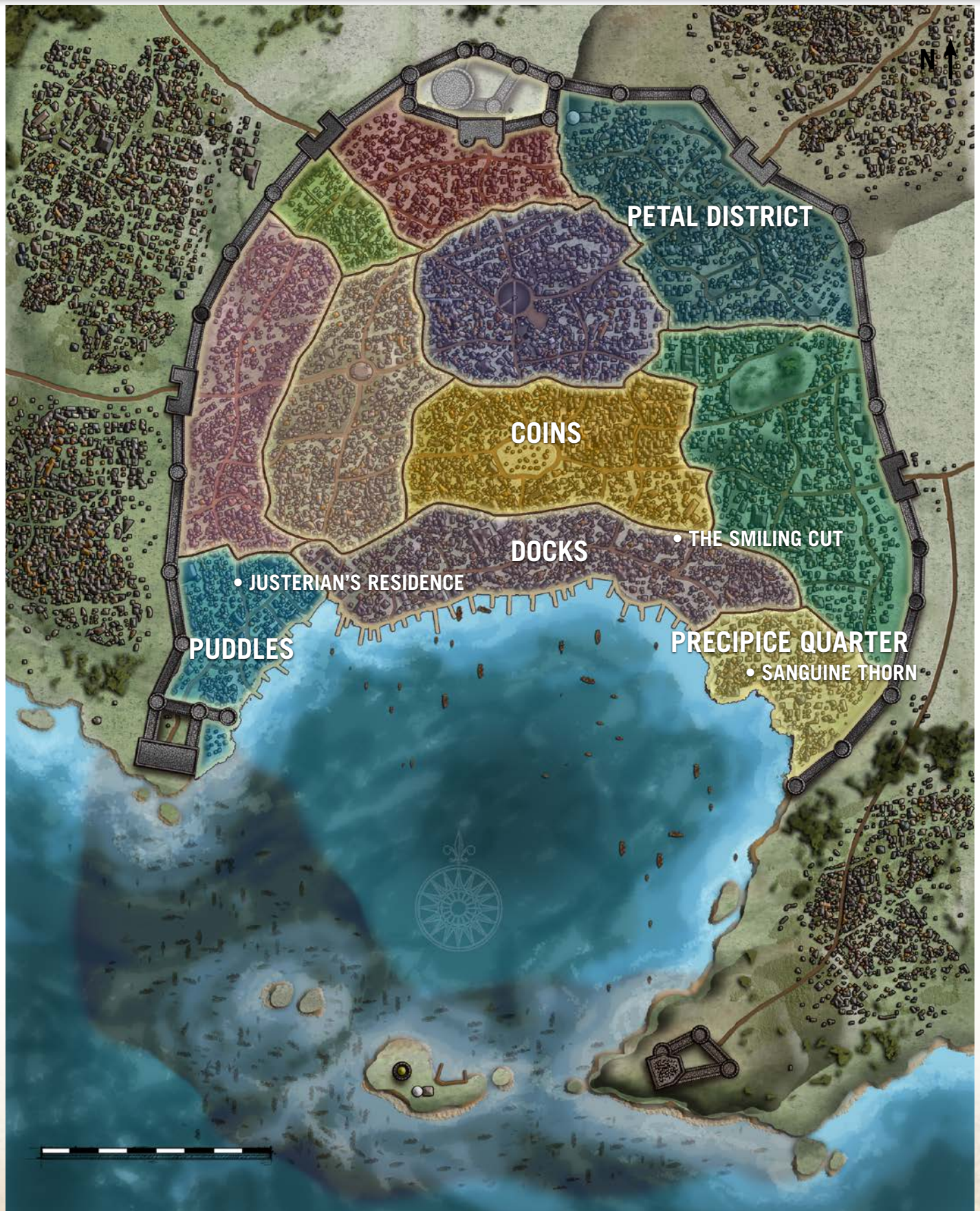
Nearly a year ago, Absalom fought off an invasion of demonflesh constructs and undead marines remembered as the Fiendflesh Siege, during which the city’s siege lord offered every slave freedom in exchange for their assistance

in defending Absalom. Practically overnight, one of the city’s cruelest industries came to an end, and many hundreds of the liberated have since become Absalom’s newest citizens.

Although most have welcomed their manumitted neighbors with open arms, an unidentified serial murderer known only as the Rose Street Killer has systematically slain at least a dozen of these freed people. So far, the city’s guards have questioned scores of witnesses and suspects with no luck. The Rose Street Killer remains at large, and one of their most recent targets was Nelfurhin Zor, a former scriptorium slave who had joined the Pathfinder Society shortly after the siege. The Society doesn’t normally investigate crimes in Absalom, but Venture-Captain Ambrus Valsin is furious that a Pathfinder’s gone missing thanks to this criminal. He’s assembled a team of agents to help solve the case. Don’t let him down—lives are on the line.

Over the course of these quests, Venture-Captain Ambrus Valsin regularly checks in with the PCs and sends them letters with additional leads they might investigate. These take the form of handouts that appear on pages 29–30. When beginning this series, give the players Handouts #1–3, which introduce the first three quests. Let the players choose which quests to play and in what order. Once the players have completed at least one of these quests, you can add Handout #4 to their collection. Let them know that this represents the story’s conclusion and that they should consider playing the other adventures first to ensure they’re as prepared as possible for the showdown. If you’re running these quests for the same group, consider withholding this last handout until the group has completed all of the first three quests.

As the PCs complete the first three quests, they can find valuable clues that provide them an edge in the final quest. At the beginning of “Haven,” check to see whether any of the PCs completed each of the earlier adventures. If they did, the PCs gain the benefit associated with that quest. See the Demolish Mead Hall area on page 27 for details.





SNIPPETS

By Joe Pasini

The massive metropolitan city of Absalom is no stranger to intrigue and murder, but a series of recent disappearances has many of its residents on edge. One such missing person is a recent recruit of the Pathfinder Society, prompting the organization to mobilize some of its members to investigate further. The prominent venture-captain Ambrus Valsin suspects that the local thieves' guild, the Bloody Barbers, is to blame. Although there's little evidence to implicate the Bloody Barbers, their reputation for and history of robbery, smuggling, and murder make them likely suspects. Even if the thieves aren't responsible, few crimes occur of which the Bloody Barbers aren't at least aware.

SUMMARY

The PCs are prompted to investigate the Bloody Barbers, Absalom's largest and most notorious thieves' guild. After pooling their resources to identify a small barbershop as a likely gathering site for some of the guild's members, the PCs arrive to find only a regular barber and a shop sweep—at least until the sweep attempts to lead them into a Bloody Barber ambush in the alley behind the shop.

WHERE IN ABSALOM

"Snippets" takes place primarily at the edge of Absalom's Docks district, at a barbershop called The Smiling Cut, just south of the city's Coins district.

GETTING STARTED

The PCs arrive just inside the gates of the Pathfinder Society's Grand Lodge to meet Ambrus Valsin, the venture-captain in charge of daily operations there. Read or paraphrase the following to get the adventure under way.

Venture-Captain Ambrus Valsin flicks an invisible speck of dust from his impeccably pressed cuff before speaking.

"Thank you for arriving together; I don't like to repeat myself. I trust you received my note, and I hope you have your wits about you. It's all well and good for everyone in the city to concoct their own thrilling hypotheses about some serial murderer, but Pathfinders need to be a bit more..." Ambrus thinks for a moment before continuing, "...evidence based.

"To that end, I'd like you to find some low-ranking members of the Bloody Barbers and press them for

information. I suspect their straight razors are ultimately to blame for the disappearances."

Almost as an afterthought, Ambrus adds, "I shouldn't need to tell you to be careful in dealing with Absalom's largest thieves' guild, but do try to avoid the old crimson shave." He draws his thumb across his neck for emphasis.

Below are Ambrus's answers to some of the PCs' possible questions.

Why do you suspect the Bloody Barbers? Ambrus tries (unsuccessfully) not to raise his eyebrow as he points out that several of the last dozen mysterious murder sprees in Absalom were eventually linked back to the guild, whose corrupt roots touch nearly every aspect of Absalom life.

How can we find the Barbers? Ambrus gestures at the entire party. "Pathfinders often have to rely on one another for help. I would start by comparing notes; you should be able to piece together a likely location for one of their meeting places."

FINDING THE BARBERS

There are a number of ways the PCs can deduce the location of a likely Bloody Barbers meeting spot, each of which involves using a skill to uncover or remember key information. The PCs need to achieve three successes at the skill checks below before getting three failures to identify one of the Barbers' bases of operation, the Smiling Cut barbershop, without attracting too much attention (see Special below).

To qualify as a success, a PC's result must be 10 or higher and secure the party at least one new piece of information. For example, a Diplomacy check result of 12 to Gather Information would be a success. A subsequent Society check result of 14 to Recall Knowledge would be a success because it secures a new piece of information, but a subsequent Underworld Lore check result of 10 would be a failure because it uncovers nothing new.

Present the information acquired as though it's narrowing down the possibilities of where one of the Barbers' hangouts could be. Once the PCs have three successes, their discoveries triangulate a likely location that's fairly close. You can also roleplay some of these scenes to find information, but keep these brief if you're running this adventure as a demo so you can conclude the quest in a timely fashion.

Special: If the PCs get three failures before achieving three successes, word circulates that the PCs are looking for the Bloody Barbers, which the Barbers interpret as looking for trouble. Adjust the later combat encounter as though there were one additional PC present, representing the reinforcements sent by the Barbers.

DECEPTION (IMPERSONATE)

Based on the result of a Deception check to Impersonate a potential recruit (or other suitable ploy), the PCs might be able to narrow down their search.

12+: The Bloody Barbers are always looking for new recruits, and a PC who carefully represents herself as looking to join the guild might be instructed to look for barbershops whose trademark poles are painted differently from the usual in a subtle way, further narrowing the PCs' search.

Diplomacy (Gather Information), Society (Recall Knowledge), or Underworld Lore (Recall Knowledge)

Based on the result of Diplomacy check to Gather Information or either a Society or Underworld Lore check to Recall Knowledge, the PCs might be able to narrow down their search. A PC learns all of the information below that has a DC equal to or less than the result of their check.

7+: True to their appellation, Bloody Barbers often work as barbers, using barbershops as bases of operation and meeting places.

10+: The Band of the Palm, the cover organization for the Bloody Barbers, meets regularly in the Coins. Searching in or near that district is likely a good starting point.

12+: Blood Barbers are notorious loan sharks and often run illegal narcotic dens, so a neighborhood with a high concentration of such activity is likely to house at least a few chapters of the Barbers.

14+: Though the Bloody Barbers are the larger guild, the Smoke Knights thieves' guild is much more secretive—so much so that it's never been proven to exist. However, the Barbers at least attempt to maintain a veneer of secrecy and are unlikely to gather anywhere that a high-profile crime has recently taken place, lest they draw attention. This eliminates a number of neighborhoods from the PCs' search.

17+: The little-known head of the Bloody Barbers, Anken the Cutter, is notoriously paranoid, and he is likely to forbid meetings of lesser members anywhere near his favored parts of the Coins.

INTIMIDATION (COERCE)

Many more people know about the Bloody Barbers than are willing to discuss it openly, and a PC can use Intimidation to Coerce others to talk openly. A PC learns all of the information below that has a DC equal to or less than the result of their check.

10+: A well-known recent victim of a low-level Bloody Barber burglary has been reluctant to share any details for fear of reprisal, but a PC convinces them to give a

NPC ATTITUDES

NPC attitudes don't just influence that character's behavior toward the PCs; there are now five specific conditions that grant bonuses or penalties on other skill checks. The two most relevant conditions in this encounter appear below, and all five appear on pages 322-324 of the *Pathfinder Playtest Rulebook*.

Friendly: This attitude affects only creatures that are not player characters. This condition reflects a creature's disposition toward the character who applied the condition. A creature that is friendly to a character likes that character. The character can attempt to make a Request of a friendly creature, and the friendly creature is likely to agree to a simple and safe request that doesn't cost it much to fulfill. A character gains a +2 circumstance bonus to Lie to, Make an Impression on, and Request things from a friendly creature. This condition ends if the character who applied the condition (or allies of the character) act in a hostile fashion toward the creature.

Indifferent: This attitude affects only creatures that are not player characters. This condition reflects a creature's disposition toward the character who applied the condition. A creature that is indifferent to a character doesn't really care one way or the other about the character. The rules assume a creature's attitude is indifferent unless specified otherwise.

few details about the location, timing, and other helpful details. The victim's fear of the Barbers means he does not report the PC to the authorities, though he might retaliate in a different way.

MERCHANT LORE (RECALL KNOWLEDGE)

Based on the result of a Merchant Lore check to Recall Knowledge, the PCs might be able to narrow down their search for the culprits.

10+: Many merchants have had to compete with Barber-controlled junk dealers who also sell stolen goods on the side. Using known locations and concentrations of such activity can help the PCs hone in on a meeting place.

RELIGION (RECALL KNOWLEDGE)

Based on the result of a Religion check to Recall Knowledge, the PCs might be able to narrow down their search. A PC learns all of the information below that has a DC equal to or less than the result of their check.

10+: Not even the Bloody Barbers dare to operate in large groups in Absalom's central district, known as the Ascendant Court, full as it is of churches and good-aligned priests. They're unlikely to meet nearby, eliminating that district from the PCs' search.

12+: The handful of families that control the Bloody Barbers are of Chelish descent, and many have taken up their homeland's worship of devils. The PCs are likely to find signs of devil worship near one of the Bloody Barbers' meeting place.

THE SMILING CUT

When the PCs arrive at this run-down barbershop in the Docks district, just south of the Coins, read or paraphrase the following.

This small barbershop has four worn barber chairs and a wooden waiting bench. The astringent odors of various hair tonics combine with that of talcum powder to produce a potent aroma. A large, tarnished mirror runs the full length of one wall, with a low shelf below it that holds an assortment of combs, razors, scissors, and jars holding murky liquids. The shop is almost empty, and it's quiet enough to hear the snip of its lone barber's scissors as she works on a large man's wild mane, while a freckled shop sweep stoops over hair clippings that he's meticulously swept into a neat pile.

The barber, Valette, is a boisterous human woman with unkempt dirty-blond hair and a penchant for pranks. She is one of the few barbers who rents a chair in this shop but is not associated with the Bloody Barbers. The members of the crime ring who do gather here—often behind the shop and after hours—are its least influential and dangerous members, but Valette nonetheless turns a blind eye to their activities.

She begins with an attitude of indifferent toward the PCs, though she is happy to talk to them, and a PC who succeeds at a DC 12 Diplomacy check to Make an Impression improves her attitude to friendly. However, she doesn't know anything about the recent spate of killings, and she refuses to talk about the Bloody Barbers. A PC who succeeds at a DC 10 Perception check while talking to her can determine that she doesn't have much information relevant to the PCs' investigation. Those who ask her about the Barbers and succeed at this Perception check can tell that Valette knows that the Barbers frequent the area but that she tries to stay out of their business to avoid becoming a target; this can confirm that the PCs are in the right place, but Valette can't provide much more. She simply wants to finish with her customer and leave for the night before getting caught in whatever trouble the PCs start.

When she tires of talking to the PCs, Valette hurls one last abuse at Snips and leaves the shop. Read or paraphrase the following.

Winking at her customer in the mirror, Valette snips off a lock of hair and drops it on the floor near her feet. She

turns to the shop sweep and shouts, “Oi, Snips, you missed a spot,” gesturing to the hair with her scissors. He starts and mumbles an apology as he rushes over with his broom, but as he bends to sweep, the barber gives him a swift kick, sending him tumbling into his carefully swept pile.

The barber laughs uproariously and claps her customer on the back, ripping off his barber cloth and telling him to pay her in ale and a pie at the shop across the street. As she strong-arms the reluctant man out the door, she yells over her shoulder at Snips to clean up and close up the shop. “And don’t forget the mirror—I want to see myself in it!” she cackles, doubling over at her own “joke” and slapping the increasingly uncomfortable customer again.

The shop sweep, a freckled 11-year-old human boy named Snips, is quiet and unsure of himself, but he also has ambitions to earn his “first shave,” a Barber initiation rite for new recruits, by leading the PCs into a trap. While the overbearing Valette is still in the shop, he timidly keeps to the periphery while obviously listening to the conversation with interest. After Valette leaves, Snips continues to act meek and afraid—primarily because he is—but he also recognizes that he can use this to his advantage to win the PCs’ trust. He tells the PCs he knows about the Bloody Barbers, and he acts very eager to assist them in their search. A PC can attempt a DC 14 Perception check to assess Snips’s trustworthiness and motives, and success indicates that PC senses an ulterior motive to the boy’s helpfulness. This grants the PC a +2 conditional bonus to the imminent Perception check to realize that he’s leading them into a trap.

After Snips spends a minute alone with the PCs, he seizes his opportunity to prove himself to the Barbers and finally earn some respect. He does his best to convince the PCs to follow him out the back door under the guise of wanting to talk in private, out of view of passersby. In actuality, he knows that several Barbers have been meeting in the back alley of this barbershop, and he plans to whistle a tune that he’s overheard the thieves use to signal one another to danger.

As Snips leads the way through the barbershop’s back door, an attentive PC can attempt a DC 14 Perception check to notice that the boy looks extremely nervous and is attempting to whistle (despite not seeming to know how), possibly to alert someone outside. If a PC acts quickly, she can attempt a DC 12 Intimidation check to scare the sweep into witless silence or a DC 14 Diplomacy check to take a softer hand in quieting him. If the PC succeeds at the check, Snips tearfully admits his plan, telling the PCs the number of Bloody Barbers likely to be outside and their probable positions.

A. ALLEYWAY

HIGH 1

A narrow cobbled street behind the barbershop links the rear exits of several nearby shops. A few Bloody Barbers meet here regularly to plan their criminal activities. Of late, they’ve been more interested in discussing the Rose Street Killer and their theories about the murderer’s identity.



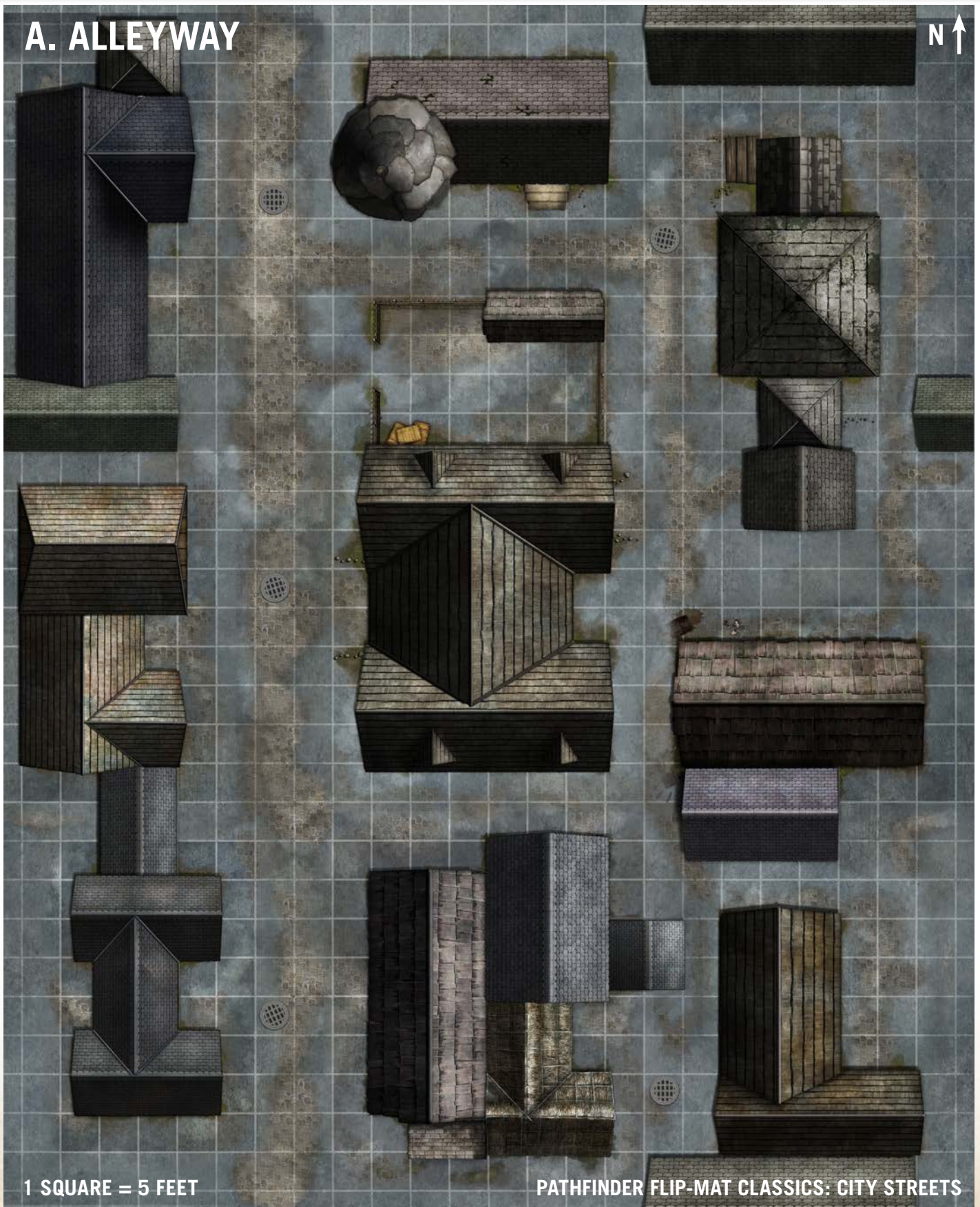
Four Bloody Barber lackeys are conferring in this alley. If Snips manages to alert them, the Barbers are in position to cover the alley’s exits, surrounding the PCs and attempting to flank them. They fight with the intent to kill all but one PC, subduing that character for interrogation. Otherwise, the four Barbers are huddled together outside, deep in discussion. If the PCs learn of the Barbers’ presence before going outside, they can approach the back alley from its exits and achieve their own flanking positions.

If the PCs subdue or drive off the Barbers, a horrified and sniveling Snips, who had never seen real combat before now, agrees to tell the PCs everything he knows about the Barbers’



SNIPS

A. ALLEYWAY



1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

PATHFINDER FLIP-MAT CLASSICS: CITY STREETS

involvement in the recent disappearances—namely that the local Barbers have been afraid for their lives and scrambling to figure out who is behind the murders. He adds that the Barbers’ only lead so far is that whoever is killing seems to be targeting former slaves. A PC who gently presses Snips for more information with a successful DC 14 Diplomacy check learns that he overheard one Barber suggesting that the killing of one of their own might be revenge for the hired murder of “that half-elf cleric.”

If the PCs capture one of the combatants—rules for dealing nonlethal damage are on page 294 of the *Pathfinder Playtest Rulebook*—the criminal can convey much of the same information that Snips provides above. The Barber also knows that the former slaves are all ones freed during the Fiendflesh Siege a little over a year ago. Among those was Remna, a former scullery slave with a mean streak, who joined the Bloody Barbers and shaved part of her head after being freed, then disappeared mysteriously about a week ago. The Barbers have questioned several witnesses to track down the killer and get revenge, but the only helpful information they found was that the probable killer wore metal armor and seemed to have difficulty controlling the right side of their body.

The subdued Barber is open to retreating and explaining to the rest of the guild that this fight was all a misunderstanding, which should spare the PCs any retribution.

4 BLOODY BARBER LACKEYS

CREATURE 0

Evil Human Humanoid Medium	Perception +5 Languages Common Skills +1, Acrobatics +5, Stealth +5 Str +0, Dex +3, Con +0, Int +0, Wis +2, Cha +0
Items leather armor, dagger, sling with 10 bullets, 8 sp	
AC 14, TAC 13; Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +2	
HP 7 each	
Speed 25 feet	
◆ Melee dagger +5 (agile, finesse, thrown 10 ft., versatile S),	
Damage 1d4 piercing	
◆ Ranged sling +5 (propulsive), Damage 1d6 bludgeoning	
Sneak Attack (precision) When attacking a flat-footed creature, a lackey deals 1d4 extra damage.	

SCALING ENCOUNTER A

This encounter is written for four players, so for each additional PC beyond four, add one additional Bloody Barber lackey to the encounter.

ITEMS AND RESONANCE

The *Pathfinder Playtest Rulebook* introduces a new mechanic called Resonance, which represents a character’s innate ability to use magic items. Each character has a number of Resonance Points (RP) equal to their level plus their Charisma modifier, and these points refresh during daily preparations. Making use of permanent magic items typically requires investing 1 Resonance Point and spending 1 minute concentrating, whereas most consumable magic items require that character to spend 1 Resonance Point as part of the action used to activate that item.

Drinking the minor elixir of life that Ambrus Valsin gives the PCs expends 1 RP. Since the PCs acquire only a handful of magic items during these quests, it’s unlikely that anyone will run out of RP. Even so, this is a good opportunity to explain the concept. For more information about Resonance, see page 376 of the *Pathfinder Playtest Rulebook*.

Special: If the PCs question one of the Barbers and learn more about the killer, they gain useful information they can use when confronting Wennel later (see page 27).

CONCLUSION

Although the Barbers may commit numerous other crimes, they’re as much the victims as the Pathfinder Society is in the case of the Rose Street Killer. Ambrus Valsin is relieved to hear that resolving this situation won’t involve going toe to toe with such a formidable opponent, but he remains troubled that the killer is still at large. He encourages the PCs to rest for a while as he finishes piecing together his next lead.



Ambrus Valsin gives the PCs a minor elixir of life, noting that the investigation seems to be getting more dangerous and that the PCs should have this elixir in case of emergency.



DRAGONS

By Thurston Hillman

The Sewer Dragons kobold tribe has maintained a massive (for kobolds, at least) territory within the sewers beneath the city of Absalom. Following a brief period of tension with the Pathfinder Society, the Sewer Dragons have since formed a pact of mutual understanding with the Society. This agreement has furthered the already impressive gains of the Sewer Dragons, who've ruled for almost 5 years as the undisputed masters of Absalom's expansive sewer systems. If there are questions about what's going on under Absalom, the Sewer Dragons likely have the answers! The only trouble is that the Sewer Dragons currently have their hands full now that a rival tribe known as the Dragon Sharks has begun encroaching on their territory. Until the Sewer Dragons have chased off these competitors, they're reluctant to spare resources to help the Society.

SUMMARY

The PCs meet with the Sewer Dragons' liaison, "dragonspeaker" Engashez, on behalf of Venture-Captain Ambrus Valsin to maintain ongoing relations with the kobolds. Engashez reports on the state of the tribe, noting

that the Sewer Dragons have recently come into conflict with an aggressive tribe of kobolds that has moved into the sewers from the eastern coastal regions of Kortos: the Dragon Sharks.

Engashez reports that the Dragon Sharks have set up a small base within the Sewer Dragons' territory as a sign of obvious aggression. The Sewer Dragons ask the PCs to help them make a two-pronged attack on the Dragon Sharks. The PCs are to accompany a team of Sewer Dragons led by a skilled kobold trap expert named Fazgyn.

Joining Fazgyn and his band, the PCs discover that the Dragon Sharks have set up traps throughout their region of the sewers, and the PCs learn how to detect and overcome these deadly impediments. Soon after this discovery, Fazgyn and his kobolds break off to enact their part of the attack while the PCs move to attack the Dragon Sharks. By employing their new knowledge about traps, the PCs can get the drop on the Dragon Shark kobolds and strike a blow that further solidifies the alliance between the Pathfinder Society and the Sewer Dragons!

GETTING STARTED

The PCs receive their instruction from Venture-Captain Ambrus Valsin in the form of a brief letter (see **Handout #2**

on page 29). Present this to the players and give them time to familiarize themselves with their mission.

The PCs arrive in a cramped operating base for the Sewer Dragons within the sewers of Absalom to meet with Engashez. Read or paraphrase the following to get the adventure under way.

Dragonspeaker Engashez gesticulates wildly while pacing within the tight confines of a foul-smelling side chamber in the sewers. The energetic and elaborately attired kobold strides around a deep circular pit in the center of this chamber, waving her hands to accent her ongoing speech.

"Bandits! Intruders! Not-true dragons! These new kobolds, these so-called 'Dragon Sharks,' are a blight upon the Sewer Dragons' dominion of Absalom's most grand sewer ways. They cannot be allowed to continue their intrusion into our territory and must be stopped. You will help us, yes? The Pathfinders have always proven to be firm allies in the past, and it's time our allies made their presence known in these sewers."

Engashez looks down into the out-of-place pit, a hint of disappointment in her eyes. "Especially after one of our other allies decided to wander off!" She then looks up and nods her head vigorously. "Yes, you can go with Fazgyn. Trap the Dragon Sharks between two sides and crush them for the glory of the Sewer Dragons and Chief Yiddlepode!"

If the PCs have any questions, Engashez quickly responds, but otherwise she ushers them off to quickly meet with Fazgyn and his group of kobolds.

Who's Fazgyn? "Most skilled trapper of all the Sewer Dragons. If you don't know about kobold traps yet, he'll teach you!"

Who wandered off? "A loud oaf who was supposed to be guarding this section of sewer! I wonder where he and the other man want off to? It doesn't really matter though; we have you to help us now!"

What do you know about the Dragon Sharks? "They're kobolds from the other side of Kortos. They've come here trying to push their way into our territory, thinking sewers and coasts are the same. We'll show them that no one intrudes on Sewer Dragons' domain!"

What about the Dragon Shark outpost? "Small place, just set up there to annoy us. We can't let that insult pass. You go with Fazgyn and stab them out of here. Be careful though. Some scouts say one of the Dragon Sharks is magic-blooded, but luckily nowhere near the skills of Varanog and our other great dragon-blooded!"

Society (Recall Knowledge) or Underworld Lore (Recall Knowledge)

Based on the result of an associated Lore check or a Society check to Recall Knowledge, the PCs might know

more about kobolds. A PC learns all of the information below that has a DC equal to or less than the result of their check.

10+: Kobolds are small reptilian humanoids that often inhabit deep forests or underground areas with little sun, largely because kobolds' eyes are sensitive to bright light.

14+: Kobolds love to engineer traps. As most other humanoid creatures are far more physically powerful than a kobold, most kobold tribes line their camps with countless traps to even the odds against intruders.

18+: Kobolds tend to follow the most powerful member of their tribe or scouting party. Defeating the leader often causes the remaining kobolds to panic and lose combat cohesiveness. Spellcasters often take leadership roles among kobolds by citing a lineage going back to a true dragon.

INTO THE SEWERS

The kobold trapper, Fazgyn, leads a band of five other kobold warriors. He greets the PCs outside of the area where Engashez briefed the party. Fazgyn's eager to lead his squad of kobolds against the Dragon Sharks, but he also has a keen eye sense for knowing when humanoids walk unprepared into kobold territory. Fazgyn believes the PCs are being unprepared for the hazard-riddled sewers, so he offers to escort the PCs further into the sewers before breaking off to lead his squad against the Dragon Sharks.

AN INFORMATIONAL JOURNEY

Fazgyn acts as an in-game tutorial of sorts for PCs to learn about hazards and how they operate in the Pathfinder Playtest system. As the two groups travel through Absalom's sewer system, Fazgyn provides an overview of different hazards and the different means for detecting and overcoming them. Once he's conveyed the basics, he answers the PCs questions as best he can. Fazgyn's a fairly stern but patient instructor who knows far more about traps than he does about supernatural hazards. He has braced himself for dealing with utter novices (meaning non-kobolds) and so is pleasantly surprised if the PCs catch on quickly. Several of the other kobolds are less forgiving, though they stop snickering at the PCs once Fazgyn reprimands his comrades by calling out one and reminding her of a silly mistake she made when first learning about traps.

Overall, the more this scene plays out as a natural conversation, the better. Afterward, it may help to quickly review the basic ideas for the players using game terms. Topics Fazgyn covers include the following, each of which includes a sample quote for how the kobold explains that concept.

- Some hazards can be spotted only by creatures with a minimum proficiency rank in Perception. ("To find

EXPLORATION MODE

While the PCs are traveling and not in round-per-round encounters, they are likely using the more free-form exploration mode, which focuses more on movement and roleplaying. While in exploration mode, each PC selects an exploration tactic (such as defending, detecting magic, searching, or sneaking). In general, each tactic requires enough attention that a PC can only use one tactic at a time, though each PC can select a different tactic. For more information about exploration mode, see page 329 of the *Pathfinder Playtest Rulebook*.

Keep in mind that the iconic rogue Merisiel has the Trap Finder feat, which allows her a chance to automatically detect many traps. If she selects the searching exploration tactic, she still receives only one Perception check to find a trap, though she could still find other features like secret doors. However, she might prefer a different tactic, such as sneaking.

traps, you have to be trap-smart, and you get trap-smart by dealing with traps or being really good at spotting traps. If you're not good at looking, you might miss the trap that kills you!")

- In combat situations (encounter mode), a PC needs to actively look for hazards with the Seek action. ("It's easy to get distracted by enemies and arrows and forget to watch for tripwires. Want to stay alive? Take a moment to look around.")
- In less strenuous situations (exploration mode), a PC needs to use the searching tactic or detecting magic

tactic to uncover hazards. ("When I'm walking like this, I'm always looking. It takes effort unless you get really good at it. Some dragonbloods can sense magic and magic traps, but that also takes effort. You want to focus on sneaking? Hiding behind shields? Life's full of choices, and my choice is to look for traps and stay alive.")

- Disabling a typical hazard requires the Disable Device use of the Thievery skill, or the liberal application of brute force. ("Once you find a trap, you can jam it, trip it, reconfigure it—you name it. Or you can hit it until it's gone, but that probably sets it off." Fazgyn rolls his head in exasperation and makes a disgusted sound.)
- Magical hazards can typically be dispelled. ("Or just use magic to kill magic traps. I don't know the details, but it takes strong magic to do.")
- Environmental hazards are typically overcome with Nature or Survival checks. ("Maybe it's not a trap but it's brambles or falling rocks or sky thunder or snakes. Use your outside smarts to avoid those.")
- Haunt hazards are typically overcome with Occultism or Religion checks. ("Sometimes there are ghosts instead of traps—bad news. The more you know about spooky things, the more you can trick those ghosts into going away.")



After Fazgyn conveys the basics about hazards and their detection, he suggests the PCs take some time to use the searching tactic as they proceed through the sewers. Sure enough while exploring the sewers, Fazgyn notices a basic pit trap set up by the Dragon Sharks. He refrains from pointing it out unless none of the PCs fail to find it—at which point he scolds the PCs for being careless in their scouting.

Regardless of whether the PCs find the pit trap, Fazgyn uses the discovery as a teaching moment. The kobold reviews how the PCs can overcome the trap and encourages PCs to attempt a Thievery check to jam the concealed trapdoor or batter the door down with brute force.

For more information about detecting and disabling traps, see page 341 of the *Pathfinder Playtest Rulebook*.

HIDDEN PIT

HAZARD

Mechanical
Trap

Stealth DC 16

Description A trapdoor covers a 10-foot-square pit that is 20 feet deep.

Disable Thievery DC 12 to remove the trapdoor, making the trap no longer hidden (Perception DC 0 to notice)

AC 10, **TAC** 7; **Fort** +1, **Ref** +1

Hardness 4 (trapdoor); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage



Pitfall

Trigger A creature walks onto the trapdoor.

Effect The triggering creature falls in and takes falling damage (10 bludgeoning damage). That creature can use the Grab an Edge reaction to avoid falling (see the Athletics skill).

Reset The trap still causes falling damage if anyone walks in, but the trapdoor must be reset manually for the trap to become hidden again.

APPLYING THE LESSONS

Once the pit trap is uncovered, the group reaches a junction of sewer tunnels. Fazgyn observes that they're close to where the Dragon Sharks set up an outpost, so it's time to split up their forces; he indicates for the PCs to take one path, while he and the Sewer Dragons warriors will take the other. Fazgyn explains that by attacking the Dragon Sharks separately, they can split the trespassers' attention and keep them from mounting a coordinated defense. Before the kobolds depart down their path, Fazgyn reminds the PCs to be on the lookout for traps—this time he won't be around to look out for them!

 The Dragon Sharks have set up a slashing blade launcher along this corridor that leads to their hideout. The trap fires several jagged metal blades at anyone walking at the front of the group, including a few that loudly clang off the opposite wall. As the PCs are in exploration mode as they approach this area, roll a Perception check for each PC using the searching exploration tactic. If at least one PC succeeds at the DC 17 Perception check, the PCs spot the trap before triggering it, after which they can attempt to disable or destroy it.

SLASHING BLADE LAUNCHER

HAZARD 1

**Mechanical
Trap**

Stealth DC 17 (trained)

Description A wall socket loaded with a jagged blade connects to a series of floor tiles in the marked tiles.

Disable Thievery DC 14 (trained) on any of the marked tiles or wall socket.

AC 15, **TAC** 10; **Fort** +5, **Ref** +3

Hardness 6; **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

 **Jagged Blade** (attack)

Trigger Pressure is placed on the marked floor tiles.

Effect The trap makes an attack against each creature or object in the noted tiles.

Ranged slashing blade +10, **Damage** 1d6+4 slashing

Special: If the PCs set off this trap—either by triggering it or destroying it—the kobolds in area B2 are alerted to their presence; see the Creatures section in that area for how this affects the encounter. If the PCs successfully

FROM EXPLORATION TO ENCOUNTER

The PCs are sent off on their own following their brief trip with Fazgyn and the other Sewer Dragons. The quest assumes that the PCs proceed in encounter mode, overcome the nearby pit trap, and then approach the mapped area (area B). This is a good opportunity to use exploration mode (*Pathfinder Playtest Rulebook* 329), so assess the order in which the PCs are traveling and ask which exploration tactic each one is using.

The PCs remain in exploration mode once they reach area B, though the moment either the PCs launch their attack or the kobolds detect the intruders, switch to encounter mode.

disable the trap, they can potentially ambush the kobolds in area B2.

B. DRAGON SHARK LAIR

A vanguard of the Dragon Shark tribe has moved into Absalom's sewers, setting up in a crumbling region that provides them with a larger living space. This sewer tunnel leads toward the base's northern entrance. The ceilings in this area are 10 feet high from the walkways, and the canals are about 4 feet deep.

As the PCs approach this area, advise them that they're getting very close to where they expect to find the Dragon Sharks, and this is a good opportunity for them to change exploration tactics if they'd like. Remember that it can be hard for the group to avoid detection unless all of the PCs are using the sneaking tactic, but it's also hard to spot anything but obvious hazards if nobody's searching. This is where a rogue with the Trap Finder feat shines, for she can effectively do both at the same time. If the PCs don't choose to sneak, that's okay; just begin encounter mode once the PCs reach this area.

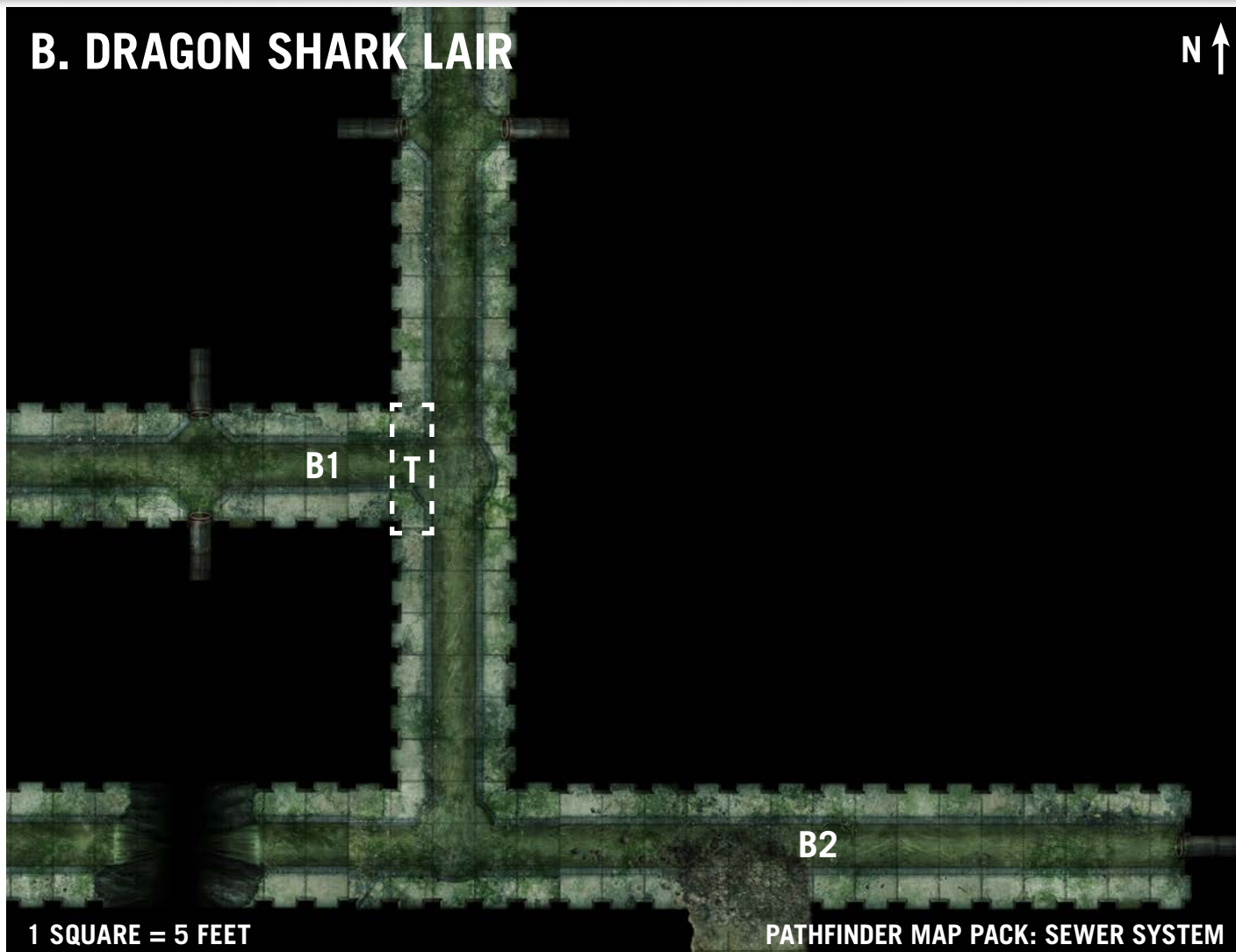
Remember that when sneaking up on the kobolds, the PCs are attempting Stealth checks against the kobolds' Perception DCs, which is effectively 13. You can find more information about calculating skill DCs on page 142 of the *Pathfinder Playtest Rulebook*.

 The sewer water in the canals here is roughly knee-deep and acts as difficult terrain. Creatures inside a canal square might gain cover against attacks originating outside of canal squares. Creatures inside a canal square can also use the Take Cover action (*Pathfinder Playtest Rulebook* 301) to increase the cover bonus.

BI. TRAP ALLEY

The PCs approach this area from the west. The path they follow leads to a T-junction, where the contents of two different tunnels combine to flow to the south and east.

B. DRAGON SHARK LAIR



A slashing blade launcher trap occupies this tunnel. If the PCs are still in exploration mode at this point—at which point they’re likely all using the sneaking tactic—any PC who is using the searching tactic or has the Trap Finder feat can attempt a Perception check to spot the trap before walking into it. Once in encounter mode, a PC without that feat must attempt a Perception check using the Seek action (*Pathfinder Playtest Rulebook* 308) in order to detect the trap.

SLASHING BLADE LAUNCHER**HAZARD 1**

Mechanical
Trap

See page 15.

Special: If the PCs trigger the trap, the noise alerts the nearby kobolds and initiates combat. If the PCs initiate combat before detecting or triggering the trap, the kobolds try to lure the PCs into the trap during the fight.

B2. HIDEOUT ENTRANCE**HIGH 1**

A second T-junction breaks off the first, with the western

path leading to a sudden drop where the floor has collapsed into a sinkhole. The canal continues to the east, and along the southern wall there’s a visible break in the masonry wall that leads into a makeshift cavern.

The Dragon Sharks scouting party has set itself up near the cavern entrance, which leads to a second group of kobolds whom Fazgyn and the other Sewer Dragons ambush at about the same time the PCs launch their attack.



Several Dragon Shark warriors stand guard outside the cave’s immediate entrance, concentrated between the entrance and the nearby tunnel junction. The kobold’s leader, a Dragon Shark with just enough true dragon blood to produce a sorcerous lineage, is in charge. If they’re not aware of the PCs, the kobolds mill about the cavern entrance while casually keeping watch, gossiping, and snacking on jerky. If they are aware of the PCs, the kobolds fan out toward the trap in area B1, preparing to ambush

the PCs, lure them into the trap, and make optimal use of their sneak attack ability.

Once combat begins, the kobold warriors charge into combat, while the Dragon Shark Sorcerer hangs back and supports by casting *magic missile*. If cornered by multiple PCs, the sorcerer uses her Illusory Retreat ability to withdraw and group up with any surviving Dragon Shark kobolds. While normally cowardly creatures, the Dragon Sharks fear their tribal leaders even more than they do the PCs and fight to the death as a result. However, if the PCs defeat the sorcerer, any remaining kobolds shaken 1 (Will DC 10 negates) at the sight of their defeated leader.

1 DRAGON SHARK SORCERER

CREATURE 1

Evil
Humanoid
Kobold
Lawful
Small

Perception +2, darkvision

Languages Common, Draconic

Skills +1, Arcana +4, Deception +5, Diplomacy +5, Blue Dragon Lore +6, Stealth +4

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

Items staff

AC 14, **TAC** 12; **Fort** +0, **Ref** +4, **Will** +4

HP 12; **Resistances** electricity 5

Speed 25 feet

◆ **Melee** staff +4 (two-handed d8), **Damage** 1d4-2 bludgeoning claw +4 (agile), **Damage** 1d4-2 slashing

Arcane Spontaneous Spells DC 15, attack +5; **1st** (3 slots) *illusory object*, *magic missile*, *shocking grasp*; **Cantrips** *detect magic*, *electric arc*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*

Illusory Retreat (arcane, illusion, manipulate, move)

Casting ◆ Somatic Casting, ◆ Somatic Casting

Requirement The kobold must be adjacent to at least one enemy.

Effect The kobold creates an illusion of itself in its square and to turn itself invisible (as 2nd-level *invisibility*) for 1 round. It can Stride up to half its Speed, but it must end its move in a space that's not adjacent to any enemies.

Sneak Attack (precision) The kobold deals 1d4 extra precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

2 KOBOLD WARRIORS

CREATURE 0

Evil
Humanoid
Kobold
Lawful
Small

Perception +3, darkvision

Languages Draconic

Skills -1, Acrobatics +4, Stealth +4

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

Items leather armor, light pick, sling with 20 bullets

AC 14, **TAC** 13; **Fort** +1, **Ref** +4, **Will** +2

HP 6

Speed 25 feet

◆ **Melee** light pick +5 (agile, fatal d8), **Damage** 1d4-1 piercing

◆ **Ranged** sling +5 (propulsive), **Damage** 1d6-1 bludgeoning

◆ **Hurried Retreat** (move)

SCALING ENCOUNTER B2

This encounter is written for four players, so for each additional PC beyond four, add one additional kobold warrior to the encounter.

Requirements The kobold must be adjacent to at least one enemy.

Effect The kobold Strides up to its speed plus 5 feet and gains a +2 conditional bonus to AC against reactions triggered by this movement. The kobold must end this movement in a space that's not adjacent to any enemy.

Sneak Attack (precision) The kobold deals 1d4 extra precision damage to flat-footed creatures.



The Dragon Shark sorcerer keeps a small stash of goods just inside the cavern. The trove contains a *scroll of illusory disguise*, a well-worn *hat of disguise* that appears to have been repeatedly rumpled by a meaty fist (or maybe even a tentacle), and 8 sp.

The sorcerer also kept what she believed was a wizard's spellbook but was in fact a waterlogged journal that once belonged to Wennele Ardonay. The ink on many of the damp booklet's pages has begun to smear, but the pages near the center are still fairly legible. Give the players **Handout #5**, an excerpt from the journal that lists several of Wennele's clients, all of whom are former slaves who have since disappeared or died. In fact, these are the individuals whom Wennele managed to remember even into undeath, and in his hateful condition, he assumed they were his enemies and has systematically attacked them. Among the names are Remna, the Bloody Barber recruit (see "Snippets"); Justerian, the dockhand who has taken shelter in the Puddles (see "Puddles"); and Nelfurhin Zor, the Pathfinder Society recruit whom the PCs seek.

CONCLUSION

Shortly after the PCs finish wrapping up the last of the Dragon Shark kobolds, Fazgyn and the Sewer Dragons emerge from the southern cavern. The kobold trapmaster relays that his team defeated the paltry scouts that the Dragon Sharks had at the other side of the outpost and that the PCs clearly had the harder challenge. He congratulates the PCs on a job well done, promising to relay their mutual success back to the Sewer Dragons.

If the PCs return to the Grand Lodge and report a successful mission, Venture-Captain Ambrus Valsin is very pleased. He has other assignments ready for the PCs, but first suggests that the group takes a break (and a bath) before tackling their next assignment. He also makes a personal note of contacting his fellow venture-captain,

Drandle Drang, about the Society's ongoing relationship with the Sewer Dragons.

If presented with Wennel's waterlogged journal, Valsin believes the notes can open up future leads; the

"Barbers" and "Puddles" quests can stem from this event, assuming the PCs haven't already completed these quests. Regardless, the PCs have some time to rest and enjoy their success.



PUDDLES

By Linda Zayas-Palmer

The slave Justerian labored for 2 decades as a dockhand and porter, and his servitude left him skittish about when his overseer might reprimand him next. With the repeal of the Flesh Tax, Justerian became a free man, yet he could not shake the fear that this was only a temporary condition and that slavers would capture him again. Haunted by these memories and mistreatment, he took up residence in the Puddles to avoid notice. His home is an abandoned mansion so decrepit and crumbling that few even dare to enter it. The cleric Wennel helped Justerian cope with his past, found him a job as a cook at a nearby tavern called the Frog's Tongue, and has visited regularly to convince Justerian to find safer lodging.

When Wennel was murdered and rose as an undead, Justerian's hiding place was one of the foremost locations on his mind. Wennel crept into the manor in the dead of night, intent on slaying the man he had once helped. Yet Justerian slept lightly, and he put up more of a fight than Wennel expected, knocking loose several clues to Wennel's identity. Wennel fled, and Justerian retreated to the manor's attic, hiding away until he

WHERE IN ABSALOM

"Puddles" takes place in Absalom's Puddles district. The Puddles suffered an earthquake 2 decades ago, which fractured the ground and sank much of the district below sea level. Most of the district floods during high tide, and some areas are perpetually submerged. Most people with the means to leave the Puddles have moved away, leaving behind a desperate and underfunded district plagued with flooding and crime.

could plan his next move. Unfortunately, he had lost too much blood, and he succumbed to his injuries. His coworker and close friend Dahlia has asked the Muckruckers to investigate his disappearance, but the guards are too busy with other matters—in particular, a surge of vermin plaguing building, frightened by Wennel's movements beneath the streets.

SUMMARY

The PCs' search for a guard in the Puddles district is brief, as they quickly come across the Muckrucker Ziraya al-Shurati. Ziraya speaks with the PCs about recent

events, including an upswing in vermin activity and a report that a local man, Justerian, has gone missing. Following the lead from Ziraya, the PCs speak with the person who reported the disappearance, and then they investigate the crumbling manor where Justerian was living. There, they find his body as well as clues to the killer's identity.

GETTING STARTED

The players should have a chance to read **Handout #3**, which includes a bag containing 35 sp, before the PCs travel to the Puddles district and search for one of the Muckruckers. After a few minutes of searching, the PCs come across a guard in the middle of a job. Read or paraphrase the following to begin the adventure.

Rain patters down onto the muddy streets of Absalom's Puddles district, covering it with the murky pools of water that give the district its name. The buildings that

line the streets have seen better days. Many of them are decaying, shuttered, or boarded up. The door of one of these buildings swings open, letting rats rush out into the streets. A woman wearing leather armor and a bronze badge stands in the doorway, slashing a shortsword into the swarm of rats and urging them out of the building. On her forearm, a tattoo of a dog animates and snarls.

This woman, Ziraya al-Shurati, is a respected member of the Muckruckers. If the PCs address her, or if they stand in the street for a few minutes indecisively, she speaks to them.

"Do you need something? As you can see, I'm busy. Can't have vermin chewing thorough our food stores, and this isn't even the first swarm of rats I've dealt with today. They've been everywhere lately."

The PCs can ask Ziraya any questions they might have. The following are some sample questions and her answers.

What's that moving tattoo on your arm? "War Hounder symbol. It's a gang I used to run with, knocking in heads and taking odd jobs to make some coin. The Muckruckers gave me a second chance at life."

What are the Muckruckers? "We're the ones who care about the Puddles enough to volunteer our time to protect it."

What's going on with the vermin? "They've been everywhere for the last week or so. Rats and flies, not to mention sewer oozes, crawling up into the street. We don't know what's got them so worked up."

If the PCs explain that they are investigating abductions and murders, Ziraya is hesitant to trust them at first. However, if a PC succeeds at a DC 15 Diplomacy or Deception check—or if they provide her with the public-service donation from Ambrus Valsin—she gives them more information. She explains that a few days back, she received a report from a local named Dahlia that one of her friends had gone missing. With the current vermin problem, the Muckruckers don't have time for a full investigation without more evidence to suspect foul play. She directs the PCs to the Frog's Tongue, the tavern where Dahlia works as a cook, if they want more information.



If the PCs get this information without providing the donation, they can spend the money on gear. The best choices are likely a minor elixir of life (30 sp), alchemist's fire (30 sp), or other level 1 alchemical gear. Valsin's irritated should he hear about the PCs' spending the donation, and he might dock this from the PCs' rewards at a later date. When you run this quest as a demo, though, this act is unlikely to have any lasting consequences.



**ZIRAYA
AL-SHURATI**

THE FROG'S TONGUE

The Frog's Tongue embraces the water that often floods the Puddles. Recognizing that keeping the first floor of the building dry was a losing battle, the owners instead hollowed out much of the first floor and built a permanent pond, stocking it with frogs for novelty. The tavern patrons primarily use the second floor.

The sign announcing the tavern is a mummified frog glued to a slab of wood. When the PCs arrive in the early afternoon, business is slow. The door to the kitchen is open, and the PCs can see Dahlia frying fish in a skillet. When the PCs approach, she's eager to speak with the PCs about her friend.

"Thank the gods, the Muckruckers decided to send someone after all. As I was telling the badge lady with the dog tattoo, it's not like Justerian to not show up for work. He's a cook here with me, see, and he loves his job. He'd been a slave for years, and with all that slavery isn't on the up and up anymore, he finally had a chance to pull his life back together. Puddles ain't the best place for that, but he was managing just fine. He kept talkin' about how he was worried that one of those underground slavers was gonna come snatch him back. I thought it was just talk, but now I'm worried."

She answers the PCs' questions to the best of her ability.

What more can you tell us about your friend? "Brilliant as a whistle, or whatever you call it. One of the best cooks I've ever met too."

Do you know more about who might have taken him? "Maybe it was slavers, like he said. I dunno who his enemies are. He's real private about his past, and I don't like to pry when it's not my business."

Where should we start our investigation? "His place. He kept staying in this real rotten old place where no one'd think to look."

What more can you tell us about his house/Why don't you check out his house yourself? "Remember how I said no one would think to look there? It's because it's not safe. The stairs are full of termites, and the attic's full of bats. One good storm and the whole place might just fall down."

If a PC succeeds at a DC 12 Nature check to Recall Knowledge, she knows basic information about bats. This information grants that PC a +2 bonus to skill checks to deal with the bat swarm in area C1. If a PC succeeds at a separate DC 12 Nature check, they know enough about termite tunnels to predict their patterns. All PCs gain a +2 bonus to skill checks to climb up to the second floor of the manor (see below).

When the PCs have finished asking Dahlia questions, she gives them directions to the ruined manor.

SCALING ENCOUNTER C1

This encounter is written for four players. For a larger group, apply the following adjustments.

5 Players: Increase the difficulty of the hazard as follows. On a critical failure, the PC takes 8 acid damage and is hampered 20 for 1 round. On a failure, the PC takes 1d6+2 acid damage and is hampered 10 for 1 round. On a success, the PC takes 1d4 acid damage, and on a critical success, the PC takes no damage.

6+ Players: Apply the 5-player adjustment above. Additionally, increase the ooze's attack modifier, DCs, saving throws, skill modifiers, and damage rolls with its pseudopod by 2. The ooze also gains 20 extra Hit Points.

C. RUINED MANOR

Only weeds surround this once-majestic manor house, which now leans slightly to the west, sinking into the muck. The first floor is flooded, and its front door hangs open. Two staircases lead up to the second floor, their steps riddled with small holes.

The map depicts only the building's second floor, for the ground floor contains only floodwater, mold, and decaying furnishings.



The stairs to the second floor have been compromised by a termite infestation. Each PC can attempt a DC 12 Acrobatics check to climb the stairs without stepping on weak points or a DC 12 Athletics check to scale the building's rough sides. If a PC fails the check, some mishap harms him. In the case of a failed Acrobatics check, his foot gets stuck temporarily and splinters stick into his leg, dealing 2 piercing damage. In the case of a failed Athletics check, some of the brickwork crumbles and showers the PC in debris, dealing 2 bludgeoning damage. If a PC critically fails, he nearly reaches the top before falling, taking 5 bludgeoning damage.

The doors on the second floor are unlocked. They creak loudly when opened and release a wave of acrid air. Inside the manor, the light levels are dim and the ceilings are 10 feet high.

C1. JUSTERIAN'S BEDROOM

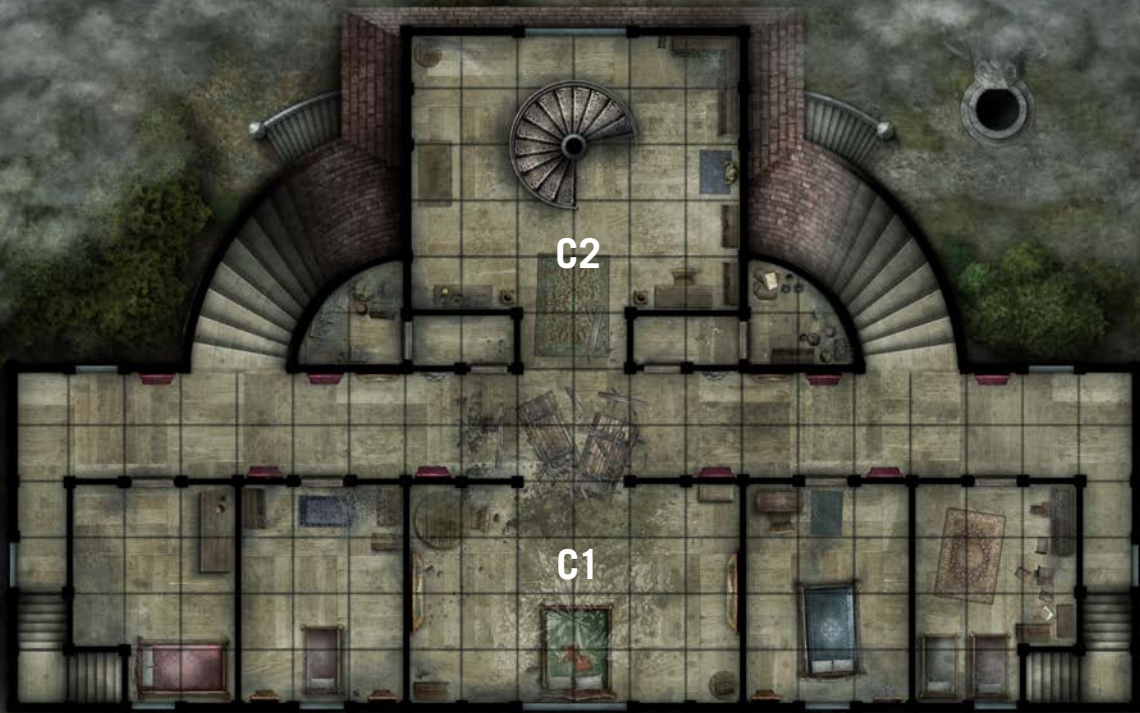
HIGH 1

This moldering bedroom was where Justerian slept. Other than the bed, which is adorned with fresh blankets and pillows, the rest of the furniture is decaying and covered in dust.



When the undead Wennel entered the house, he inadvertently lured in a sewer ooze with him. He planned to feed Justerian's body to the sewer ooze after killing him to neatly dispose of his remains. However, Wennel had to flee, and the ooze has been content to consume dead bats, droppings, and other material. The

C. RUINED MANOR



1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

PATHFINDER FLIP-MAT: HAUNTED HOUSE

hungry ooze lashes out at the nearest PC, opening the encounter with its filth wave. If the PCs neutralize the hazard (see below) before its first turn, the ooze's filth wave deals no damage.

In addition to the ooze, a swarm of bats roosts in the rafters. The bats are easily spooked and likely to attack the PCs, but the PCs might be able to calm them. If a PC succeeds at DC 12 Nature check as an action, the bats do not attack anyone that round. If a PC critically succeeds at the check, he calms the bats sufficiently that they no longer pose a threat. An individual PC can attempt to escape the bats' notice by using an action to attempt a DC 12 Stealth check. If the PC succeeds at the check and hasn't attacked the bats this turn, the bats do not include him in their swarming bites attack on their next turn.

The bats fear the ooze, and on any round that the swarm isn't pacified, it attacks the PCs farthest from the ooze. Once reduced to 3 or fewer Hit Points, the bats flee to one of the side rooms and don't trouble the PCs unless purposefully disturbed further.

SEWER OOZE

CREATURE 1

Medium
Mindless
Ooze

Perception +1, blindsight (tremors) 60 feet
Languages –
Skills –1, Stealth –3 (+6 in sewers)

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

AC 5, **TAC** 5; **Fort** +5, **Ref** +1, **Will** +1

HP 40; **Immunities** acid, asleep, critical hits, mental, precision, visual

Speed 10 feet

◆ **Melee** pseudopod +7, **Damage** 1d6+1 bludgeoning plus 1d4 acid

◆ **Filth Wave**

Frequency once per minute

Effect The sewer ooze unleashes a wave of filth and slime, hitting all creatures within a 20-foot aura. Creatures in the area take 1d4 acid damage and are hampered 10 feet for 1 minute unless they succeed at a DC 15 Reflex save (no damage or hampered on a success, and a character additionally falls prone on a critical failure). An affected creature can clean off the muck as an Interact action, reducing the hampered condition by 5 with each action.

BAT SWARM

CREATURE 1

Animal
Large
Swarm

Perception +5, echolocation 20 feet, low-light vision
Languages –

Skills –1, Athletics +0 (+6 to Climb), Acrobatics +6

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

Echolocation A bat can use its hearing as a precise sense at the listed range.

AC 14, TAC 14; Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +1

HP 15; Immunities precision, targeted effects; **Resistances** bludgeoning 5, piercing 5, slashing 2; **Weaknesses** area damage 4, splash damage 4

Speed 5 feet, fly 30 feet

◆ **Swarming Bites** Each enemy in the swarm's space takes 1d4 piercing damage plus 1 persistent bleed damage. Succeeding at a DC 15 Reflex save halves the damage (no damage on a critical success, double damage on a critical failure).



A few days of exposure to the sewer ooze have left the ground covered in acidic sludge. The acid isn't strong enough to eat through the soles of the PCs' shoes unless they stand still in it for several minutes, but it does make movement more challenging. All squares that contain the sludge are difficult terrain. Additionally, the bats' panicked launch from the rafters causes small pieces of the ceiling to periodically fall into the acid, splashing those who are nearby. This hazard activates once per round for 2 minutes.

ACIDIC FLOOR

HAZARD 0

Environmental Stealth DC 10

Description The floor of area **C1** is covered in acidic sludge. Debris from the ceiling periodically falls into the sludge, splashing those nearby.

Disable Crafting DC 15 (untrained) to brace the ceiling with debris in three places disables the hazard, or a PC can attempt DC 13 Perception or Survival (trained) check to avoid being near falling debris that round

AC 10, TAC 7; Fort +1, Ref +1

Hardness 0; Immunities critical hits, object immunities, precision damage



Acid Glob

Trigger A piece of ceiling falls on to the floor.

Effect The debris lands with a splash, showering a random PC with acid (Reflex DC 13). On a success, the PC dodges the acid and takes no damage. On a failure, the PC takes 1d4+1 acid damage. On a critical failure, the PC takes 5 acid damage and is hampered 10 for 1 minute (the hampered effect does not stack with the ooze's filth wave).

Reset The hazard triggers once per round for 2 minutes, after which debris stops falling from the ceiling.



Justerian kept all of his belongings in a small wooden trunk that he kept hidden underneath his bed. The trunk contains two sets of simple clothing, 50 feet of hemp rope, a waterskin, 10 days of rations, a set of cookware, a *minor elixir of life*, a vial of *nectar of purification*, and 12 sp. It also contains **Handout #6**, a letter from Wennel, imploring Justerian to find a safer place to live.

CONDITIONS

Several threats in this encounter apply new conditions, which are paraphrased below.

Hampered: Your Speed is reduced by the listed amount of feet. This condition can't reduce your Speed below 5 feet. You can have both the accelerated and hampered conditions at the same time, so if you were accelerated 10 and hampered 15, your Speed would be reduced by 5 feet.

Persistent Damage: While under the effect of persistent damage, at the end of your turn you take the specified amount and type of damage, after which you can attempt a DC 20 flat check to remove the persistent damage. You roll any damage dice anew each time you take the persistent damage.

You can have only one persistent damage condition of each damage type, and a higher value overrides a lower amount. Persistent damage with the bleed type ends automatically ends if you're healed to your maximum Hit Points.

You or an ally can spend actions to help you recover from persistent damage, such as using Medicine to Administer First Aid (DC 15) to stop bleeding; successfully doing so reduces the DC of the flat check to 15 and usually lets you immediately attempt an extra flat check to end the persistent damage. The reduction to the DC lasts until you remove the persistent damage or gain another persistent damage condition with the same damage type.

C2. STAIRWELL

Much of the fight between Wennel and Justerian took place in this room. The floor bears several bloodstains, and a dribbled trail of blood leads up the staircase. The PCs can find several clues in this room.

Club: Justerian fought Wennel with a wooden club. Strands of Wennel's hair still cling to the weapon. A PC who succeeds at a DC 14 Medicine or Religion check while studying the hair recognizes that the hair comes from an undead creature—it is stuck directly to a bloodless piece of exposed bone.

Holy Symbol: When Justerian was fighting for his life, he knocked loose Wennel's holy symbol, which lies discarded on the floor. A PC who succeeds at a DC 14 Religion check to Recall Knowledge recognizes that the symbol represents Milani, goddess of devotion, hope, and uprisings.

Insects: Two different kinds of insects hover in the air near the top of the stairs: corpse flies and death's-head moths. A PC who succeeds at a DC 10 Nature check to Recall Knowledge identifies the flies, knowing that they are drawn to meat and rotting corpses, and also knows that the other insects are death's-head moths. A PC who succeeds at a DC 12 Religion check to

Recall Knowledge knows that death's-head moths are sacred to Urgathoa, goddess of gluttony, disease, and undeath. The moths are indigenous on the Isle of Kortos, but their presence here seems like more than a coincidence.

C3. ATTIC

This area is a 20-foot-by-25-foot room accessible by the stairwell and not depicted on the map.

Justerian's body lies on the floor of the attic among abandoned furnishings, surrounded in a puddle of congealed blood. A PC who succeeds at a DC 12 Medicine check determines the wounds that cover his body and caused his death came from claws.

CONCLUSION

If the PCs return to Dahlia, she is devastated to learn of her friend's death but grateful to the PCs for investigating. She asks the PCs if they found any clues about the killer. If the PCs tell her about the holy symbol of Milani, Dahlia says that to her knowledge, Justerian never owned such a symbol, though he occasionally spoke of a priest of Milani who had recommended that he take a job at the Frog's Tongue.

Ambrus Valsin listens intently to the PCs' report about their findings, and then he thanks the PCs for their investigation. This information leaves him even more concerns about the fate of Nelfurhin Zor, and he asks the PCs to continue searching for answers.



HAVEN

By Leo Glass

Decades ago, worshippers of Milani opened the Sanguine Thorn, a tavern in the wealthy Absalom neighborhood known as Beldrin's Bluff. Relying on the clamor of the inn's unsuspecting patrons to conceal the clandestine meetings held in the tavern's back rooms, the church of the Everbloom hatched plots to liberate slaves in the city. Known for the barbed vines of blood-red roses that scaled its walls and signaled its secret purpose, the Sanguine Thorn became a beacon to those who opposed slavery in Absalom—at least, until an earthquake devastated Beldrin's Bluff, heaving much of the area into the Inner Sea.

Using clues provided by the PCs after completing one or more of the previous quests, Venture-Captain Ambrus Valsin has determined that the victims of the Rose Street killer were all liberated slaves who were once hidden in the demolished and undead-infested ruins of the Precipice Quarter by the cleric of Milani who helped them escape. Even stranger, they all were harbored in the exact same safe house—the Sanguine Thorn—despite the fact that no one who has survived a visit to the Precipice Quarter within the last 20 years can remember seeing the inn.

WHERE IN ABSALOM

"Haven" takes place in the Precipice Quarter of Absalom, formerly known as Beldrin's Bluff. In 4698 AR, a devastating earthquake sheared off whole city blocks of Beldrin's Bluff, toppling them into the sea. Today, the Precipice Quarter is a dangerous, abandoned area of the city where threats ranging from thieves to undead roam free.

SUMMARY

Ambrus Valsin asks the PCs to travel to the Precipice Quarter to find the Sanguine Thorn and investigate. Once there, the PCs are free to explore a massive sinkhole where the inn once stood. At the bottom, they find the ruins of the Sanguine Thorn to be mostly intact, and they encounter at least one hazard outside its walls. Once inside, the Rose Street killer, a skeletal cleric named Wennel, immediately attacks the PCs. If the PCs overcome Wennel and his minions, the party discovers that the missing Pathfinder, Nelfurhin Zor, has fallen through the collapsed floor and needs help. By questioning Nelfurhin, they can discover more about the mystery of Wennel's life—and undeath.

GETTING STARTED

The PCs receive letters from Ambrus Valsin instructing them to find the Sanguine Thorn and search it for clues. The PCs should be able to quickly travel to the Precipice Quarter and arrive at the address provided by Ambrus. On the way, members of Absalom's Post Guard warn the party that the entrance gates to the Precipice Quarter remain closed between dusk and dawn, no matter who asks to be let past.

Once the PCs arrive at the intersection identified by Ambrus, read or paraphrase the following.

Through a shroud of heavy fog, the twisted silhouettes of ruined structures loom over the broken cobblestone path. What was once the corner of an intersection is now an imposing chasm. The mouth of the crater is large enough to have swallowed a colossal beast, but mist, detritus, and darkness obscure the bottom. Numerous shards of stone and debris jut out from the inner walls as if the cavernous hole is baring its teeth all the way down.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Perception check to Seek can search the rubble topside to find a warped and worn oaken sign with the name of the Sanguine Thorn painted above an ornate carving of a crimson rose, blood dripping from its thorns. A PC who succeeds at a DC 10 Religion check to Recall Knowledge knows that the carving bears a resemblance to the holy symbol of Milani, goddess of devotion, hope, and uprisings.

If the PCs climb down, the rocks and debris protruding from the inner walls provide several footholds and handholds. Any PC who critically fails a DC 14 Athletics check to Climb falls 20 feet and takes 10 bludgeoning damage. A falling PC can use the Acrobatics skill to try to Grab an Edge (DC 14) as a reaction to reduce this damage by half. Alternatively, a PC can affix a rope with a piton and hammer: using a rope to descend this slope decreases the DCs of the checks to Climb and the Grab an Edge (if necessary) to 10 each.

D. THE SUNKEN SAFE HOUSE

The fog remains thick at the bottom of the hole, providing the concealed condition to all creatures outside the safe house. Inside, the building only has dim light, making all creatures and objects within concealed to any creatures that don't have blindsense, blindsight, darkvision, or low-light vision. Light sources like torches or light can overcome the drawbacks of the dim light, but not those of the fog.

Broken bedrock, hunks of wattle, and splintered lumber—all lightly dusted with sea salt—sink into the mud. The lurching profile of a bowed and broken structure stands here, its

walls little more than rows of warped timbers, covered in withered vines, that converge at strange angles. The door on this side of the wall is missing from its frame.

If the PCs explore the Sanguine Thorn's outer walls, they see a crumbling veranda (D3) that leads to the tavern's front door. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check while using the searching tactic discovers that some of the withered vines on the outer walls hide gaping holes that could easily serve as entrances into the tavern if the vines were cut away or otherwise removed (see S on map).

Exploration Mode: Remember that until the PCs encounter danger such as the sinking mud hazard or undead, they're proceeding in exploration mode and should each select an exploration tactic.

D1. MUDDY RUINS

The wreckage-strewn ground at the bottom of the hole is difficult terrain (*Pathfinder Playtest Rulebook* 312). If the PCs head for the side door leading to the tavern's rotting pantry (D2), the GM should attempt a secret Perception check for each PC to see if they detect the large patch of quicksand (see Hazard below) that's directly in front of the door.



A 5-foot-by-15-foot patch of sucking mud (H1), a more viscous and slightly less dangerous version of quicksand, pools directly in front of the side door. A creature who spots the hazard in exploration mode can readily point it out to others.

SUCKING MUD

HAZARD 1

Complex
Environmental

Stealth +8 (trained)

Description An area of a clay-and-water slurry traps and submerges creatures who step onto it.

Disable Survival DC 14 (trained) to quickly mark the hazardous area and make the trap no longer hidden (Perception DC 0)

Submerge

Trigger A Large or smaller creature walks onto the area.

Effect The triggering creature is pulled down into the mud up to its waist. The mud rolls initiative if it hasn't already.

Routine (1 action) On its initiative, the mud pulls down each creature within it. A creature that was submerged up to its waist becomes submerged up to its neck, and a creature that was submerged up to its neck is pulled under and has to hold its breath to avoid suffocation. On its turn, a creature in the quicksand can attempt a DC 15 Athletics check to Swim to raise itself by one step, or to move 5 feet if it's submerged only up to its waist. On a critical failure, the creature is pulled down one step. A creature that swims out of the sucking mud patch escapes the hazard and is prone in a space adjacent to the hazard.

Reset The hazard still submerges anyone who walks in, but the surface doesn't become hidden again until it settles over the course of 24 hours.

D. THE SUNKEN SAFE HOUSE



While the PCs attempt to escape from the mud, the reanimated body of Remna, one of Wennel's first victims, crawls out from under the steps and attacks. The crawling skeleton does not join combat until the second initiative round. If the PCs completed the Snippets quest, they can recognize the skeleton's dagger as one of the razors favored by the Bloody Barbers.

CRAWLING SKELETON

CREATURE 0

Evil
Medium
Mindless
Skeleton
Undead

Perception +0, darkvision

Languages –

Skills –3; Acrobatics +3, Athletics +3

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

Items dagger

AC 14, **TAC** 12; **Fort** +1, **Ref** +3, **Will** +1

HP 6, negative healing; **Immunities** asleep, disease, mental, paralysis, poison; **Resistances** cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5, slashing 5, piercing 5

Speed 10 feet

◆ **Melee** claw +6 (agile), **Damage** 1d4+1 slashing
dagger +6 (agile), **Damage** 1d4+1 slashing

Crawling This skeleton has the prone condition, though it ignores the condition's penalty to attack rolls and can crawl 10 feet as an action.

EXTRACTION AND SUFFOCATION

The hazard here is potentially deadly unless the PCs spot it first or work together.

Aid: Succeeding at several Athletics checks can be difficult, but the PCs can help one another escape by using the Aid reaction (*Pathfinder Playtest Rulebook* 307). The DC to help extract another PC from the mud is 15.

Suffocation: You can hold your breath for a number of actions equal to your Constitution score, or double your Constitution score if you use the Breathe Deep action (*Pathfinder Playtest Rulebook* 309) before entering the airless environment. Each of your actions in a round costs you 1 action worth of air, even if you do nothing with that action. (Creatures that have fewer than 3 actions still lose a minimum of 3 actions' worth of air each turn.) Each time you perform an attack or manipulate action, you lose 2 actions' worth of air instead of 1. You also lose 2 actions' worth of air each time you are hit by an attack. Verbal actions cost you all your remaining air. Once you run out of air, you fall unconscious and risk suffocation (see page 315 of the *Pathfinder Playtest Rulebook* for more details).



If the GM succeeds at a secret DC 10 Perception check for any PC that is fully submerged in the mud, that PC detects something solid within the muck. If the PC has a free hand, she can grab the item. If the PC escapes from the mud, she finds the object is a skeletal hand with the chain of an *owlbear claw* trinket (*Pathfinder Playtest Rulebook* 400) wrapped around the metacarpal bones.

Special: If Wennel perceives the PCs outside the Sanguine Thorn, he prepares for a fight by casting *protection* (good) on himself just before combat.

D2. ROTTING PANTRY

Splintered remnants of tables and cabinets clutter a long, rectangular room that reeks of mold and decay.



A wooden chest in which Wennel kept supplies can be opened by a PC who succeeds at a DC 14 Thievery check to Pick the Lock or Athletics check to Break Open. The chest contains a 2 bedrolls, a pint of oil, 1 vial of *holy water*, a lantern, 7 days of rations, a leather pouch with 8 sp, and a wooden religious symbol of Milani on a leather cord.

D3. CRUMBLING VERANDA

The door here is jammed shut. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Athletics check to Break Open the door can burst it down; alternatively, the door has Hardness 5 and can sustain only one dent before breaking.



Any attempt to open the front door by force causes several of the beams holding up the veranda's roof to collapse. Each PC standing on the deck of the veranda (see the marked area) when this occurs takes 1d6 bludgeoning damage from falling timber, or half that if they succeed at a DC 13 Reflex save. A critical failure on the save results in double damage, and a critical success negates the damage.

Special: If Wennel perceives the PCs outside the Sanguine Thorn, he prepares for a fight by casting *protection* (good) on himself just before combat.

D4. DEMOLISHED MEAD HALL

SEVERE 1

This drinking hall's wooden floors are decaying, and its furniture is in ruins.



Once a half-elven cleric of Milani, Wennel has transformed into a skeletal champion who now draws his divine power from Urgathoa, goddess of disease, gluttony, and undeath. Using unholy rituals, he has created several zombies to assist him. When the PCs enter this area, the undead attack.

In combat, Wennel uses his channel energy ability to cast *harm* on a PC or casts *ray of enfeeblement* at a distance. He also casts *unlife's blessing* to heal himself or one of his zombie allies. In melee, he Raises A Shield each round if possible; first he casts *goblin pox* on available

targets, and then he attacks with his claws or shield spikes. If a PC ends their turn adjacent to one of the collapsed floorboards (D5), Wennel attempts to Shove the PC into that square so they fall down the 10-foot hole.

For each of the previous quests the PCs completed, they have likely acquired a piece of evidence or remnant from Wennel's life that they can use to their advantage during this encounter.

- **Rose Street Records (Dragons):** While holding Wennel's journal and reciting the names of the former slaves he had once helped (a manipulate action), a PC gains a +3 item bonus on Intimidation checks to Demoralize Wennel. On a critical success, he becomes dazzled for 1 round rather than fleeing. When presented with these names, Wennel seems conflicted, insisting that these were the ones he remembered and that they must be the ones who killed him.

- **Rose Street Remembrance (Puddles):** While within 10 feet of Wennel, a PC can brandish Wennel's religious symbol of Milani (a manipulate action) to remind him of his former faith. This gives Wennel the stupefied 1 condition for 1 minute (Will DC 13 negates) as he bemoans his death and insists that Urgathoa granted him new life in order to seek revenge against his killers.

- **Rose Street Tactics (Snippets):** A PC knows that Wennel's right side is damaged, which includes the hand wielding his morningstar. Any successful Athletics check to Disarm Wennel's morningstar is treated as a critical success, and not only denies him a potent weapon but also gives the PCs a bludgeoning weapon with which to overcome Wennel's resistance.



In two places, the frail floorboards have given way entirely, opening into the warped cellar 10 feet below. There is no chance of accidentally falling through the floor unless a PC either steps into one of these spaces or is pushed there.

The missing Pathfinder, **Nelfurhin Zor** (NG female elf alchemist), has broken her leg and lies immobile in the cellar, having fallen through the floorboards to the northeast. A PC who succeeds at a DC 10 Perception check to Seek finds a spotted trail of fresh blood leading to the hole. Each of the holes is only 10 feet deep and requires a DC 10 Climb check to scale safely. If the PCs do not search for Nelfurhin, she calls out for help.

WENNEL

CREATURE 2

Chaotic
Evil
Medium
Skeleton
Undead

Perception +7, darkvision

Languages Common, Elven

Skills +2; Intimidation +5, Medicine +5, Religion +7

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

Items breastplate, heavy steel shield (Hardness 5) with shield spikes, morningstar

AC 16 or 18 with shield raised, **TAC** 14 or 16 with shield raised; **Fort** +4, **Ref** +3, **Will** +7 (+1 conditional vs. positive)

HP 28, negative healing; **Immunities** asleep, death effects, disease, paralysis, poison; **Resistances** slashing 5, piercing 5

◆ **Attack of Opportunity**

◆ **Shield Block** If he has his heavy shield raised, Wennel can use the Shield Block reaction.

Speed 20 feet

◆ **Melee** morningstar +7 (versatile P), **Damage** 1d6+1 bludgeoning

claw +7 (agile), **Damage** 1d6+1 slashing

heavy spiked shield +7, **Damage** 1d6+1 piercing

Divine Prepared Spells DC 16; **1st** *goblin pox*, *protection*, *ray of enfeeblement*; **Cantrips** *chill touch*, *daze*, *detect magic*, *light*

Cleric Powers 3 Spell Points, DC 16; **1st** *unlife's blessing* (1)

Channel Energy *harm* (level 1, ×4)

Emblazoned Symbol Wennel has scrawled the symbol of Urgathoa on his shield, allowing him to use his shield as a divine focus to perform Material Casting and Somatic Casting actions without a free hand. The symbol functions only for him, and it functions even if the item is dented or broken (but not if it's destroyed).

2 ZOMBIE SHAMBLERS

CREATURE 0

Evil
Medium
Mindless
Undead
Zombie

Perception -1, darkvision

Languages –

Skills -3 Athletics +4

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

AC 11, **TAC** 8; **Fort** +5, **Ref** -1, **Will** +0

HP 20, negative healing; **Immunities** asleep, disease, paralysis, poison; **Weaknesses** positive 5, slashing 5

Slow A zombie is permanently slowed 1 and can't use reactions.

Speed 25 feet

◆ **Melee** fist +6, **Damage** 1d6+2 bludgeoning plus grab

◆ **Bite** (attack)

Requirement The zombie has a creature grabbed.

Effect The zombie makes a bite melee unarmed Strike against the grabbed creature with an attack bonus of +6 that deals 2d4+3 piercing damage.

CONCLUSION

Nelfurhin Zor can convey that the cleric Wennel Ardonay had helped her find her bearings after being freed with no money. The two remained friends, but for the last 2 months Wennel had insisted that he was close to proving that several abductions around Absalom were connected to a secretive cell of slave traders. He expressed his intention to expose the cell,

SCALING ENCOUNTER D4

For each additional PC beyond four, add one zombie shambler to the encounter.

HARMFUL CONDITIONS

This encounter uses several new conditions, which are paraphrased below.

Dazzled: If vision is your only precise sense, all creatures and objects are concealed to you.

Enfeebled: You gain a conditional penalty on all attack rolls, damage rolls, and Strength-based checks equal to the enfeebled value.

Frightened: You take a conditional penalty on all your checks, DCs, and saving throws equal to this value. Unless specified otherwise, at the end of each of your turns, the value of your frightened condition decreases by 1.

Stupefied: You take a conditional penalty on spell rolls, spell DCs, and Intelligence-, Wisdom-, and Charisma-based checks equal to the value. Any time you attempt to cast a spell while stupefied, the spell is disrupted unless you succeed at a spell roll against the DC of the effect that gave you the stupefied condition.

even if it meant its members might try to silence him. When Wennel unexpectedly appeared at Nelfurhin's home a few days ago, the alchemist readily opened the door, only to discover her friend was now a reanimated corpse. Wennel attacked and Nelfurhin awoke in the Sanguine Thorn, where she fell through the floor in an unsuccessful attempt to escape).

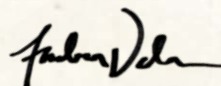
Nelfurhin doesn't have any information about the slavers' identities or how Wennel was reanimated, though a PC who succeeds at a DC 12 Religion check to Recall Knowledge knows that those who perish from treachery, with unfinished business, or after great suffering can sometimes rise as undead spontaneously—a process that twists even that person's best intentions into hate.

Even if the PCs don't guess at the cause of Wennel's undeath, Ambrus Valsin can offer the above speculation once the PCs report back to him. He thanks the PCs for uncovering the killer, ending the murders, and rescuing Nelfurhin. As a reward, he awards the PCs 15 sp and invites them to join him and several other venture-captains for dinner, after which the PCs should have many informed contacts and countless more opportunities for adventure.

Handout #1: Snippets

Pathfinders,

The circumstances surrounding the recent disappearances have me convinced that the fault lies not with some "Rose Street Killer," but with the Band of the Palm, that flimsy front for the despicable collection of villainy known as the Bloody Barbers. Come see me for details.

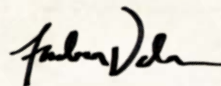


Venture-Captain Ambrus Valsin

Handout #2: Dragons

Pathfinders,

With the ongoing rash of disappearances in the streets of Absalom, it seems prudent to strengthen ties with our allies. I'm sending you into the sewers to meet with one of the Society's most dependable, albeit more unconventional, allies in Absalom: the Sewer Dragons Kobold tribe. You'll be meeting with their speaker, Dragonspeaker Engashez, and offering whatever assistance you can. When people disappear on the surface, bodies usually end up in the sewers, and having the eyes of the Sewer Dragons helping us could prove invaluable.



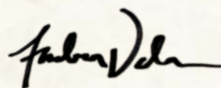
Venture-Captain Ambrus Valsin

Handout #3: Puddles

Pathfinders,

There are certain places in Absalom where criminals go when they want to keep a low profile. The Puddles is one of those places. Street after street of abandoned buildings and a small and underfunded guard force make it an ideal place for people looking to stir up trouble without getting caught.

Still, someone there may have heard something useful. Travel to the Puddles and speak to the guards. They're called the Muckruckers, and you can recognize them by the bronze badges they wear. I've provided you with a small donation to help fund their public services, which should help convince them that talking to you is worth their time.

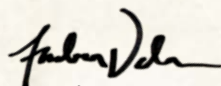


Venture-Captain Ambrus Valsin

Handout #4: Haven

Pathfinders,

Your information has led me to conclude that the Rose Street victims were all former slaves, somehow connected to the church of Milani. I've determined that when the victims were freed, each was hidden in the same safe house, a tavern called the Sanguine Thorn. But that seems unlikely, as multiple accounts report that the earthquake destroyed it decades ago. Go to the tavern's address in the Precipice Quarter. If it's somehow standing, search for information that can help us stop this murderer or find our missing Pathfinder, Nelfurvin Zor, before it's too late.



Venture-Captain Ambrus Valsin

Handout #5: Waterlogged Journal Excerpt

...to ensure that my clients receive all the support they require. Many forget that Milani is not just a goddess of liberating the oppressed, but also of ensuring they're not condemned to hardship once free.

Justerian — male human dockworker, about 40 years: I worry about Justerian. The slavers wore down his spirit as much as they did his body. He struggles to cope with his new life and fears his former masters might find him and shackle him again. He needs friends, and while I am glad to see he has steady employment, his living conditions are not healthy.

Remna — female dwarf scullery maid, about 40 years: With good reason, servitude has left her resentful of social elites. She's ambitious, but I have tried to counsel her against association with some of Absalom's more dangerous circles. Much as I do not like the rumors I've heard of her new role models, she is free now — including free to make her own decisions. I shall stay in touch should she need help.

Aedo — male halfling gardener, about 50 years: He has managed fairly well with the transition. Wealthy families who once secured his services for free were eager to hire him. I have provided him the silver needed for tools, and his business is thriving along the Petal District's Rose Street.

Nelfurhin — female elf alchemist, age unknown: Formerly a scriptorium slave handling several households' documents, Nelfurhin has found a welcome home at the Pathfinder Society. The Society is a good fit for her, particularly as the Grand Lodge continues to clean up some of its questionable practices.

Omoak — female half-orc personal assistant, about 25 years: She served Lady Eambria Tullian, who perished during the siege in Absalom's defense and apparently willed Omoak a considerable sum for a decade of service. I've helped her locate and start up a grocery business.

Handout #6: Letter

Justerian,

Again I ask that you find somewhere else to live. You don't need to live in squalor — not when you have friends who can help you find a safer home.

—W

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