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HELL'S VENGEANCE[™]

WRATH OF
THRONE

by Thurston Hillman

CHELIAX



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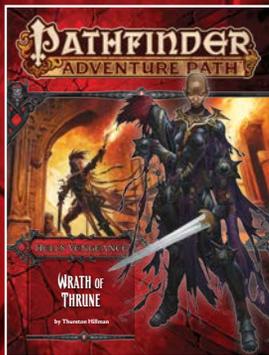
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ON THE COVER



On this latest cover of the Hell's Vengeance Adventure Path, Wayne Reynolds offers up a ruthless new villain—the iconic Hellknight, Linxia Benzekri!



HELL'S VENGEANCE™

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REFERENCE

This book refers to several other Pathfinder Roleplaying Game products using the following abbreviations, yet these additional supplements are not required to make use of this book. Readers interested in references to Pathfinder RPG hardcovers can find the complete rules of these books available online for free at paizo.com/prd.

<i>Advanced Player's Guide</i>	APG	<i>Ultimate Combat</i>	UC
<i>Inner Sea Gods</i>	ISG	<i>Ultimate Equipment</i>	UE
<i>The Inner Sea World Guide</i>	ISWG	<i>Ultimate Magic</i>	UM



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A CLOAK OF SECRECY

One of the goals of the Hell's Vengeance Adventure Path is to provide a chance for players to experience playing evil characters in a variety of different situations that require distinct play styles. In the previous adventure, "The Hellfire Compact," the PCs are assumed to be the bad guys almost from the very start. Not only are they the thuggish minions of a villainous patron, but the entire adventure takes place in a town still under the thumb of the evil empire of Cheliox. Few of the townsfolk are as wicked as the PCs, of course, and most just want to go about their lives, yet Longacre still isn't the pastoral place of peace and happiness it might otherwise seem to be. As a result, the PCs get to strut their stuff in town, showing off their dominance and cracking down on dissent, secure in the knowledge that, as bad as they are, they're the lawful representatives of the rightful government of both Longacre and Cheliox.

However, in this month's adventure, "Wrath of Throne," the PCs are forced to take a different tack. They're more powerful than they were in the first adventure, and possess even greater authority once they're officially inducted as Throne agents, but the town of Kantaria is quite different from Longacre. Kantaria has already fallen to the Glorious Reclamation, Iomedean knights patrol the streets, and perhaps most importantly, a sizable majority of the population supports the town's new protectors and the government they've installed. As a result, if the PCs are going to succeed in "Wrath of Throne," they'll have to be a bit more circumspect in their actions.

No longer can the PCs walk openly through town, proudly bearing their House Throne insignia and enforcing Archbaron Fex's decrees; they'll need to stealthily infiltrate Kantaria instead of brazenly attacking

the town, hiding their true allegiance and keeping a low profile the whole way through. Their strategies will require more subtlety to succeed, such as shrewdly manipulating the members of Kantaria's governing council to serve their own ends, and engaging in surreptitious acts of sabotage, subversion, and even assassination. Of course, if the PCs are successful and the tide turns more in their favor, they'll eventually earn the chance to show their true colors and openly revel in their villainy, just in time to defeat their Glorious Reclamation foes and remind the citizens of Kantaria of who their rightful masters are—and the penalties for so quickly forgetting their proper obedience and loyalty to House Throne.

To really call attention to these differences in theme, I strongly encourage GMs to highlight the best play style for each adventure. Make it clear to the players right from the start that the overt tactics they used in "The Hellfire Compact" will be less successful in "Wrath of Throne," and that surreptitious methods are a better approach for this adventure. Continue to support those assertions in play by having NPCs demonstrate the advantages of covert action and the drawbacks of direct measures. The accuser devil Razelago, in particular, can set a good example with his own stealth and espionage abilities—while at the same time reminding the PCs that they're still under the watchful eyes of their own superior. Likewise, if the PCs fail to keep their true natures and goals concealed, they should suffer the consequences of their actions. The Glorious Reclamation will not tolerate blatant attempts to overturn its hard-won authority, and there are far more knights—not to mention angels, archons, and other celestial allies—in Kantaria than there are PCs if the villains continue to kick the hornet's nest.

Focusing on the thematic differences between adventures not only allows the players to experience these different styles of play, but it can also provide more options for their characters by enabling different character classes to shine in those situations best suited for their skills and abilities. It could even open up possibilities for characters to excel in what might be considered nontraditional circumstances, such as a less combat-oriented Asmodean cleric enjoying success in a gregarious social situation.

For all the secrecy required in "Wrath of Throne," however, rest assured that there will still be plenty of opportunities for the PCs to be openly evil as the campaign progresses. As they continue to grow in power and ascend through the ranks of Throne agents, the PCs have the potential to become paragons of all that House Throne and the infernal empire of Cheliah stand for. By that point, the PCs will be expected to be prominent instruments of Cheliah's power and strength, to be seen and feared by all who would oppose House Throne.

THE GLORIOUS RECLAMATION'S PROGRESS

Throughout the Hell's Vengeance Adventure Path, the Glorious Reclamation enjoys a variety of victories in its war against Cheliah and House Throne, but if the PCs are successful in their endeavors during the campaign, the knights should also suffer some devastating defeats. The inside front cover of each volume of the Adventure Path displays a map of Cheliah with symbols of both House Throne and the Glorious Reclamation to track both sides' progress in the wider conflict.

At the beginning of "The Hellfire Compact," the Glorious Reclamation had just launched its crusade from its headquarters at Citadel Dinyar, former stronghold of the Hellknight Order of the Godclaw, just across the Iseri border. In an opening salvos, the knights send one of their own, the "Angel Knight" Lencia Visserene, to the town of Longacre in hopes of establishing a beachhead for the Glorious Reclamation. By the conclusion of that adventure, however, the evil PCs should have fended off the lone knight-errant and ended her upstart rebellion, keeping Throne's hold on Longacre firmly in place.

Meanwhile, the Glorious Reclamation has pursued its campaign elsewhere in Cheliah, conquering several small towns and villages along Cheliah's eastern border. Throne-imposed martial law stills holds sway in the larger cities of the east, however, leaving Laekastel, Ostenso, and Remesiana as loyalist strongholds. Much of the Glorious Reclamation's strength is concentrated in the Sirmium Plains, where the knights are engaging the numerous Chelish army units stationed there in battle, but the Iomedaeans have also sent smaller forces deeper into Cheliah in an attempt to seize specific targets.

The most notable of these objectives is the town of Kantaria. The site of Iomedae's Tenth Act, Kantaria is sacred to the Inheritor's faith, and control of the town is instrumental to the Glorious Reclamation's efforts to garner more support for its cause. As "Wrath of Throne" begins, Kantaria has fallen to the Glorious Reclamation in a near-bloodless conquest, becoming not only a symbol of the order's righteousness and success, but also an indicator of its ability to strike blows deep in the Chelish heartlands. Whether or not the Glorious Reclamation can hold on to its new prize is a matter for the newly minted Throne agent PCs to decide.

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WRATH OF THRUNE

PART 1: LOYAL AGENTS OF THRUNE

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The villainous player characters pledge their lives to the service of Queen Abrogail II in a ritual ceremony. Now Throne Loyal Agents, the villains are tasked with retaking the town of Kantaria from the Glorious Reclamation and returning it to the hands of House Throne.

PART 2: COUNTERREVOLUTION

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Infiltrating Kantaria, the villains secretly work to dismantle the Glorious Reclamation's hold on the town through alliances, sabotage, and fomenting unrest among Kantaria's citizens.

PART 3: VALOR'S LAST STAND

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With their hold on Kantaria quickly slipping away, the Glorious Reclamation's remaining forces retreat to Valor's Fastness, the town's fortified temple of Iomedae. The villains must tear down this final beacon of hope and kill the knights' leader in an assault on the Iomedae stronghold.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"Wrath of Throne" is designed for four characters and uses the medium XP track.

- 4 The PCs begin this adventure at 4th level.
- 5 The PCs should be 5th level before they face Kalcyra the Just in Event 7.
- 6 The PCs should be 6th level by the time they assault Valor's Fastness in Part 3.

The PCs should be 7th level by the end of the adventure.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Nearly 900 years ago, Iomedae—heroine of the Shining Crusade and not yet a goddess—ruled the leaderless Chelish town of Kantaria for a year and a day, while personally battling hordes of shapechanging faceless stalkers that had infiltrated the city at the behest of a cabal of veiled masters. In a climactic final battle, the patriarch of House Narikopolus and rightful lord of Kantaria, Arakhan Narikopolus, returned at the head of a relieving force and broke the siege. When the battle was done, Iomedae gave her sword—a magical blade called *Heart's Edge*—to Arakhan to use should the veiled masters ever return.

Over the following centuries, House Narikopolus shifted its focus from swordfighting to archery, and *Heart's Edge* was seen as little more than a valuable family heirloom. In the chaos of Aroden's death and the ensuing Chelish Civil War, knowledge of the sword and its history fell from memory entirely. Its discovery by the Hellknight Order of the Godclaw in the basement of an abandoned Isgeri manor house began a chain of events that would lead to the near-destruction of the Hellknight order and the formation of the Glorious Reclamation.

Soon after beginning its crusade against Thrune-dominated Chelias, the Glorious Reclamation set its eyes on Kantaria, one of Chelias's most sacred Iomedae sites. For weeks prior to its assault on the city, the Glorious Reclamation worked in secret with Fourth Sword Knight Oppian Nevilindor, Kantaria's highest-ranking priest of Iomedae, and thus enacted a relatively bloodless takeover of the town. The knights and their priestly allies quickly rounded up most of the loyalist Thrune elements in Kantaria (including a pair of visiting Hellknights of the Order of the Rack), freed the town's resident slaves, and instituted immediate reforms in line with the teachings of Iomedae. Oppian's appointment as the town's official governor, advised by a supporting council drawn from local citizens, assured the people of Kantaria that the Glorious Reclamation had the best interests of the just at heart.

Now, Kantaria has become a symbol of the Glorious Reclamation's success—its first true territorial gain in the growing war against House Thrune. But as the eyes of Chelias are fixed on the Glorious Reclamation's attack on the city of Senara, Archbaron Darellus Fex of Longacre has other plans in mind. If the archbaron has his way, the leaders of Kantaria will soon be taught an important lesson for daring to betray House Thrune, while Fex and his allies will reap the rewards of their own loyalty by returning Kantaria to Thrune's control.

PART 1: LOYAL AGENTS OF THRUNE

The adventure begins in the town of Longacre, where the player characters have recently stymied the attempts of a knight errant of the Glorious Reclamation, Lencia Visserene, to incite revolution in the town. Although the paladin's efforts failed and the PCs ensured that Longacre would remain a bastion of House Thrune, additional acts of defiance have been reported all across Chelias. Nevertheless, give the PCs the opportunity to recuperate from their exploits, tie up loose ends, and enjoy their positions as minor tyrants in Longacre.

Before long, however, the PCs receive a summons from their patron, Archbaron **Darellus Fex** (LE male human conjurer 12), instructing them to report to Scarlet Crown, his manor outside the town. Slaves lead the PCs into one of the areas

of the manor reserved for the archbaron's magical research, where Fex awaits. Fex congratulates the PCs on their successes during the previous adventure and tells them that he wishes to reward them for their service. As henchmen of the archbaron, the PCs have already been acting as de facto representatives of Chelias's imperial government, but now Fex offers the PCs the honor of pledging themselves directly to Queen Abrogail II in a ritual ceremony, becoming sworn agents of House Thrune. Doing so would grant the PCs some measure of royal authority and entitle them to unique boons.

If the PCs accept the offer, Fex brings forth his accuser devil Razelago to witness the ritual. The ceremony is a short affair; the PCs must each use a small offering of their own blood to sign a formal document, swearing to lay down their lives for Queen Abrogail II and House Thrune. No official requirements or duties are stated in the document, and the PCs' loyalty is not bound by anything other than their word. As a result, there are no overt penalties at this point for breaking their allegiance to House Thrune, but upon completion of the ceremony, Razelago takes the signed document to a hidden location in Chelias where all such records are stored.

Once the PCs have signed the document, Fex draws an invisible *arcane mark* on each of the PCs to identify their association with House Thrune and names them Loyal Agents of Thrune. In addition, each of the PCs participating in the ritual gains a boon in the form of the Thrune Loyal Agent trait (see the sidebar on page 6). Fex goes on to inform them that this is just the first of three degrees of loyalty to Thrune. If the PCs continue to demonstrate their ability and fidelity, they can advance even higher, earning greater authority and rewards.



OPPIAN NEVILINDOR

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JOINING THE RANKS OF THRUNE

The Thrice-Damned House of Thrune rules Cheliox, and those who work for the imperial government and its ruling house are commonly known as Thrune agents. Among these agents, however, are those who serve House Thrune directly, often working for the best interests of Cheliox's ruling family rather than for those of the nation (though these interests often overlap). These agents swear their bodies, minds, or souls (or all three) to Queen Abrogail II herself.

The first level of sworn Thrune agent is the rank of Thrune Loyal Agent (referred to within the Thrune organization as simply "the Loyal"). Thrune Loyal agents swear to give their lives, if necessary, in service to Her Infernal Majestrix Abrogail II and House Thrune. In exchange, they gain a bonus character trait: Thrune Loyal Agent. This bonus trait is an exception to the normal rules restricting characters to two traits.

Thrune Loyal Agent: You have sworn your body to Queen Abrogail and House Thrune in a ritual ceremony, and are willing to lay down your life in service to Thrune. Once per week, when reduced to fewer than 0 hit points, you automatically gain fast healing 1 for 1 minute. Once this ability has been used, you instead gain a +4 trait bonus on Constitution checks to stabilize when reduced to negative hit points.

In addition, you receive an invisible *arcane mark* of the encircled cross emblem of Cheliox as a symbol of your loyalty. This mark does not fade and is visible only to other creatures with this trait, or creatures with the ability to perceive the invisible (via *see invisibility* or *true seeing*, for example). You can make this mark visible to other creatures for 1 round as a swift action. If the mark is dispelled or removed (such as with *erase*), it can be replaced with another casting of *arcane mark*, which thereafter functions as detailed in this trait.

THE KANTARIA STRATAGEM

Now that the PCs are Thrune Loyal Agents, Archbaron Fex informs them that the town of Kantaria has recently fallen to the Glorious Reclamation—the rebellion's first major territorial gain. Allow the PCs to attempt DC 20 Knowledge (history) checks to know something of the town's history as a site once ruled by the mortal Iomedae for a year and a day—a deed now immortalized as Iomedae's Tenth Act—and that the town is considered a holy site by the Iomedaeans. The archbaron can fill in any details that the PCs miss, and points out that the town's capture has strengthened the Glorious Reclamation's position both militarily and spiritually. Fex also mentions

that the Glorious Reclamation used only a small force of soldiers to take Kantaria, while their greater army moved to surround the city of Senara further east. While every Thrune agent in Cheliox seems bent on battling the rebellious knights near Senara, Fex has a different goal in mind—breaking the Glorious Reclamation's hold on Kantaria. Retaking Kantaria for Thrune would not only strike a blow against the rebellion, but also showcase the talents of Fex and the PCs, increasing their own prestige in the eyes of House Thrune.

To accomplish his goals, Fex wants the PCs to infiltrate Kantaria under the guise of hired protection for a Nidalese woman named Loredana Viorica, the proprietor of an inn called the Little Uskwood. The inn caters primarily to travelers, and Loredana owes several undisclosed favors to Fex. The archbaron believes the PCs shouldn't have too much difficulty passing themselves off as hired muscle for Loredana, since they've played a similar role for him.

Once the PCs arrive in Kantaria and establish themselves at the Little Uskwood, the archbaron wants them to cause as many problems as they can for the Iomedaeans ruling the town, eventually toppling the nascent Glorious Reclamation government. Intelligence is scarce, so Fex expects the PCs to perform their own reconnaissance. The archbaron believes that, as a Nidalese expatriate, Loredana will be sympathetic to House Thrune and should be able to provide the PCs ample information on potential strategies to undermine the Glorious Reclamation.

If the PCs need to relay important information to Fex or otherwise communicate with him, they can do so through Razelago, as the accuser devil plans to make routine visits to the town during the PCs' time there. In addition, the archbaron provides each of the PCs a starting payment of 1,000 gp to purchase any equipment they might need for their mission and cover initial expenses, though once in Kantaria, they are expected to provide for their needs with their own funds. Success in their mission will, of course, be rewarded upon completion.

TRAVELING TO KANTARIA

Kantaria lies in the foothills of the Menador Mountains, approximately 250 miles northwest of Longacre. The easiest route to the town, however, is a longer journey of about 375 miles along the main roads of Cheliox, from Longacre west to the town of Dekarium, then north through the Barrowood alongside the Sedna River. The trip should take just over 2 weeks on foot, or 9 days on horseback. The journey is not detailed in this adventure, though inspiration for appropriate encounters can be found in this volume's bestiary on page 83. For groups that want to jump right into the action, Archbaron Fex can arrange to teleport the PCs to the hinterlands just outside Kantaria.

PART 2: COUNTERREVOLUTION

The town of Kantaria serves as the setting for the remainder of the adventure. Kantaria sits on the Sedna River north of the Barrowood and functions as a stop between the cosmopolitan heartlands of central Cheliox, the mines of the northern Menador Mountains, and the distant and shadowy land of Nidal. Kantaria is fully detailed in the gazetteer beginning on page 64.

“Wrath of Throne” is primarily a sandbox-style adventure, wherein the PCs engage in both event-based and location-based encounters. Each encounter includes guidelines on when and where it should occur, but for the most part, the PCs can participate in these encounters in any order they deem fit, with the GM’s guidance. However, the PCs should complete the majority of the encounters in Part 2 before braving Valor’s Fastness in Part 3.

As suggested by Archbaron Fex, the Little Uskwood inn (area A) is the PCs’ likely starting point and base of operations once they arrive in Kantaria. The owner of the Little Uskwood, Loredana Viorica, knows several potential pressure points in town and can guide the PCs’ plots against the Glorious Reclamation. In addition, **Event 1** introduces some major NPCs in town who can provide a framework for social interactions and other encounters throughout the rest of the adventure. Furthermore, Razelago can appear at any point (sneaking into Kantaria by means of his *greater teleport* and *invisibility* spell-like abilities) to provide additional guidance to the PCs and point them toward specific encounters.

DESPAIR METER

As the PCs successfully complete the encounters in Part 2, their actions undermine the Glorious Reclamation’s hold on Kantaria, causing the town’s citizens to become discouraged with their new leaders. A counter called the Despair Meter tracks the growing tensions in town, and in broader terms, charts the PCs’ progress throughout the adventure. As the PCs complete encounters and events, the Despair Meter increases in response to their actions, and Kantaria’s citizens may become concerned, fearful, and then panicked by what is happening to their town. At the same time, achieving certain milestones on the Despair Meter triggers reactions from the Glorious Reclamation or other forces in Kantaria—specific events in their attempts to maintain order in Kantaria.

The following is a brief overview of various events that occur when the Despair Meter reaches specific milestones for the first time.

0–14 Points: People go about their lives as though nothing unusual were happening.

15 Points: Suspicions start to grow that a few seemingly isolated events might actually have an organized force behind them. Unless the PCs have done an exceptional job keeping the Glorious Reclamation oblivious to their involvement, **Event 6** occurs.

30 Points: Word spreads among the citizens that organized insurgents oppose the Glorious Reclamation. The price of all goods purchased in town increases by 20%, as the town’s shop owners worry about the possibility of civic unrest in the near future (Linton Demeer’s Healthy Heart Alchemicals is the sole exception, selling all goods at normal prices). Guard patrols are now reinforced with a Glorious Reclamation sergeant, increasing their CR

(see page 11).

40 Points: The rumors of opposition to the Glorious Reclamation becomes indisputable and people stay in their homes, venturing outside only when necessary. Local militia volunteers now patrol the streets along with the Glorious Reclamation’s soldiers, further increasing the CR of guard patrols (see page 11), and inspections become frequent. Kantaria temporarily gains the Hunted disadvantage (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* 208). Oppian Nevilindor seeks celestial help in ridding Kantaria of the insurgency (see **Event 8**). If he has not already approached the PCs, Linton Demeer now invites them to his store to request their help (see **Event 9**).

55+ Points: Citizens riot in the streets! Residents flee the town as Throne loyalists rise up in open revolt against the Glorious Reclamation and its supporters. Kantaria ceases to function as an organized polity, and the town gains the Anarchy disadvantage (*GameMastery Guide* 208) until order can be restored. The Glorious Reclamation’s remaining soldiers retreat to the protection of the fortress church Valor’s Fastness (area H). The PCs can now attack the fastness to strike the final blow against the Glorious Reclamation and return Kantaria to the rule of House Throne (see Part 3 on page 42).

KANTARIA RUMORS

The PCs may want to spend some time learning about events transpiring in and around Kantaria. Once per day, a PC can attempt a DC 10 Diplomacy check to gather information or DC 15 Knowledge (local) check to learn one of the following rumors, either randomly selected or specifically chosen to point the PCs in a particular direction. Each rumor includes a note as to its veracity, as well as any events or encounters it points toward.



DARELLUS FEX

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1. The Captive Hellknight (true): Many Thruene loyalists who opposed the Glorious Reclamation's liberation of Kantaria are imprisoned outside the city in a work camp called Hardship's Hearth. Among the prisoners is a single Hellknight of the Order of the Rack. (Area E)

2. The Devil Smith (false): Oppian Nevilindor, the current governor of Kantaria, killed his best friend, the town's blacksmith Tychus Groat, during the Glorious Reclamation's liberation of the town. Fires still burn in the ruins of Groat's smithy; it is believed that Groat's spirit has returned as a fearsome devil, wielding his magical smithing hammer against all who dare disturb his domain. (Area B)

3. Exemplar (true): During her time in Kantaria as a mortal, Iomedae cared for a local dog, which she named Exemplar. Following her ascension to godhood, Exemplar passed away. In the centuries since, visitors have claimed to have seen a spectral hound matching

Exemplar's description guarding the outer grounds of Valor's Fastness. (Area H)

4. Fiendish Corruption (false): Faydreth Zaine, a half-elven wizard member of the Glorious Reclamation who helped liberate Kantaria, lives in the old Narikopolus Manor. The Narikopoluses were renowned for quickly adapting to the fiendish allegiances of House Thruene, and it's a growing belief that Zaine has fallen prey to the dark secrets held in the Narikopolus library. (Area F)

5. The Harbormaster (true): Jonas Reikman was a notorious river pirate before he found sanctuary in Kantaria working for House Thruene as the town's self-proclaimed harbormaster. Despite his brutality, Reikman retained his position when the Glorious Reclamation arrived in town. Now he oversees the searches of vessels mooring at Kantaria's docks—it's common knowledge that these searches are to ensure the boats are not carrying supplies or weapons for House Thruene, and that the docking fees go toward reinforcing the town and training a militia of Kantarian citizens to help the Glorious Reclamation defend the town. (Area D)

6. Missing Family (partially true):

Usually a staple at Kantaria's weekly Oathday Market, the Bradon family hasn't been heard from in weeks. Most assume the family ran afoul of Narikopolus loyalists in the hinterlands, maybe in the Blooming Caves northwest of town, but the Glorious Reclamation has yet to send a party to investigate. (Area G)

7. Oppian's Feelings (true): It's a well-known secret that Kantaria's governor, Oppian Nevilindor, harbors feelings beyond those of a shepherd tending to his flock for Loredana Viorica, proprietor of the Little Uskwood inn. The cleric of Iomedae has never acted on his desire, but he does his best to shield Loredana from the more zealous and inquisitive elements of the Glorious Reclamation. (Event 1)

8. Ruthless Emissary (true): Kalcyra the Just is a member of the Glorious Reclamation and advisor to Oppian Nevilindor. An inquisitor of Torag, this firebrand dwarf was responsible for reconsecrating Kantaria's old church of Asmodeus into a shrine to the Father of Creation. She's currently away from the town, securing trade partnerships with the various mines of the Menador Mountains. (Event 7)



GLORIOUS RECLAMATION
SERGEANT

THE GLORIOUS RECLAMATION

Kantaria lies fully in the hands of the Glorious Reclamation, the knightly order of Iomedae dedicated to overthrowing House Thruene's rule of Cheliah. Most of the town welcomed the Iomedaean liberators, and those members of the town's government and Chelish military who opposed the knights have been arrested and detained outside of town. Any Thruene loyalists still present in town wisely keep a low profile.

Three main factions allied with the Glorious Reclamation are currently active in Kantaria, serving as town watch, guards, and soldiers in the town. The PCs will encounter these defenders throughout the adventure; for easy reference, the various groups making up the Glorious Reclamation's forces in Kantaria are detailed below.

For more details on the Glorious Reclamation, its membership, goals, and history, see *Pathfinder Adventure Path #103: The Hellfire Compact*.

Kantarian Militia: Many of Kantaria's citizens hailed the Glorious Reclamation as liberators, and eagerly offered to bolster the knights' ranks. These militia volunteers are not as well outfitted as the order's soldiers, but they have received some training in the arts of war, and serve as guards in various locations throughout town. In addition, a number of halflings, former slaves freed by the Glorious Reclamation, have offered their services as slingers to the knights in thanks for their freedom.

HALFLING SLINGER CR 1/2

XP 200

Halfling warrior 2
NG Small humanoid (halfling)
Init +2; **Senses** Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+2 armor, +2 Dex, +1 size)
hp 13 (2d10+2)
Fort +4, **Ref** +3, **Will** +0; +2 vs. fear

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.
Melee short sword +3 (1d4/19-20) or halfling sling staff +3 (1d4)
Ranged halfling sling staff +5 (1d6/x3)

TACTICS

During Combat Slingers target opponents at range with their sling staffs, preferring to strike at enemies not yet engaged by allies, or using tanglefoot bags against heavily armored opponents. If forced into melee combat, a slinger takes 5-foot steps backward to continue making missile attacks, switching to use a short sword (or using the sling staff as a club) only if he has no other choice.

Morale A halfling slinger flees when reduced to 4 hit points or fewer.

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 15, **Con** 11, **Int** 10, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 10
Base Atk +2; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 13
Feats Point-Blank Shot
Skills Acrobatics +4, Climb +2, Handle Animal +4, Perception +2, Profession (servant) +3, Stealth +7; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Acrobatics, +2 Climb, +2 Perception
Languages Common, Halfling
Combat Gear tanglefoot bag; **Other Gear** leather armor, halfling sling staff with 10 bullets, short sword

MILITIA VOLUNTEER CR 1

XP 400

Human fighter (polearm master) 2 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 106)
LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +1 Dex)
hp 21 (2d10+6)
Fort +5, **Ref** +1, **Will** +1

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.
Melee guisarme +5 (2d4+3/x3)
Ranged light crossbow +3 (1d8/19-20)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with guisarme)
Special Attacks pole fighting

TACTICS

During Combat Militia volunteers prefer fighting in groups, moving to surround lone enemies and subdue them.

Morale A militia volunteer flees when reduced to fewer than 7 hit points.

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10
Base Atk +2; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 15
Feats Athletic, Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (guisarme)
Skills Climb +4, Handle Animal +4, Perception +2, Profession (farmer) +5, Ride +1, Swim +4
Languages Common
Gear scale mail, guisarme, light crossbow with 10 bolts

Knights of the Glorious Reclamation: Although most of the knights who fought and captured Kantaria have moved on to Senara and other battlegrounds, the Glorious Reclamation left behind a garrison to hold and defend the town. The majority of these defenders are not actual knights, but they are professional soldiers. They hold the rank of sergeant and form the backbone of the Glorious Reclamation's army. In addition, several of the Glorious Reclamation's squires—paladins who are still in training to become full knights—remain in town.

GLORIOUS RECLAMATION SERGEANT CR 2

XP 600

Human fighter 3
LG Medium humanoid (human)
Init +2; **Senses** Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor, +2 Dex)
hp 24 (3d10+3)
Fort +4, **Ref** +3, **Will** +5 (+1 vs. fear)

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee mwk bastard sword +7 (1d10+3/19-20)
Ranged mwk longbow +6 (1d8/x3)

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TACTICS

Before Combat If she has time before combat, a sergeant drinks her *potion of bear's endurance*.

During Combat A sergeant uses her longbow against distant foes or those engaged by allies. In melee combat, a sergeant makes Power Attacks with her bastard sword.

Morale A sergeant surrenders or attempts to flee when reduced below 7 hit points.

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 15, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 17

Feats Iron Will, Point-Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (bastard sword)

Skills Climb +5, Handle Animal +4, Perception +4, Profession (soldier) +7, Ride +5

Languages Common

SQ armor training 1

Combat Gear *potion of bear's endurance*, *potion of cure moderate wounds*; **Other Gear** mwk chainmail, mwk bastard sword, mwk longbow with 20 arrows, wooden holy symbol of Iomedae, 38 gp

GLORIOUS RECLAMATION SQUIRE**CR 1****XP 400**

Human paladin of Iomedae 2

LG Medium humanoid (human)

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

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +1 shield)

hp 19 (2d10+4)

Fort +7, **Ref** +2, **Will** +6

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk longsword +5 (1d8+2/19–20)

Ranged shortbow +2 (1d6/×3)

Special Attacks smite evil 1/day (+2 attack and AC, +2 damage)

Paladin Spell-Like Abilities (CL 2nd; concentration +4)

At will—*detect evil*

TACTICS

During Combat A squire first attempts to deal nonlethal damage to subdue foes. Once any allies have been slain, the squire instead attacks with lethal damage, targeting foes with obvious evil affiliations (such as those wearing Hellknight armor, displaying unholy symbols, using evil magic, etc.) with smite evil.

Morale When reduced to fewer than 7 hp, a squire attempts to withdraw and summon reinforcements, using lay on hands to remain conscious.

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 10, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 14

Feats Power Attack, Step Up

Skills Diplomacy +6, Heal +5, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (nobility) +3, Knowledge (religion) +3, Ride +1

Languages Common

SQ lay on hands 3/day (1d6)

Combat Gear oil (2), thunderstone; **Other Gear** chain shirt, light wooden shield, mwk longsword, shortbow with 20 arrows, bullseye lantern, wooden holy symbol of Iomedae, 8 gp

Sword Knights of Iomedae: The Church of Iomedae has its own forces in Kantaria as well. In addition to the current governor, Fourth Sword Knight Oppian Nevilindor, and his lieutenant, Fifth Sword Knight Viktor Skave, several Sixth Sword Knights garrison the town's temple of Iomedae, Valor's Fastness. These clerics are not knights themselves, but are attached to the Glorious Reclamation and hold the rank of chaplain in the order.

SIXTH SWORD KNIGHT**CR 3****XP 800**

Human cleric of Iomedae 4

LG Medium humanoid (human)

Init +4; **Senses** Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 10, flat-footed 17 (+7 armor)

hp 33 (4d8+12)

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

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee mwk longsword +5 (1d8+1/19–20)

Ranged javelin +3 (1d6+1)

Special Attacks channel positive energy 5/day (DC 14, 2d6)

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th; concentration +6)

5/day—battle rage (+2), touch of good (+2)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 4th; concentration +6)

2nd—*aid*, *shield other*, *sound burst* (DC 14), *spiritual weapon*⁰

1st—*bless*, *command* (DC 13), *divine favor*, *protection from evil*^P, *shield of faith*

0 (at will)—*guidance*, *light*, *resistance*, *stabilize*

D domain spell; **Domains** Good, War

TACTICS

During Combat If accompanying allies, a sword knight casts *shield other* on those expected to move into melee. A sword knight attempts to stay back to support and heal allies, using offensive spells when able. If pressed into melee, a sword knight casts *divine favor* before attacking.

Morale Zealous defenders of the faith, sword knights fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 10, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 14

Feats Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Selective Channeling

Skills Diplomacy +8, Heal +8, Knowledge (religion) +6, Spellcraft +6

Languages Common

Combat Gear *wand of cure moderate wounds* (10 charges);
Other Gear *+1 breastplate*, javelins (3), mwk longsword, silver holy symbol of Iomedae (worth 25 gp), spell component pouch, platinum rings (2; divine focus for *shield other*; worth 50 gp each)

GUARDS! (CR 5+)

Under the rule of the Glorious Reclamation, Kantaria is a relatively unfriendly place for conspicuous Chelish loyalists and Throne agents. Many of Kantaria's citizens are either worshipers of Iomedae who openly back the Glorious Reclamation or at least tacitly support the Iomedae cause. Glorious Reclamation soldiers patrol the streets, and any loyalists remaining in town wisely keep their political views to themselves. The PCs aren't going to be stopped in town as long as they take reasonable measures to keep a low profile, but openly wearing Throne or Asmodean colors or symbols certainly attracts unwanted suspicion—if not outright hostility. Actually identifying themselves as Throne agents is sure to draw the attention of the Glorious Reclamation, which acts quickly to remove the threat.

Creatures: A typical guard patrol consists of four Glorious Reclamation squires. They regularly walk the streets of Kantaria, serving the same function as town guards or city watch. If any townspeople witness the PCs engaging in some criminal or insurgent act, there is a 90% chance that the citizens call for the guard. This requires a successful DC 5 Diplomacy check (with a +3 bonus on the check because of Kantaria's law modifier); success brings a patrol in 1d6 minutes, with the arrival time reduced by 1 minute for every 5 points by which the result exceeds the DC. Full rules for calling the guards can be found on page 204 of the *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*. If called, the squires first try to question those involved, preferring diplomacy to violence, but they attack without hesitation if given just cause.

GLORIOUS RECLAMATION SQUIRES (4) CR 1
XP 400 each
hp 19 each (see page 10)

Development: Once the Despair Meter reaches 30, add a Glorious Reclamation sergeant (see page 9) to each guard patrol, increasing the difficulty of the encounter to CR 6. When the Despair Meter reaches 40, guard patrols are further bolstered by the addition of two militia volunteers (see page 9), creating a CR 7 encounter.

A. THE LITTLE USKWOOD

Operated by Loredana Viorica, the sole surviving member of the Viorica family, the Little Uskwood inn is situated on the northern outskirts of the town, just a short walk from Kantaria proper. The inn caters primarily to travelers, particularly those from Nidal, and

those seeking a night's rest without no questions asked. A map of the Little Uskwood appears on page 12; brief descriptions of its rooms are presented below.

A1. Common Room: The Little Uskwood's cramped common room contains a bar and a few tables and chairs. Loredana keeps a loaded hand crossbow behind the bar. Guests can sleep on the floor for the price of 2 sp per night.

A2. Kitchen: Loredana prepares poor meals for her guests in the inn's tiny kitchen, but those seeking more substantial fare usually head to Kantaria's other public house, The Sweetest Drop. A large cabinet in the kitchen's northwest corner hides a boarded-up door (Perception DC 15) that leads to the inn's disused cellar (area A7).

A3. Innkeeper's Room: The Little Uskwood's innkeeper, Loredana Viorica, resides in this room, which contains a bed, table, and small wardrobe.

A4. Private Rooms: Each of these rooms contains a single bed, a small table, and a basic lock on the door (Disable Device DC 15). A private room can be rented for 2 gp a night.

A5. Rented Rooms: These three rooms are identical to the inn's other private rooms (area A4), but are currently occupied by a Nidalese man named Nicolae and his two hirelings (see **Event 2** on page 15).

A6. Stables: Guests can rent one of the four stalls in the inn's stables for 5 sp per day.

A7. Cellar: This unused cellar has been sealed off; its only entrance is through the concealed, boarded-up door in the kitchen (area A2). The cellar (and its inhabitant) is further detailed in **Event 3** on page 16.

Creature: The Little Uskwood's proprietor, Loredana Viorica, greets the PCs when they first arrive at the inn and offers them up to six of the inn's private rooms free of charge. The PCs are an odd exception to the Uskwood's typical clientele, but Loredana owes Darellus Fex for services provided while the archbaron was in the region. Loredana knows that the PCs intend to work against the Glorious Reclamation, but the somber woman sternly warns them against bringing unwanted attention to her establishment. Although she wants to see the Glorious Reclamation removed from power, Loredana also knows how to look after her best interests, and won't hesitate to rescind her offer of shelter if the PCs are too overt in their actions.

As a long-time resident of Kantaria, Loredana can provide the PCs with much information about the town. Her role in this adventure is to guide the PCs toward potential actions against the Glorious Reclamation, having firsthand knowledge of Oppian Nevilindor and his leadership style (see **Development** below).

Should combat erupt in her establishment, Loredana is quick to hide and claim ignorance. If cornered, she fights ferociously to defend herself even though she has little talent for combat.

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A. THE LITTLE USKWOOD

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



LOREDANA VIORICA

CR 1

XP 400

Female human rogue 2

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; Senses Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +2 Dex)

hp 16 (2d8+4)

Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +2

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

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

Ranged mwk hand crossbow +4 (1d4/19-20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

TACTICS

During Combat Loredana prefers to attack from range, using her hand crossbow from behind the inn's bar. If approached, she draws her holdout weapon, a *wand of shocking grasp*, and attempts Use Magic Device checks to activate it.

Morale Loredana does whatever she must to survive. If combat turns against her and it seems like she might be overwhelmed, Loredana does not hesitate to betray her allies, attempting to convince her foes that she is actually a friend.

STATISTICS

Str 10, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 8

Base Atk +1; CMB +1; CMD 13

Feats Point-Blank Shot, Skill Focus (Use Magic Device)

Skills Acrobatics +7, Appraise +7, Bluff +4, Diplomacy +4, Disable Device +8, Knowledge (local) +7, Knowledge (nobility) +3, Perception +6, Profession (innkeeper) +7, Sense Motive +7, Stealth +7, Use Magic Device +7

Languages Common, Dwarven, Infernal, Shadowtongue

SQ rogue talent (surprise attack), trapfinding +1

Combat Gear *wand of shocking grasp* (20 charges); **Other Gear** leather armor, dagger, mwk hand crossbow with 10 bolts, thieves' tools, 37 gp

Development: The morning after the PCs arrive at the inn, Loredana informs them the town's governor, Oppian Nevilindor, has invited them to a brunch later that morning (see **Event 1** on page 13). The PCs can also interact with the inn's other guests at any time (see **Event 2** on page 15). And while the PCs' first night at the Little Uskwood is uneventful, subsequent nights might eventually lead them to investigate the inn's hidden cellar, incurring the wrath of Masimo Viorica (see **Event 3** on page 16).

If the PCs seek further guidance from Loredana, she can suggest that they visit the town's weekly Oathday Market (**Event 4** on page 17), direct them to investigate the ruins of Groat's Smithy (area **B** on page 23), or point them toward the docks (area **D** on page 25), as the Glorious Reclamation is using the dock fees to finance their rule of the town. In addition, Loredana can mention rumors that the Glorious Reclamation is using one of the town's sword towers (area **C** on page 25) to store healing supplies, and that the Iomedaeans have imprisoned a Hellknight at Hardship's Hearth (area **E** on page 27).

EVENT 1: KANTARIAN INFLUENCE

This event occurs on the PCs' second day in Kantaria. Hearing of the PCs' arrival, Oppian Nevilindor, the current governor of Kantaria, invites Loredana Viorica and the PCs, along with several of the town's governing councilors, to a late morning brunch in the breakfast room of Narikopolus Manor (area Fg). The manor is fully detailed beginning on page 32, though there is little reason at this point for the PCs to explore the rest of the house.

This encounter serves as a gateway for the PCs to meet and establish initial relationships with the governing council of Kantaria, and possibly gain influence over these important representatives. Throughout the adventure, the PCs may opt to lead double lives, manipulating or seducing these NPCs as supposed allies while simultaneously taking covert action against the Glorious Reclamation.

GAINING INFLUENCE

During the brunch, each PC can select one NPC in attendance to influence by attempting an influence check. The PC can attempt this check on each subsequent day as well, as long as the PC has interacted with the NPC during that day. Each PC can attempt a Bluff check (to pretend to be friendly), an Intimidate check (to frighten the NPC into submission), or a specific skill check mentioned in the Influence entry of the NPC's social stat block (to appeal to that character's other interests). Each of these specific skills can be discovered by succeeding at a DC 15 Sense Motive check. This adventure assumes that the PCs are not genuinely trying to make friends with most of these NPCs, so Diplomacy is not a universally appropriate skill. Each NPC can be influenced by only a single PC.

Each NPC has a social stat block that details basic race and class information (and where to find the NPC's full stat block), role, appearance, and personality. In addition, the social stat block indicates the NPC's influence check DC (listed in the Influence entry) and the number of times that NPC must be successfully influenced (see the Successes entry) before the NPC is considered friendly toward the party and grants the PCs a useful benefit (see the Benefits entry). A PC earns an additional success for every 5 points by which the influence check exceeds the listed DC.

The PCs can also gain advantages over the targets of their influence checks by exploiting the NPCs' weaknesses. The PCs can discover these character flaws or bits of scandalous gossip by succeeding at discovery checks, as detailed in the social stat block. A PC can forgo an influence check on any given day to instead attempt a discovery check targeting a given NPC (listed in parentheses in the NPC's

Weaknesses entry). If successful, the PC learns the NPC's weakness, granting the PCs a +4 competence bonus on any future influence checks against that target.

These rules are a slightly simplified version of the rules for influencing an individual presented in Chapter 3 of *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Intrigue*.



LOREDANA VIORICA

FAYDRETH ZAINE

LG male half-elf wizard (area F on page 32)

Background Rassophore of the Glorious Reclamation, member of Kantaria's governing council

DESCRIPTION

Appearance Sporting a well-kept beard and pristine red-and-white lomedae robes, Faydreth Zaine peers through silver spectacles. The half-elven wizard is never found without several scrolls and a wand hanging inside the folds of his robes.

Personality Zaine distances himself from social matters as much as possible, finding them monotonous affairs. Unless given a necessary reason to deal with other people, Zaine prefers to sequester himself inside Narikopolus Manor, where he delves into the trove of magic items confiscated by the Glorious Reclamation.

DISCOVERY

Influence (Sense Motive DC 15) Bluff, Intimidate, or Knowledge (arcana) DC 22

Weaknesses (Knowledge [arcana] or Spellcraft DC 22)

Interested in forbidden or heretical subject matters, Zaine opens up to those who discuss such topics.

INFLUENCE

Successes Needed 3 checks

Benefit Zaine sees the PC as a potential partner or romantic interest, offering the PCs a private invitation to tour Narikopolus Manor (area F), where he advises the PCs of the mansion's various traps and defenses.

JALILA HADJARA

LG female human monk (area E6 on page 30)

Background Warden of Hardship's Hearth (area E on page 27), member of Kantaria's governing council

DESCRIPTION

Appearance Jalila is lean and muscular, but her defining physical trait is the tattooed text adorning her skin. Painstakingly transcribed verses from the Acts of lomedae cover the flesh exposed by her garb.

Personality A kind and generous woman, Jalila rarely has time for personal matters, preferring to attend to the logistical needs of Hardship's Hearth, the detainment camp for captured Throne loyalists outside of town. Soft-spoken and secretly fearful of social outings, Jalila nonetheless yearns for companions, and is quick to form bonds with people she finds spiritually compatible.

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DISCOVERY

Influence (Sense Motive DC 15) Acrobatics, Bluff, or Intimidate DC 17

Weaknesses (Combat maneuver [disarm, grapple, or trip] vs. CMD 24 [26 vs. grapple]) Jalila is impressed by people capable of matching her own physical aptitude. Although she understands there is a balance between intellectual and martial pursuits, she thinks she has enough intellectual friends, and not enough martial ones.

INFLUENCE

Successes Needed 2 checks

Benefit Once influenced, Jalila confides in the PCs about her special charge at Hardship's Hearth: the imprisoned Hellknight Zara Orcelani. She invites the PC to speak with Zara privately in hopes of improving the captive's sour mood (see area **E7** on page 31 for more details).



JANA HOLDUS

JANA HOLDUS

CG female human bard

Background Owner of The Sweetest Drop tavern, member of Kantaria's governing council

DESCRIPTION

Appearance Dressed in a low-cut leather jerkin, Jana smirks with her every action. A woman of considerable charm, she flutters her green eyes at raconteurs, enthusiastically applauding every tale.

Personality Perhaps the councilor closest to the heart of Kantaria, Jana is a canny businesswoman who runs The Sweetest Drop, the most popular tavern in Kantaria—a fact of which she is proud to boast. A follower of Cayden Cailean, Jana is always interested in meeting new friends and short-term romantic partners, but she is too carefree for longer-term plans. Jana is the most informal member of the governing council, having accepted the position only to help keep the peace in town as it transitions to rule under the Glorious Reclamation, but she is more interested in having fun than running a town.

DISCOVERY

Influence (Sense Motive DC 15) Bluff, Intimidate, or Perform (any) DC 15

Weaknesses (Acrobatics or Perform [any] DC 15) Jana is a sucker for anyone capable of putting on an impressive performance, whether acrobatic, artistic, or more sensuously physical in nature.

INFLUENCE

Successes Needed 2 checks

Benefit Jana holds little power and no secrets of note, but influencing the tavern owner gains her as an ally. If the

PCs ever become the target of suspicion by the Glorious Reclamation, Jana steps in to publicly defend them, stopping further investigation. This occurs only once, and only if the PCs are not caught red-handed in a major offense (such as murder).

LINTON DEMEER

NE male human alchemist (disguised faceless stalker; see page 56)

Background Owner of Healthy Heart Alchemicals, member of Kantaria's governing council, secret leader of Kantaria's faceless stalkers

DESCRIPTION

Appearance In his shapechanged human form, Linton's characteristic features are his unkempt black hair and his generous paunch. The alchemist has a penchant for fidgeting with small objects or alchemical reagents.

Personality The proprietor of Healthy Heart Alchemicals, Linton represents Kantaria's mercantile interests, and had

a longstanding relationship with the town's church of Iomedae prior to the Glorious Reclamation's arrival. In spite of his disheveled look, Linton is calm and collected in his dealings. He asks many questions, but tries to deflect any that come his way. During his first encounter with the PCs, he is quick to offer up his shop's services, including a one-time 10% discount on their first purchase.

DISCOVERY

Influence (Sense Motive DC 15) Bluff, Craft (alchemy), or Intimidate DC 20

Weaknesses (Knowledge [history] or Sense Motive DC 18)

Linton's only weakness is the fact that he is really a faceless stalker in disguise. A successful discovery check is unlikely to reveal his true identity, uncovering only that Linton is hiding something potentially damaging, but if the PCs pressure, interrogate, or investigate him, they may be able to learn Linton's secret. Depending on when and how the PCs discover this information, they may find the alchemist easier to deal with, or become targets of Kantaria's faceless stalkers (see **Event 10** on page 22 for more details).

INFLUENCE

Successes Needed 3 checks

Benefit Once influenced, Linton Demeer confides that he's struggling to fulfill an order for healing magic to be stored in one of the town's sword towers for the Glorious Reclamation (area **C**), and mentions that he regularly visits the prison camp of Hardship's Hearth to check on the loyalist prisoners there (see area **E**). In addition, gaining Linton's trust opens up the potential for an alliance with the faceless stalkers of Kantaria (see **Event 10**).

LOREDANA VIORICA

NE female human rogue (area **A** on page 12)

Background Owner of the Little Uskwood inn

DESCRIPTION

Appearance Loredana has an ashen complexion and well-kept black hair that she keeps in a tight bun. Other than the occasional quirked eyebrow, her gray-blue eyes betray little emotion.

Personality Filled with dry wit and sarcastic humor, Loredana is the odd person out among the leaders of Kantaria. She is quick to criticize the Glorious Reclamation and Iomedaeen beliefs when given the chance, facing stern rebukes from the others. Such things don't matter to Loredana, however, as she cares little for the opinions of others, even the townsfolk of Kantaria.

DISCOVERY

Influence (Sense Motive DC 15) Bluff, Intimidate, or Diplomacy DC 20

Weaknesses (see text) Loredana has no personal vices that can be appealed to, but she does harbor a dark secret: her undead father, Masimo Viorica, who haunts the sealed cellar of the Little Uskwood. Defeating Masimo grants each PC a bonus on future influence checks against Loredana as though they had discovered a weakness. See **Event 3** for more details.

INFLUENCE

Successes Needed 3

Benefit Loredana approaches the PC who influences her for a more intimate relationship. Knowing full well that the PCs won't stay in Kantaria forever, Loredana is still interested enough to pursue the PC. If Oppian Nevilindor somehow learns of this relationship, the cleric becomes distraught, reducing his effectiveness as governor and increasing the Despair Meter by 5.

OPPIAN NEVILINDOR

LG male human cleric of Iomedae (see page 58)

Role Governor of Kantaria, leader of the Glorious Reclamation forces in Kantaria

DESCRIPTION

Appearance A well-built man with short, neatly cut hair, Oppian is garbed in a gleaming breastplate displaying the symbol of Iomedae. Oppian always has a warm smile on his face, but has a habit of keeping one hand on his sheathed sword.

Personality Oppian is welcoming to newcomers. Given the PCs' association with Loredana Viorica, he tries to mediate any disputes between the PCs and other town councilors in hopes of earning his secret love interest's approval (see Weaknesses below).

DISCOVERY

Influence (Sense Motive DC 15) Bluff, Intimidate, Knowledge (religion) DC 18

Weaknesses (Knowledge [local] or Sense Motive DC 15) Oppian pines for the affections of Loredana Viorica, going

so far as to risk small infractions against his otherwise stringent moral code in order to gain her attention.

INFLUENCE

Influence DC 18; **Additional Skill** Knowledge (religion)

Successes Needed 3 checks

Benefit Oppian offers to take the PCs on a tour of Kantaria's Iomedaeen church, Valor's Fastness (area **H** on page 43), casually showing them the first floor of the fortified temple (areas **H3** through **H13**).

Special Once the Despair Meter reaches 30, Oppian can no longer be influenced, as his attention focuses on the defense and management of Kantaria.

Story Award: Award the PCs 1,200 XP for each NPC they successfully influence.

EVENT 2: THE MAN FROM PANGOLAIS (CR 4)

This encounter can occur any time after the PCs have spent their first night at the Little Uskwood (area **A**). It begins when the PCs interact with the inn's only other patrons, a Nidalese man named **Nicolae** (NE male human fighter 2/ranger 2) and his two bodyguards.

Creatures: Nicolae often steps out onto the inn's front stoop to enjoy a stiff brandy in the cool outdoor air. He has a sharp personality and few interpersonal skills. His initial attitude is indifferent, but a successful DC 14 Diplomacy check makes the normally standoffish man friendly and open to talking about his history. He is incensed over the Glorious Reclamation's reforms in Kantaria, which have cost him a legally purchased duo of halfling slaves. Unwilling to face his masters in Nidal without the slaves, Nicolae meanders around the Little Uskwood hoping Thrune will eventually come to restore order.

If made at least friendly, Nicolae asks if the PCs would be willing to subdue the two recently freed halflings he already purchased. The Glorious Reclamation has already warned him against taking any action himself, and he and his bodyguards have been pointed out to the halflings, so it would be difficult for them to apprehend the pair without causing a commotion. The Nidalese slaver believes the PCs might be up to the task, however, offering a reward of 400 gp for capturing the halflings alive and discreetly bringing them to the Little Uskwood. If necessary, use the stats for a slaver (*GameMastery Guide* 266) for Nicolae, and stats for a street thug (*GameMastery Guide* 265) for his bodyguards.

Jed and Leora, the halfling twins promised to Nicolae as slaves, now make their living as fisherfolk on the Sedna River. Enjoying their newfound freedom, the two take long trips away from Kantaria to fish along the river when not working for the Labor Guild. They know the faces of Nicolae and his bodyguards, but are trusting and open to anyone else who amicably approaches them. They have no equipment other than their fishing gear and slings for hunting small game.

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DISCORD BOTTLE

Believed to originally be a cursed variant of the *eversmoking bottle*, the *discord bottle* has been adopted by less scrupulous folk as an effective weapon against large groups of creatures.

DISCORD BOTTLE

PRICE
5,400 GP

SLOT none	CL 5th	WEIGHT 1 lb.
AURA faint conjuration and enchantment		

This black metal urn with a lead stopper bears the image of countless gaunt humanoids piled on top of one another in a torturous melee. When the stopper is removed, an invisible and odorless gas pours from the bottle, covering a 50-foot-radius area in 1 round. If the bottle is left open, the gas billows out another 10 feet per round until it has covered a 100-foot radius. This area remains filled with gas for 5 rounds, after which the gas dissipates naturally.

Each round, a creature within the area of the gas must succeed at a DC 14 Fortitude save or attack the nearest creature on its next turn. This condition lasts long as a creature is in the cloud and for 1 round after it leaves the area or after the gas dissipates. Any creature that succeeds at its save is not subject to the same gas again, whether or not it remains within the area. This is a mind-affecting poison effect.

A moderate wind (11+ mph) disperses the gas in 4 rounds; a strong wind (21+ mph) disperses it in 1 round.

Once opened, a *discord bottle* must be restoppered and recharge for 24 hours before it can be used again.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 2,700 GP
Craft Wondrous Item, <i>confusion</i> , <i>stinking cloud</i>	



Development: Nicolae and his hirelings leave the following night with the recaptured slaves. Over the next several days, the Glorious Reclamation attempts to find the missing halflings, but word of its failure spreads among the townsfolk, raising the Despair Meter by 3.

Story Award: If the PCs manage to deliver the halflings to Nicolae alive, award them full XP as though they had defeated the halflings in combat.

EVENT 3: UNDER THE USKWOOD (CR 5)

There is a 30% chance of this event occurring on the second night the PCs spend at the Little Uskwood (area A on page 11). This chance increases by 10% for each additional night spent at the inn until the PCs deal with the trouble.

The encounter begins at midnight, likely as the PCs rest in their rooms at the inn. It starts with the sounds of clawing and scratching coming from beneath the floorboards of the building. The noises are loud enough for most residents to hear (allow sleeping characters to attempt DC 10 Perception checks to notice the noise), making restful sleep almost impossible. If not interrupted, the scratching sounds last until the sun rises in the morning.

The inn has no obvious cellar or basement, but if the PCs try to track down the source of the noises, they can find the concealed door behind a cabinet in the kitchen (area A2) with a successful DC 15 Perception check. The door has been boarded up (hardness 5, hp 20, break DC 25), but if broken open, it reveals a rickety wooden ladder that descends into the inn's darkened cellar (area A7). Alternatively, the PCs can access the cellar by breaking through the inn's floorboards (hardness 5, hp 60, break DC 20). Use the map on page 12 for this encounter.

Creatures: The scratching sounds are the work of Loredana's deceased father, Masimo Viorica, a cleric of Zon-Kuthon who is now an undead monstrosity. Three years ago, Loredana got into a heated argument with her father in the Little Uskwood's cellar about the future of the inn. Masimo believed that the family should return to Nidal with their acquired wealth and indulge in the religious practices of their homeland, while Loredana preferred the life they lived in Kantaria, enjoying her relative freedom under Thrune's government. At the height of the argument, Loredana hurled a kettle at her father, not realizing it contained a potent alchemical acid Masimo had been using for unsavory practices. As the lower half of her father's body melted away, Loredana fled to the inn above and boarded up the cellar's sole entrance.

Though silent and undisturbed over the following years, Masimo's spirit reacted violently to the Glorious Reclamation's liberation of Kantaria. What was left of Masimo's oddly preserved skin sloughed off and became an undead shredskin, powered by hate and an enduring

JED AND LEORA (2)

CR 2

XP 600 each

Accomplished angler (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex 256*)

hp 10 each

Gear sling with 10 bullets, fishing pole, fishing net

TACTICS

Morale If either sibling takes lethal damage, both attempt to flee at top speed. They stop running only if one of them is incapacitated—the other then moves to defend the injured sibling. Both halflings beg their attackers to stop, constantly questioning why they're being punished.

Treasure: If the PCs successfully capture the halflings, Nicolae pays them the reward as promised, along with a special gift he thinks they can put to use—a *discord bottle* (see the sidebar on this page).

connection to Zon-Kuthon. Unable to open the boarded-up cellar door, the shreds skin is trapped beneath the Little Uskwood, but finds some solace in endlessly scratching the walls. He waits in the small chamber to the south of the main cellar. When living creatures enter the cellar, Masimo rises up from among the haphazardly placed barrels, boxes, and other abandoned stores to find a host body he can control to confront his daughter.

MASIMO VIORICA **CR 5**

XP 1,600

Male advanced variant shreds skin cleric of Zon-Kuthon 3
(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4* 288, 243)

NE Small undead

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *detect undead*;
Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 15, flat-footed 14 (+4 Dex, +3 natural, +1 size)
hp 62 (7d8+31)

Fort +8, **Ref** +6, **Will** +11

Defensive Abilities amorphous; **Immune** undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed fly 40 ft. (average)

Melee bite +10 (1d4+4), 2 claws +10 (1d4+4 plus grab)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 9/day (DC 15, 2d6), constrict (1d4+4), control body, enshroud, enshrouding caster, grab (Medium)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd; concentration +7)

Constant—*detect undead*

1/day—*command undead* (DC 16)

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd; concentration +7)

7/day—touch of darkness (1 round), touch of evil (1 round)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 3rd; concentration +7)

2nd—*blindness/deafness*^o (blindness only; DC 16), *death knell* (DC 16), *hold person* (DC 16)

1st—*bane* (DC 15), *deathwatch*, *doom* (DC 15), *obscuring mist*^o

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 14), *detect magic*, *guidance*, *resistance*

D domain spell; **Domains** Darkness, Evil

TACTICS

During Combat Masimo attempts to enshroud the target who appears to be weakest physically. If successful, he immediately uses his enshrouding caster ability to cast *obscuring mist*, then alternates between channeling negative energy and spellcasting as appropriate.

Morale Masimo fights until destroyed in his attempt to find a host body to control. If one of his foes dies, Masimo immediately enshrouds the corpse and moves toward the exit, eager to confront his daughter with his new body.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 19, **Con** —, **Int** 12, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 19

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +8 (+12 grapple); **CMD** 22 (can't be tripped)

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Blind-Fight, Extra Channel, Quick Channel^{UM}, Weapon Finesse

Skills Fly +12, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (religion) +11, Perception +12, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +8, Stealth +15

Languages Common, Infernal, Shadowtongue (can't speak)
SQ compression

Gear spell component pouch, platinum unholy symbol of Zon-Kuthon (worth 500 gp)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Enshrouding Caster (Ex) Since he is unable to speak, Masimo cannot cast spells with verbal components. However, when Masimo successfully uses his enshroud ability on a humanoid creature capable of speech, he can, instead of constricting the creature, apply pressure on the creature's vocal cords as a free action to enable him to cast spells normally.

Treasure: A thorough inspection of the cellar (and a successful DC 20 Perception check) turns up a jet-black *lesser merciful metamagic rod*^{UE} amid the remains of Masimo's melted lower body, which the disciple of Zon-Kuthon once used to subjugate unwilling slaves. In addition, a small open lockbox holds a *scroll of darkness*, a *scroll of hold person*, and 100 gp.

Development: Defeating Masimo has no effect on the Despair Meter, but the PCs and other occupants of the Little Uskwood should be able to enjoy peaceful sleep for the rest of their stay at the inn. Loredana is indebted to the PCs, and offers up the hidden cellar as a secret base of operations for the PCs to plan their future moves, or as a makeshift interrogation or torture site. If Nicolae becomes aware of the PCs' actions here and has not yet befriended them, the Nidalese slaver approaches them with his offer at this point (see **Event 2**).

EVENT 4: OATHDAY MARKET (CR 6+)

This event occurs whenever the PCs visit the Kantaria's weekly Oathday Market. This market takes place every Oathday in Kantaria's town square, known as Inheritor's Square. Farmers from outside of town, as well as local merchants, come to sell goods to Kantarian families, and the Glorious Reclamation sends at least one good outsider to remind the populace that "angels walk among them."

As a populated event, the market is a tempting target to disrupt. Because of the number of people who could identify their involvement, the PCs' best option may be to create panic via unorthodox means. Mind-affecting spells, or the *discord bottle* (see page 16) the PCs can receive as a reward from Nicolae (see **Event 2**), can be used to sow chaos and compel the locals into hostile actions, quickly sparking tensions between Thrune loyalists and those townsfolk who support the Glorious Reclamation. Similarly, a spell with a wide area of effect or summoning spells could throw the market into a frenzy. Let the PCs come up with their own ideas, and be generous when determining the success of their implementation.

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Creatures: Several dozen townsfolk wander the market at any given time, but if trouble occurs, only 10 of them stay long enough to get involved. Half of these townsfolk are armed with clubs, while the other half have sickles. These 10 villagers flee as soon as they recognize the source of a threat, but are otherwise active targets.

Two Glorious Reclamation squires monitor the festivities, along with a hound archon that has come to mingle with the townsfolk. Should combat erupt, the squires spend the first 3 rounds ushering the townsfolk away, stepping in to fight only if they or the villagers are directly attacked. The hound archon seeks out the greatest threat and attempts to defeat it.

GLORIOUS RECLAMATION SQUIRES (2) **CR 1**

XP 400 each

hp 19 each (see page 10)

HOUND ARCHON **CR 4**

XP 1,200

hp 39 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 19)

TOWNSFOLK (10) **CR 1/2**

XP 200 each

Farmer (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* 309)

hp 10 each

Gear club or sickle, 1d6 gp

Development: To successfully disrupt the Oathday Market, the PCs must kill at least five townsfolk and one defender. Causing a panic and disrupting the market increases the Despair Meter by 5. Increase the Despair Meter by 2 additional points if the PCs manage to slay the hound archon.

If the PCs fail to disrupt the market, they can repeat their attempt multiple times as long as they manage to remain unnoticed. The PCs might scope out the market first, then return a second time a week later to make their move.

EVENT 5: SUPPLY SHIPMENT (CR 6)

This event can occur any time during the PCs' time in Kantaria. The easiest method to point the PCs toward this encounter is via the accuser devil Razelago, who learns of it from Archbaron Fex's information network. Alternatively, the PCs might learn this information by interrogating or torturing captured Glorious Reclamation soldiers.

To secure their hold on Kantaria and other Chelish holdings, the Glorious Reclamation has engaged in trade negotiations with various mining operations in the Menador Mountains. While none of these groups have yet offered full support to the Glorious Reclamation's rule, they have contributed small amounts of resources and supplies that the order has collected into a sizable shipment for the town. This shipment could provide

Kantaria with enough supplies to fortify against retaliatory strikes from House Thrune.

The shipment consists of an assortment of refined metals carried in a medium wagon (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment* 87) drawn by two heavy horses (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 177). The horses are not combat-trained, and the weight of the wagon is considered a heavy load for the horses, reducing their speed to 35 feet, though the wagon normally travels at walking speed for its guards (see Creatures below)

The exact timing of the shipment's approach to Kantaria is left for you to determine, but the PCs should catch wind of its progress early enough to ambush the convoy outside of town.

Creatures: Seven members of the Glorious Reclamation guard the shipment, handpicked by Kalcyra the Just (see **Event 7** on page 20), who is currently negotiating with the various Menador mining interests. The guards, who are under the command of a Glorious Reclamation sergeant, consist of three local militia volunteers and three freed halfling slingers. The sergeant sits on the wagon's seat next to the militia volunteer driving the wagon, while two halfling slingers perch on the back. The remaining slinger and two volunteers walk alongside the wagon. All of the guards know the importance of the shipment and fight tenaciously to defend it.

GLORIOUS RECLAMATION SERGEANT CR 2
XP 600
hp 24 (see page 9)

HALFLING SLINGERS (3) CR 1/2
XP 200 each
hp 13 each (see page 9)

MILITIA VOLUNTEERS (3) CR 1
XP 400 each
hp 21 each (see page 10)

Treasure: The shipment consists of 1,000 pounds of iron; 500 pounds of copper; 250 pounds of tin; 40 pounds of silver; 10 pounds of cold iron; 10 pounds of gold; and 1 pound each of adamantite, mithral, and platinum. Combined, the metals have a weight of just over 1,800 pounds and a total value of 3,100 gp. Selling the metals in Kantaria is next to impossible, meaning they must be transported elsewhere for trade. Given time, Razelago can teleport the shipment out of Kantaria (50 pounds at a time), but he demands a 20% cut of the deal. With a successful DC 20 Diplomacy or Intimidate check, the PCs can haggle the devil down to a 10% cut of the take. It takes the devil 1d4 days to find a buyer and return with payment. The wagon and horses are easier to sell in town—the PCs can receive full value for their sale.

Development: The disappearance of the supply shipment raises fears that Kantaria's outlying lands are no longer safe, increasing the Despair Meter by 4. Assuming there are no survivors, the PCs' actions are blamed on the Narikopolus loyalists (see area G) known to operate in the hinterlands outside town.

EVENT 6: GLORIOUS SPIES (CR 5)

This event can occur any time after the Despair Meter reaches 15. Kantaria's governor, Oppian Nevilindor, is a cautious and somewhat naive man, but he is far from stupid. Once evidence starts pointing toward the PCs' involvement in actions against the Glorious Reclamation, his suspicions are aroused, and the cleric calls in a duo of archons to monitor the PCs' actions and report back.

Creatures: Oppian sends two spyglass archons—preternaturally quiet, masked outsiders with black skin and wings—to shadow the PCs and take note of their activities. As law-abiding as they are stealthy, the archons refrain from direct violations of the law (such as entering the PCs' rooms in the Little Uskwood without permission), instead observing the PCs from afar. Ordered only to report evidence of insurrection to Oppian, the archons do not openly confront the PCs unless they catch them in the act of something truly evil or heinous, at which point the outsiders do not hesitate to intervene.

SPYGLASS ARCHONS (2) CR 3
XP 800 each

Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Chronicle of the Righteous 61
LG Medium outsider (archon, extraplanar, good, lawful)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *detect evil*, hone senses, low-light vision; Perception +7

Aura aura of menace (DC 13), *magic circle against evil*

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+2 armor, +2 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 natural)

hp 26 each (4d10+4)

Fort +4, **Ref** +8, **Will** +6; +4 vs. poison

DR 5/evil; **Immune** electricity, petrification; **SR** 14

OFFENSE

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

Melee mwk longsword +5 (1d8+2/19-20), mwk short sword +5 (1d6+1/19-20)

Ranged shortbow +6 (1d6/x3)

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th; concentration +3)

Constant—*detect evil*, *magic circle against evil*

At will—*aid*, *continual flame*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *message*

3/day—*darkness*, *entropic shield*, *undetected alignment*

TACTICS

Before Combat Because the PCs are assumed to be evil, the benefits from the archons' *magic circle against evil* spell-like ability are included in their statistics.

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During Combat The archons generally avoid combat if at all possible, but should the PCs become involved in any action that endangers the people of Kantaria or the forces of the Glorious Reclamation, the outsiders move to engage the offenders and help any potential allies. The two archons work together and with allies to flank foes and make sneak attacks. Against lightly armored opponents, the archons prefer to deal nonlethal damage, attempting to take prisoners back to Oppian Nevilindor.

Morale As long as innocents or allies are in danger, the archons fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 15, **Con** 12, **Int** 13, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 9

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 20

Feats Skill Focus (Stealth), Two-Weapon Fighting

Skills Acrobatics +9, Bluff +6, Fly +13, Knowledge (planes) +8, Perception +7, Sense Motive +7, Stealth +12

Languages Celestial, Draconic, Infernal; truespeech

Gear leather armor, mwk longsword, mwk short sword, shortbow with 20 arrows

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Hone Senses (Su) Three times per day, a spyglass archon can concentrate its attention as a swift action. For 4 rounds, the range of the spyglass archon's darkvision doubles, it gains a +6 bonus on Perception checks, and it gains blindsense out to a range of 15 feet.

EVENT 7: ENTER THE INQUISITION (CR 8)

Once the PCs have seized control of Hardship's Hearth (area E on page 27), their defeat of Jalila Hadjara sends a clear message that the Glorious Reclamation is now under attack, and triggers this event. Upon learning of the growing unrest in town, an important member of the local Glorious Reclamation leadership—a no-nonsense inquisitor of Torag named Kalcyra the Just—returns to Kantaria from her mission to secure trade relationships with the mines in the Menador Mountains.

If the PCs' involvement with the recent woes befalling the town is not obvious, Kalcyra quickly grows suspicious of the timing of their arrival, and, believing the PCs could have duped her allies, decides to interrogate them. If the PCs have made their participation known to the forces of the Glorious Reclamation, the inquisitor instead mounts an offensive against them. Without consulting Oppian Nevilindor, she musters local forces and attacks the PCs at their last known whereabouts, most likely the Little Uskwood (area A on page 11). Alternatively, the PCs may learn of Kalcyra's return and preemptively seek out the dwarf—perhaps at the Shrine of the Hammer, the town's former temple of Asmodeus, now dedicated to Torag.

Creatures: The church of Torag has sent several emissaries to advise and observe the Glorious Reclamation to ascertain whether the knightly order would be a worthy ally to the Father of Creation's church. Kalcyra the Just is one of these advisors and observers. Less noble than

her Glorious Reclamation allies, Kalcyra is practical and methodical in her actions. Her primary drive is the delivery of swift justice to those who deserve it. Accompanied by a trio of loyal foo dogs, the inquisitor seeks to lay enemies of the Glorious Reclamation low with her magic, offering no quarter to those who oppose her or her allies.

FOO DOGS (3)

CR 2

XP 600 each

hp 17 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 120)

KALCYRA THE JUST

CR 6

XP 2,400

Female dwarf inquisitor of Torag 7 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 38)

LN Medium humanoid (dwarf)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 12, flat-footed 21 (+7 armor, +2 deflection, +2 shield)

hp 70 (7d8+35)

Fort +10, **Ref** +4, **Will** +10; +1 vs. fear, +2 vs. poison, spells, and spell-like abilities

Defensive Abilities defensive training

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +1 *morningstar* +11 (1d8+5)

Ranged repeating light crossbow +8 (1d8+2/19–20)

Special Attacks bane (7 rounds/day), hatred, judgment 3/day

Inquisitor Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +10)

At will—*detect alignment*

7 rounds/day—*discern lies*

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +10)

6/day—resistant touch (+2)

Inquisitor Spells Known (CL 7th; concentration +10)

3rd (2/day)—*litany of righteousness*^{UC}, *retribution*^{APG} (DC 16)

2nd (4/day)—*blistering invective*^{UC} (DC 15), *confess*^{APG} (DC 15), *flames of the faithful*^{APG} (DC 15), *hold person* (DC 15)

1st (5/day)—*bless*, *command* (DC 14), *divine favor*, *lock gaze*^{UC} (DC 14), *protection from evil*

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *brand*^{APG} (DC 13), *daze* (DC 13), *guidance*, *sift*^{APG}, *stabilize*

Domain Protection

TACTICS

Before Combat Kalcyra casts *divine favor* and *protection from evil* on herself before battle, and then *bless* (which affects the foo dogs as well).

During Combat Kalcyra begins combat by casting *blistering invective* while the foo dogs attack. She prefers to stay out of melee combat, using her spells to debilitate her foes from a distance. If pressed into melee combat, Kalcyra casts *flames of the faithful* and activates her bane ability, then on the next round pronounces a judgment—usually destruction, justice, or resistance.

Morale Believing she has a divine mandate, Kalcyra fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 10, **Con** 16, **Int** 8, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 19 (23 vs. bull rush and trip)

Feats Combat Casting, Duck And Cover^{APG}, Power Attack, Shake It Off^{UC}, Skill Focus (Intimidate), Toughness

Skills Appraise -2 (+0 to assess nonmagical metals or gemstones), Diplomacy +10, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (religion) +8, Perception +12 (+14 to notice unusual stonework), Sense Motive +16, Spellcraft +4

Languages Common, Dwarven

SQ monster lore +3, solo tactics, stern gaze +3, track +3

Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds*, *potion of spider climb*; **Other Gear** +1 *chainmail*, +1 *buckler*, +1 *morningstar*, repeating light crossbow with 10 bolts, iron holy symbol of Torag, 28 gp

Development: Defeating Kalcyra the Just increases the Despair Meter by 6. The inquisitor's death is another blow to the Glorious Reclamation as her efficiency in managing Kantaria's industrial efforts is now lost. Several dwarven families in town pack up their belongings and start the long trek east to their ancestral homeland in the Five Kings Mountains, hoping to escape the growing conflict in Cheliah. Oppian Nevilindor holds a memorial service for Kalcyra, and if he remains unaware of the PCs' involvement with the insurrection in town and their role in Kalcyra's death, he may even invite them to attend.

EVENT 8: HEAVEN'S RETALIATION (CR 7)

This event can occur any time after the Glorious Reclamation has identified the PCs as the ones responsible for the insurgency in Kantaria—most likely following the death of the wizard Faydreth Zaine (see area F on page 32) unless the PCs managed to strike him down without arousing suspicion. Alternatively, any guards who escape from the sword tower (area C on page 25) may be able to identify the PCs as dissidents. If the PCs successfully conceal their involvement, this event takes place once the Despair Meter reaches 40. This encounter can take place almost anywhere, such as just after the PCs leave Narikopolus Manor (area F on page 32) or on the road to the Blooming Caves (area G on page 36).

Creature: Once proof reaches Oppian Nevilindor that the PCs are behind the counterrevolution, he wastes no time in moving against them. Assuming the PCs are agents of House Throne, Oppian contacts his superiors in the Glorious Reclamation for support. With the siege

of Senara underway, the Iomedaeans are unable to send major reinforcements to Kantaria, but the order pledges a powerful outsider from Heaven—a hiracapath—to Oppian's service. The hiracapath excels in tracking and nonlethal combat, and Oppian believes it is the perfect ally to help bring the PCs to justice. Unwilling to summarily execute the PCs, Oppian orders the outsider to defeat the PCs and bring back whichever character seems to be the leader for further interrogation. The hiracapath fights until reduced to 15 hit points of fewer, at which point it uses *plane shift* to escape, abandoning its mission.

HIRACAPATH

CR 7

XP 3,200

hp 94 (see page 88)

Development: The Glorious Reclamation can provide no further support for their troops in Kantaria once the hiracapath is defeated, leaving Oppian Nevilindor on his own. This increases the Despair Meter by 4.

EVENT 9: A FRIEND IN NEED

This event occurs once the PCs have successfully influenced Linton Demeer (see **Event 1** on page 14), or, if they have not done so, once the Despair Meter reaches 40.

As the PCs plan their next move against the Glorious Reclamation, they receive an unexpected invitation from Linton Demeer to stop by his shop, Healthy Heart Alchemicals. The PCs



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might be suspicious of the summons, especially coming from a member of Kantaria's governing council, but there is no duplicity in the invitation. If the PCs scout out the alchemy shop before their meeting, they find no hint of Glorious Reclamation forces in wait, just a sign on the door that reads, "Closed for the day due to illness."

Creature: Linton Demeer greets the PCs at the door. The alchemist shows no symptoms of sickness as he ushers the PCs into his establishment, but he does display a great sense of urgency. If the PCs succeed at a Sense Motive check (opposed by Linton's Bluff check), they can tell Linton's urgency is a bit of intentional overacting. Secretly a faceless stalker shapechanged into a human, Linton goes to great lengths to hide his true identity from the PCs (assuming they have not yet discovered it on their own and revealed this discovery to him). Linton Demeer is fully detailed in the NPC Gallery on page 56.

Once the PCs are all inside and pleasantries have been exchanged, Linton has a unique request for them.

"Prior to the Glorious Reclamation's arrival in Kantaria, I had working relationships with multiple factions in town. Chief among them were the town's former leaders, the nobles of House Narikopolus, who were of course loyal to House Thrune. When the Iomedaeans took control of Kantaria, the Narikopolus family was conveniently away, in the capital city of Egorian. Although some of the family's retainers were apprehended and imprisoned in Hardship's Hearth, a handful of them managed to flee the fall of the town and evade capture. They call themselves 'Narikopolus loyalists,' though of course the Glorious Reclamation has branded them rebels.

"I would be remiss not to mention that I have a good friend among these retainers, a man by the name of Gregor Ardain. While I am far from a supporter of House Thrune or the Narikopolus cause, Gregor has kept in contact with me about the movements of this band of loyalist rebels. He's been quite punctual in his updates, sending a message every few days, but it has now been over a week since I last heard from him. His last missive indicated a stop at the Blooming Caves—a rather beautiful series of nearby caverns that, in less turbulent times, the locals occasionally visit."

"Obviously, it would be inappropriate for me to broach this with our new protectors, but as you are outsiders, I thought I might ask you to investigate as a personal favor. Specifically, I'd like to know what has happened to my friend Gregor."

Linton offers the PCs a reward of 3,000 gp for successfully discovering the fate of Gregor Ardain and the Narikopolus loyalists, and gives them directions to the group's last known location, the Blooming Caves (area G). Should the PCs require additional incentives to investigate, Linton mentions that Gregor retrieved the fabled hammer of Kantaria's former blacksmith, Tychus Groat, before leaving town. The hammer, a magic weapon named *Sinderbos*, has become a symbol of resistance to

the Glorious Reclamation, and Oppian Nevilindor has been searching for it ever since the weapon disappeared in the aftermath of his duel with Groat. If the PCs find Gregor, they might also find Groat's hammer—though what they do with it is up to them.

Development: Linton does hold back one important piece of information from the PCs—the fact that Gregor is also a faceless stalker who was spying on the Narikopolus loyalists for Linton. It is unlikely that the PCs will uncover this fact prior to their expedition, but if they manage to discover Linton's true nature as a faceless stalker, he is indifferent to their discovery. He still wishes to know what happened to Gregor, but as a further reward, he is willing to discuss the potential of an alliance with the PCs against the Glorious Reclamation upon their return (see **Event 10**).

EVENT 10: FACELESS ALLIES (CR 8)

This event occurs when the PCs return to Linton Demeer after their exploration of the Blooming Caves (area G on page 36). Assuming the PCs provide information on Gregor's fate and have not alienated Linton in the process, the alchemist mentions he has another proposal for the PCs, and suggests a clandestine meeting in the woods outside of town later that night. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Sense Motive check can tell that Linton is hiding something, but while the PCs' first reaction might be to suspect betrayal, it is simply due to Linton's wariness about revealing the existence of faceless stalkers in Kantaria.

Creatures: The meeting takes place under the cover of trees and darkness. Linton intentionally arrives 5 minutes later than the appointed time, giving the PCs time to worry about the alchemist's motives. For safety, Linton brings along one of his trusted lieutenants, the only faceless stalker in town that does not possess its own human identity, but instead operates by filling in for others. In this case, he has taken Linton's appearance, so that it looks like two Linton Demeers have appeared for the meeting with the PCs. As the PCs process this strange revelation, both shapechangers attempt to assuage the PCs' doubts, with the real Linton performing the bulk of the explanations.

Linton begins by identifying himself as an ugothol, commonly known as a faceless stalker. He describes his people's past as a wandering band that moved from town to town, preying on the unwitting residents, until arriving in Kantaria shortly after the death of Aroden. Since then, Kantaria's ugothol population has developed into a very different society from that normally seen among faceless stalkers—rather than murdering and consuming the town's inhabitants, thus exhausting its resources, the ugothols became a part of Kantaria's community, albeit a parasitic one. The faceless stalkers hold human identities and jobs in town, but they still feed on Kantaria's other citizens.

Seeing the PCs' growing success against the Glorious Reclamation, Linton states that he wishes to ally with the PCs and assist them in driving the Glorious Reclamation from Kantaria. He volunteers the faceless stalkers' unique shapeshifting services in this endeavor, offering to use them as spies to gather and plant information where needed, but refuses to put his people directly in harm's way, or to reveal their identities, even to the PCs. In exchange, Linton would like to maintain the ugothols' current position in Kantaria—secretly living among and feeding on the town's citizens.

Linton attends the meeting with his full set of equipment; he hopes to avoid combat, but he's ready should it occur. If the PCs refuse Linton's offer of an alliance and attack, the faceless stalker lieutenant tries to cover Linton's escape, while Linton supports his ally with bombs thrown from a distance.

FACELESS STALKER LIEUTENANT CR 5

XP 1,600

Advanced faceless stalker (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 292, 122)
hp 52

LINTON DEMEER CR 7

XP 3,200

hp 95 (see page 56)

Treasure: If the PCs defeat Linton in combat, they might decide to ransack his shop, Healthy Heart Alchemicals, where they can find many worthwhile items displayed on shelves. These include two *potions of cure light wounds*, two *potions of cure moderate wounds*, two *potions of delay poison*, two *potions of endure elements*, two *potions of lesser restoration*, and four *potions of stabilize*. In addition, the shop has a supply of five flasks of acid, five flasks of alchemist's fire, five packets of alchemist's kindness (*Ultimate Equipment* 100), three vials of antiplague (*Ultimate Equipment* 100), three vials of antitoxin, three vials of padzahr (*Ultimate Equipment* 100), two tanglefoot bags, two thunderstones, and three vials of wismuth salix (*Ultimate Equipment* 101). Lastly, a cache of reserve coins totaling 750 gp is kept in a small, unlocked strongbox behind the shop's counter.

Development: Allying with Linton Demeer and the faceless stalkers gives the PCs ample opportunity to learn about the defenses of the remaining Glorious Reclamation forces in Kantaria. At the same time, the ugothols take advantage of the chaos in town to exact vengeance on other residents who have wronged them and seek out new sources of blood for consumption. These renewed assaults increase the Despair Meter by 5.

With a successful DC 19 Diplomacy check or DC 23 Intimidate check, the PCs can convince Linton to provide them with a single faceless stalker—the lieutenant attending the meeting—as a henchman during their time in Kantaria.

If the meeting does not end with an accord with the faceless stalkers but the PCs either avoid combat or fail to kill Linton, the alchemist is swift to turn against the PCs once he returns to the town. Sometime in the next few days, he sends four faceless stalkers (a CR 8 encounter) to ambush the PCs while they're acting against the Glorious Reclamation. If this assassination attempt fails, Linton and any remaining faceless stalkers in town depart Kantaria, as he knows his people's continued peaceful existence is under threat.

If the PCs kill Linton, the rest of the faceless stalkers in town soon revert to their normal ways. Bereft of his leadership, the ugothols go on a murder spree, killing indiscriminately before leaving Kantaria for new hunting grounds. Driving the faceless stalkers out of Kantaria without divulging their nature to the populace (by killing Linton or other means) also increases the Despair Meter by 5, as the townsfolk react fearfully to the sudden disappearance (or murders) of a member of the governing council and several other citizens. Revealing the presence of the faceless stalkers to the people of Kantaria (such as in a public battle) and defeating them actually works against the PCs, reducing the Despair Meter by 5.

Story Award: If the PCs make a deal with Linton and ally with the faceless stalkers, award them XP as if they had defeated Linton and his lieutenant in combat.

B. GROAT'S SMITHY (CR 4)

There are several reasons the PCs might choose to explore the ruins of the local smithy, where an epic battle took place between Oppian Nevilindor and Tychus Groat, the town blacksmith—the PCs might investigate the rumors of Tychus's restless spirit, searching for the blacksmith's renowned hammer, or gather information to use against Oppian Nevilindor. A miasma of ash and smoke fills the air around the ruins, and collapsed stone and fragments of burnt wood litter the area. Several plumes of fire burn merrily throughout the smithy (see Hazards below). The locals of Kantaria give the site a wide berth, believing it to be inhabited by a devil made manifest from Tychus's spirit. Use the map on page 26 for this encounter.

Creature: Tychus Groat kept a piece of his infernal past with him—an ukobach named Brextur. Commonly known as tinder devils, ukobachs keep the fires and furnaces of Hell burning, and revel in flames and explosions. Brextur assisted Tychus with his more important projects, but the devil was left alone following the death of his master. So far, fear of the good-aligned outsiders assisting the Glorious Reclamation in Kantaria has kept Brextur confined within the ruins of the smithy, but the few sightings of the fiend have prompted a belief among the citizens that Tychus himself became a devil after his death.

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When the PCs first arrive at the smithy, Brextur hides in the ruins. Noticing that they are (most likely) not wearing any Iomedean paraphernalia, the devil has enough confidence to stealthily initiate combat with the intruders by animating the nearby fire plumes with his animate flames ability.

If the PCs detect Brextur, they can attempt to talk to the devil. Brextur's initial attitude is unfriendly; he can be made indifferent with a successful DC 21 Diplomacy check, or friendly with a successful DC 26 Diplomacy check. Alternatively, the PCs can bully the devil with a successful DC 18 Intimidate check. If the PCs reveal their status as Thruene agents, they gain a +4 circumstance bonus on these checks. See Development below for details on befriending the devil.

BREXTUR**CR 4****XP 1,200**Male ukobach (*Pathfinder Adventure Path* #25 86)

LE Small outsider (devil, evil, extraplanar, lawful)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., see in darkness; Perception +3**DEFENSE****AC** 17, touch 15, flat-footed 13 (+4 Dex, +2 natural, +1 size)**hp** 37 (5d10+10)**Fort** +3, **Ref** +10, **Will** +7**DR** 5/good or silver; **Immune** fire, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10; **SR** 15**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** fire poker +5 (1d6–1 plus 1d4 fire) or 2 claws +5 (1d3–1 plus 1d4 fire)**Ranged** ember +10 (1d6 fire)**Special Attacks** animate flames, fire-breathing, scorch**TACTICS**

During Combat From hiding, Brextur attempts to animate one of the fire plumes as a Small fire elemental, which then attacks the PCs. If the devil remains undetected, he continues this tactic. If he's spotted, Brextur stays to defend his home, but uses his flame leap ability to move around the battlefield through the fire plumes.

Morale If reduced to fewer than 10 hit points, Brextur offers unconditional surrender, pleading for his life and cursing "the Inheritor and her lackeys for ever coming to Kantaria."

STATISTICS**Str** 9, **Dex** 19, **Con** 14, **Int** 13, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 12**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 17**Feats** Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Throw Anything**Skills** Acrobatics +12, Appraise +9, Bluff +9, Craft (armor) +9, Craft (weapons) +9, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Stealth +16**Languages** Celestial, Common, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.**SQ** fire leap**Gear** oil (5 flasks)**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

Animate Flames (Su) As a standard action, an ukobach can animate an existing Small or larger fire. Doing so requires the ukobach to succeed at a DC 15 Wisdom check as it impresses its will upon the fire. This DC increases by +5 for every size category of the flame above Small. If it's successful, the flame animates and follows the ukobach's mental commands, functioning as a fire elemental of the same size. The flame remains animate for a number of rounds equal to the ukobach's Wisdom modifier—usually 3—after which it returns to being simple flame, setting the square it ceases moving in alight or being extinguished, as its surroundings warrant.

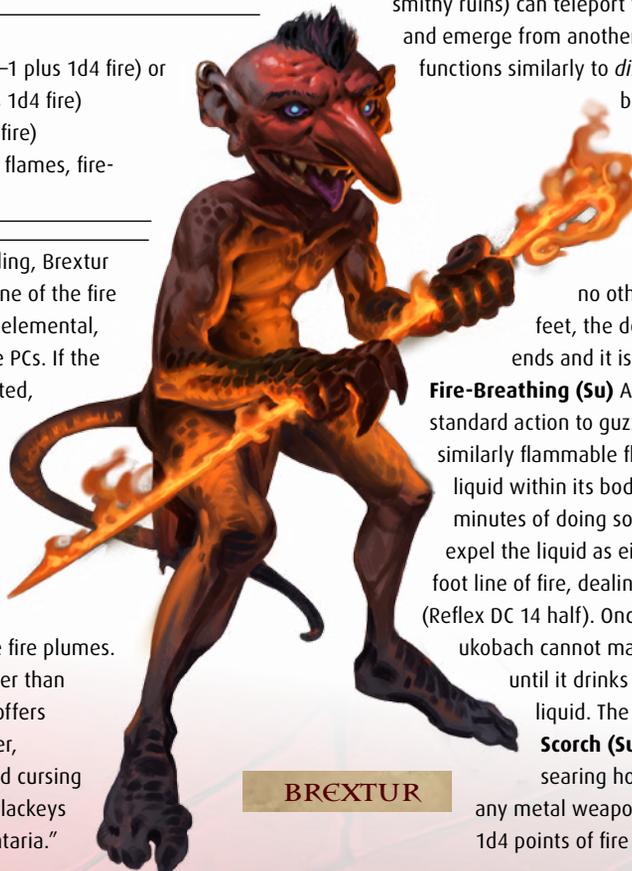
Ember (Ex) An ukobach can hurl a red-hot ember as an improvised thrown weapon that deals 1d6 points of fire damage. A thrown ember has a range increment of 10 feet.

Fire Leap (Su) As a swift action, an ukobach occupying the same space as a fire, a pool of lava, a vent of searing steam, or a similar blaze (such as the fire plumes in the smithy ruins) can teleport from that burning feature and emerge from another within 100 feet. This ability functions similarly to *dimension door*, but only

between fires. Upon entering a flame, an ukobach is instantly aware of all flames within range through which it might exit. If an ukobach enters a flame and there are no others to exit through within 100 feet, the devil's movement immediately ends and it is stunned for 1 round.

Fire-Breathing (Su) An ukobach can spend a standard action to guzzle a pint of oil, alcohol, or a similarly flammable liquid and hold the combustible liquid within its body. At any point within 10 minutes of doing so, the ukobach can ignite and expel the liquid as either a 10-foot cone or a 20-foot line of fire, dealing 3d6 points of fire damage (Reflex DC 14 half). Once it has breathed fire, an ukobach cannot make use of this ability again until it drinks another pint of flammable liquid. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Scorch (Su) An ukobach's touch is searing hot, and its natural weapons and any metal weapons it grasps deal an additional 1d4 points of fire damage.

**BREXTUR**

Hazard: Following the smithy's destruction, Brextur has kept the forge's flames alight, creating several fire plumes throughout the ruins (in the positions marked on the map). These plumes act as concentrated open flames that deal 1d6 points of fire damage if touched. In addition, a creature that touches a fire plume or ends its turn standing within a plume must succeed at a DC 15 Reflex save or catch fire (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 444).

Treasure: If the PCs search the ruins of the smithy, a successful DC 20 Perception check reveals a *fire elemental gem* in the ashes of the forge.

Development: If the PCs change Brextur's attitude to friendly, the devil offers his services to the party. While most devils specialize in one-sided bargains, Brextur is more interested in revenge for the death of his tolerable master, so he makes an exception. The ukobach can support the PCs on missions, cause distractions when needed, or use his crafting abilities to mend damaged armor and weapons. In addition, Brextur tells the PCs that he saw one of the townsfolk take Tychus's hammer after Oppian Nevilindor felled the smith. The description of this individual matches that of Gregor Ardain, a citizen who ran off with loyalist Narikopolus rebels into the hinterlands. The PCs can learn more about Ardain and the Narikopolus loyalists in **Event 9**.

If the PCs ally with Brextur, the devil becomes more adventurous, leaving the ruins of the smithy and sporadically starting fires throughout town, which raises the Despair Meter by 4.

Story Award: If the PCs convince Brextur not to fight them and gain the devil's trust, award them XP as if they had defeated him in combat.

C. SWORD TOWER (CR 5)

This sturdy wood and stone tower with an oversized sword on its roof is one of three watch posts flanking the city, created during Iomedae's time in Kantaria. The PCs may choose to investigate this location after hearing that the Glorious Reclamation is using this tower as a reserve storage site for healing magic in the event of an assault on the city. This is the only stash of supplies outside Valor's Fastness (area H; see page 43), so stealing or destroying the contents of the tower would be a serious blow to the Glorious Reclamation.

This particular sword tower stands north of the town, due east of the Little Uskwood (area A; see page 11), and, at 30 feet high, is clearly visible from the inn. A barred, strong wooden door (hardness 5, hp 20, break DC 25) leads into the tower's interior (area C1). A flight of stone stairs climbs along the interior walls to the tower's crenellated roof (area C2). A stone sculpture of an oversized sword stands in the middle of the roof; it glows with *continual flame* at night. Use the map on page 26 for this encounter.

Creatures: A Sixth Sword Knight of Iomedae, a Glorious Reclamation squire, and two halfling slingers guard the tower, changing shifts every 8 hours. All stand watch on the tower's roof (area C2), questioning anyone approaching the tower before resorting to violence. If the tower comes under attack, the squire and sword knight rush down to the ground floor to defend the door while the slingers focus their efforts on attackers outside the tower.

GLORIOUS RECLAMATION SQUIRE CR 1

XP 400

hp 19 (see page 10)

HALFLING SLINGERS (2) CR 1/2

XP 200 each

hp 13 each (see page 9)

SIXTH SWORD KNIGHT CR 3

XP 800

hp 33 (see page 10)

Treasure: A chest sits on the roof of the tower beneath the immense stone sword, containing the Glorious Reclamation's reserve healing supplies: four *potions of cure moderate wounds*, a *potion of neutralize poison*, a *potion of remove disease*, and two *scrolls of lesser restoration*.

Development: If any of the guards manage to escape, they identify the PCs to their superiors, triggering **Event 8** regardless of the current level of the Despair Meter.

If the PCs try to sell any of the curatives at Healthy Heart Alchemicals, Linton Demeer eagerly purchases the goods, offering full price for the potions instead of the usual half price. A successful DC 15 Sense Motive is enough for the PCs to recognize that the alchemist tacitly approves of their actions.

Destroying or stealing the healing supplies in the sword tower increases the Despair Meter by 4.

D. THE DOCKS (CR 6 OR 8)

Many ships traversing the Sedna River take refuge in Kantaria's small harbor, even under the rule of the Glorious Reclamation, though they must now pay a docking fee (which goes into the order's coffers) and submit to a search. Any vessel found carrying provisions or weapons for Cheliox and House Throne has its cargo seized. These supplies have helped bolster the knights' forces in town. Destroying the docks would strike a blow against the town's economy and weaken the Glorious Reclamation's hold on Kantaria, making the harbor a tempting target for the PCs. Use the map on page 26 for this location.

A 5-foot-thick, 20-foot-high stone wall surrounds the docks, but it is designed to defend against attacks from the river, not from the town itself—stone staircases climb to the walkway atop the wall along the western side.

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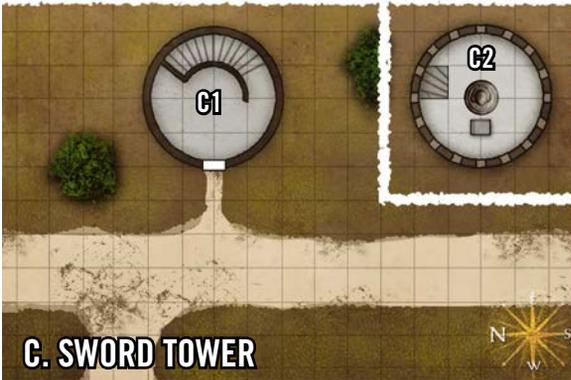
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B. GROAT'S SMITHY



C. SWORD TOWER

D. THE DOCKS

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



Climbing down the river-side wall requires a successful DC 30 Climb check. A single stone gatehouse (area D1) with two wooden portcullises provides access to the docks. The portcullises are open during the day, but are closed at night (hardness 5, hp 30, break DC 25). The gatehouse is 30 feet tall, and its crenellated roof is accessible via a ladder inside the gatehouse. Just south of the gatehouse is the quartermaster's office (area D2), a wooden shack perched on pilings above the water. Inside are a desk and chair, a lockbox, and a simple cot.

Creatures: At any given time, one or more riverboats are moored at the docks. Kantaria's militia guards the docks, and during the day, there are usually at least a dozen people present, in addition to the harbormaster (see below): six militia volunteers guarding the gate and six dockworkers (use the old sailor stats on page 260 of the *Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex*). Assaulting the docks during the day is thus a CR 8 encounter. At night, however, the harbor is quieter; three militia volunteers patrol the docks and no workers are present.

Jonas Reikman, a former river pirate turned harbormaster, can be found in his office (area D2) at any time of day. Although no true supporter of the Glorious Reclamation (Reikman is an atheist), the harbormaster realized he could make more money working with the town's new government than against it. In more ideal circumstances, the knights would have replaced Reikman, but in this time of war, Kalcyra the Just (see **Event 7**) decided to keep the man on simply due to the efficiency with which he runs the docks.

Regardless of the time of day, Reikman and any dockworkers and guards who are present confront anyone they spot attempting to damage the docks or otherwise disrupt the harbor's daily business (see Development below).

JONAS REIKMAN**CR 4****XP 1,200**Male human fighter 2/rogue (pirate) 3 (*Pathfinder RPG**Ultimate Combat* 72)

N Medium humanoid (human)

Init +7; **Senses** Perception +6**DEFENSE****AC** 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +3 Dex)**hp** 42 (5 HD; 3d8+2d10+13)**Fort** +7, **Ref** +7, **Will** +3; +2 vs. fear, +1 vs. mind-affecting effects**Defensive Abilities** evasion**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** +1 *scorpion whip* +7 (1d4+3), mwk handaxe +6

(1d6+1/x3)

Ranged dagger +7 (1d4+2/19–20)**Special Attacks** sneak attack +2d6**TACTICS**

During Combat The harbormaster prefers to let the militia volunteers engage enemies directly, moving in to flank when possible. Reikman knows the docks exceptionally well, and has memorized the locations of boxes, ropes, and other equipment, allowing him to use his swinging reposition class feature anywhere in this area.

Morale Having thrown in his lot with the Glorious Reclamation, Reikman fights until reduced to fewer than 10 hit points, at which point he attempts to flee Kantaria.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 17, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 10

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

Feats Exotic Weapon Proficiency (scorpion whip), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Sea Legs^{UC}, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (scorpion whip)

Skills Acrobatics +12, Appraise +6, Bluff +7, Climb +11, Disable Device +6, Escape Artist +8, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (geography) +5, Perception +6, Profession (sailor) +6, Swim +8

Languages Common, Dwarven

SQ swinging reposition

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*; **Other Gear** mwk leather lamellar^{UE}, +1 scorpion whip^{UE}, daggers (3), mwk handaxe, *cloak of resistance* +1, half-full bottle of whiskey, key to lockbox in area **D2**, thieves' tools, 20 gp

MILITIA VOLUNTEERS (3 OR 6)

CR 1

XP 400 each

hp 21 each (see page 9)

Treasure: The lockbox in the harbor master's office (area **D2**) can be opened with a successful DC 25 Disable Device check or Jonas Reikman's key. Inside are the dock fees Reikman has yet to turn over to the Glorious Reclamation, as well as what he's managed to skim off the top for himself—a total of 1,149 gp in assorted coins and small gemstones.

Development: Once the harbor's defenders have been dealt with, the PCs can turn their attention to destroying the docks. Each 10-foot-by-10-foot section of the docks has hardness 5, hp 60, and break DC 20, though destroying them through brute force would take a great deal of time and attract a lot of attention. As a result, setting fire to the docks is probably the most reliable way to end Kantaria's ability to host passing riverboats. A variety of methods, such as alchemical items, spells, a summoned fire elemental, or even the ukobach Brextur (see area **B** on page 23), can be used to set the docks on fire. Once set alight, the docks are completely consumed in 3d8 minutes, provided there is no one working nearby who can douse the flames.

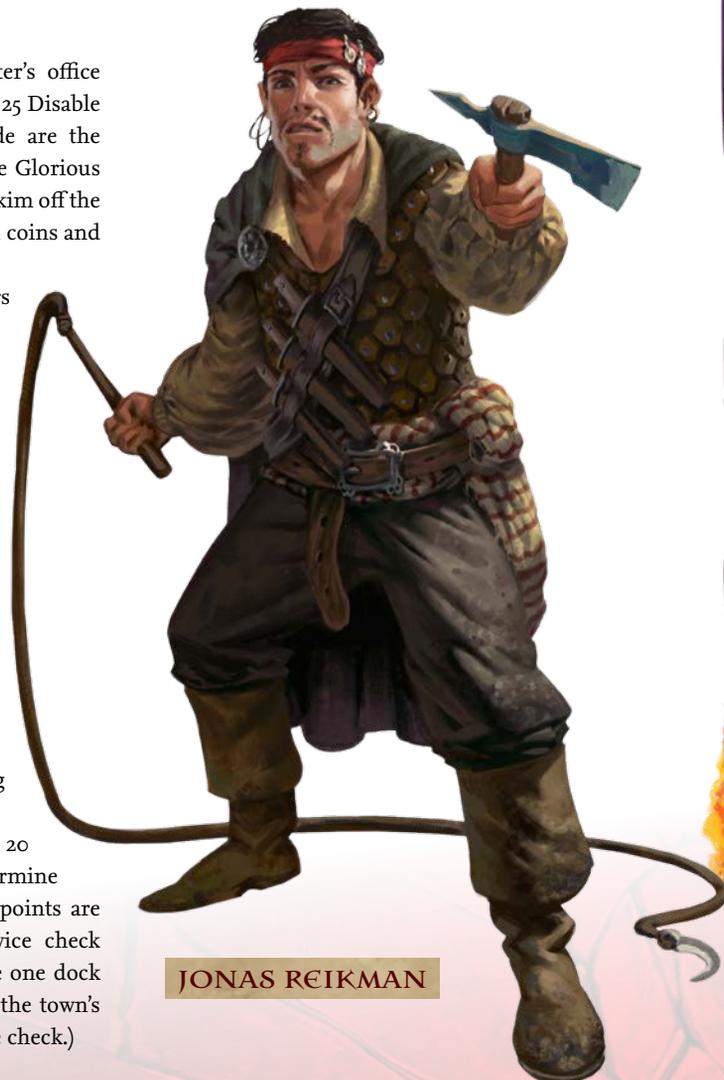
Alternatively, a PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Knowledge (engineering) check can determine the docks' weakest points. Once these weak points are identified, a successful DC 20 Disable Device check and 2d4 rounds of work is sufficient to cause one dock to collapse, effectively destroying it. (Each of the town's three docks requires a separate Disable Device check.)

Destroying the docks increases the Despair Meter by 5. Killing Jonas Reikman or forcing him to flee raises the Despair Meter by an additional 2 points, as the Glorious Reclamation loses a skilled ally.

E. HARDSHIP'S HEARTH

When the Glorious Reclamation began their effort to liberate Kantaria, one of their first targets was a slave camp several miles outside town. Commonly known as "the Pen," this camp housed groups of slaves awaiting transport to the Menador Mountains. The Glorious Reclamation's forces defeated the camp's garrison and freed the slaves housed there before moving on to take Kantaria itself. Rechristened Hardship's Hearth by the Iomedaeans, the site now houses Chelish soldiers and Thrune loyalists captured during the assault on Kantaria, under the guard of a contingent of Glorious Reclamation soldiers.

Located only an hour's walk south of Kantaria, Hardship's Hearth is a major hub of Glorious Reclamation activity, so the site should be a prime target



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for the PCs once they've begun their counterrevolution. The PCs might learn of Hardship's Hearth and its role housing loyalist prisoners (including an Order of the Rack Hellknight) from rumors, or by talking with some of Kantaria's prominent citizens (see **Event 1** on page 13). The PCs can go to Hardship's Hearth any time they wish, preferably before they reach 5th level. If necessary, Razelago can appear and suggest the PCs investigate the site and confirm the veracity of the rumors of the captive Hellknight there.

The camp proper (areas **E1–E4**) is enclosed within a stout, 15-foot-high wooden wall (hardness 5, hp 60, break DC 20) with an elevated watchtower at each corner. Scaling the walls requires a successful DC 21 Climb check. A single gate leads into the camp from the west (hardness 5, hp 60, break DC 25) and is kept locked from the outside at all times (Disable Device DC 25); the camp's warden, Jalila Hadjara (see area **E6**), has the only key. The camp's command post (areas **E5–E7**) is located in a large wooden building standing just outside the western wall, next to the winding road that leads to the gate.

E1. WATCHTOWER (CR 4)

A raised wooden enclosure stands atop the corner of the wall, supported by wooden struts. A wooden ladder climbs to the tower from the ground outside the walls.

The Glorious Reclamation uses these four 25-foot-tall watchtowers to keep watch on the prisoners in the camp below and to look out for potential attackers.

Creatures: A Glorious Reclamation squire and a halfling slinger (a former slave interred within the camp prior to its liberation) staff each tower alongside a lantern archon providing illumination and support. These guards sound the alarm and attack anyone assaulting the camp.

GLORIOUS RECLAMATION SQUIRE CR 1

XP 400

hp 19 (see page 10)

HALFLING SLINGER CR 1/2

XP 200

hp 13 (see page 9)

LANTERN ARCHON CR 2

XP 600

hp 13 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 20*)

E2. PRISONER BARRACK (CR 6)

Rows of bunk beds fill this long, windowless building, each supporting a threadbare blanket and stained, straw-filled pillow. The beds, walls, support pillars, and beams are all made out of wood.

This bunkroom for the Pen's human slaves now serves a similar purpose for the Glorious Reclamation's prisoners. Two simple wooden doors (hardness 5, hp 10) provide access to the building's interior. Normally kept unlocked, they can be barred from the outside if necessary (break DC 25). Every 2 weeks, Linton Demeer, skilled chironurgeon and owner of Healthy Heart Alchemicals, visits to check on the prisoners.

Creatures: The barrack houses a total of 16 prisoners, all Chelish soldiers who had been stationed in Kantaria before being captured by the Glorious Reclamation, and now perform simple labor for the knights and the town. These soldiers are all loyal to House Thrune, but they have been stripped of their gear. In addition, the prisoners are all victims of the vampiric mists in area **E3**; they are pale and weak with dark circles around their eyes, and all have taken Constitution damage from blood loss, though none of the prisoners display any visible wounds. Two hound archons, one posted at each door, guard the prisoners. They fight to the death to prevent the prisoners from escaping or being freed.

HOUND ARCHONS (2) CR 4

XP 1,200 each

hp 39 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 19*)

THRUNE LOYALIST PRISONERS (16) CR 1/3

XP 135 each

Foot soldier (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide 286*)

hp 8 each (currently 4)

Gear none

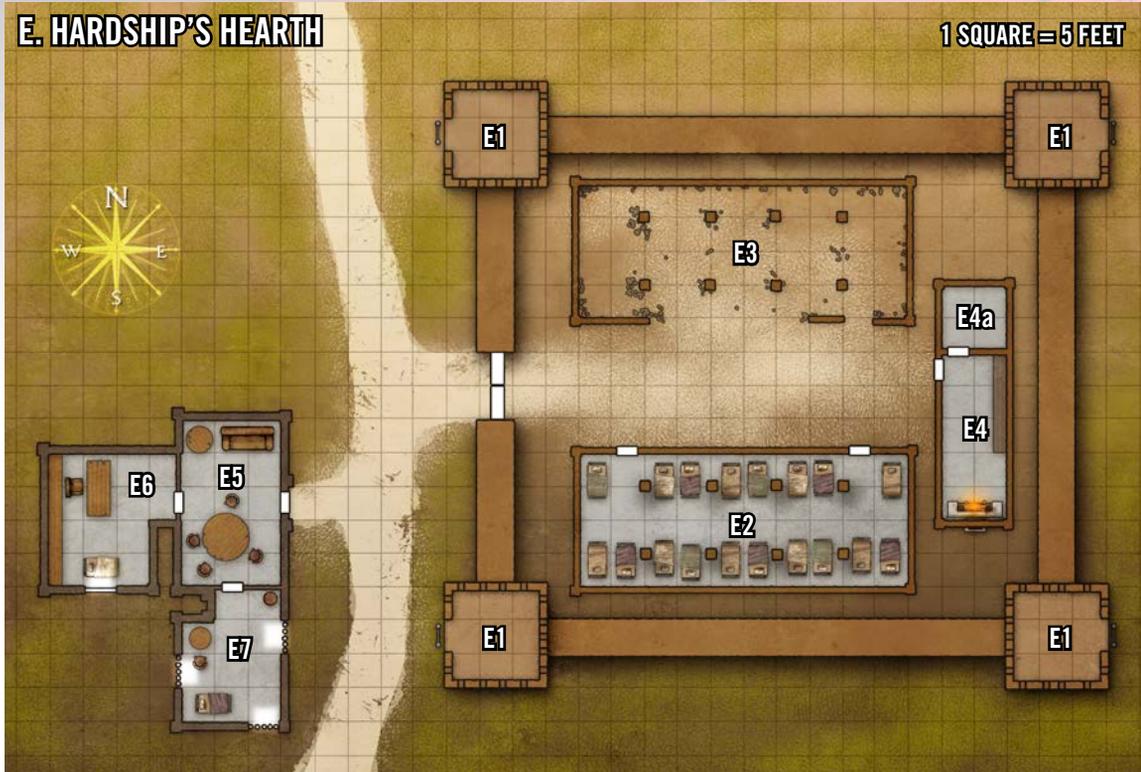
Development: If questioned, the prisoners mention the "vengeful ghosts" of halfling slaves that supposedly haunt the ruins of the burned barrack to the north (area **E3**) and drink the blood of the prisoners at night. If asked about a captive Hellknight, the prisoners can confirm that Zara Orcelani, a Hellknight of the Order of the Rack, is a prisoner at Hardship's Hearth, but she is being held in the camp's command post outside the walls (see area **E7**).

If the PCs free the prisoners, they can choose what to do with the loyalists, though it would be difficult to reequip and feed the soldiers while keeping them hidden from the Glorious Reclamation. One option might be to form the freed soldiers into a new garrison for Hardship's Hearth, especially if the PCs have been driven out of town and need a new base of operations.

Killing the prisoners deprives the PCs of potential allies, but this act increases the Despair Meter by 5, as word reaches Kantaria of just how far the Loyal Agents of Thrune are willing to go to show the consequences of failing Cheliox and House Thrune.

Story Award: If the PCs free the prisoners, award them an additional 1,200 XP.

E. HARDSHIP'S HEARTH



E3. BURNED BARRACK (CR 5)

The scent of sulfur hangs in the air around the blackened remains of what was once a large structure. The roof is gone and only charred wooden walls remain. A large gap in the middle of the ruins indicates where the devastation began.

This building once housed the Pen's halfling slaves, but it was ravaged by a desperate *fireball* cast by a Throne loyalist during the Glorious Reclamation's assault on the camp. Since then, the knights haven't had the time or supplies to demolish or repair the structure.

Creatures: Two vampiric mists have taken up residence in the burned barrack, making the ruins their lair. The mists have come to view the nearby prisoner barrack as their private feeding grounds, and the aberrant creatures are just intelligent enough to refrain from killing their victims outright, keeping their "larder" stocked. Each night, the vampiric mists flow silently into the barrack, drink their fill of blood, then return to their lair. The prisoners think their nocturnal attackers are the ghosts of the halfling slaves who perished in the blaze here and superstitiously avoid the building, hoping and praying each night that the "angry spirits" take their vengeance on someone else. The hound archons and Glorious Reclamation soldiers have attempted to find these "ghosts," but the canny mists have thus far managed to remain hidden. Although they don't usually make an appearance during the day, the vampiric mists attack any living creature exploring the burned barrack.

VAMPIRIC MISTS (2)

CR 3

XP 800 each

hp 30 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 277)

E4. KITCHEN (CR 4)

Vegetables and other foodstuffs ready for preparation sit atop a long worktable in this building. To the south, a large pot of stew bubbles merrily in a fireplace.

Food for the prisoners is prepared in this building. To the north, a door leads into a small larder (area E4a) where foodstuffs are stored. Anyone searching the larder who succeeds at a DC 15 Perception check finds a fresh human corpse hidden beneath a bloodstained sheet—the remains of a recently slain prisoner that the camp's cook, Rima (see Creature below), has been feeding on.

Creature: A prisoner named Rima works in the kitchen, but she is actually a faceless stalker placed here by Linton Demeer to keep an eye on things in the camp. Although surprised by any intrusion, Rima seems friendly enough. However, a PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Sense Motive gets the sense that she's hiding something—in this case, both her true nature and the cadaver hidden in the larder. Diplomacy is ineffective in getting Rima to talk, but with a successful DC 17 Intimidate check a PC can get her to reveal that she is here at Linton Demeer's behest. If confronted with the body in the larder, Rima shifts back to her true form as a swift action and attacks,

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thinking that the PCs are either allied with the Glorious Reclamation or Thrune agents who've come to kill her.

RIMA**CR 4****XP 1,200**

Female faceless stalker (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 122)

hp 42

Melee 2 slams +7 (1d6+4 plus grab)

E5. GUARDROOM (CR 5)

A large burgundy couch sits in the northeast corner of this room next to a small end table. A larger circular table and four chairs fill the southern half of the room. Wooden doors exit the chamber to the south, east, and west.

The prison camp's guards use this chamber as a common room when off duty. It also serves as a waiting room for visitors to the camp. The eastern door audibly squeaks when opened unless the character opening the door succeeds at a DC 10 Stealth check. If the door makes noise, allow Jalila Hadjara in area E6 to attempt a DC 15 Perception check to hear the approaching PCs. The strong wooden door to the south leads to the private cell holding the captive Hellknight Zara Orcelani (area E7) and is kept locked at all times (hardness 5, hp 20, break DC 25, Disable Device DC 30); Jalila carries the only key.

Trap: The door to area E7 bears a trap in addition to the lock. If an evil-aligned creature touches the door, the trap manifests as a golden glyph resembling Iomedae's holy symbol, and lashes out with holy energy while also sounding an audible resonance that alerts Jalila in area E6 to the presence of intruders. Creatures tampering with the lock do not trigger the trap, though subsequently opening the door does. The trap activates only from this side; evil creatures in area E7 do not trigger the trap.

HOLY SMITE TRAP**CR 5****XP 1,600**

Type magic; **Perception** DC 29; **Disable Device** DC 29

EFFECTS

Trigger touch (*detect evil*); **Reset** none

Effect spell effect (*holy smite*, evil creatures take 3d8 damage [evil outsiders take 6d6 damage] and are blinded for 1 round, half damage to neutral creatures [no blindness], Will DC 16 halves damage and negates blindness; *alarm*, audible alarm); multiple targets (all nongood targets in a 20-ft.-radius burst)

E6. WARDEN'S OFFICE (CR 6)

A wooden desk sits at the western end of this chamber, with a wall of empty bookshelves behind it. A cot lies beneath a window along the southern wall.

The warden of the slave camp used this chamber as his office, as does the current warden of Hardship's Hearth, who also makes her quarters here. The empty bookshelves behind the desk once held slave records, all of which were burned at the behest of the Glorious Reclamation.

Creatures: Born in distant Katapesh, Jalila Hadjara was sold into slavery as a child. She eventually ended up in Absalom, where agents of the Pathfinder Society freed her and entrusted her to the care of a local church of Iomedae. Raised in the Inheritor's faith, Jalila has led a mostly insular life, eventually finding purpose in the Glorious Reclamation's call to arms. She joined the force sent to take Kantaria and was entrusted by Oppian Nevilindor to oversee Hardship's Hearth. A member of Kantaria's governing council, Jalila advises Oppian during her infrequent trips into Kantaria proper, though she tries to distance herself from the politics of managing the liberated town. As a sign of devotion to her faith, Jalila has had all of the Eleven Acts of Iomedae tattooed onto her skin in black ink.

Two harbinger archons accompany and assist Jalila, mostly spending their time in quiet contemplation while Jalila meditates or handles the necessary bookkeeping of the prison camp. The archons are quick to act if Jalila is threatened, aiding or healing her as necessary, and both are willing to lay down their lives in defense of the pious woman.

HARBINGER ARCHONS (2)**CR 2****XP 600 each**

hp 16 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 18)

JALILA HADJARA**CR 5****XP 1,600**

Female human monk 6

LG Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 17, flat-footed 18 (+1 Dex, +1 monk, +2 natural, +2 shield, +3 Wis)

hp 54 (6d8+24)

Fort +7, **Ref** +6, **Will** +8; +2 vs. enchantments

Defensive Abilities evasion; **Immune** disease

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.

Melee unarmed strike +8 (1d8+4) or

unarmed strike flurry of blows +8/+8/+3 (1d8+4)

Special Attacks flurry of blows, stunning fist (6/day, DC 16)

TACTICS

Before Combat At the first sign of trouble or intrusion, Jalila quaffs her *potion of barkskin* and applies her *oil of magic weapon* to her hands.

During Combat As soon as combat begins, Jalila enters her Snapping Turtle Style stance as a swift action and attacks with a flurry of blows. When attacked, she uses

Snapping Turtle Clutch to grapple enemies, holding them in place for her harbinger archon allies to target with their blades.

Morale Utterly dedicated to Iomedae and the ideals of the Glorious Reclamation, Jalila fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 12, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +9 (+11 grapple); **CMD** 24 (26 vs. grapple)

Feats Combat Reflexes, Deflect Arrows, Improved Grapple, Improved Unarmed Strike, Snapping Turtle Clutch^{UC}, Snapping Turtle Shell^{UC}, Snapping Turtle Style^{UC}, Stunning Fist, Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +10 (+24 to jump), Climb +8, Diplomacy +4, Knowledge (religion) +8, Perception +12, Sense Motive +12

Languages Common

SQ fast movement, high jump, ki pool (6 points, magic), maneuver training, slow fall 30 ft.

Combat Gear *oil of magic weapon*, *origami swarm*^{UE}, *potion of barkskin*; **Other Gear** *belt of giant strength* +2, keys to Hardship's Hearth gate and area **E7**, wooden holy symbol of Iomedae

Treasure: A lifetime of meditation and devotion has infused Jalila's tattoos with some measure of her fervent piety, making her skin a unique, albeit macabre, reward for the PCs after she is slain. Casting *detect magic* reveals a faint magical aura emanating from Jalila's tattoos (identified as an aura of abjuration with a successful DC 18 Knowledge [arcana] check). Once the aura is detected, a PC can identify the skin's properties with a successful DC 21 Spellcraft check, as if it was a magic item. If flayed and preserved, Jalila's skin has the same properties as angelskin (*Ultimate Equipment* 48), and can be crafted into a suit of leather or studded leather armor without the need to pay the extra cost associated with the special material.

Alternatively, the PCs can use the monk's flayed, tattooed skin against the Glorious Reclamation. If the skin is displayed as a banner or flag, the bearer gains a +4 circumstance bonus on Intimidate checks to demoralize Glorious Reclamation soldiers (including halfling slingers and militia volunteers). If the skin is openly used or flaunted in the course of their insurrectionary activities (such as by displaying it in the market in **Event 4** on page 17 or tacking the skin onto the wall of Valor's Fastness [area **H** on page 43]), increase the Despair Meter by 1, in addition to the normal increase provided by the encounter.

Development: Defeating Jalila increases the Despair Meter by 5, as word spreads of the generous warden's death.



JALILA HADJARA

E7. PRIVATE CELL

A tidily made bed sits in the southwest corner of this chamber. A small table and wooden chair are bolted to the floor, and a silver tray with bits of half-eaten food sits on the table. Thick iron bars secure the room's windows.

The former warden of the slave camp housed the slaves he used as concubines or personal servants in this chamber. Now the room has been redecorated, providing accommodations for a single prisoner important to the Glorious Reclamation. The door to this chamber is both locked and trapped (see area **E5**) and the windows are barred (hardness 10, hp 30, break DC 28).

Creature: The Hellknight Zara Orcelani, shield-malictor of the Order of the Rack, inhabits this chamber. The Glorious Reclamation has confined her in this cell to ensure that she does not incite the other prisoners to counterrevolution, and because the Glorious Reclamation wants to keep the various Hellknight orders out of the conflict as much as possible. Despite her exceptional treatment at the hands of the Iomedaeans, Zara is furious at her imprisonment. Oppian Nevilindor hopes Zara's anger at the Glorious Reclamation can be tempered prior to negotiating her return to the Order of the Rack.

If the PCs come here to talk to Zara at Jalila Hadjara's behest (see **Event 1** on page 13), they find the captive Hellknight sullen, terse, and unwilling to speak with them unless they reveal themselves to be Throne agents. If they do, Zara exhorts them to free her at the earliest opportunity, and pledges her support for their cause. She is currently unarmed and unarmored, but if the PCs have not yet defeated Jalila Hadjara (see area **E6**), Zara tells the PCs about the monk and requests a decent sword and shield to bring into battle against her. She is quick to give orders, not out of malice, but out of a deep desire to exact vengeance and regroup against the Glorious Reclamation.

Zara is fully detailed in the NPC Gallery on page 60.

ZARA ORCELANI

CR 5

XP 1,600

hp 58 (see page 60)

Development: Rescuing Zara from the prison camp is a boon to the

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PCs' cause. She informs the PCs that Faydreth Zaine has her equipment, as well as numerous other magical items taken during the assault on Kantaria, at Narikopolus Manor (area F). The Hellknight is eager to assist the PCs in destabilizing the Glorious Reclamation's rule. She offers her services and advice in future missions, but she sees it as a point of practicality and pride to reclaim her arsenal from Narikopolus Manor at the earliest opportunity.

If any of the PCs express interest in joining the Hellknights, Zara knows of a magic item called a *brimstone barbazu*, which she saw at Narikopolus Manor when Faydreth Zaine interrogated her there. If the PCs recover the item, it can be used to summon a bearded devil. Zara can then witness the prospective Hellknight PC's fight with the devil, thus fulfilling two of the requirements for the Hellknight prestige class (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Inner Sea World Guide* 278).

Story Award: If the PCs successfully free Zara from the hands of the Glorious Reclamation, award them 1,600 XP as if they'd defeated her in combat.

F. NARIKOPOLUS MANOR

Easily Kantaria's most impressive building after Valor's Fastness (area H on page 43), Narikopolus Manor has been the seat of the Narikopolus family, rulers of Kantaria and archdukes of Menador, for hundreds of years. Thrune's declaration of martial law drew the Narikopolus family back to Egorian (a fact that contributed to the timing of the Glorious Reclamation's occupation of Kantaria), leaving the Glorious Reclamation to claim the empty manor.

The PCs likely come to Narikopolus Manor to search for the trove of magical items confiscated from House Narikopolus by the Glorious Reclamation, to retrieve the Hellknight Zara Orcelani's stolen equipment, or to challenge Faydreth Zaine, the Glorious Reclamation's most powerful arcane spellcaster in Kantaria.

FAYDRETH ZAINE (CR 6)

The new lord of Narikopolus Manor is Faydreth Zaine. A wizard of some magical talent, Zaine works to ensure evil magic is contained, devoting his life to the study and destruction of tainted knowledge and vile magical items. Currently, he is studying a number of items confiscated during the Glorious Reclamation's takeover of Kantaria.

Zaine holds the title of rassophore in the Glorious Reclamation; though he's not a part of the order's chain of command, his arcane abilities make him a valuable member of the group's leadership in Kantaria. He serves on the town's ruling council and advises Oppian Nevilindor on strategy and arcane matters.

Creature: Faydreth Zaine represents the primary challenge in Narikopolus Manor. When the PCs first enter the mansion, Zaine can be found in area F16 or F17 (50% chance for either). He is likely alerted to the PCs' presence in the manor by his *alarm* spells on the doors to the house

(area F1). Once he becomes aware of intruders, Zaine protects himself by casting *hold portal* on the doors to the room he occupies, then prepares for combat.

When confronted by intruders, Zaine casts *dimension door* to teleport to the corner of that floor opposite his enemies. There he uses his *scroll of summon monster V* to summon 1d3 hound archons to hunt down his opponents, and casts *message* to contact the living topiaries in area F1 for support. Thereafter, Zaine moves throughout the rooms of the manor house, relying on his allies to directly engage enemies while he harries opponents with spells and attempts to lure them into areas F3 or F6 to trigger the traps in those locations.

FAYDRETH ZAINE

CR 6

XP 2,400

Male half-elf wizard (scrollmaster) 7 (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic* 89)

LG Medium humanoid (elf, human)

Init +6; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 13, flat-footed 18 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +2 Dex, +3 shield)

hp 53 (7d6+26)

Fort +4, **Ref** +5, **Will** +7; +2 vs. enchantments

DR 10/adamantine; **Immune** sleep

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *scroll blade* +3 (1d6/19–20) or
mwk dagger +3 (1d4–1/19–20)

Special Attacks hand of the apprentice (7/day), scroll blade

Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 7th; concentration +11)

4th—*dimension door*, *wall of ice* (DC 18)

3rd—*dispel magic*, *lightning bolt* (DC 17), *spiked pit*^{APG} (DC 17)

2nd—*false life*, *glitterdust* (DC 16), *mirror image*, *scorching ray*

1st—*alarm* (2), *hold portal*, *mage armor*, *vanish*^{APG} (DC 15)

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *light*, *message*, *read magic*

TACTICS

Before Combat Zaine casts *alarm* on the house's two entrances (area F1) every day, as well as *false life* and *mage armor*. When alerted to intruders, he uses his *scroll of stonesskin* and casts *mirror image*.

During Combat Zaine prefers to use his spells or *wand of magic missile* against foes unless he has no other choice. If forced into melee, Zaine uses his *scroll of dimension door* as a +2 *scroll shield*, then activates his *scroll of fly* as a +1 *scroll blade*, using his hand of the apprentice ability to attack with it as needed.

Morale Not willing to risk the Narikopolus relics falling into the hands of evildoers, Zaine stays to fight until reduced to fewer than 15 hit points, at which point he attempts to flee to Valor's Fastness (area H), using his

scroll of dimension door or *scroll of fly* if necessary to escape the manor.

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 15

Feats Combat Casting, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Dimensional Agility^{UC}, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Knowledge [arcana])

Skills Fly +7, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Knowledge (engineering) +12, Knowledge (history) +10, Knowledge (planes) +10, Knowledge (religion) +10, Perception +8, Spellcraft +14, Use Magic Device +7

Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Infernal

SQ elf blood, scroll shield

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *scroll of dimension door*, *scroll of fly*, *scroll of resist energy*, *scroll of stonewood*, *scroll of summon monster V*, *wand of magic missile* (CL 5th, 45 charges); **Other Gear** mwk dagger, *cloak of resistance +1*, *ring of protection +1*, master keys for all doors and windows in Narikopolus Manor (area F), spell component pouch, spellbook (contains all 0-level spells, all prepared spells, plus *create pit*^{MPG}, *explosive runes*, *fireball*, *fly*, *identify*, *magic missile*, *mount*, *resist energy*, *sepia snake sigil*, and *stonewood*), 63 gp

Development: Killing Faydreth Zaine, a major leader of the Glorious Reclamation, increases the Despair Meter by 6. If Zaine successfully escapes Narikopolus Manor, he flees to Valor's Fastness (area H), where he uses similar strategies to vex the PCs in Part 3.

EXPLORING NARIKOPOLUS MANOR

A thick hedge surrounds the Narikopolus Manor. The manor house's exterior doors are strong wooden doors (hardness 5, hp 20, break DC 25, Disable Device DC 25); the interior doors are simple, made of lighter woods from the surrounding Barrowood (hardness 5, hp 10, break DC 15). All windows are securely shuttered and locked (hardness 5, hp 15, break DC 18, Disable Device DC 30).

The ceilings within the manor are 10 feet high. The building is richly furnished; paintings and wooden cabinets filled with display pieces line the walls, and the rooms and corridors feature similarly decorative furnishings. Small torches and hanging chandeliers powered by *continual flame* spells (CL 10th) provide light in the halls and public rooms, while the bedrooms are equipped with traditional oil lamps. The storage areas are unlit.

Most rooms in the manor are described only briefly below, as it is likely the PCs will move quickly through these areas in search of their target. Those encounter areas requiring more detail (because of creatures, traps, or treasures) are described after the room summaries. The map for the manor appears on page 35.

F1. Entrance: This area is detailed on page 34.

F2. Foyer: A large couch sits to one side of this entry hall. Opposite the couch, a grand stairway climbs to the second floor and area F12. A storage closet under the stairs holds dozens of coats, cloaks, and other outerwear.

F3. Hall Library: This area is detailed on page 34.

F4. Storage: These areas contain barrels of water, foodstuffs, linens, tools, and other mundane items necessary for daily life.

F5. Servants' Quarters: These rooms housed the Narikopolus servants and slaves, all of whom were emancipated by the Glorious Reclamation. They contain basic, worn furniture, but are otherwise empty.

F6. Locked Stairwell: This area is fully detailed on page 35.

F7. Privy: Each of these small chambers contains a commode, a sink, and a cast iron tub.

F8. Lower Kitchen: The Narikopolus family's servants prepared breakfasts and casual lunches for guests in this kitchen, which



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serves the lower level of the house. With the family gone, Zaine has had little use for this kitchen or the adjacent breakfast room (area **F9**). A wood-burning stove stands against the western wall, and the cupboards around the walls store crockery, cooking implements, and dry goods.

F9. Breakfast Room: Guests and family members alike enjoyed breakfast in this chamber, where wide glass windows in the northern wall fill the room with outside light. Elegantly carved chairs encircle the wide wooden table in the center of the room.

F10. Living Room: The Narikopolus family received visitors in this chamber, or retired here after breakfast or lunch for casual conversation. Now Zaine uses this room to entertain guests on the rare occasions he leaves his work. A piano stands in one corner, a fireplace occupies another, and a couch stands along the east wall.

F11. Lower Bedroom: This spacious bedroom belonged to the eldest Narikopolus son. A large bed stands in the southeast corner, and empty bookshelves line the walls; their contents were taken to Egorian when the family fled.

F12. Second Floor Landing: The grand stairway from the manor's foyer (area **F2**) ends here, in an open area containing several glass trophy cases. The cases are empty, their contents taken to the Narikopolus's estate in Egorian. From the landing, great 15-foot-tall windows look out over the manor's grounds and front entrance (area **F1**).

F13. Upper Kitchen: A close copy of its downstairs counterpart (area **F8**), this kitchen sees far more use now. Zaine prepares his own meals here when dining alone, but hires cooks to handle the larger dinners he hosts.

F14. Dining Room: Larger than its downstairs counterpart (area **F9**), this dining room hosted private dinners for the Narikopolus family and privileged guests. Now, Faydreth entertains guests of all types here, hosting at least one meal per week for Kantaria's governing council. Wide windows along the north wall illuminate a great table in the center of the room, a cabinet displaying glossy red terra sigillata bowls, and a small table holding liqueurs on the eastern edge of the room.

F15. Sitting Room: This large room is bereft of any furniture, though a large fireplace fills the northeast corner. The Narikopolus family kept their most ostentatious furniture here, but had it moved to Egorian when they received summons from House Thrune.

F16. Study: This area is detailed on page 35.

F17. Zaine's Bedroom: This area is detailed on page 35.

F1. ENTRANCE (CR 6)

Two entrances lead into the manor: the front door on the south side of the house, and a side door to the east. Each is accessible by a 5-foot-high flight of steps climbing to a stone landing. The doors remain open during the day, but are locked at night. Faydreth Zaine casts *alarm* on both entrances every day; mental alarms warn him of any intruders or uninvited guests using the doors.

Creatures: In one of their many infernal bargains, members of House Narikopolus enslaved two living topiaries to guard their estate. When Kantaria fell to the Glorious Reclamation, Faydreth freed the plant creatures, but negotiated with them to remain on the manor's grounds. One topiary guards each entrance to the house. Sculpted in the form of savage devils, the topiaries act only when instructed to do so (see Development below), altering their forms into angels as they move to attack. The topiaries pursue enemies within the manor and its grounds, but do not leave the premises.

LIVING TOPIARIES (2)

CR 4

XP 1,200 each

hp 42 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4* 181)

Development: Once called by Faydreth's *message* spell (see page 32), the living topiaries move throughout the manor and its grounds in search of intruders.

F3. HALL LIBRARY (CR 5)

The walls of this hallway are lined with bookshelves filled with treatises on Chelish history, though large gaps exist in the collection—books confiscated by Faydreth. Some of the texts can now be found in his personal study (area **F16**); the rest were destroyed.

Trap: Knowing that many of the books here contain sensitive material that should be kept on hand but also carefully controlled, Faydreth installed a magical trap in this hallway. Touching any of the books causes a conflagration to erupt from all of the books, filling the hall with fire and destroying the texts. Alternatively, the trap can be triggered manually with a spoken command word. If triggered in this manner, the speaker of the command word is protected from the flames.

HALLWAY CONFLAGRATION TRAP

CR 5

XP 1,600

Type magic; Perception DC 28; Disable Device DC 28

EFFECTS

Trigger touch (*alarm*) or manual (see above); **Reset** none
Effect spell effect (*fireball*, 7d6 fire damage, Reflex DC 17 half); multiple targets (all targets in area **F3**)

Treasure: Among the books here is a collection of volumes detailing numerous forms of fiendish bargaining skills, as well as incentives for various devils that might be useful in summoning them. A character referencing these books gains a +2 insight bonus on skill checks to influence a devil (such as in conjunction with a *planar binding* spell) and knowledge of what appeals to specific types of devils, as detailed on pages 107–108 of *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic*. This collection weighs 40 pounds in total, and can be sold as a set for 2,000 gp to an interested buyer.

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F6. LOCKED STAIRWELL (CR 5)

The doors to this area are locked (hardness 5, hp 10, break DC 15, Disable Device DC 25). This auxiliary staircase was originally designed for the use of slaves and servants so they could carry out their duties out of sight of the family.

Trap: Always expecting betrayal or espionage by their supposed allies, the Narikopolus family planted a special trap keyed to agents of House Throne in this stairwell. Anyone wearing a symbol of House Throne (including the invisible *arcane mark* given to loyal Throne agents such as the PCs) triggers the trap, which forces them to each face an illusion of their greatest fear. Faydreth found the trap but left it in place, appreciating the irony at his enemies' paranoia as well as the extra defense. He also modified the trap to alert him with a mental alarm if the trap is triggered.

PHANTASMAL KILLER TRAP CR 5

XP 1,600

Type magic; Perception DC 29; Disable Device DC 29

EFFECTS

Trigger visual (*true seeing*); **Reset** none

Effect spell effect (*phantasmal killer*, Will DC 16 disbelieves, death, Fort DC 16 for 3d6 damage; *alarm*, mental alarm)

F16. STUDY

This room was the private study of the House Narikopolus patriarch, but Faydreth Zaine has converted the chamber

into a study and storage room for blasphemous texts and tainted magical items.

Treasure: Among the textbooks in this chamber, the PCs can find several valuable treatises about devils and the infernal histories of Cheliox, House Narikopolus, and House Throne. These tomes weigh 20 pounds in total and are worth 2,000 gp. Resting on the desk atop the other tomes is an evil *book of extended summoning* (*Ultimate Equipment* 283).

One of the most intriguing items in the chamber is a small figurine called a *brimstone barbazu* (see the sidebar on page 36), which Zaine was intently examining to see whether a good-aligned version could be crafted. If she is with the PCs, Zara Orcelani can identify the item and its function immediately.

Development: There is a 50% chance that Faydreth Zaine is in this chamber when the PCs first arrive in the manor. Otherwise, he's found in area F17. See page 32 for his tactics once he becomes aware of the PCs' presence.

F17. ZAINE'S BEDROOM

This bedchamber was reserved for the patriarch of House Narikopolus. Faydreth has claimed it now, filling the bookshelves with tomes on arcane lore and celestial scriptures detailing the good-aligned planes.

Treasure: Unlike the fiendish tomes found elsewhere in the house, Faydreth's personal collection of angelic scriptures are common documents, mostly on loan from the Kantaria Historicum. Outside of Kantaria, these books are worth 100 gp to an appropriate buyer.

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BRIMSTONE BARBAZU

At the end of their Hellknight training, all armigers must endure one final trial to fully test their discipline and loyalty—a battle with a summoned devil. Those who succeed are promoted to the full rank of Hellknight, while those who fail pay the price with their lives. To provide worthy foes for their initiates, many Hellknight orders make use of magical statuettes known as *brimstone barbazus* to summon bearded devils that are controlled by Hellknight signifers for the test. The Hellknights also use the figurines in defense of their citadels, summoning barbazus to assist the Hellknights in repelling attackers.



BRIMSTONE BARBAZU

PRICE
3,300 GP

SLOT none

CL 11th

WEIGHT 2 lbs.

AURA moderate conjuration

Shaped in the form of a leering bearded devil clutching a glaive, this dusty yellowish figurine stands just under a foot tall. When broken or shattered, a *brimstone barbazu* steadily heats up over the course of 1 round, belching thick sulfuric smoke before bursting into flames. At the start of the following round, a bearded devil (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 73) appears in the square where the figurine was broken. This summoned devil is under the command of the creature that broke the figurine, as per *summon monster*. The devil disappears when slain or after 20 rounds. Once used, a *brimstone barbazu* is destroyed.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

COST 1,650 GP

Craft Wondrous Item, Extend Spell, *summon monster V*

In addition, Faydreth has stored all of the Hellknight Zara Orcelani's equipment (see page 60) in the adjoining storage room (area F4).

Development: There is a 50% chance that Faydreth Zaine is in this chamber when the PCs first arrive in the manor. Otherwise, Faydreth is found in area F16. See page 32 for Faydreth's tactics once he becomes aware of the PCs' presence.

G. THE BLOOMING CAVES

The PCs likely investigate the Blooming Caves at the behest of Linton Demeer (see **Event 9** on page 21),

or perhaps following up on rumors of the missing Bradon family (see page 8). A half-day's journey northwest of Kantaria, the Blooming Caves are a deep cave system that is famous locally because of the luminous fungi and exotic plants found within. Normally a popular spot for young lovers seeking exotic trysts, travel to the caverns has all but ceased because of rumors of desperate rebels in the surrounding area. These rebels, loyalists of House Narikopolus, were already malnourished and suffering from fatigue when they sought shelter in the caverns just over a week before the PCs first arrived in Kantaria.

Soon after the loyalists made camp, they ran afoul of a pair of myceloids. These fungal creatures had found their way to the surface from the Darklands via an obscure access tunnel before discovering the Blooming Caves. Under normal circumstances, the proud Narikopolus retainers would have had no issue dealing with the myceloids, but in their weakened state, the loyalists quickly succumbed to the fungi's purple pox disease and spore domination. Now, the Blooming Caves are home to the myceloids and their growing brood, as well as a handful of resilient loyalists who serve the walking fungi as spore-dominated slaves.

Ceilings within the Blooming Caves vary between 10 and 15 feet in height. The ever-present glowing fungi in the caverns emit a warm, pink glow, filling each chamber with dim light unless otherwise noted. The air in the caves is damp and humid because of the underground stream running through the chambers.

G1. CAVERN ENTRANCE (CR 6)

Two torches mounted on the walls illuminate a roughly circular stone chamber. At the northern end of the cave, a steep slope leads up to a subterranean passageway. To the south, a tunnel exits the cavern into an open clearing.

Creatures: The myceloids managed to infect all of the Narikopolus loyalists with purple pox when they first encountered the humans. Now, four spore-dominated loyalists watch the entrance to the cavern, ensuring no one enters without being challenged. All of the loyalists are afflicted with purple pox; their skin is riddled with purple lesions, some of which sprout small mushrooms. Two of the loyalists stand at the bottom of the slope in the northern end of the cavern, while the other two stand at the top, 5 feet above.

G. BLOOMING CAVES



SPORE-DOMINATED LOYALISTS (4) CR 2

XP 600 each

Human ranger 4

LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 22 each (4d10-4)

Fort +2, **Ref** +6, **Will** -2

Weaknesses purple pox-afflicted, spore-dominated

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee short sword +6 (1d6+2/19-20)

Ranged mwk composite longbow +7 (1d8+2/×3)

Special Attacks combat style (archery), favored enemy (humans +2)

Ranger Spells Prepared (CL 1st; concentration +2)

1st—*gravity bow*^{APG}

TACTICS

During Combat The loyalists immediately cast *gravity bow* and fire their longbows at lightly armored targets. Against heavily armored halflings or humans, the loyalists switch to their *bane arrows*.

Morale The two loyalists at the top of the slope each take a single shot with their bows before pulling back to take advantage of the traps in area **G2**. The remaining loyalists attempt to shoot down enemies as best they can, but pull back to area **G2** after 3 rounds. The loyalists make their final stand in that area, fighting to the death under the effects of spore domination.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 15, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

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

Feats Dodge, Endurance, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot

Skills Acrobatics +5, Climb +8, Handle Animal +6, Heal +2, Knowledge (geography) +6, Knowledge (nature) +6, Perception +4, Ride +6, Stealth +8, Survival +4

Languages Common, Infernal

SQ favored terrain (urban +2), hunter's bond (companions), track +2, wild empathy +3

Combat Gear +1 arrows (5), +1 halflingbane arrows (2), +1 humanbane arrows (2); **Other Gear** studded leather, mwk composite longbow (+2 Str) with 20 arrows, short sword

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Purple Pox-Afflicted (Ex) The loyalists are afflicted with the myceloids' purple pox disease and have taken 8 points of ability damage to their Constitution and Wisdom scores. This adjustment reduces their CR by 1.

Spore-Dominated (Sp) The loyalists are currently under the effects of *charm monster* (CL 6th) because of the myceloids' spore domination ability.

Development: If the loyalists are freed from their spore domination, they immediately flee from the caves in horror. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Heal check while examining the loyalists or their bodies can identify their affliction as purple pox. If successful, the PC can then attempt a DC 19 Knowledge (nature) check to connect the disease to myceloids.

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G2. LOVERS' CAVE (CR 5)

Spots of glowing fungi along the rock walls fill this chamber with a violent luminescence. More patches of fungi grow on the ground, though a clear path through the cavern connects passageways to the south and northeast.

This chamber is the only part of the Blooming Caves normally frequented by visitors. Over the years, countless couples have inscribed their names and pledges of love and devotion on the walls of the cave. PCs who succeed at a DC 15 Perception check can notice some specific engravings, including the name of Jana Holdus, owner of The Sweetest Drop tavern and member of Kantaria's governing council, which appears multiple times with the names of her many short-term lovers, as well as the signatures of Anselm and Gebhard Mathis, owners of the Kantaria Historicum. More recent carvings can be found near the back of the cavern, where many of

the Narikopolus loyalists, including Gregor Ardain, inscribed their names.

Moist air and the sound of running water rise from the northeast tunnel, noticeable once a creature enters the northern half of the chamber. A damp wooden sign affixed to the wall next to the tunnel entrance reads, "Danger. Go no further. By edict of House Narikopolus of Kantaria." The warning sign was posted to deter would-be explorers from hurting themselves in the tunnel beyond (see Hazard below).

Hazard: The passage to the northeast heads east for a short distance before curving to the south in a steep, slippery slope that descends 30 feet below the ground to area G3. Traversing the slope requires a successful DC 5 Climb check; a creature that fails the check falls into area G3 and takes 2d6 points of falling damage.

Traps: After their initial arrival in the Blooming Caves, the Narikopolus loyalists dug two pit traps in this cavern to capture or impede any Glorious Reclamation scouts trying to find them. The pits are camouflaged with fungi scraped from the walls and floor, but perceptive characters might notice that the fungi covering the pits glow with a much dimmer light than the other fungi in the chamber.

CAMOUFLAGED PIT TRAPS (2)

CR 3

XP 800 each

Type mechanical; Perception DC 20; Disable Device DC 25

EFFECTS

Trigger location; Reset manual

Effect 30-ft.-deep pit (3d6 falling damage); Reflex DC 20 avoids; multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-square area)

G3. WATER TUNNEL (CR 5)

Flowing water rushes through a small stone alcove along the western edge of this chamber, which is little more than a widening of the tunnel. The corridor continues on to the south, and up a steep incline to the north.

The vein of water is part of a larger underground river that flows through the caverns in an easterly direction. The river connects to areas G5, G6, and G7, moving at a speed of 40 feet per round. The water is considered rough; PCs must succeed at a DC 15 Swim check or a DC 15 Strength check to navigate the river and avoid going under. Creatures that fall into this chamber down the slope from area G2 and fail a DC 15 Reflex save land in the water and may potentially be swept away.

Creatures: A pair of bunyips frequent the underground river passing through the Blooming Caves. Recently, one of the bunyips consumed some of the fungus growing in the caves, contracted purple pox, and was subsequently spore-dominated by



SPORE-DOMINATED
LOYALIST

the myceloids. Unwilling to leave its companion, the infected bunyip's mate remains as well. There is a 50% chance of encountering the two bunyips when the PCs first enter this chamber. Otherwise, anyone entering the river attracts the bunyips' attention after 1d6 rounds.

BUNYIP **CR 3**

XP 800

hp 32 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2 50*)

PURPLE POX-AFFLICTED BUNYIP **CR 3**

XP 800

hp 27 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2 50*)

Fort +4, Will +0

Weaknesses purple pox-afflicted, spore-dominated

Special Attacks roar (DC 12)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Purple Pox-Afflicted (Ex) The bunyip is afflicted with the myceloids' purple pox disease and has taken 2 points of ability damage to its Constitution and Wisdom scores.

Spore-Dominated (Sp) The bunyip is currently under the effects of *charm monster* (CL 6th) because of the myceloids' spore domination ability.

G4. BARRICADES

Two crude wooden barricades stand upright in the center of this open chamber, facing west. Pink fungus lines the walls, patches of it creeping up the sides of the wooden planks that make up the haphazard defenses. Tunnels branch off from the cavern in all four directions.

The Narikopolus loyalists set up barricades in this chamber to perform a last stand against Glorious Reclamation forces that never came. Creatures adjacent to the barricades have cover against any attacks coming from the opposite side.

G5. UNDERGROUND BEACH (CR 6)

A body of water fills the northern part of this chamber, creating a rocky subterranean beach. Brilliant pink light shines from a nearly solid mass of fungus on the walls here, reflecting off the water in vivid displays. A single tunnel exits the cavern to the south.

The water here is part of the same underground river connecting areas G3, G6, and G7.

Creatures: When the Narikopolus loyalists contracted the myceloids' purple pox, they were already at the point of complete exhaustion. The first to succumb to the affliction gave birth to a new generation of the fungus creatures, but the myceloids that spawned from the malnourished humans were stunted and malformed. The original myceloids, Mam and Pap (see area G6), in

keeping with their newfound "family" identity, view this first generation of offspring as their "children," though such relationships are not relevant to myceloid ecology.

Three of these "young'uns"—as Mam and Pap call them—spend their time here when not vying for the affections of their "parents." These newly birthed myceloids have yet to fully grasp Mam and Pap's views on "settling down" in the caves, and when confronted with outsiders, immediately attempt to catch as many enemies in their spore clouds as possible (the save DC for young'uns' purple pox and *lesser geas* is 13). The young'uns telepathically describe to those afflicted with the pox how the myceloids will make the afflicted kill their friends before transforming them into new siblings. These telepathic communications are equal parts vindictive and soothing, as the stunted myceloids claim to "look forward to having big brothers and sisters."

If hard pressed in combat, the young'uns attempt to telepathically call out to the spore-dominated bunyip in the nearby river (area G3) for assistance.

MYCELOID YOUNG'UNS (3) **CR 3**

XP 800 each

Young myceloid (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3 196, 291*)

hp 27 each

G6. MAM AND PAP (CR 6)

The floor at the northern end of this cavernous space ends abruptly at an open artery of rushing water. Bioluminescent fungus covers the ceiling of the chamber, while smaller patches grow haphazardly on the ground. Rocks the size of halflings, chiseled into crude chairs, sit near the center of the cave. At the southern end of the room, two tunnels branch off to the southwest and southeast.

The ceiling in this chamber is 15 feet high. The underground river to the north connects to areas G3, G5, and G7.

Creatures: The two myceloids responsible for the subjugation and infection of the Narikopolus loyalists reside in this chamber. Before arriving at the Blooming Caves, the myceloids happened upon a local farming family—the Bradons, who have since been reported as missing in Kantaria (see page 8)—and massacred them. Now calling themselves Mam and Pap—words they first heard from the screams of the Bradons' children as the myceloids slew the Bradon parents—the fungus folk hope to raise an idyllic "family" in the Blooming Caves.

The two myceloids sit on the stone chairs in the center of the room, accompanied by one severely pox-afflicted and spore-dominated loyalist, who sits on the riverbank, vacantly staring at her reflection in the water. The loyalist is teetering on the brink of death from her fungal affliction. Small drops of blood weep from the

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broken, purple lesions spread across her body. Drool rolls from her quivering lips, and her mouth is filled with dozens of tiny purple mushrooms that tear and bleed when she speaks.

Having used the loyalists to spawn their first generation, Mam and Pap are now eager to settle in and chat with outsiders, hoping to “make friends with their new neighbors.” The myceloids are happy to talk; they’re not eager to fight the PCs, nor do they feel a strong urge to add more bodies to their family. Assuming none of the PCs speak Undercommon, Mam and Pap use their telepathy to speak through the pox-afflicted loyalist in an ingratiating drawl. The myceloids’ starting attitude is indifferent; with a successful DC 15 Diplomacy check, a PC can make them friendly (see Development below).

If combat erupts, Mam and Pap fight viciously to defend their new homestead. Pap has a masterwork scythe, taken from the farmers he and Mam slew before coming to the Blooming Caves, but he has no proficiency in the weapon, and drops it after the first attack. The myceloids use their telepathy to contact the Wrong One in area G7 to assist them, if within range. If either Mam or Pap is slain, the surviving myceloid attempts to telepathically call the young’uns from area G5 for aid.

The pox-afflicted loyalist takes no actions except to speak on behalf of Mam and Pap, even if attacked. She has taken 13 points of Constitution damage and 11 points of Wisdom damage from the purple pox; 1 more point of ability damage to either will kill her or render her unconscious. If necessary, use the stats for a spore-dominated loyalist on page 37, adjusted to reflect this loyalist’s greater ability damage.

MAM AND PAP (2)

CR 4

XP 1,200 each

Myceloid (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 196)

hp 37 each

Melee 2 claws +6 (1d6+3 plus disease) or
mwk scythe +3 (2d4+4/x4 plus disease)

Treasure: Pap’s masterwork scythe is rusted and sprouts purple and orange fungal blooms, causing the weapon to afflict purple pox on a successful hit, just like a myceloid’s claws. This property disappears 1d4 days after the scythe is removed from the cave. The pox-afflicted loyalist carries the same gear as her fellows in area G1.

Development: If the PCs befriend Mam and Pap, they can learn much of the myceloids’ story, including their murder of the Bradons, which they gleefully retell in visceral detail, embellishing the tale with movements of their stunted limbs. Encountering the Bradons engendered in the fungus creatures a desire to procreate, so the myceloids took the adults’ names and decided to “start a family,” having slain the farmers too quickly to properly afflict them with their pox. Discovering the

Narikopolus loyalists in the caves, Mam and Pap managed to slip past a fatigued guard and infect the group with their purple pox rather than slaying them outright.

One important piece of information the friendly myceloids relate is the presence of “the Wrong One” in area G7. Mam talks about this freak creature as a child who needs more attention and love, but Pap scolds her and states that “something is definitely wrong with that one.” If questioned further, the myceloids reveal that the loyalist that spawned the Wrong One was not human like the other loyalists, but some other kind of creature that succumbed to the purple pox.

It’s possible for the PCs to ally with the myceloids, though such an alliance comes fraught with possible betrayal if and when Mam and Pap eventually decide to expand their brood. Fostering an arrangement where Glorious Reclamation prisoners are brought to the myceloids to be infected with purple pox and then coerced into giving up key secrets, or sent back to Kantaria as spore-dominated agents, is a realistic plan. Linton Demeer, however, could complicate such an alliance, as the faceless stalker is unwilling to just stand by and let the death of one of his people go unavenged.

G7. FUNGAL PLANTATION (CR 7)

The pinkish glow of the caverns’ fungus dulls to a muted purple in this chamber, which hosts a great fungus farm in its southern half. Flies swarm above a massive pile of compost littered with the rotting corpses of at least five humanoids. Each of these gaunt cadavers has been split open down the center, exposing hundreds of purple mushrooms growing inside. A subterranean river flows through the cave’s east side.

The underground river flows through this chamber from areas G3, G5, and G6.

Creature: Among the Narikopolus loyalists in the caves was the faceless stalker Gregor Ardain, who also contracted the myceloids’ purple pox. The disease eventually killed Gregor, but instead of creating a new myceloid, his body spawned a freak mutation. This creature, dubbed the “Wrong One” by Mam and Pap, is more aberration than fungus, resembling a writhing mass of living, rubbery flesh in the shape of a vaguely humanoid mushroom. Dozens of crude humanoid faces, each contorted in agony, adorn the mushroom’s cap. The Wrong One lacks the usual disease and spore abilities of myceloids, but its faceless stalker ancestry provides it with some unique abilities of its own. The warped creature is hostile to any creature other than myceloids, attacking intruders immediately.

The Wrong One wallows in the fungal farms maintained by the myceloid “family.” The stunted myceloid young’uns in area G5 normally refuse to be around it, but two of them have come here to torture

their mutated “sibling.” When the PCs first enter this cavern, the young’uns are poking the writhing creature with sticks, but they quickly try to run off to get Mam and Pap in area **G6** or their allies in area **G5** if combat occurs.

MYCELOID YOUNG’UNS (2) **CR 3**

XP 800 each

Young myceloid (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 291, 196)

hp 27 each

THE WRONG ONE **CR 5**

XP 1,600

Unique flesh myceloid (*Advanced Bestiary* 148, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 196)

NE Medium aberration (augmented plant)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent, tremorsense 20 ft.; **Perception** +6

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+2 Dex, +6 natural)

hp 52 (5d8+30); fast healing 2

Fort +9, **Ref** +3, **Will** +4

DR 5/slashing; **Immune** purple pox; **Resist** cold 10, fire 10, sonic 10

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 claws +8 (1d6+5 plus bleed)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks bleed (1d4), long limbs

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th;

concentration +6)

3/day—remorseful aspect (DC 14)

TACTICS

During Combat The Wrong

One uses its remorseful aspect spell-like ability against intruders, preferring victims already suffering from purple pox. When an opponent gets within its reach, the Wrong One attacks with its claws.

Morale The Wrong One fights to the death unless Mam or Pap commands it to stop fighting.

STATISTICS

Str 21, **Dex** 15, **Con** 20, **Int** 9, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 20

Feats Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Toughness

Skills Perception +6, Sense Motive +6, Stealth +6, Survival +9; **Racial**

Modifiers +4 Sense Motive, +4 Survival

Languages Undercommon; telepathy 60 ft. (myceloid and purple pox sufferers only)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Long Limbs (Ex) As a result of its faceless stalker ancestry, the Wrong One’s arms are lengthier than that of normal myceloids, giving it reach of 10 feet.

Remorseful Aspect (Sp) The Wrong One can adjust its skin to crudely resemble the appearance of another creature it can see, the sight of which fills the target with profound disgust and remorse. This spell-like ability functions as *terrible remorse*^{UM}. Creatures currently infected with purple pox take a –2 penalty on saving throws against this ability.

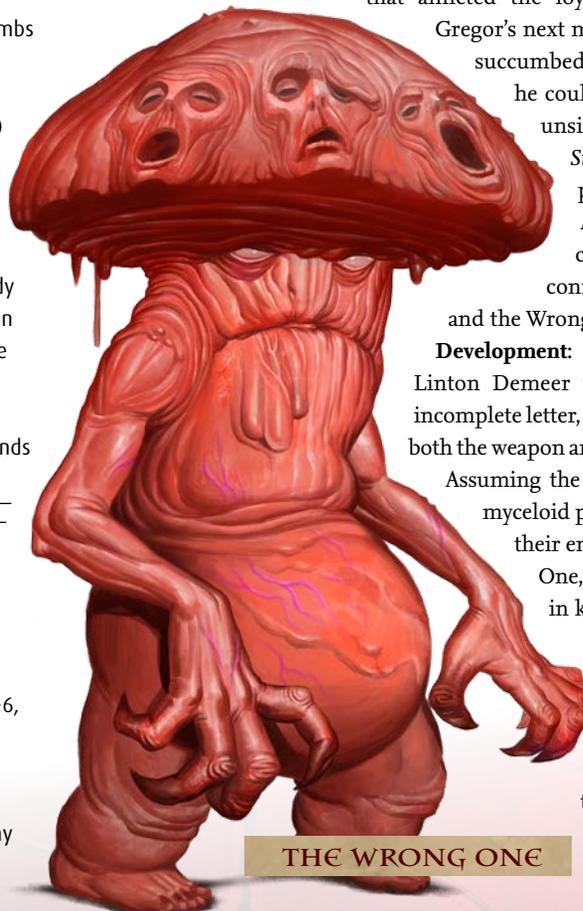
Treasure: A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Perception check finds a magic warhammer called *Sinderbos* (see the sidebar on page 42) discarded in the middle of the huge fungal pile in the chamber. The hammer was once wielded by Tychus Groat, Kantaria’s blacksmith; following Groat’s battle against Oppian Nevilindor, Gregor Ardain retrieved the weapon from the still-warm hands of the dead blacksmith. Gregor used *Sinderbos* as a means of further ingratiating himself with the Narikopolus loyalists, who revered Groat as a true loyalist of House Throne.

The PCs can also discover the remains of a half-written note addressed to Linton Demeer in the heap of fungus describing the beginning stages of the disease that afflicted the loyalists. This was to be Gregor’s next missive to Linton, but he succumbed to the purple pox before he could finish it. The letter is unsigned, but together with *Sinderbos*, it certainly points toward Gregor Ardain’s presence in the caves (and may imply a connection between Gregor and the Wrong One as well).

Development: If the PCs return to Linton Demeer with *Sinderbos* and the incomplete letter, the alchemist recognizes both the weapon and Gregor’s handwriting.

Assuming the PCs tell him about the myceloid presence in the caves and their encounter with the Wrong One, Demeer takes comfort in knowing what transpired at the Blooming Caves.

He rewards the PCs for their actions as promised, and may even propose a longer-term alliance with them against the Glorious Reclamation (see **Event 10** on page 22).



THE WRONG ONE

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SINDERBOS

Forged with oaths of devotion to the archdevil Moloch, the magic warhammer once belonged to Kantaria's black smith, Tychus Groat, and has since become a symbol of opposition to the Glorious Reclamation.

SINDERBOS

PRICE
12,312 GP

SLOT none

CL 10th

WEIGHT 5 lbs.

AURA moderate conjuration and evocation

This pitch-black +1 flaming warhammer is bereft of any ornamentation beyond an engraving on its face of a bull's head with an open flame, the unholy symbol of the archdevil Moloch. Whenever the wielder of *Sinderbos* successfully strikes a creature with the hammer, he can create a cloud of ash around the target as an immediate action. This ash shares the target's space and persists for 1 round before dissipating. The ash does not obscure sight, but the target and any creatures that enter the cloud must succeed at a DC 14 Fortitude save or take a -2 penalty on attack rolls for 1 round as they cough and choke on the fiery ash. Holding one's breath provides no benefit, but creatures that don't breathe or that have any kind of fire immunity or resistance are immune to the cloud's effects.

If Moloch is the wielder's patron, the wielder can forge masterwork armor and weapons with *Sinderbos*, which reduces the DC of the Craft check for items' masterwork components to 10 (the Craft DC for the items' standard components are unchanged). Items crafted in this way have a faint evil aura for the purposes of detect evil or similar effects.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS COST 6,812 GP

Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *ash storm*^{UM}, *fireball*, creator must worship Moloch and have 5 ranks in Craft (armor) or Craft (weapons)



Treasure: Most personal belongings in the cavern are mundane items abandoned by the loyalists after their domination, but a set of +1 leather armor bearing the family crest of House Narikopolus rests neatly next to a bedroll. In addition, PCs who search the cavern find four polished citrines worth 100 gp each and 318 gp in assorted coins.

PART 3: VALOR'S LAST STAND

Once the Despair Meter reaches 55 or higher, the Glorious Reclamation pulls back the majority of its forces to Kantaria's fortified temple of Iomedae, Valor's Fastness. By this point, the PCs have likely taken out most of the order's leaders in town, with the exception of its governor, Oppian Nevilindor, who hunkers down in the fortress, waiting for reinforcements from the Glorious Reclamation's army.

At this point in the adventure, the Glorious Reclamation's rule of Kantaria has been destabilized to such an extent that the town is an anarchistic mess.

Some citizens proclaim their renewed loyalty to House Thrune, others decide to stand with the Glorious Reclamation to the end, while still others evacuate the town altogether. Until either the Glorious Reclamation or the PCs are defeated and the winning side can impose order on the town, Kantaria is no longer a settlement, but instead, a battleground.

If the PCs consider an assault on Valor's Fastness before this point, both Loredana Viorica and Zara Orclani strongly advise against it, instead counseling further actions to undermine the Glorious Reclamation's hold on the town first (see *Braving the Fastness* below if the PCs persist in a premature attack on the fortress).

Once the knights retreat to the temple and Kantaria's citizens begin turning against the Glorious Reclamation and one another, the PCs and their allies can see that defeating the entrenched forces in Valor's Fastness is the only way to end the conflict before the Glorious Reclamation's leadership decides to reinforce Kantaria. Loredana Viorica and Zara Orclani, as well as any other loyalist allies the PCs might have made, give whatever help they can in planning the assault. Zara advises that it may take several strikes against the Fastness to finally rout Oppian and his knights. At this point, despite the possibility of repercussions against her business, Loredana offers her inn as a safe haven for the PCs between their missions.

BRAVING THE FASTNESS (CR 4 OR 7)

The PCs may decide to visit Valor's Fastness before they're fully ready, either as scouts or to launch an ill-considered assault on the Iomedae forces within. If they do so before the Despair Meter reaches 55, the fortified temple and the threats within are likely well beyond the PCs' ability to handle. In addition, such an act probably

G8. ENCAMPMENT

The walls of this cavern have been scraped clean of fungus, leaving patches of the glowing growths only at the entrance to the chamber. Several bedrolls and piles of personal belongings lie strewn across the floor.

The Narikopolus loyalists chose this cavern to make their camp and rest, and most of them were asleep when the myceloids arrived and afflicted them with purple pox.

results in the Glorious Reclamation learning the PCs' identities and motives, making their mission even more difficult. This encounter can be used to warn off the PCs by giving them an appropriate creature to fight should they attempt to attack the temple prematurely.

Creature: Valor's Fastness is home to several creatures loyal to the Glorious Reclamation, whose attention the PCs attract should they attempt to scale the outer walls of the fortress or explore the interior. Early in the adventure, before the Despair Meter reaches 30, the PCs should encounter a single foo lion patrolling the ramparts or temple grounds. Once the PCs are 5th level, the Despair Meter is higher than 30, or if the PCs come in force with additional allies, they should instead face the temple's unique protector, the church grim Exemplar, who normally inhabits the inner courtyard (area H3).

FOO LION CR 4

XP 1,200

hp 42 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 120)

EXEMPLAR CR 7

XP 3,200

hp 67 (see page 44)

Development: Defeating the foo lion proves that the Glorious Reclamation is far from safe, even within their own stronghold, increasing the Despair Meter by 3. If the PCs face and defeat Exemplar, the Despair Meter does not change, as the faithful hound simply rejuvenates (unless the PCs take appropriate action). Should the PCs accomplish some form of secondary objective that sows chaos and weakens the Glorious Reclamation (such as defeating a patrol on the walls, defacing or destroying a wall, leaving a threatening message for the knights, etc.), increase the Despair Meter by 2.

H. VALOR'S FASTNESS

Valor's Fastness is Kantaria's fortified temple of Iomedae, consecrated to the Inheritor after her ascension to godhood in honor of her defense of the town. The center of Iomedaean faith in Kantaria, Valor's Fastness is the heart of the Glorious Reclamation's presence in the region, serving as the order's base of operations. The map for this area is located on page 46.

The walls of Valor's Fastness are the typical whitewashed stone commonly seen in Iomedae architecture. The exterior walls are 20 feet high and 10 feet thick, and require a successful DC 25 Climb check to scale. The exterior doors are strong wooden doors and can be barred from within (hardness 5, hp 20, break DC 25). The ceilings inside the temple are 15 feet high unless otherwise noted. The public areas are accessible via arched entryways, and sound travels easily through these open portals. The private quarters and storage chambers have good wooden doors with

simple locks unless otherwise noted (hardness 5, hp 15, break DC 18, Disable Device DC 20). Everburning torches provide light in most interior chambers and hallways, with the exception of living quarters (areas H10 and H13), where inhabitants must provide their own light sources.

Numerous rank-and-file members of the Glorious Reclamation and the Church of Iomedae inhabit Valor's Fastness. In addition to unique NPCs and allies, a total of 20 Glorious Reclamation sergeants and five Sixth Sword Knights currently garrison the temple. Although they are normally encountered in specific locations within the temple, these defenders can move freely throughout the fortress. As long as the Despair Meter is below 55, any defenders who are killed are replaced within a day by other soldiers in Kantaria. Once the Despair Meter reaches 55, however, no more reinforcements from Kantaria are available—slain defenders are no longer replaced, though soldiers might be moved from one area to replace losses in another strategic location.

How many forays the PCs make into Valor's Fastness, and how long they take to do so, may also affect the makeup of the temple's defenders. No one can stay on alert indefinitely, and without reinforcements, the garrison at the temple must eventually rest or suffer the consequences. Based on the PCs' actions, and at your discretion, you can reduce the numbers of defenders in the encounter locations presented below; any individuals so removed are not on duty and should instead be encountered resting in the mess hall (area H11) or living quarters (area H13). Alternatively, you can run the encounters with the numbers presented, but apply the fatigued condition to the defenders due to lack of sleep.

Normally, visitors enter Valor's Fastness through its main gate (area H1). Enterprising intruders can attempt to climb the walls or use magical flight to access the fortress's guard towers (area H2) or courtyard (area H3). If the PCs' point of entry is obvious, feel free to adjust the encounters as the temple's inhabitants react to the conspicuous intrusion. The PCs might also attempt to fly to the top of the temple's spire (area H25), where the final encounter with Oppian Nevilindor is set. If the PCs take this route, Oppian withdraws from area H25 down into the main temple building, forcing the PCs to track him down elsewhere in the fortress.

H1. GATE

A sturdy wooden gate stands between two towers in the thick white walls of the fortress, barring entry. The sword-and-sun symbol of Iomedae is painted on the gate in vibrant colors.

The wooden gate is 2 feet thick and closed with a high-quality locking mechanism (hardness 5, hp 40, break DC 25, Disable Device DC 30). Cranks in the adjacent guard towers (areas H2b and H2c) are used to open the doors.

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Development: The eight guards in the adjacent towers (areas **H2b** and **H2c**) monitor the gate at all hours, watching for intruders or visitors.

H2. GUARD TOWER (CR 6)

A whitewashed stone tower, its sides pierced with arrow slits, rises above the walls of the temple.

Each of these four towers is 30 feet tall and contains three levels, each 10 feet high, connected by wooden ladders. The bottom two levels are used for storage, primarily crates of preserved rations and barrels of water in case of siege, and when necessary, additional barrack space, while the third level serves as a guardroom. The top two levels of each tower are equipped with arrow slits, providing views of the fortress's surroundings and the temple's interior courtyard (area **H3**). Strong wooden doors on the towers' third levels provide access to the ramparts atop the walls. The second levels of the two towers flanking the main gate (areas **H2b** and **H2c**) contain the crank mechanisms for opening and closing the gate.

Creatures: Four Glorious Reclamation sergeants stand on guard in each tower, day and night. These soldiers trade shifts with others inside the fortress, resting in the living quarters or eating in the mess while off duty. Should trouble occur, the sergeants target intruders with their longbows and quickly call for reinforcements from the other guard towers.

GLORIOUS RECLAMATION SERGEANTS (4) CR 2

XP 600 each

hp 24 each (see page 9)

H3. COURTYARD (CR 7)

Bushes and trees grow in the well-tended grass of this expansive inner courtyard, and a gravel path runs northeast from the fortress's main gate to the temple proper. The path encircles a magnificent stone fountain, atop which a tall sword stands, its length thrust halfway into the fountain's spout. Names are engraved all along the sides of the fountain.

The courtyard of Valor's Fastness once housed a cemetery for Iomedean clergy and Kantaria's former military leaders. Eventually, the temple's clergy replaced the individual grave markers with an ornate fountain. The fountain's sword marks the deceased interred below and commemorates Iomedae's heroic defense of Kantaria. The names engraved on the fountain are those of particularly famous heroes buried here and can be identified with a successful DC 20 Knowledge (history) check.

Creature: During her time in Kantaria as a mortal, Iomedae formed a special bond with a stray dog that she named Exemplar. The dog survived the siege of the town,

but when Iomedae departed Kantaria, she was forced to leave him behind. Exemplar passed away around the same time Iomedae completed the Test of the *Starstone*, but he soon returned to Valor's Fastness as an incorporeal creature known as a church grim. Tied to the site, Exemplar roams the grounds of the temple, a silent but friendly companion to the disciples of Iomedae, and a stalwart enemy of those who would bring evil to his former home.

EXEMPLAR CR 7

XP 3,200

Male advanced church grim (*Tome of Horrors Complete* 106)

LG Small outsider (extraplanar, incorporeal)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., know alignment, low-light vision; **Perception** +16

DEFENSE

AC 17, **touch** 17, **flat-footed** 14 (+3 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 size)

hp 67 (9d10+18)

Fort +8, **Ref** +9, **Will** +7

Defensive Abilities incorporeal, rejuvenation; **DR** 10/evil

OFFENSE

Speed fly 40 ft. (perfect)

Melee incorporeal bite +13 **touch** (1d8 plus 1d4 Wisdom)

Special Attacks howl, Wisdom damage

TACTICS

During Combat Exemplar identifies evil threats with his know alignment ability and then uses his howl ability to panic as many enemies as possible, hopefully attracting reinforcements from the fortress as well. In melee, he first targets evil divine spellcasters.

Morale Exemplar fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 17, **Con** 15, **Int** 12, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 24

Feats Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Iron Will, Lunge, Vital Strike

Skills Fly +25, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (religion) +13,

Perception +16, Sense Motive +16, Stealth +19, Survival +14

Languages Common (can't speak)

SQ limited domain, soul defender

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Howl (Su) When Exemplar howls, all evil creatures within his limited domain (see below) must succeed at a DC 17 Will save or be panicked for 2d4 rounds. This is a sonic mind-affecting fear effect. Good or neutral creatures are unaffected by the howl as long as they are not there to attack Valor's Fastness or steal from the dead interred there. Whether or not the save is successful, a creature cannot be affected by Exemplar's howl again for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Know Alignment (Su) Exemplar automatically knows the alignment of any creature that enters Valor's Fastness. This ability can be suppressed, but Exemplar can reactivate it the following round as a free action. This ability cannot be extended beyond the limits of Exemplar's domain.

Limited Domain (Ex) Exemplar is sworn to protect the grounds of Valor's Fastness. He can freely wander through the courtyard and first floor of the temple (areas **H3** through **H13**), but he cannot move beyond these boundaries.

Rejuvenation (Su) Exemplar cannot be destroyed through simple combat. If slain, Exemplar restores himself in 24 hours, reappearing in Valor's Fastness. The only way to permanently destroy Exemplar is to raze Valor's Fastness to the ground and cast *desecrate* or *unhallow* on the fountain in the church's courtyard (area **H3**).

Soul Defender (Su) Exemplar's sacred duty is to defend the bodies and souls of those buried within Valor's Fastness. Any attempts to cast *animate dead* or similar spells to create undead within Exemplar's domain require the caster to succeed at a DC 20 caster level check. If the check fails, the spell fizzles away just as if it had been cast.

Wisdom Damage (Su) Exemplar's incorporeal bite deals 1d8 points of damage and 1d4 points of Wisdom damage to a target. A successful DC 16 Fortitude save negates the Wisdom damage. On each successful attack that deals Wisdom damage, Exemplar gains 5 temporary hit points. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Development: Unless permanently destroyed, Exemplar rejuvenates 24 hours after he is slain. Permanently destroying Exemplar earns the ire of Iomedae, but also garners the favor of several evil deities. Any PC involved in the church grim's destruction gains a special boon: if targeted by a divine spell cast by a worshiper of Iomedae, the PC gains a +1 profane bonus on saving throws against the spell.

H4. NARTHEX (CR 6)

The walls of this expansive chamber are covered in elaborate frescoes depicting Iomedae's greatest heroic struggles, including the Shining Crusade, the salvation of Kantaria, and the Test of the Starstone. Sturdy stone pillars etched with intricately carved text are evenly spaced alongside the walls.

The murals on the walls show the accomplishments and struggles of the mortal Iomedae, including several scenes not immortalized in the goddess's Eleven Acts. One prominent image depicts Iomedae wielding a heavy flail against a horde of wights who disarmed her of her blade during the Shining Crusade. The carvings on the pillars are prayers and devotions to the Inheritor.

Creature: A vulpinal agathion named Kelinti currently resides in this chamber. At the first sign of trouble, particularly if combat erupts in areas **H1** or **H3**, Kelinti casts *invisibility* and hides behind one of the pillars. If she detects evil creatures in the narthex, the vulpinal casts *major image* to create an illusion of Oppian Nevilindor. Kelinti attempts to negotiate with the PCs through the

illusion, pleading with them to stop their senseless violence against the church and the people of Kantaria. If discovered, the vulpinal retreats via *dimension door* to the sanctuary (area **H7**) to defend the townsfolk there.

KELINTI

CR 6

XP 2,400

Female vulpinal agathion (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 22)

hp 59

Gear silver holy symbol of Iomedae

H5. ANTECHAMBER

A red carpet covers the floor of this room. Three wooden chairs rest against one wall, their seats covered with simple red pillows, while a small iron safe stands against the opposite wall.

Brides and grooms wait in this chamber before entering the sanctuary proper, as do visitors waiting to meet with the church's clergy.

Treasure: The safe is locked with a good quality lock (hardness 10, hp 30, break DC 28, Disable Device DC 30) and contains the past several weeks' worth of church tithes and docking fees collected from riverboats at Kantaria's docks, consisting of two finely cut diamonds sized for earrings (worth 200 gp each), four uncut vermilion-hued gems (worth 75 gp each), a crudely carved wooden figurine of Iomedae made by a local child (worth 4 cp), 27 pp, 283 gp, and 1,500 sp.

H6. SACRISTY

This small sits under a flight of stairs that leads to the temple's second floor (area **H14**). The wooden door to the room is locked with an average lock (hardness 5, hp 15, break DC 18, Disable Device DC 25). Sacred implements and furnishings for the sanctuary are stored here.

Treasure: The silver chalices, platters, and altar service kept here are worth a total of 750 gp. In addition, a weapons rack holds six ceremonial longswords (two of them are Small, sized for halflings) used for Iomedae rites. The swords are masterwork alchemical silver longswords of pristine quality, but they have been intentionally dulled, and are considered to have the broken condition if used in combat. These swords can be restored to combat readiness with a successful DC 15 Craft (weapons) check. Individually, the swords can be sold for half their normal value (200 gp each), but as a set, they would be worth 2,500 gp to an interested buyer of Iomedae religious paraphernalia.

H7. SANCTUARY (CR 5)

Two rows of wide pews line this room, facing an elevated stone dais and altar to the southeast. Above the dais,

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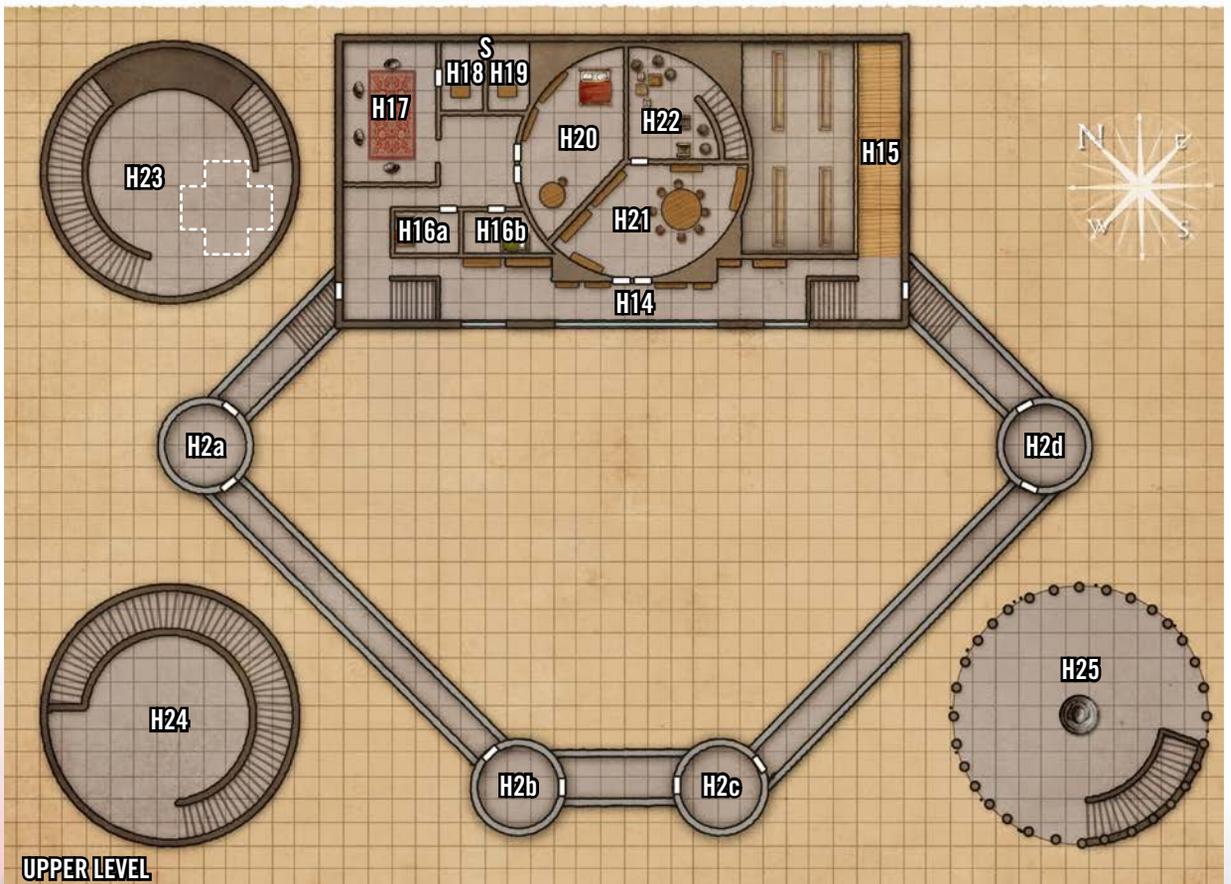
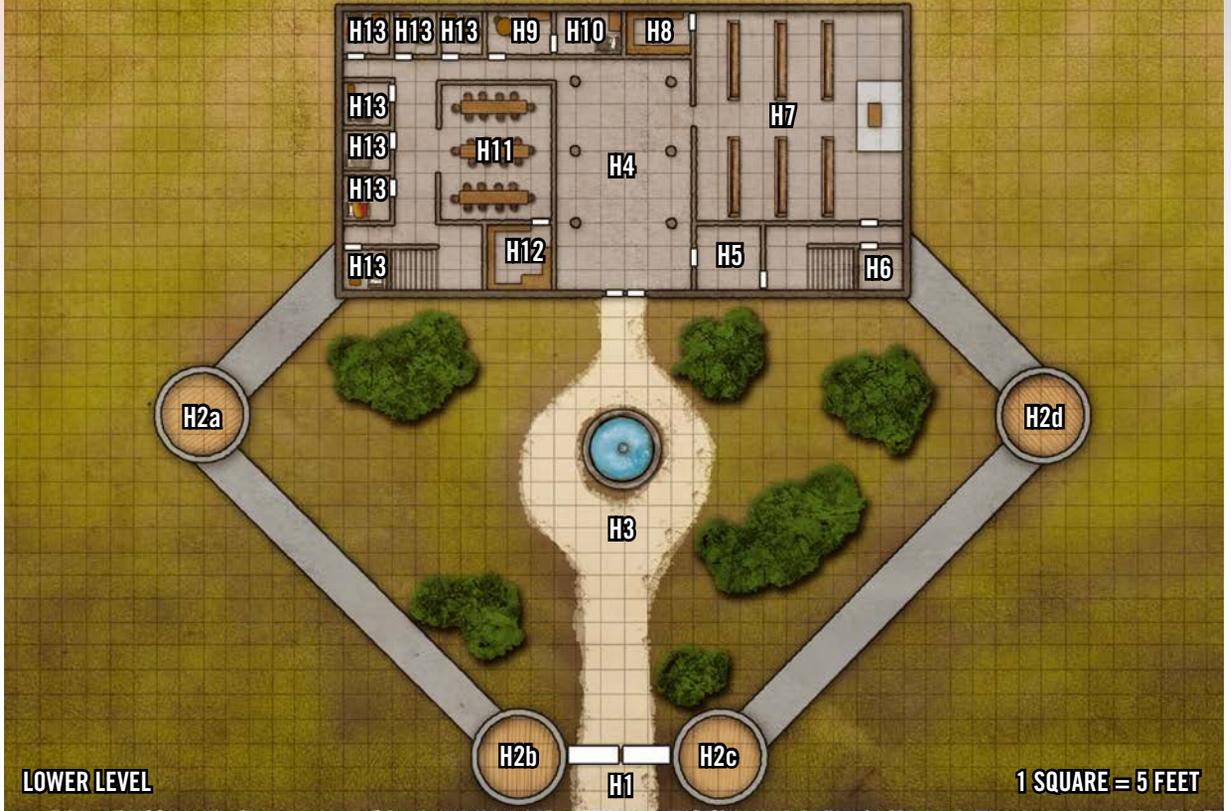
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magnificent banners depicting crusading knights and heraldic emblems hang from the edge of a wooden balcony overlooking the space.

Befitting the fortified nature of Valor's Fastness, the sanctuary was constructed with practicality in mind, and lacks the glass-paned windows common in other Iomedae churches. Priests of Iomedae lead services for the local faithful from the dais. The balcony above the altar (area **H15**) is 15 feet above the floor.

Creatures: The growing tide of sentiment against the Glorious Reclamation's rule of Kantaria has driven many of Iomedae's faithful into the fastness for protection. Currently, 10 frightened townsfolk have sought shelter here in the sanctuary. They huddle together in fear when the PCs first enter the sanctuary, begging the PCs to leave them unharmed, even offering their life savings in copper pieces in exchange for their lives. The townsfolk lack equipment other than their work knives; if attacked, they attempt to flee as best they can.

In addition, a graven guardian watches over the sanctuary and the townsfolk. Crafted from stone in the form of Iomedae herself, the construct stands motionless in the eastern corner of the sanctuary. If the townsfolk are attacked, the graven guardian immediately animates and attacks the intruders, using the element of surprise against any targets who don't openly display the holy symbol of Iomedae. The guardian ignores the townsfolk, recognizing the commoners as worshippers of Iomedae.

FRIGHTENED TOWNSFOLK (10) **CR 1/3**

XP 135 each

Beggar (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 256)

hp 4 each

Gear dagger, 1d12 cp

GRAVEN GUARDIAN OF IOMEDAE **CR 5**

XP 1,600

N Medium construct (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 140)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +8 natural)

hp 53 (6d10+20); fast healing 2

Fort +2, **Ref** +5, **Will** +3

DR 5/adamantine; **Immune** construct traits; **SR** 16

Weaknesses faith bound

OFFENSE

Speed 70 ft.

Melee +2 *keen* longsword +12/+12/+7 (1d8+6/17-20) or slam +10/+10 (1d6+4)

Special Attacks enhanced, good weapons, magic weapon

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th; concentration +0)

1/day—*haste* (self only)

TACTICS

Before Combat The guardian casts *haste* before battle.

During Combat The guardian attacks any intruders in the sanctuary. The construct ignores anyone wearing or displaying a holy symbol of Iomedae who does not attack it first, but its sword deals 1d6 points of additional damage to evil creatures because of its good weapons ability.

Morale The graven guardian fights until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 15, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 22

SQ guardian domains (Good, War)

Gear mwk longsword

Development: If the PCs attack the townsfolk in this chamber, they attract the attention of the legion archon Mindaliel (see area **H25**). The archon casts *mirror image* and teleports to the sanctuary, appearing on the balcony above (area **H15**) to assault visible enemies with *flaming javelins*. If the PCs manage to engage the archon in melee combat or deal 15 points of damage or more to her, Mindaliel teleports away, swearing vengeance for the PCs' horrific actions (see the Archon Stalker sidebar on page 50).

Story Award: If the PCs murder the townsfolk here, award them full XP for the deed, even though the commoners likely posed little threat to them. In addition, word of the massacre quickly spreads through Kantaria, raising the Despair Meter by 10.

H8. VESTRY

Nearly two dozen sets of Iomedae cleric's vestments hang from hooks lining the walls of this chamber. Since the arrival of the Glorious Reclamation, the Iomedae priests have left these less militant robes here, instead choosing to don their more practical battle armor.

H9. CONFESSIONAL (CR 7)

A circular wooden table flanked by two sturdy wooden chairs stands in the center of this room. A single candle flickers in a holder in the middle of the table.

Iomedae priests meet with members of their congregation for confessionals or with other clergy members in this chamber.

Creatures: Fifth Sword Knight Viktor Skave, Oppian Nevilindor's deputy, resides in the adjoining room (area **H10**) and uses this chamber as an office. A tiefling haunted by the nature of his birth, Viktor found shelter within the welcoming arms of Iomedae's faith in Kantaria. Realizing the young devilspawn struggled to control his anger, Oppian shepherded the boy into following a stricter martial discipline of the Inheritor, leading him down the path of a warpriest. Viktor found solace in Iomedae's historical triumphs, and honors the goddess by wielding a heavy flail—a weapon Iomedae once used after being disarmed during a battle in the Shining Crusade.

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Currently, Viktor is meeting with two Sixth Sword Knights in this chamber to discuss the defense of the temple and ways to address the growing chaos in Kantaria. Unless the PCs are particularly stealthy in their approach, the three have had time to prepare for the PCs' arrival. The two Sixth Sword Knights move into area **H10** while Viktor blocks the doorway into his quarters. One of the clerics casts *shield other* on Viktor as soon as battle is joined, and both clerics support Viktor with spells and healing as the Fifth Sword Knight battles intruders.

SIXTH SWORD KNIGHTS (2)**CR 3****XP 800 each**

hp 33 each (see page 10)

VIKTOR SKAVE**CR 5****XP 1,600**

Male tiefling warpriest of Iomedae 6 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 264, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Class Guide* 60)
LG Medium outsider (native)

Init +2; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 10, flat-footed 19 (+9 armor)

hp 54 (6d8+24)

Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +7

Resist cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +1 heavy flail +8 (1d10+4/19–20)

Special Attacks blessings 6/day (Sun: blinding strike; War: war mind), channel positive energy 2/day (DC 15, 3d6), fervor 5/day (2d6), sacred weapon (1d8, +1, 6 rounds/day)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th; concentration +5)

1/day—darkness

Warpriest Spells Prepared (CL 6th; concentration +8)

2nd—*bull's strength*, *hold person* (DC 14), *resist energy*, *silence* (DC 14)1st—*bane* (DC 13), *divine favor*, *doom* (DC 13), *magic stone*, *remove fear*0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *guidance*, *read magic*, *resistance*, *stabilize***TACTICS**

During Combat Viktor prefers to use his sacred weapon enhancement bonus to give his flail the *flaming* weapon special ability against foes. He tries to use the confined space to his advantage, and relies on his fervor ability to cast spells on himself as swift actions. Against enemies reliant on a single weapon, Viktor attempts to sunder their weapons, but he combines Power Attack and Cleave when facing multiple opponents.

Morale If reduced to fewer than 15 hit points, Viktor is willing to negotiate a surrender as long as his companions remain standing. If his allies are slain, however, Viktor fights to the death to avenge them.

STATISTICS

Str 15, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 8

Base Atk +4; CMB +6 (+8 sunder); CMD 18 (20 vs. sunder)

Feats Cleave, Combat Casting, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (heavy flail)

Skills Bluff +1, Diplomacy +5, Heal +6, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (religion) +6, Spellcraft +5, Stealth –2

Languages Celestial, Common

Combat Gear *potion of haste*; Other Gear +1 half plate, +1 heavy flail, silver holy symbol of Iomedae, spell component pouch

Development: Once combat breaks out here, two Glorious Reclamation sergeants from area **H11** arrive in 5 rounds to assist the beleaguered sword knights.

H10. FIFTH SWORD KNIGHT'S QUARTERS

Cinnamon-scented incense burns in a tiny brazier on an otherwise empty bookshelf on the northeast wall of this chamber. A bed stands beside the opposite wall, next to a dresser. A small footlocker sits at the foot of the bed.

Fifth Sword Knight Viktor Skave (see area **H9**) lives in this chamber. Although the room is more spacious than the temple's other living quarters, the austere Iomedaean warpriest keeps his quarters free of adornments.

Treasure: The footlocker is not locked, and contains a set of cleric's vestments more appropriate for peacetime, as well as a platinum ring decorated with images of smiling angels. The ring appears to be a *ring of mind shielding*, but it is actually a cursed *ring of truth* (*Ultimate Equipment* 349). Viktor found this ring before he joined the church and is aware of its cursed nature, but he has held on to the ring to prevent it from falling into the hands of an innocent.

H11. MESS HALL (CR 7)

Three large wooden tables surrounded by chairs take up the bulk of the space in this chamber. Plates and eating utensils are stacked neatly on the tables. Weapon racks stand against the southeastern wall.

The forces of the Glorious Reclamation and church of Iomedae share food and enjoy some relaxation here in the temple's communal mess hall.

Creatures: A constant flow of soldiers moves in and out of this chamber. At any given time of day, four off-duty Glorious Reclamation sergeants and a Sixth Sword Knight can be found sitting at the tables here enjoying food, sharing tales of past exploits, or discussing different religious opinions. The soldiers have placed their weapons in the racks on the southeast wall, and if confronted by enemies, they quickly move

to retrieve them. If any of the sergeants responded to sounds of combat in area **H9**, reduce the number of defenders here accordingly.

GLORIOUS RECLAMATION SERGEANTS (4) CR 2

XP 600 each

hp 24 each (see page 9)

SIXTH SWORD KNIGHT CR 3

XP 800

hp 33 (see page 10)

H12. KITCHEN

Hired cooks from the town normally prepare meals for the temple's inhabitants in this kitchen, but with the growing unrest in town, they have been dismissed. Now the soldiers of Valor's Fastness prepare their own simple meals here. A long shelf runs along the walls of the room, with crates and kegs of preserved foodstuffs tucked underneath.

Treasure: A character who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check discovers, hidden among the boxes, a *wand of create food and water* with 10 charges remaining.

H13. LIVING QUARTERS

These small rooms, numbering seven in all, are designated as living quarters for the rank-and-file clerics of Valor's Fastness. The presence of the Glorious Reclamation has increased the number of troops stationed in the temple, and while many soldiers have lodgings in Kantaria proper, others share these quarters. Each room contains a set of bunk beds and two footlockers holding personal effects. The southernmost chamber sits under the stairs that lead up to area **H14** on the second floor.

Development: If you remove any defenders from their scripted encounter locations (see page 43), they are most likely to be found asleep or resting in one of these rooms, unarmored but with their weapons close at hand.

H14. LIBRARY (CR 6)

This wide hallway stretches along the front face of the main temple building. Ornate wooden bookshelves cover the northeast wall, while glass windows in the southwest wall overlook the temple's courtyard outside.

The books lining the shelves are a plethora of religious texts. Most of them are treatises on matters of Iomedae's faith, though a fair number of the tomes cover topics pertaining to Abadar, Erastil, Milani, Sarenrae, and Torag. A scant few discuss other good or neutral deities.

The glass windows offer clear views of the courtyard 15 feet below (area **H3**) and the guard towers along the fortress's outer wall (area **H2**). At both ends of the hall, staircases descend to the temple's ground floor, and short flights of stone steps lead up to strong wooden doors, providing access to the outer wall ramparts.

Creatures: Two foo lions who accompanied the Glorious Reclamation during the liberation of Kantaria now spend their time in this chamber. The lions use their freeze ability at the sound of trespassers, attacking with surprise if possible. Characters who succeed at a DC 18 Perception check realize the lions' true nature, but once noticed, the lions quickly move to attack intruders.

FOO LIONS (2) CR 4

XP 1,200 each

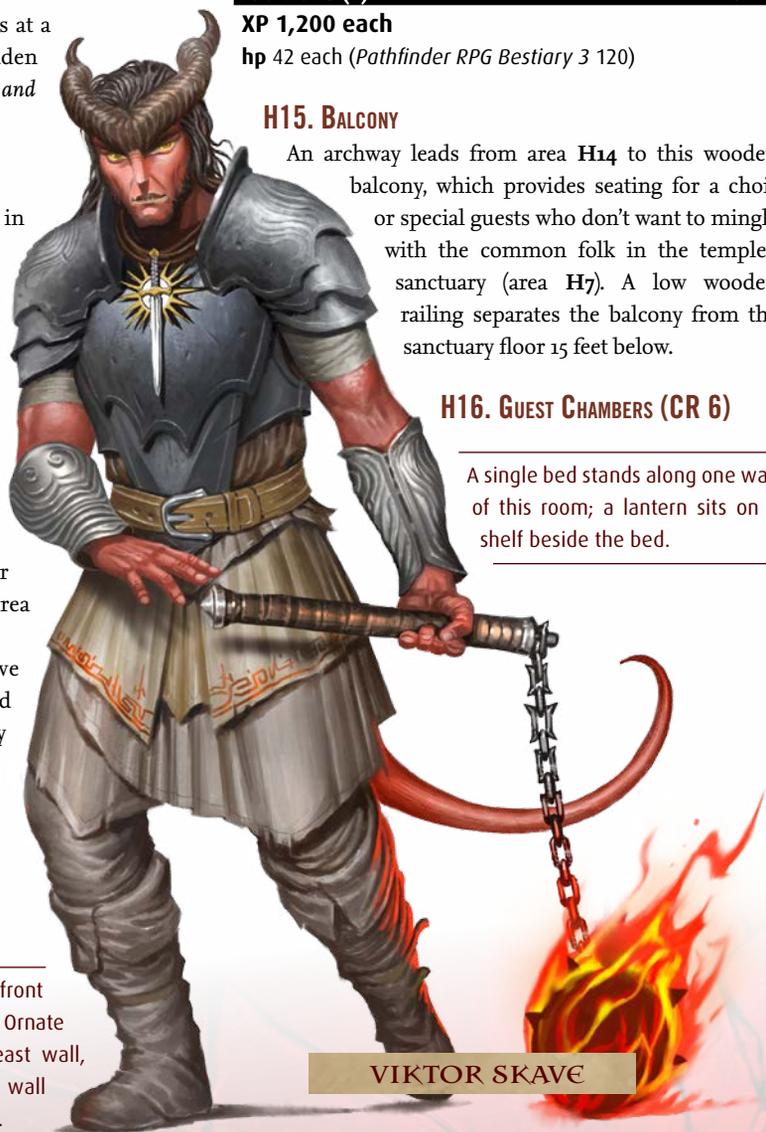
hp 42 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 120)

H15. BALCONY

An archway leads from area **H14** to this wooden balcony, which provides seating for a choir or special guests who don't want to mingle with the common folk in the temple's sanctuary (area **H7**). A low wooden railing separates the balcony from the sanctuary floor 15 feet below.

H16. GUEST CHAMBERS (CR 6)

A single bed stands along one wall of this room; a lantern sits on a shelf beside the bed.



VIKTOR SKAVE

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ARCHON STALKER

Since the Glorious Reclamation's arrival in Kantaria, Oppian Nevilindor's most trusted advisor has been a legion archon named Mindaliel. A tireless strategist and warrior, Mindaliel is eager to bring the fight to the PCs once their true allegiance to House Thrune is revealed. While Oppian broods in the rotunda at the top of the temple's spire, trying to come to terms with what has happened to Kantaria, Mindaliel actively works against the PCs. Knowing her place is at Oppian's side, the legion archon does not confront the PCs directly, but uses *greater teleport* to maneuver around the fortress, coordinating defenders with *message* spells and preparing soldiers for battles with *aid*.

As they explore Valor's Fastness, the PCs might catch glimpses of Mindaliel as she appears at the opposite end of a hallway, throwing a *flaming javelin* or two before flying or teleporting away. These brief encounters are meant to harry the PCs and make their final battle with the archon in area **H25** more rewarding. As a result, you should try to ensure that the PCs do not slay Mindaliel before they face Oppian Nevilindor in area **H25**. Prior to that point, assume that Mindaliel's Glorious Reclamation allies heal any damage the archon may have taken after she teleports away from the PCs.

The church of Iomedae and the Glorious Reclamation host guests in this pair of rooms. Though far from extravagant, these quarters are nevertheless clean and comfortable. The lantern in each room contains a *continual flame*.

Creature: The western chamber (area **H16a**) is home to a provisional guest of the Glorious Reclamation, a half-elven Andoren diplomat named Micheri Bedard. Sent to Kantaria shortly after the Glorious Reclamation took charge of the town, Micheri's presence is the first tentative attempt at establishing diplomatic relations between Andoran and the Iomedaeen order. Her visit has no specific goals other than to learn more about the Glorious Reclamation and how it operates, and explore future options.

Once the Despair Meter reaches 55, Oppian Nevilindor orders Micheri not to leave the safety of Valor's Fastness, then sequesters himself in the temple's spire. Micheri can now be found brooding in her quarters. She desperately wishes to leave Kantaria and return to Andoran, having come to the decision that the Glorious Reclamation may not be up to the task of defending the lands they seek to liberate.

If the PCs speak with Micheri, they can learn of her position as a diplomatic envoy. She pleads with the PCs to let her return to Andoran, citing diplomatic

immunity and promising to recommend that her homeland should maintain neutrality in the ongoing conflict between Cheliox and the Glorious Reclamation. She is not lying, and offers up her equipment, save her weapons and *silver raven figurine of wondrous power*, as tokens of good faith. If the PCs refuse to let her leave, Micheri offers to remain in Kantaria until the Glorious Reclamation has been defeated and House Thrune can provide her with an escort back to Andoran.

MICHERI BEDARD

CR 6
XP 2,400

 LN female half-elf diplomat (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 253)

hp 28

TACTICS

Morale Skilled with her rapier, Micheri fights defensively if she is attacked, but takes the first opportunity she sees to retreat and seek the aid of others in the fortress. If the PCs and the Iomedaeans get into a protracted battle, Micheri tries to flee Kantaria entirely.

Development: If any of the Glorious Reclamation's leaders (such as Faydreth Zaine in area **F**) managed to escape the PCs earlier in the adventure, those NPCs occupy the empty guest quarters next door (area **H16b**) and join in the defense of Valor's Fastness.

Story Award: If the PCs allow Micheri to leave, award them XP as if they had defeated her in combat. However, either keeping Micheri alive as a future bargaining chip for House Thrune to use in negotiations with Andoran or publicly executing her once Kantaria is reclaimed would be a far more effective use of the Andoren diplomat. If the PCs deal with the diplomat in such a manner, award them 4,800 XP.

H17. TRAINING ROOM (CR 5)

Four human-sized wooden dummies stand around the edges of a red carpet in the center of this room. Each featureless mannequin wears a distinct style of armor and clutches a different weapon at its side.

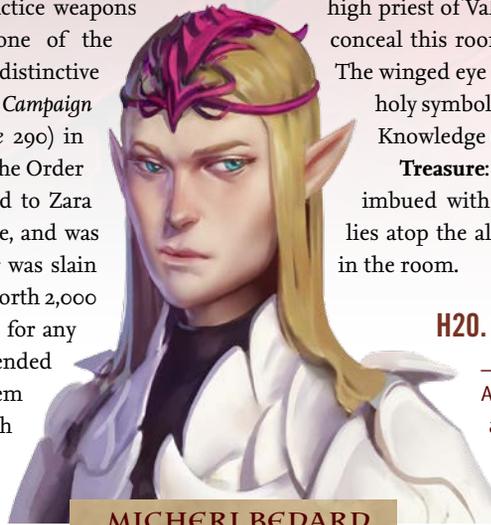
The clerics of Valor's Fastness and the knights of the Glorious Reclamation practice their martial skills against the training dummies here. The dummies are primarily garbed in padded and leather armor, and are armed with a flail, light mace, longsword, and spear.

Creatures: Two Sixth Sword Knights have taken up position here after praying for guidance in the Shrine of the Inheritor next door (area **H18**). They attack any intruders in the temple.

SIXTH SWORD KNIGHTS (2)

CR 3
XP 800 each
hp 33 each (see page 10)

Treasure: Most of the armor displayed on the dummies is battered and has the broken condition, and the weapons are blunted practice weapons of negligible value. However, one of the mannequins wears a suit of distinctive Hellknight plate (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Inner Sea World Guide* 290) in the exposed musculature style of the Order of the Rack. This armor belonged to Zara Orcelani's charge, Derilus Jaddene, and was brought here after the maralictor was slain by Kalcyra the Just. The armor is worth 2,000 gp, and would be a valuable prize for any Hellknight PC. If the PCs befriended Zara, she has no objection to them claiming Jaddene's armor, though it must be resized for the new wearer at a cost of $2d4 \times 100$ gp. In addition, if the Hellknight PC wishes to join an order other than the Order of the Rack, the armor must be modified to that order's style, which can be accomplished with a successful DC 19 Craft (armor) check and the expenditure of an additional 400 gp.



MICHERI BEDARD

H18. CHAPEL OF THE INHERITOR

A sturdy stone altar sits on the southwest side of this small chapel. A beautiful silver sword is thrust halfway into the stone; the length of the blade is inscribed with intricate text. A draped banner hangs on the southeast wall, bearing the image of an armored female warrior battling a tentacled horror.

Before Valor's Fastness was fully consecrated as a temple to Iomedae, the Inheritor's faithful worshiped their goddess in this shrine. Now the priests and soldiers in the fortress pray to Iomedae at the small altar here following training bouts in the adjoining room (area H17). A character who succeeds at a DC 10 Knowledge (religion) check recognizes the figure depicted on the banner as Iomedae; a character who succeeds at a DC 26 Knowledge (dungeoneering) check can identify the creature she is fighting as one of the veiled masters—creatures resembling aboleths—who once besieged Kantaria. With a successful DC 26 Perception check, a PC notices the secret door hidden behind the banner, which leads to area H19.

H19. CHAPEL OF ARODEN

A silver and brass altar emblazoned with the symbol of a winged eye in a circle stands against the southwest wall. A warm glow emanates from the top of the altar.

In Iomedae's mortal years, this room and the shrine next door constituted a single, larger chapel dedicated

to Aroden where Iomedae prayed for guidance during the siege of Kantaria. Following Aroden's death, the high priest of Valor's Fastness at the time chose to conceal this room behind a wall and secret door. The winged eye on the altar can be recognized as the holy symbol of Aroden with a successful DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check.

Treasure: A silver holy symbol of Iomedae imbued with a *continual flame* spell (CL 10th) lies atop the altar, and is the source of the glow in the room.

H20. HIGH PRIEST'S QUARTERS

A single, smooth wall of stone curves along the north and western sides of this chamber, while straight wooden walls close off the room to the south and southeast, seemingly partitioning this room from a larger, circular space. A dresser and bookshelf stand against the northern wall, beside a spacious double bed with a chest at its foot. A half-burned candle, a piece of parchment, and a quill sit on a table at the western end of the chamber.

This room and the two adjoining chambers (areas H21 and H22) form the base of the temple's tall central spire. This chamber is the personal quarters of the high priest of Valor's Fastness, currently Fourth Sword Knight Oppian Nevilindor. The governor of Kantaria spends little time in this chamber, however, except when sleep becomes a necessity. The footlocker next to the bed normally contains Oppian's equipment, but the cleric's growing paranoia about an assault on the fortress has prompted him to keep all of his gear on hand, and the chest is empty.

Treasure: Once the Despair Meter reaches 55 or higher, Oppian begins working on a confessional letter, which lies on the table (see **Handout #1** on page 52). The contents of the letter are short, but the mention of Tychus Groat should give the PCs a hint to present the warhammer *Sinderbos* to Oppian to further weaken his resolve.

H21. COUNCIL ROOM (CR 6)

Bookshelves cover many of this chamber's walls, which curve to the south and west. A large wooden table surrounded by chairs sits in the center of the room, its surface covered in maps and papers. Double doors exit the room to the southwest, while a single wooden door leads northeast.

The Glorious Reclamation's leadership (Faydreth Zaine, Jalila Hadjara, Kalcyra the Just, and Oppian Nevilindor) held their planning and strategy sessions in this chamber, and Oppian occasionally invited the town's

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May this letter find its way into good hands,

I write this knowing that my time as Kantaria's protector is drawing to a close. Forces loyal to House Thrune have usurped the work we've done in restoring Kantaria to the light, and even now, I fear they march on our last remaining bastion. I am not certain who my foes are, but I have my suspicions, and I'm sure to see them confirmed at the top of this temple's spire, where I take refuge and pray to Iomedae for guidance and absolution for the choices I've made.

Ever since my blade ended the life of my friend Tychus Groat, I have doubted the price of Kantaria's supposed freedom. Is the betterment of life for a people already managing to endure in the harshest of lands worth so much pain? I don't know. I doubt I ever will know. But I believe that what will befall me is my penance, the righting of an injustice performed by my own hand.

I dream now of Tychus rising from the grave, his withered hands wielding his foul hammer. He comes seeking retribution for a friendship and trust so miserably betrayed. And the worse thing is that part of me believes I deserve it...

HANDOUT #1

governing council here to discuss matters in Kantaria as well. The table is covered with maps of the town, its surrounding farms, and potential trade routes with the Menador Mountains. Information on the region and the history of Kantaria fills the bookshelves, along with more recent additions of books on governance.

Creatures: Two iophanites hover over the table here, appearing as glowing discs of metal. These angels assisted the governing council as messengers and advisors, but with the deaths of the Glorious Reclamation's leaders, this chamber has fallen into disuse and the angels have not spoken with another soul in days. The iophanites are an excellent source of information on previous council meetings and the governance of Kantaria up to this point, but they question any creatures entering the chamber whom they do not recognize, and if they suspect malicious intent, they immediately move to attack.

IOPHANITES (2)**CR 4****XP 1,200 each**

LG Medium outsider (angel, extraplanar, fire, good, lawful)
(*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Gods* 293)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision;
Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 natural;
+2 deflection vs. evil)

hp 37 each (5d10+10)

Fort +6, **Ref** +7, **Will** +1; +4 vs. poison, +4 resistance vs. evil

DR 5/magic; **Immune** fire, petrification; **Resist** acid 5, cold 5,
electricity 5; **SR** 15

Weaknesses vulnerable to cold

OFFENSE

Speed fly 40 ft. (perfect)

Melee 2 blades +8 (1d8+1 plus burn)

Special Attacks burn (1d6 fire, DC 14), radiance

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th; concentration +7)

Constant—*protection from evil*

At will—*know direction, mage hand*

3/day—*burning hands* (DC 12), *expeditious retreat*

1/day—*scorching ray*

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 17, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 20 (can't be tripped)

Feats Dodge, Mobility, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +8, Fly +11, Intimidate +9, Knowledge

(geography) +8, Knowledge (planes) +8, Knowledge

(religion) +5, Perception +12; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Perception

Languages Celestial, Infernal; truespeech

SQ shield form

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Radiance (Sp) An iophanite usually glows with a golden light equivalent to that of a candle. In battle, the angel's glow increases, filling the area within 5 feet. An iophanite can suppress or resume this glow as a free action. Additionally, as a standard action, an iophanite can intensify this glow to reproduce the effects of a *flare* spell at will. A creature can resist this effect with a successful DC 13 Fortitude save, though evil creatures take a -4 penalty on their saves. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Shield Form (Su) Once per day, an iophanite can transform into a +1 *spiked light steel shield* sized for a Small or Medium creature. An iophanite cannot communicate or use any of their other abilities while in this form.

Once transformed, an iophanite cannot change back for 24 hours, though a *break enchantment* spell can end the transformation early. An iophanite regains full hit points upon shifting back into their normal form. If the shield is destroyed, the iophanite is killed.

Treasure: The maps of the Menador Mountains on the table detail which mining sites were interested in allying with the Glorious Reclamation. Thrune would likely find such information quite valuable, so if the PCs deliver the maps to Archbaron Fex or Razelago, Fex rewards them with 500 gp.

In addition, a +2 *longsword* is embedded in the center of the table, flush with the table's surface. The blade belonged to a previous high priest of Valor's Fastness known for her strategic acumen, and upon her death, her sword was incorporated into the construction of the council table. Removing the sword can be done only by destroying the table (hardness 5, hp 20, break DC 23).

H22. STOREROOM

Empty storage barrels and crates fill this chamber, which once stored food for the inhabitants of Valor's Fastness and equipment for the Glorious Reclamation. All of these containers are now empty, their contents used to fund the order's activities in Kantaria and the surrounding region. A flight of stone stairs curves up the southeast wall, leading to area H23.

H23. MEMORIAL (CR 6)

A long stone staircase ascends in a curve along the northwest wall of this lofty circular chamber; a second staircase to the southeast descends to the level below. Dozens of niches are embedded in the walls of the room, each containing a stone statue and a bronze plaque.

This chamber is a memorial to the previous high priests of Valor's Fastness, each of whom is represented by one of the fine sculptures in the alcoves, their names and titles inscribed on the bronze plaques. Several alcoves remain empty for future expansion.

The high central spire of Valor's Fastness is mostly hollow; the staircase in this room ascends 60 feet (through area H24) to the rotunda at the top of the spire (area H25). See area H24 once a creature sets foot on these stairs or otherwise attempts to ascend the spire.

Trap: Oppian Nevilindor used a scroll to place a *flame strike* trap in this chamber at the top of the stairs from area H22. Anyone setting foot in this room triggers the trap, which fills the squares marked on the map with divine fire.

FLAME STRIKE TRAP CR 6
XP 2,400
Type magic; Perception DC 30; Disable Device DC 30

EFFECTS

Trigger proximity (*alarm*); **Reset** none

Effect spell effect (*flame strike*, 8d6 fire damage, Reflex DC 17 half); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-radius cylinder)

H24. THE ASCENT (CR 6+)

The stairs continue climbing along the walls of the tower, curving upward toward a break in the stone ceiling above.

This area consists of the entire open space between the floor of area H23 and area H25, 60 feet above, including the stairs along the walls.

Creature: As the PCs approach the top of the spire, the legion archon Mindaliel senses them with *detect evil* and flies down from area H25 to confront them. Aware of the haunt in this chamber and how it works (see Haunt below), the archon flies to the center of the tower to throw *flaming javelins* at the intruders. Her preference is to delay the PCs so they waste time and resources attacking her, and potentially have to save against the haunt's effects. If the PCs have sufficient ranged attacks to threaten Mindaliel, or deal 15 or more points of damage to her, the archon withdraws to rejoin Oppian in the rotunda (area H25) above.

MINDALIEL CR 7
XP 3,200
Female legion archon (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 19)
hp 76

Haunt: When Iomedae lived in Kantaria as a mortal, she defended the town against the veiled masters and their faceless stalker minions in the stead of the missing lord of Kantaria, Arakhan Narikopolus. Arakhan eventually returned to claim his birthright and take over the defense and leadership of the town, and he was buried in the temple's courtyard when he later passed away. However, a portion of his soul was unwilling to abandon Kantaria as he had done earlier in life, and lingered within Valor's Fastness, tied to the place where he secured his family's name in history. As Kantaria teeters on the brink once more, Arakhan's spirit now manifests as a haunt in one final attempt to stop the PCs.

The haunt triggers as soon as an evil creature sets foot on the stairs from area H23 or flies higher than 10 feet above the floor of H23. Unlike normal haunts, Arakhan's spirit is affected by negative energy instead of positive energy. A character who succeeds at a DC 21 Knowledge (religion) check recognizes the haunt's susceptibility to negative energy, and what must be done to permanently destroy the haunt (see below).

ARAKHAN'S DEFIANCE CR 6
XP 2,400

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LG persistent haunt (area **H24**)

Caster Level 6th

Notice Perception DC 20 (to hear the wet thwack of flailing tentacles against stone and the sound of slow, plodding footsteps)

hp 27; **Weakness** susceptible to negative energy; **Trigger** proximity (*detect evil*); **Reset** 1 day

Effect Any evil creature entering area **H24** triggers this haunt. When it's triggered, a ghostly vision of a veiled master appears, slowly forcing equally ethereal apparitions of Arakhan Narikopolus and the mortal Iomedae up the stairs. Each round, evil creatures ascending the stairs must succeed at a DC 14 Will save or be slowed (as per the *slow* spell). In addition, a creature that fails its save and spends 3 or more rounds in this area becomes fatigued. Good creatures in the area instead gain the effects of *heroism* for as long as the haunt is active.

Destruction The haunt is immediately destroyed if an evil creature manages to walk the stairs to the top of the spire and reach area **H25** without failing a save against the haunt's effects, and without using flight or teleportation. This effect manifests as the veiled master catching one of Arakhan's legs in a tentacle, lifting his ghostly body into the air, and hurling him onto the stone floor 60 feet below. Once the haunt is destroyed (not simply neutralized), all evil creatures in area **H24** are immediately affected by a *haste* spell (CL 6th).

H25. ROTUNDA (CR 9)

No walls enclose this circular space high above the temple. Instead, regularly spaced pillars frame open archways around the chamber's circumference and support a domed roof above. On a plinth beneath the center of the dome stands a stone statue depicting a tall, armored woman bestowing an intricately crafted longsword upon a kneeling noble.

The uppermost chamber of Valor's Fastness is traditionally used for private Iomedean ceremonies or peaceful meditation away from the activity of the main temple and town far below. The floor of the rotunda is 90 feet above the ground; the dome rises another 25 feet to its apex, 115 feet high.

The statue of the armored woman can be identified as Iomedae with a successful DC 10 Knowledge (religion) check. A character who succeeds at a DC 20 Knowledge (history), DC 15 Knowledge (local), or DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check can recognize the statue as a rendition of the scene when Iomedae presented the lord of Kantaria, Arakhan Narikopolus, with her blade *Heart's Edge* following her defense of the town against the veiled masters.

The whole of Kantaria is visible from the rotunda. Depending on the PCs' actions earlier in the adventure, they can see any destructive endeavors or ongoing rebellious activities in town from here. If they managed

to instigate an all-out rebellion against the Glorious Reclamation, sporadic fires are visible in the town below, and audible shouts and cries from street battles fill the air.

Creatures: Fourth Sword Knight Oppian Nevilindor, high priest of Iomedae and governor of Kantaria, spends most of his time in this chamber, pondering what he considers to be his many failures in governing Kantaria. Although mentally exhausted and filled with doubt, the Oppian still believes he is doing just work. When the PCs first enter this area, the Sword Knight is kneeling on the northern side of the rotunda, opposite the stairs. He hopes to engage the PCs in conversation before combat begins. More than anything, Oppian craves justification for their actions, needing to understand why they would bring such ruin to Kantaria.

Oppian possesses a singular weakness: his inherent self-doubt surrounding his killing of his friend Tychus Groat, Kantaria's blacksmith. If a PC wields Groat's hammer, *Sinderbos*, in melee combat against Oppian, the sight of the hammer plays into his doubts (as hinted in the letter found in area **H20**). As long as the character wielding *Sinderbos* threatens Oppian, the cleric must succeed at a DC 20 Will save each round or be shaken. If the wielder confirms a critical hit against the sword knight with *Sinderbos*, Oppian is staggered for 1 round, in addition to any other effects.

The legion archon Mindalviel accompanies Oppian, flying nearby under the dome. The archon moves to attack as soon as the PCs make a hostile move against Oppian, or when Oppian directs her into battle.

MINDALIEL

CR 7

XP 3,200

Female legion archon (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 19)

hp 76

OPPIAN NEVILINDOR

CR 7

XP 3,200

hp 79 (see page 58)

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

With the defeat of Oppian Nevilindor, Kantaria swiftly returns to the hands of House Thrune. Seeing the inevitable outcome of the conflict, the inhabitants turn on one another, and the town's loyalists round up any remaining Glorious Reclamation supporters in hopes of offering them up in exchange for pardons from the Chelish government. Unless the PCs have done an exceptional job of keeping their involvement hidden, most of the town's citizens now consider them the de facto governors of Kantaria. In any event, NPCs such as Linton Demeer and his faceless stalkers, Loredana Viorica, or Zara Orcelani soon make the PCs' participation in recent events known to the town.



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Through Razelago, Archbaron Fex commends the PCs on their success, and as promised, presents them with a reward for their actions. Fex has kept a close eye on the PCs (through Razelago's infernal eye) and has a good idea of what they want. As a result, you should give each PC a magic item that reflects her personal preferences or wishes—something that she's had her eyes on but has been unable to find or purchase, for example. Each item should be worth no more than about 6,000 gp in value, but a PC who wants to "upgrade" an item (from a +1 longsword to a +2 longsword, for example) can "trade in" the old item to Fex for the new item, so long as the price difference is within 6,000 gp.

In addition, the archbaron offers to acquire any items the PCs want that have a price above the base value of Kantaria. The PCs have to pay for these items themselves, of course; Fex is simply providing access to items that would otherwise be unavailable in a town of Kantaria's size.

Allow the PCs some time to enjoy their positions as leaders of Kantaria while they await the return of the Narikopolus family from Egorian and new orders from Archbaron Fex. If the PCs don't think of it themselves, their distant patron suggests reminding the locals of the price of betrayal by rounding up any surviving leaders of the old regime and conducting public excruciations

in Inheritor's Square. These torture sessions might also draw out any remaining Glorious Reclamation supporters from hiding for one last strike against the PCs, potentially involving any major NPCs who survived previous encounters with the PC villains. The PCs might additionally wish to leave their own marks on the town, such as burning Valor's Fastness to the ground, reconsecrating the Shrine of the Hammer back to a temple of Asmodeus, or opening a slave market in the middle of Inheritor's Square.

If the PCs are not interested in running Kantaria, they'll need to appoint a suitable governor in their stead. Eventually, House Narikopolus will return from Egorian to Kantaria to resume their authority, but until then, Archbaron Fex trusts the PCs' judgment in selecting a new temporary ruler. Loredana Viorica is one option, though there might be some question as to whether her loyalty is to Nidal or Cheliox. Linton Demeer is exceptionally suitable for governance, and if put in charge, he strives to rebuild the town in hopes of attracting new immigrants—more food sources for him and his fellow faceless stalkers. Regardless of whether the PCs opt to rule Kantaria themselves or pass the burden on to another, Archbaron Fex soon requires their services again for a new task, as detailed in the next installment of the Hell's Vengeance Adventure Path: "The Inferno Gate."



LINTON DEMEER

Proprietor of Healthy Heart Alchemicals, Linton Demeer is also a member of Kantaria's new governing council. He conceals a secret, however: he also leads a ragged band of faceless stalkers who have settled in Kantaria.

LINTON DEMEER

CR 7

XP 3,200

Male faceless stalker alchemist (chirurgeon) 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 122, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 26, *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic* 18)

NE Medium aberration (shapechanger)

Init +15; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 16, flat-footed 20 (+2 armor, +6 Dex, +4 natural, +4 shield)

hp 95 (10d8+41)

Fort +9, **Ref** +11, **Will** +8; +2 vs. poison

DR 5/piercing or slashing

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee slam +9 (1d6+4 plus grab)

Ranged bomb +13 (3d6+3 fire) or acid bomb +13 (3d6+3 acid) or smoke bomb +13 (3d6+3 fire plus smoke)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks blood drain (1 Con), bomb 8/day (3d6+3 fire, DC 15), sneak attack +2d6

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th; concentration +9)
Constant—*tongues*

Alchemist Extracts Prepared (CL 5th; concentration +8)
2nd—*cure moderate wounds*, *false life*, *invisibility*
1st—*anticipate peril*^{UM} (DC 14), *cure light wounds*, *expeditious retreat*, *shield*, *true strike*

TACTICS

Before Combat If he expects any sort of trouble (such as before meeting the PCs in **Event 10**), Linton drinks extracts of *anticipate peril*, *false life*, and *shield*.

During Combat Linton deplores combat, but knows his strength rests in the efficiency of his bombs. If he has time, he quaffs an extract of *invisibility* at the beginning of combat in hopes of catching his enemies off guard. Linton targets foes with his bombs, making sneak attacks whenever possible. He uses his extended reach to grapple targets moving into melee combat with him, but breaks the grapple almost immediately to lob more bombs.

Morale Linton is a born and bred survivor, and attempts to retreats from combat using all means available once reduced to 20 hit points or fewer. If he survives and

escapes, Linton assumes a new identity in town by killing and replacing a friendly NPC such as Loredana Viorica or any other character with whom the PCs are allied, and attempts to exact revenge on his enemies.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 22, **Con** 18, **Int** 17, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +9 (+13 grapple); **CMD** 25

Feats Brew Potion, Combat Reflexes, Deceitful, Extra Discovery^{APG}, Improved Initiative, Ricochet Splash Weapon^{UM}, Skill Focus (Heal), Throw Anything

Skills Bluff +18, Craft (alchemy) +16 (+21 to create alchemical items), Disguise +22, Escape Artist +22, Heal +24, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (local) +8, Perception +10, Sleight of Hand +14, Spellcraft +10, Stealth +18; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Disguise, +8 Escape Artist

Languages Aquan, Celestial, Common, Infernal

SQ alchemy (alchemy crafting +5), anaesthetic, change shape, discoveries (acid bomb, infusion, smoke bomb [10-ft. radius, 5 rounds]), faceless, infused curative, mutagen (+4/-2, +2 natural armor, 50 minutes), swift alchemy

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of lesser restoration*, *potion of undetectable alignment*, acid (2), alchemist's fire (2), antitoxin (2), oil of taggit (2); **Other Gear** *bracers of armor +2*, *ring of mind shielding*, alchemy crafting kit, formula book (contains formulae for all prepared extracts, plus 2d6 additional formulae), healer's kit

The veiled masters and their ugothol servants have long held an interest in Kantaria, but following their disastrous defeat at the hands of the mortal Iomedae, the veiled masters' shapechanging armies abandoned their designs on the town. Centuries later, however, a band of enterprising faceless stalkers returned to the infamous site of their masters' failure. In the aftermath of Aroden's death, the faceless stalkers arrived in Kantaria and had little difficulty infiltrating and feeding upon a society already fracturing after its apparent abandonment by its favored deity.

The situation changed when House Thrune became the dominant faction in the escalating Chelish Civil War. The lawlessness the faceless stalkers had enjoyed was coming to an end, so the ugothols began preparing for

a mass exodus. However, one of them stepped forward and proposed a longer-term investment in Kantaria. Up to that time, the ugothols had constantly shifted forms and identities as needed between fictitious travelers and townsfolk they'd slain and replaced. Under their new leader's guidance, the faceless stalkers each adopted unique identities within the town that would survive when House Throne eventually won its war and imposed order in Kantaria.

The ugothol calling himself Linton Demeer is the offspring of the leader who first organized Kantaria's faceless stalker community. Taking the identity of a surgeon, Linton opened a shop to provide the citizens of Kantaria with alchemical healing supplies and services. He also formed strong relationships with the local church of Iomedae and other local religious elements, building a reputation as an expert in the medical sciences. Locals come to Linton for a variety of minor healing needs, which he often "treats" with leeching and bloodletting, collecting the blood of his patients to feed the town's faceless stalkers. Linton sometimes uses oil of taggit as an anesthetic, and if his patients feel weak or woozy after one of his treatments, he can provide them with extracts or *potions of lesser restoration* to mitigate the effects of their blood loss.

This facade allows Linton to provide his people with fresh blood and keep their predations in line. On rare occasions, one of the town's faceless stalkers might still assault or murder a neighbor in a famished fury. The aftermath always leads to a stern reprisal from Linton, followed by a joint effort from the ugothol community to cover up the incident.

With the coming of the Glorious Reclamation to Kantaria, Linton's rapport with the Church of Iomedae has paid off even further, granting him a position on the newly formed governing council. Even so, Linton now struggles to keep his people under control. In the absence of Throne's authority, the faceless stalkers have grown worried about their future in Kantaria. Gone are the days when a person could disappear off the streets and be dismissed as a dissident who ran afoul of Throne agents, and Linton fears that a single mistake by one of his people could push the Iomedaeans into an investigation that might reveal the ugothols' presence in town.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

Linton Demeer has the potential to be either an ally or enemy of the PCs as the adventure progresses. Once the Despair Meter increases sufficiently, the alchemist approaches the PCs with a quest—which opens the way to a potential alliance with the faceless

stalkers, even though Linton keeps his true nature and motives hidden for most of the adventure.

Should the PCs discover Linton's identity, the faceless stalker becomes vicious in the defense of his people. He wants to ally with the PCs if he believes they'll win the growing conflict, but he won't needlessly risk exposing his community or endanger their lives in meaningless endeavors. Linton's one weakness in negotiation is his desire to avenge the defeat his people suffered at the hands of Iomedae. Canny PCs who suggest a resurgence of the ugothols in Kantaria as a means of damaging Iomedae's religion quickly gain the interest of the surgeon.

Kantaria's faceless stalkers don't reappear in the campaign beyond the events in this adventure, though achieving an alliance with them could allow the PCs to call in future favors from Linton. In addition, Linton might be a suitable candidate to rule Kantaria once the PCs have successfully ousted the Glorious Reclamation and are sent on their next adventure.



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FOURTH SWORD KNIGHT OPPIAN NEVILINDOR

Appointed governor of Kantaria by its Glorious Reclamation liberators, Oppian Nevilindor is a devout servant of Iomedae. Oppian dedicates himself to the ideals of the Inheritor, maintaining peak martial, physical, and spiritual condition.

OPPIAN NEVILINDOR

CR 7

XP 3,200

Male human cleric of Iomedae 8
LG Medium humanoid (human)

Init -1; **Senses** Perception +3

Aura divine presence (30 ft., DC 17, 8 rounds/day)

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 12, flat-footed 25 (+10 armor, +3 deflection, -1 Dex, +3 shield)

hp 79 (8d8+40)

Fort +10, **Ref** +1, **Will** +9; +2 vs. spells with the evil descriptor or cast by evil creatures

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +1 *longsword* +12/+7 (1d8+7/19-20)

Special Attacks channel positive energy 5/day (DC 16 [18 to damage undead], 4d6), holy lance (4 rounds, 1/day)

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +11)
6/day—touch of glory (+8), touch of good (+4)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 8th; concentration +11)

4th—*air walk*, *freedom of movement*, *holy smite*^o (DC 17)

3rd—*dispel magic*, *invisibility purge*, *protection from energy*, *searing light*^o, *wind wall*

2nd—*bear's endurance*, *bless weapon*^o, *bull's strength*, *Inheritor's smite*^o, *spiritual weapon*

1st—*bless*, *command* (2, DC 14), *divine favor*, *sanctuary* (DC 14), *shield of faith*^o

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *light*, *read magic*, *stabilize*

D domain spell;

Domains Glory, Good

TACTICS

Before Combat Oppian likely has forewarning of the PCs' arrival from Mindaliel, giving him time to cast *air walk*, *bear's endurance*, *bull's strength*, *freedom of movement*, and *shield of faith* before facing them.

During Combat Oppian uses his *scroll of spiritual ally* on the first round of combat. He knows he is a stronger melee combatant than spellcaster, so he activates his holy lance ability and closes to melee range as soon as possible, but he casts spells as needed.

Against heavily armored enemies or foes capable of dealing large amounts of damage, he casts *Inheritor's smite* and attempts to bull rush them off the edge of the rotunda.

Morale His dream of a free Kantaria torn asunder, Oppian fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 8, **Con** 18, **Int** 10, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 22

Feats Combat Casting, Disciple Of The Sword^o, Heavy Armor Proficiency, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Skills Diplomacy +11, Knowledge (history) +9, Knowledge (religion) +9, Sense Motive +12

Languages Common

Combat Gear *scroll of blessing of fervor*^{APG}, *scroll of spiritual ally*^{APG}; **Other**

Gear *honor's panoply* (+1 full plate; see sidebar), +1 heavy steel shield, +1 longsword, golden holy symbol of Iomedae (worth 100 gp), spell component pouch

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Disciple of the Sword Oppian gains the benefits of Weapon Specialization (longsword). This feat originally appeared on page 210 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Gods*.



Spells Oppian has prepared the *Inheritor's smite* spell from *Inner Sea Gods*. If this resource is not available, replace this spell with *spear of purity*^{UM} or a second *spiritual weapon* spell.

Born in Kantaria and raised on the legends of Iomedae, Oppian Nevilindor knew in his heart that one day he would lead the town's Iomedaean faithful. This belief was born not out of hubris, but from duty to his goddess and a drive to oppose the malevolence festering in Cheliax. Oppian left Kantaria to hone his combat skills in service to Iomedae, but returned to his hometown 10 years ago. Under House Thrune's oppressive rule, Oppian ascended to the rank of Fourth Sword Knight and oversaw a flourishing of Iomedae's church in Kantaria, repairing and rebuilding much of the fortress temple of Valor's Fastness. His efforts were rewarded as Kantaria's populace increasingly turned to the church of Iomedae for fellowship and guidance.

During this time, Oppian befriended a newcomer from the city of Westcrown—the town's blacksmith, Tychus Groat, whose skills proved invaluable during the reconstruction of Valor's Fastness. The cleric also developed a growing attraction to Loredana Viorica, the Nidalese proprietor of the Little Uskwood inn. Oppian made several overtures to the innkeeper, but while gentle in her rebukes, Loredana never accepted his advances.

The Glorious Reclamation's arrival in Kantaria changed everything for Oppian. Approached in secret by the Iomedaean knights, Oppian agreed to assist their efforts. He was instrumental in developing the strategy for the conquest of Kantaria, designed with the express purpose of minimizing civilian casualties. When the time came to liberate the town, Oppian led the offensive. Unfortunately, Tychus Groat was a staunch Thrune loyalist. The two eventually came to blows, and Oppian was forced to kill his friend, an act that haunts him and fills his otherwise successful tenure as governor of Kantaria with doubt and self-loathing.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

Oppian Nevilindor is the final obstacle the PCs must overcome in "Wrath of Thrune." For the majority of the adventure, Oppian resides within Valor's Fastness, but he makes a point of visiting Loredana Viorica at least once every few days. This gives the PCs the opportunity to meet with the cleric socially before their assault on the fortified Iomedaean temple in Part 3, either during one of these visits or in **Event 1**. At this time, the PCs can also learn of Oppian's feelings for Loredana Viorica and his history with Tychus Groat—two facts the PCs might be able to take advantage of when they finally face the Fourth Sword Knight at the conclusion of the adventure. Should the PCs try to remove Oppian prior to that point, they should find him well guarded by Sixth Sword

HONOR'S PANOPLY

As a reward for his service to Iomedae, Kantaria, and the Glorious Reclamation, the legion archon Mindaelief gifted Oppian this unique suit of magic full plate armor.

HONOR'S PANOPLY		PRICE
		12,550 GP
SLOT armor	CL 5th	WEIGHT 50 lbs.
AURA faint abjuration		

This immaculate set of *+1 full plate* adorned with gilt flourishes and imagery of lions, and embossed red accents. When worn, the armor grants its wearer a +2 sacred bonus on all saves against spells with the evil descriptor or cast by evil creatures.

Once per day as a swift action, the wearer of *honor's panoply* can call upon Iomedae for protection. For the next 5 minutes, the armor glows with an aura of golden light, and any hostile creature within 20 feet of the wearer must succeed at a DC 14 Will save or take a -2 penalty to its Armor Class and on attack rolls and saving throws for the duration, or until it hits the wearer with an attack. The wearer can dismiss this effect before the duration expires as a swift action on his turn to heal itself of 3d8+5 points of damage in a burst of healing energy.

A creature with the Craft Magic Arms and Armor feat and at least 5 ranks in the Craft (armor) skill can perform a ritual to corrupt *honor's panoply*, shifting its dedication to an evil deity. This ritual takes 6 days to complete, costs 2,000 gp in incense and materials, and requires a successful DC 19 Craft (armor) check. If the magic warhammer *Sinderbos* (see page 42) is used during the ritual, the cost of the ritual is reduced by 1,000 gp and requires only a successful DC 10 Craft (armor) check to complete. Once performed, the ritual transforms the armor into *infamy's panoply*; the armor turns black, the lions become animals sacred to the evil deity to which the armor is dedicated, and the red accents turn the crimson of fresh blood. The ritual also inverts the armor's effects: the save bonus is now profane and applies to spells with the good descriptor or cast by good creatures, and the armor now emanates a palpable aura of horror, causing non-allies to be shaken on a failed save. Dismissing this effect now grants the wearer fast healing 2 for 1 minute.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 7,100 GP
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Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *archon's aura*^{UM}, *veil of positive energy*^{APG}, creator must worship Iomedae

Knights, Glorious Reclamation sergeants, and squires—and far beyond their ability to overcome until they have eliminated his allies and gained more experience. In the end, however, Oppian's defeat spells the end of the Glorious Reclamation's hold on Kantaria, leaving the town ripe for reconquest by House Thrune.

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SHIELD-MARALICTOR ZARA ORCELANI

Dedicated to law above all else, Zara Orcelani represents the ideals of the Hellknight Order of the Rack. Imprisoned during the fall of Kantaria, she seeks to escape and exact vengeance for the death of the maralictor she was sworn to defend.

ZARA ORCELANI**CR 5****XP 1,600**

Female human fighter 5/Hellknight 1 (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Inner Sea World Guide* 278)

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 12, flat-footed 23 (+9 armor, +2 Dex, +4 shield)

hp 58 (6d10+21)

Fort +8, **Ref** +3, **Will** +3 (+1 vs. fear)

Defensive Abilities bravery +1

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee mwk longsword +11/+6 (1d8+5/19–20)

Ranged mwk heavy crossbow +9 (1d10/19–20)

Special Attacks smite chaos 1/day (+1 attack and AC, +1 damage), weapon training (heavy blades +1)

Hellknight Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th; concentration +7)
At will—*detect chaos*

TACTICS

During Combat Zara prefers a defensive role in combat. She quickly determines which of her allies are most useful to her and uses her Saving Shield feat to protect them.

Morale Zara fights to the death to avoid recapture.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 14, **Con** 16, **Int** 8, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 20

Feats Combat Reflexes, Iron Will, Missile Shield^{APG}, Saving Shield^{APG}, Shield Focus, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword)

Skills Intimidate +10, Knowledge (local) +3, Knowledge (planes) +1, Perception +5, Ride +1, Sense Motive +5

Languages Common

SQ armor training 1, aura of law, Hellknight order (Order of the Rack)

Combat Gear *arrow magnet*^{UE}, *potion of darkvision*; **Other Gear** Hellknight plate^{ISWG}, +1 heavy steel shield, mwk heavy crossbow with 10 bolts, mwk longsword

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Aura of Law (Ex) Zara's aura of law (see the *detect law* spell) is particularly powerful, equal to that of a cleric of her total character level (6th level).

Detect Chaos (Sp) This ability functions like a paladin's *detect evil* class feature, save that it detects chaos.

Hellknight Order (Ex) Zara is a member of the Order of the Rack, which seeks out and cleanses dangerous knowledge wherever its members find it. For more details on the Order of the Rack, see page 267 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Inner Sea World Guide*, or the "Hellknights" article on page 64 of *Pathfinder Adventure Path #27: What Lies in Dust*.

Smite Chaos (Su) This ability functions as per the paladin's smite evil class feature, but against chaotic-aligned creatures. This ability is twice as effective against outsiders with the chaotic subtype, chaotic-aligned aberrations, and fey.

Zara Orcelani grew up in a minor Chelish noble family long allied with House Thrune, and both she and her older brother Lucan held commissions with the Hellknight Order of the Pike arranged when they were children. In preparation for this career, Lucan trained rigorously in the military arts, but Zara was much more of a socialite. As a teenager, Zara eagerly accepted an invitation to a secret book reading, where her friends revealed a proscribed book that claimed Chelias was doomed because its people had turned their backs on Aroden and his inheritor, Iomedae, in favor of Asmodeus and the forces of Hell. Although these revelations disturbed her, Zara chose not to turn in her friends.

Tragedy struck, however, when Zara's friends set fire to a neighboring noble estate as a show of rebellion against their nation's disloyalty to Aroden and Iomedae. Those combating the blaze informed Zara that her parents and elder sister has been inside the home when the fire was set. Driven to rage-filled tears by the death of her closest family, Zara found the youths who had set the fire and put them to the sword herself. Believing that the true monsters to be fought existed in forbidden texts and ideas, Zara sought membership in the Order of the Rack—an order of Hellknights more in line with her newly entrenched beliefs.

During her Hellknight training, Zara spurned use of the Order of the Rack's ceremonial whip and adopted

a more defensive style, willfully throwing herself in harm's way to protect her allies and skillfully deflecting blows with her shield. When the time came for Zara to battle a summoned devil in single combat—the final requirement to being named a true Hellknight—Zara was unmoved as many of her fellow armigers were cut down or defeated by the summoned fiends, until she realized one of her comrades-in-arms had been matched against a devil far surpassing the aspirant's skills. Moving with speed, Zara intercepted the devil's strike with her shield and defended the young armiger from further attacks. As senior Hellknights moved in to subdue the fiend, Zara landed the final attacks that slew the devil, earning her both the rank of Hellknight and the attention of the leader of the order, Lictor Richemar Alamansor.

Lictor Alamansor took a personal interest in Zara, encouraging the new Hellknight to improve her abilities and making her his shield-bearer, a member of his personal bodyguard. He also bestowed upon her the ceremonial title of shield-maralictor, authorizing her to wear the iconic Hellknight plate armor before her official rank would normally allow.

When the Glorious Reclamation launched its crusade, the Order of the Rack feared the effects the Iomedaeans' subversive scriptures might have in the empire's more remote regions. Lictor Alamansor sent Maralictor Derilus Jaddene, with Zara as his bodyguard, to Kantaria to circulate the latest versions of House Throne's history books and doctrines. Unfortunately, their arrival in town coincided with the Glorious Reclamation's assault on Kantaria. In the ensuing battle, the Iomedaeans slew Maralictor Jaddene and subdued Zara.

Following her defeat, Zara was stripped of her gear and incarcerated in Hardship's Hearth, the Glorious Reclamation's temporary prison camp, where the Hellknight nurtures a growing desire to escape and seek vengeance against her captors. While Zara feels no remorse over the death of Jaddene—she did her duty to the best of her ability, and he died in service to the order—she sees the Glorious Reclamation's presence in Kantaria as a stain on both her own honor and that of the Order of the Rack.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

When the PCs first encounter Zara Orcelani, she is a prisoner of the Glorious Reclamation, held captive in Hardship's Hearth (area E). Freeing the imprisoned Hellknight gives the PCs an ally who will fight with them against the Iomedaeans, but Zara can also be an invaluable source of intelligence regarding the enemy's local leadership, as she fought against both Faydreth Zaine and Kalcyra the Just, and learned some of the abilities the two have at their disposal.

Zara can also serve as a mentor for a PC who wishes to become a Hellknight. If any PCs want to take levels in the Hellknight prestige class, Zara can aid them by witnessing their battle with a devil, one of the necessary prerequisites for membership. She can even help them find a devil to fight, in the form of the *brimstone barbazu* currently held in Narikopolus Manor (see page 36).

However, the true potential of befriending Zara is realized in the next adventure, "The Inferno Gate," when the PCs can use their good relationship with Zara to their advantage when they meet her older brother, Lucan Orcelani, lictor of the Hellknight Order of the Pike at Citadel Ordeial.



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MEET THE VILLAIN:

LIXIA BENZEKRI

Linxia is the iconic Hellknight for the Hell's Vengeance Adventure Path. Although she does not appear as a character in the campaign, she can be used as an NPC or pregenerated player character. Note that her CR is 1 higher than normal because she has PC wealth.

LIXIA BENZEKRI**CR 7****XP 3,200**

Female human fighter 5/Hellknight 2 (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Inner Sea World Guide* 278)

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +4; **Senses** Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 10, flat-footed 21 (+11 armor)

hp 69 (7d10+26)

Fort +9, **Ref** +3, **Will** +6 (+1 vs. fear)

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *longsword* +14/+9 (1d8+10/19–20) or
mwk whip +12/+7 (1d3+4 nonlethal)

Ranged mwk composite shortbow +8/+3 (1d6+4/×3)

Special Attacks smite chaos, weapon training (heavy blades +1)

Hellknight Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +8)

At will—*detect chaos*

4/day—*discern lies*

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 10, **Con** 16, **Int** 10, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 21

Feats Exotic Weapon Proficiency (whip), Furious Focus^{APG}, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword)

Skills Climb +6, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (engineering) +5, Knowledge (local) +5, Knowledge (planes) +2, Perception +6, Sense Motive +8

Languages Common

SQ armor training 1, aura of law, Hellknight armor 1, Hellknight order (Order of the Rack)

Combat Gear *feather token* (whip), *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of haste*, alchemist's fire (2), caltrops, tanglefoot bag; **Other Gear** +2 *Hellknight plate*^{ISWG}, +1 *longsword*, dagger, mwk composite shortbow (+4 Str) with 20 arrows, mwk whip, *aegis of recovery*^{UE}, *belt of physical might* +2 (Dex, Con), *cloak of resistance* +1, manacles, silk rope (50 ft.), sunrods (4), waterskin, 26 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Aura of Law (Ex) The power of Linxia's aura of law (see the *detect law* spell) is equal to her total character level (7th level).

Detect Chaos (Sp) This ability functions like a paladin's *detect evil* class feature, except that it detects chaos.

Hellknight Armor (Ex) When Linxia wears Hellknight plate armor, she reduces its armor check penalty by 1, increases the maximum Dexterity bonus allowed by 1, and moves at full speed.

Hellknight Order (Ex) Linxia is a member of the Order of the Rack, who seek out and cleanse dangerous knowledge wherever they find it. For more details on the Order of the Rack, see page 267 of *The Inner Sea World Guide*, or the "Hellknights" article on page 64 of *Pathfinder Adventure Path #27: What Lies in Dust*.

Smite Chaos (Su) This ability functions as the paladin's smite evil class feature, but against chaotic-aligned creatures. This ability is twice as effective against outsiders with the chaotic subtype, chaotic-aligned aberrations, and fey.

Linxia Benzekri was born and raised in Khari, the Chelish enclave on the northwest corner of Garund. Although ethnically Garundi, Linxia always thought of herself as Chelaxian. After all, Khari had been part of Chelias since long before she was ever born, and though Linxia's parents kept their Garundi surname, they gave her a traditional Chelish first name. To Linxia, the mighty ruins of the Arch of Aroden that tower above Khari were more a symbol of her heritage than the city's Rahadoumi sandstone architecture.

Although not religious, Linxia's parents sent her to an Asmodean convent as a child to receive an education. At the convent, Linxia learned the grand history of Chelias, how House Thrune unified a warring nation with the blessings of Asmodeus, and the necessity of laws based on those of Hell itself to preserve an ordered society.

Linxia returned home a teenager, now a loyal Chelish citizen ready to do her part to support the empire. But she was taken aback when she overheard her parents talking with an old family friend about a secret cabal of Garundi gentry who wanted to return Khari to "its rightful home" of Rahadoum. Horrified that her parents were involved in such a treasonous plot, Linxia reasoned that her parents' friend must have lured them into the conspiracy, so she immediately reported them to the city guard, the dottari.

That night, two Hellknights of the Order of the Rack—dressed in their characteristic night-black armor and flayed-skin cloaks—came to Linxia’s house to arrest her parents for sedition. As her parents were hauled away in chains, loudly proclaiming their innocence, Linxia only watched in silence. If her parents were truly innocent, then she trusted the law to exonerate them.

Linxia’s parents were judged guilty that same night, and the next morning, Linxia went to the city square to witness their sentences: scourged with whips, crucified, and then disemboweled. Through it all, Linxia watched without emotion. Even though she still believed her parents were duped, they had been found guilty of treason and had to be punished. The law had spoken.

Three days later, when her parents finally succumbed to their tortures and died, Linxia made a decision: she would become a Hellknight herself. Her parents’ crime was not their own—they had been misled by a friend, and paid the price. As a member of the Order of the Rack, however, she could help protect other innocents from such dangerous whispers and prevent them from suffering the same fate. The Hellknights personified the law and order that guarded civilization and prevented it from sliding back into barbarity; people like the “friend” who had deceived her parents were criminals whose actions threatened the very fabric of society.

As a symbol of her dedication, Linxia shaved her head and got a tattoo of the Order of the Rack’s symbol—a spiked torture wheel—on her forehead, so every time she looked in the mirror she would be reminded of her goal, her purpose, and the terrible consequences of failure. Linxia traveled to Avistan and presented herself at the gates of Citadel Rivad, headquarters of the Order of the Rack, and was accepted into the order as an armiger, a Hellknight squire in training.

Linxia devoted herself to her new calling, honing her mind and body for the trials that lay ahead. She had received basic combat training at the Asmodean monastery, but under the tutelage of the Hellknights, she learned to fight in heavy armor, mastered the sword and whip, and learned strategy, tactics, and engineering. When not practicing the arts of war, Linxia obsessively studied in Citadel Rivad’s library, memorizing the tenets of the Hellknights’ philosophy, the Measure and the Chain. To strengthen her resolve and desensitize herself to pain, Linxia regularly and willingly underwent the Order of the Rack’s reckoning, purging herself of weakness and undisciplined thoughts

by drinking boiling water until her throat scarred and left her voice a ragged rasp.

With her training complete, Linxia faced her final task: single combat with a summoned barbazu. All around her, many of her fellow armigers failed in this final trial, slain by the devils’ barbed glaives or succumbing to infernal wounds and infections they suffered at the hands of the fiends. But Linxia emerged triumphant, though bloodied. She received the full rank of Hellknight and a suit of Hellknight plate armor. Now Linxia serves as a righteous bastion of law against the chaos of insidious knowledge, corrupt philosophies, and rebellious thought. With her sword, she enforces conformity and justice to preserve a peaceful and ordered society—no matter the cost.



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Ah, first time in town, eh? Well, I can tell you all about Kantaria and her great history. We started out as a camp for the armies of Old Taldor. General Kantarikos fought the orcs of the Menador Mountains—those peaks you can see over yonder—and Taldor thanked him with this land. Before long, we had a proper town, and named it Kantaria after the general himself.

“But that’s not why you’re here, now is it? No, you’re wanting to know about the goddess that walked these same streets. That’s right—while she was still as mortal as you or I, the Inheritor lived in Kantaria, and saved the town from faceless horrors and shapeshifting monstrosities. It was a miracle, I tell you, her Tenth Act. Aye, that’s the house she called home, right up the street, and for just a single silver, I’ll give you a tour and the whole story—including things you won’t hear about in church, if you know what I mean!”

—Pious Pete, Kantarian local and amateur historian

The town of Kantaria rests atop a hill overlooking the Sedna River in the Archduchy of Menador. Surrounded by fertile farmland and the rich lumber of the nearby Barrowood, Kantaria provides a waypoint for travelers between Nidal and the Chelish heartlands, and for miners and slave trains heading to and from the excavations in the Menador Mountains. The only settlement of note for miles, Kantaria serves as the ducal seat of House Narikopolus, which has ruled Kantaria and the Archduchy of Menador for centuries. However, the town is now most famous as the site of the goddess Iomedae's Tenth Act.

Sheltered between the northern mountains and the southern forest, Kantaria is protected from the worst effects of the area's seasonal weather, which fluctuates between striking sunny days and dismal periods of rain. Although recurrent flooding threatens the farms in the nearby hinterlands, Kantaria itself is spared such a calamity thanks to its location on the hillside above the river.

EARLY HISTORY

Soon after Chelias was officially founded as a province of Taldor in 3007 AR, a Taldan army led by General Kantarikos came to the region to address a growing orc threat in the nearby Menador Mountains. Kantarikos established a command post above the Sedna River, where he could clearly view much of the surrounding region. When Kantarikos retired in the aftermath of the long campaign against the orcs, Taldor rewarded the general and several of his officers with honorable discharges and land in Chelias. Most of these retired soldiers settled near the command post that had been their home, and dozens of residences and businesses soon sprang up around the former military fortress. This settlement formed the foundation of the modern town of Kantaria, named in honor of General Kantarikos.

Kantarikos led the town until his death, but left no descendants, so a governing council took over Kantaria for the next few centuries. The town saw a drastic change in leadership after the Shining Crusade ended in 3828 AR. An aged Taldan knight named Fiona Narikopolus gained the attention of the empire when she personally battled one of the Whispering Tyrant's generals on the shores of distant Lake Encarthan, defeating the unholy abomination and scattering an army of undead before her. For her valor in the face of such horrors, Fiona was granted a noble title and the town of Kantaria and its hinterlands as her family estate.

Fiona Narikopolus ruled Kantaria for only a single year before she died of natural causes, passing her title and leadership of the region to her only son, Arakhan, the result of a brief tryst with a fellow soldier during the Shining Crusade. Arakhan had only visited Kantaria a handful of times before Fiona's death and,

KANTARIA

LN small town

Corruption +0; **Crime** -2; **Economy** +2; **Law** +3; **Lore** +2; **Society** -2

Qualities sacred site, strategic location

Danger +0

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government overlord

Population 1200 (1,004 humans, 97 halflings, 73 dwarves, 18 tieflings, 8 other)

Notable NPCs

Councilor Faydreth Zaine (LG male half-elf wizard 7)

Councilor Jalila Hadjara (LG female human monk 6)

Councilor Jana Holdus (CG female human bard 5)

Councilor Linton Demeer (NE male faceless stalker alchemist^{APG} 5)

Governor Oppian Nevilindor (LG male human cleric of Iomedae 8)

Harbormaster Jonas Reikman (N male human fighter 2/rogue 3)

Innkeeper Loredana Viorica (NE female human rogue 2)

Inquisitor Kalcyra the Just (LN female dwarf inquisitor^{APG} of Torag 7)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 1,100 gp; **Purchase Limit** 5,000 gp;

Spellcasting 4th

Minor Items 3d4; **Medium Items** 1d6; **Major Items** —

SPECIAL QUALITIES

Sacred Site As the site of Iomedae's Tenth Act, Kantaria is sacred to the faith of the Inheritor. A large number of pilgrims are drawn to the town, which has long been home to devoted followers of Iomedae. (*Corruption* -2; *Economy* +1; *Lore* +1)

following that tragic event, the Narikopolus heir vanished, not even deigning to attend his mother's funeral. Lacking any true leader, Kantaria entered a short period of chaos and confusion as its citizens attempted to reinstate the town's former governing council with varying levels of failure.

IOMEDAE'S RULE

Fortune smiled on Kantaria in 3831 AR, when the then-mortal Iomedae visited the town following her recent defeat of the vampire-mage Basilov. While resting on her way to Absalom, Iomedae perceived a strong emanation of evil from several of Kantaria's governing council members. Iomedae and her entourage confronted them, only to be taken aback when several of the accused revealed themselves as shapechanging faceless stalkers. Battling the horrific aberrations throughout town, Iomedae

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and her retinue eventually defeated them, only to leave Kantaria leaderless. Believing that whatever was behind the infestation might soon return, Iomedae offered to defend the town and assist in creating a stable government. Her suspicions were confirmed when an army of faceless stalkers almost immediately attempted to invade the town.

For months, Iomedae repelled constant incursions, eventually facing the true leaders behind the assault—a cabal of veiled masters. The siege culminated in a great battle on the day following the one-year anniversary of Iomedae's arrival in Kantaria. Pressed on all sides, Iomedae and the town's surviving defenders retreated into the old command post built by General Kantarikos. The veiled masters discarded any attempt at subtlety and assaulted the fortress directly. Only the timely arrival of Arakhan Narikopolus, the long-missing rightful lord of Kantaria, at the head of a host of adventurers, mercenaries, and soldiers saved the people of Kantaria and restored peace.

In recognition of his valor, Iomedae gifted her sword, *Heart's Edge*, to Arakhan to help defend the town should the veiled masters return. She also handed over leadership to him, restoring House Narikopolus's rule of Kantaria. Iomedae then departed and resumed her journey to Absalom. Soon after, she ascended into the ranks of divinity, and Kantaria became a sacred site for the goddess' nascent church.

HOUSE THRUNE

Kantaria changed little over the intervening centuries, though it slowly grew in affluence due to the fame from its direct association with the goddess Iomedae. Even Cheliox's declaration of independence from Taldor in 4081 AR had little impact on the town. The leaders of House Narikopolus became archdukes of Menador during this time, but Kantaria otherwise remained distant from the politics of greater Cheliox. During the Everwar, Kantaria saw an influx of soldiers passing through on their way to subjugate Nidal, and the town remains a stopping point for those traveling between the two nations to this day.

The outbreak of civil war following Aroden's death in 4606 AR dramatically impacted Kantaria. While the town remained untouched by the war itself, when House Thrunne seized power and took control of Cheliox in 4640 AR, Kantaria contended with the rise of diabolism and the state worship of Asmodeus. Being distant from the new capital of Egorian allowed Kantaria to maintain some independence from Thrunne's various edicts, but Kantaria's holy significance to the church of Iomedae drew unwelcome attention. House Narikopolus became a loyal supporter of Thrunne, and to appease the throne, ordered that Kantaria's former chapel of Aroden be converted into a temple of Asmodeus.

Nevertheless, Kantaria retained its status as a sacred site of Iomedae in the aftermath of House Thrunne's ascension, and even enjoyed a modicum of prosperity as the growing slave economy resulted in regular caravans passing through the town as they moved between the cosmopolitan cities of the south and the Menador Mountains, Nidal, and points farther north.

THE GLORIOUS RECLAMATION

When the Glorious Reclamation launched its crusade against House Thrunne to restore the faith of Iomedae in Cheliox, the dormant tensions between Kantaria's Asmodeans and Iomedaeans flared into life. Fourth Sword Knight Oppian Nevilindor, the local leader of the town's church of Iomedae, worked to avoid any potential crackdown on those disloyal to House Thrunne by mediating these conflicts. Due to its status as a sacred site, Kantaria presented an important military and religious objective for the Glorious Reclamation, which had secretly contacted Nevilindor weeks before to prepare for the town's conquest.

Once House Thrunne declared martial law in Cheliox's major cities, the members of House Narikopolus left Kantaria for Egorian to present themselves to the imperial court. Seeing the family's departure as an opportunity, the Glorious Reclamation launched a precision strike on Kantaria, seizing the town in a single day with minimal bloodshed. To maintain order, the Glorious Reclamation appointed Oppian Nevilindor governor of Kantaria, supported by a council of local Kantarian advisors.

Today, Kantaria is adapting to a new way of life as the just and merciful teachings of Iomedae replace the tyrannical edicts of House Thrunne. Gone are the public displays of torture and humiliation in the old town square, replaced with a flourishing farmers' market. No longer are the needs of the people decided by a decadent noble house, but by a kindhearted leader who seeks the advice of the town's own citizens. It is a new age for Kantaria, as the forces of the goddess who once saved the town seek to secure its auspicious future under their guidance.

KANTARIA GAZETTEER

Details on several of Kantaria's most prominent locations are presented below. Unlabeled buildings represent family homes, common shops, small businesses, and warehouses. Most of Kantaria's buildings are constructed out of wood with thatched roofs or wooden shingles, though temples and military structures are built with stone mined from the nearby Menador Mountains.

The lands surrounding Kantaria are quite fertile and house numerous farming families who work their fields only a few miles from the town proper. These farmers, and the many other laborers who live

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even farther from town (such as the lumberjacks of the Barrowood), are still considered Kantarian citizens and are entitled to the same protections afforded their urban counterparts.

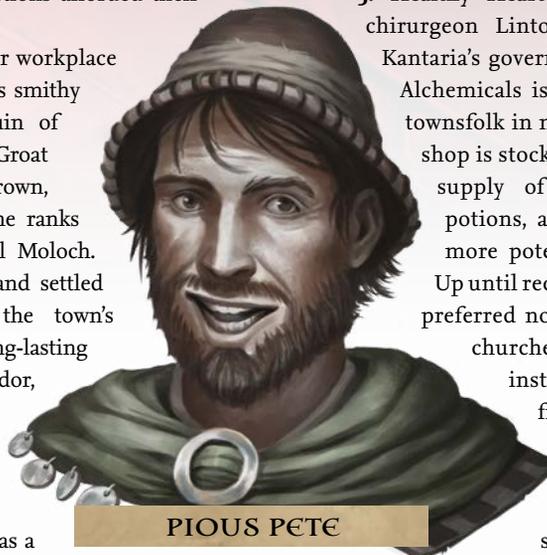
1. Groat's Smithy: The former workplace of blacksmith Tychus Groat, this smithy is now little more than a ruin of blackened wood and stone. Groat grew up in the slums of Westcrown, where he was recruited into the ranks of a local cult of the archdevil Moloch. Years later, Groat left the cult and settled in Kantaria. Groat became the town's blacksmith and formed a long-lasting friendship with Oppian Nevilindor, high priest of Kantaria's church of Iomedae. This friendship came to a deadly end in the Glorious Reclamation's conquest of Kantaria, however, as Groat was a staunch Thrune loyalist, and Oppian, fighting alongside the Iomedaeans, was forced to slay his former friend. The ruins of Groat's smithy still crackle with arbitrary goutts of hellish flame, and the local populace gives Groat's makeshift grave a wide berth, believing it to be haunted by his ghost. See page 23 for more details on this site.

2. Harbor: The Taldan soldiers following General Kantarikos dug Kantaria's harbor out of the banks of the Sedna River before the town was even founded. Its docks, originally little more than a humble assemblage of wooden planks, were constructed for the disembarkation of soldiers. Iomedae ordered the docks fortified during her rule of Kantaria, and a solid stone wall and gatehouse were erected west of the harbor to ward off river pirates and other aquatic threats. Up to three riverboats can moor at the docks at one time. Usually the watercraft found there are supply ships making their way to the Menador Mountains or hauling trade goods back to the heartlands; even after the arrival of the Glorious Reclamation, Chelish ships are still permitted to dock in Kantaria as long as they pay a fee and submit to a rigorous inspection to ensure their cargoes are not bound for House Thrune or the Imperial Army. Kantaria's harbormaster, a former river pirate named Jonas Reikman, manages the docks and oversees the searches for the Glorious Reclamation, just as he did before the Iomedaeans' arrival.

All sorts of tales surround Kantaria's harbor, the most popular being that it conceals a cache of lost Iomedaeans' relics. According to local legend, Iomedae herself stood vigil on the newly constructed harbor walls, wielding a longbow to devastating effect against a rising tide of aberrations from the river. It is said that some of Iomedae's arrows, now holy relics of the goddess, still

survive somewhere in the depths of the harbor. The docks are further detailed on page 25.

3. Healthy Heart Alchemicals: Run by the surgeon Linton Demeer, a member of Kantaria's governing council, Healthy Heart Alchemicals is a stopping point for most townsfolk in need of magical healing. The shop is stocked with a seemingly endless supply of curative and restorative potions, as well as an assortment of more potent alchemical concoctions. Up until recent events, many Kantarians preferred not to show favoritism to the churches of Asmodeus or Iomedae, instead buying their healing from Healthy Heart. With the arrival of the Glorious Reclamation, citizens are more open to acquiring services from Nevilindor and the clerics at Valor's Fastness,



though the church still sends those with minor needs to Demeer.

4. Inheritor's Square: Named for Iomedae, Kantaria's main square was used for public excruciations and other punishments prior to the arrival of the Glorious Reclamation. Now, the square is home to a vibrant, open market, bustling with trade. Every Oathday, the square hosts a larger gathering, as farmers from outside town and miners from the nearby Menador Mountains come to barter food and ore for equipment and supplies. See page 17 for more on the weekly Oathday market.

5. Iomedae's Home: When the mortal Iomedae lived in Kantaria, this simple, single-story wooden house was her home. Maintained regularly by the clergy at Valor's Fastness, the residence has remained intact for nearly 900 years ago, a fact the locals attribute to divine providence. For the price of 1 silver piece, visitors can get a short, guided tour from local vagabond Pious Pete, who bills himself as an "amateur historian," though he is known for blatantly exaggerating and misrepresenting Iomedae's life in Kantaria.

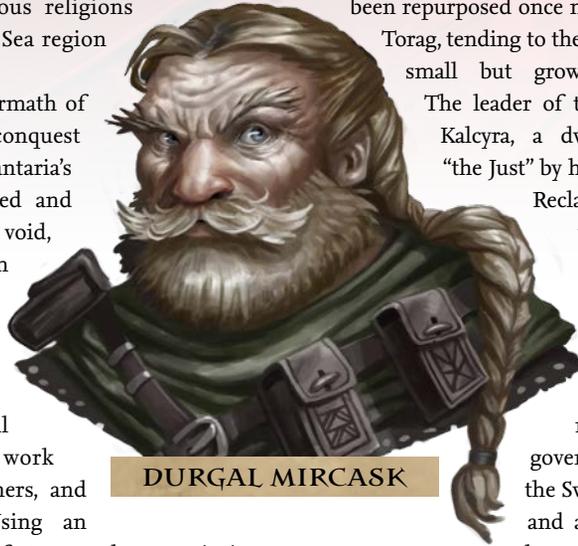
6. Kantaria Historicum: Both in their late seventies, **Anselm Mathis** (CN venerable male human bard 5) and his husband **Gebhard** (CG venerable male human expert 6), have run this combination library and bookstore for the past 50 years. Avid collectors of books and documents, the two men met during a literary conference in Westcrown, and eventually joined their wealth to purchase a plot of land in town and open the Kantaria Historicum. Having come under scrutiny more than once by the Order of the Pyre during the Hellknights' infrequent visits to Kantaria, the elderly couple surprised the town's populace when they

unexpectedly produced hundreds of hidden tomes in the wake of the Glorious Reclamation's arrival. Previously seen as heretical, these new additions to the Kantaria Historicum represent a wealth of information on the various religions found throughout the Inner Sea region and beyond.

7. Labor Guild: In the aftermath of the Glorious Reclamation's conquest of the town, dozens of Kantaria's slaves found themselves freed and without purpose. To fill this void, long-retired dwarven foreman **Durgal Mircask** (NG male dwarf expert 4) created the Labor Guild, based in the town's former slave auction house. Managing several accounts, Durgal receives work orders from townsfolk, farmers, and external interests alike. Using an allocation system based on factors such as seniority, experience, and physical aptitude, Durgal doles out jobs for those seeking work. In exchange for this service, Durgal takes a small portion of laborers' wages, using the funds to finance larger business opportunities for those coming to the guild for aid.

8. The Little Uskwood: Although this inn appears to be built from shoddy gray wood, the Little Uskwood is actually constructed from lumber imported from its namesake—the Uskwood in shadow-touched Nidal to the north. Built to accommodate travelers journeying between Nidal and the Chelish heartlands, the inn's gloomy ambiance seems depressing to many Chelaxians and other visitors, but Nidalese guests find the atmosphere comforting and refreshing. Currently run by Loredana Viorica, daughter of the inn's founder, the Little Uskwood has seen minimal change with the Glorious Reclamation's arrival in Kantaria, but disturbing rumors have surfaced about strange sounds coming from the inn during the darkest hours of the night. The Little Uskwood is detailed further on page 11.

9. Narikopolus Manor: Built from austere red brick, this large mansion is the manorial seat and official residence of House Narikopolus, the archdukes of Menador. Nowhere near as opulent as the noble homes seen in larger Chelish cities, Narikopolus Manor is nevertheless the most impressive private dwelling in the town. The Glorious Reclamation claimed the manor when they took Kantaria, and Rassophore Faydreth Zaine, the order's resident wizard, now makes his home here. The Iomedaeans confiscated countless magic items during Kantaria's fall, and many of the most dangerous objects were brought to the manor for personal inspection by Zaine. See page 32 for full details of this location.



DURGAL MIRCASK

10. Shrine of the Hammer: This small chapel was once dedicated to Aroden, but in the wake of the Chelish Civil War, it became Kantaria's temple of Asmodeus. Since the arrival of the Glorious Reclamation, however, the site has been repurposed once more, this time as a shrine to Torag, tending to the spiritual needs of Kantaria's small but growing dwarven community. The leader of the shrine's congregation is Kalcyra, a dwarven inquisitor. Dubbed "the Just" by her allies within the Glorious Reclamation, Kalcyra hopes to train new disciples to follow her beyond the borders of Kantaria and into the infernal heart of Chelias.

11. The Sweetest Drop: Owned by a reluctant member of Kantaria's governing council, Jana Holdus, the Sweetest Drop is both a tavern and an inn. Jana prefers to run her establishment more as a drinking hole, sending customers who just want a soft bed to her competitor, Loredana Viorica, at the Little Uskwood. Jana doesn't see much of a financial drawback from this act of generosity, as many of her more vivacious patrons inevitably spend the extra coin to sleep at the Sweetest Drop rather than risk an embarrassing walk home in the dark.

12. Sword Towers: Three stone watchtowers overlook Kantaria from the north, west, and south. Each tower is capped with an oversized stone sword similar to the holy symbol of Iomedae, pointing toward the sky. Iomedae herself oversaw the towers' construction, and when the sun sets, the swords glow with the light of *continual flame* until sunrise. Creatures capable of channeling positive energy can expend one use of their channel energy ability to empower a tower to radiate bright light in a 180-foot radius. This effect lasts a number of minutes equal to the number of dice of the channeling character's channel energy ability. See page 25 for more details on one of these sites.

13. Valor's Fastness: Originally the site of General Kantarikos's command post, Kantaria's temple of Iomedae sits atop the highest point in town. Reconstructed and renovated countless times in the centuries since the town's founding, the fortified temple now boasts strong walls of whitewashed stone and a 115-foot-tall spire topped with a dome of red tiles. Valor's Fastness is the focal point for the Iomedaeans church and the Glorious Reclamation in Kantaria, and currently houses many of the knightly order's troops. Due to the ongoing war, the fortress is off-limits to citizens except for weekly prayer sessions held in the temple's sanctuary. Valor's Fastness is fully detailed on page 43.

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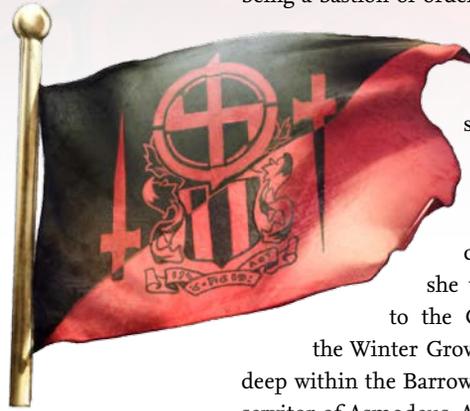


THRICE-DAMNED HOUSE OF THRUNE

When Aspex the Even-Tongued declared the Taldan province of Cheliasx an independent nation in 4081 AR, he granted his greatest general, Alivia Thrune, the title Duchess of Central Cheliasx. The duchess served as Aspex's closest advisor throughout the bloodless war that followed, during which the people of Cheliasx and its fellow Taldan provinces eagerly bowed to the duchess's superior strategy and vision. Aspex attempted to cede the throne to Duchess Alivia, but she refused, confident that he could rule the nation in her stead. Instead, she dedicated her life to reforming every aspect of Chelish bureaucracy and law, with the aid of devils that she bound to her service. In recognition of Alivia's excellence, the rest of House Thrune agreed to act as advisors and administrators, until such time as Cheliasx needed them to claim the throne.

—*The Glorious Nation of Cheliasx, 126th Edition: The Certified Most Accurate and Complete History of the Greatest Empire on Golarion, valid until 15 Arodus 4715 AR, by order of Lictor Alamansor of the Order of the Rack*

The current sinister reputation of the nation of Cheliox is due entirely to the actions of House Thrune. After Aroden's death, the Chelish noble house of Thrune struck pacts with devils in order to triumph over their rivals in the ensuing chaos. Under their leadership, the worship of Asmodeus and the practice of binding devils spread throughout the nation. Monasteries and schools devoted to the philosophies of Hell have flourished, as have the disciplined orders of Hellknights. Some of Cheliox's vassals and provinces, such as Isgar and Korvosa, welcomed the changing ideals. Others, such as Andoran and Galt, rejected House Thrune's teachings so thoroughly that their governments embraced freedom from monarchy as a central ideal.



HISTORY OF HOUSE THRUNE

No aspect of Chelish history has received more thorough revision under the rule of the Thrice-Damned House of Thrune than the history of House Thrune itself. Every few months, a new version of the official history of Cheliox is printed, inevitably inflating the glory of House Thrune even more than its predecessors. Hellknights of the Order of the Rack tirelessly gather and burn all but the most recent copies, making uncovering the truth a daunting proposition. These histories claim that House Thrune was responsible for nearly every economic, military, and cultural victory that Cheliox has attained in the past 6 centuries, and that Cheliox's failures are the result of those in power ignoring House Thrune's prescient advice. Both are held up as examples of why Thrune should be granted ever-greater control of every aspect of Chelish life, for the good of aristocrats and commoners alike.

As most people in Cheliox suspect—but few would dare to admit out loud—the official version of history is almost entirely false. House Thrune was one of dozens of families elevated to the nobility after the Everwar in 4410 AR, when Cheliox's military successes left it with vast swaths of new territory. Before that date, the Thrune family was best known for its lawyers and bureaucrats, and the tendency of its members to be dour and reserved. The subtle manipulations of devils were a perfect match for the insular arrogance and ambitions of the newly risen House Thrune. Infernal influence within the family spread, starting with the lawyers who practiced their skills by studying the laws of Hell. Very few members of House Thrune actually summoned devils, and even fewer worshiped devils; instead, most of them worshiped Cheliox's patron deity Aroden.

With Aroden's unexpected death in 4606 AR, however, his devout followers reeled at the sudden loss. Within House Thrune, those whose philosophies were inspired by infernal sources quickly rose to prominence.

As civil war broke out, House Thrune prided itself on being a bastion of order and efficiency, and immediately set to work forging alliances and establishing its place in the new order. In 4635 AR, several prominent Hellknight orders cast their lot with the Thrunes, and Abrogail Thrune sequestered herself for months, crafting an infernal contract that she was certain would pave her way to the Chelish throne. She traveled to the Winter Grove, an ancient summoning circle deep within the Barrowood, and called forth a powerful servitor of Asmodeus. After exhaustive negotiations, she and the devil agreed upon a contract.

Abrogail Thrune would claim the throne of Cheliox in exchange for her soul. In addition, she was required to allow devils to mentor the children of her house, and to compel her family members to participate in weekly services to Asmodeus. Additionally, her contract stipulated that the soul of any member of House Thrune contested between Hell and another plane default to Hell in perpetuity; only an individual's complete rejection of the name, wealth, power, and benefits of membership in the family would exempt him. The damning of her own soul and her family's souls are officially named the First Damnation and the Second Damnation, respectively, though very few outside of Hell have seen a copy of the actual contract, or know of its contents. Every year since, the Infernal Majestor or Majestrix has journeyed to the Winter Grove to make a sacrifice to renew Thrune's contract with Hell.

With the assistance of hordes of devils, Abrogail quickly eliminated her rivals, culminating in the defeat of Thrune's last rival house, House Davian, at the Battle of a Hundred Kings in 4639 AR. Abrogail ascended the throne of Cheliox as Abrogail I, with the pit fiend Gorthoklek at her side as a loyal advisor. She ruled Cheliox for more than 30 years, until her son Antonius murdered her. Antonius's actions shocked the people of Cheliox, many of whom saw Abrogail I as a savior from the dark chaos of the civil war.

For the first time since Abrogail's ascension, the stability of House Thrune's rule appeared to be in jeopardy. Antonius's reign was unexpectedly brief, however, cut short by a poorly prepared poisonous safu'u fish. The investigations into his death were perfunctory, and every Thrune ruler since has died in a similarly suspicious yet largely unquestioned accident. Abrogail I's great-granddaughter, Abrogail II, seized the throne

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TIMELINE

- 4081 AR Aspek the Even-Tongued granted his most trusted and masterful general Alivia Thrune the title Duchess of Central Cheliox. Strangely, this momentous event appears only in modern Chelish histories, and not the accounts of contemporary foreign scholars.
- 4410 AR In the wake of the Everwar, Cheliox promotes many of its military officers to the nobility. Among those promoted is a young lieutenant named for her famous ancestor: Alivia Thrune.
- 4417 AR Alivia's brother Gellius Thrune seeks infernal advice in evading the consequences of fraud, and in so doing becomes the first member of House Thrune to forge a pact with Hell.
- 4598 AR Abrogail Thrune is born in Westcrown.
- 4606 AR Aroden dies, and Cheliox descends into chaos.
- 4608 AR The Chelish Civil War begins. Through a combination of military strategy, clever alliances, and luck, House Thrune begins a steady rise in power and influence.
- 4635 AR The Hellknight orders of the Scourge, Chain, Gate, and Thorn formally ally with House Thrune, and assist House Thrune's rise to power.
- 4636 AR Abrogail Thrune sells her soul to Asmodeus.
- 4639 AR House Davian's failed assault on House Thrune at the Battle of a Hundred Kings establishes House Thrune as the most powerful family in all of Cheliox.
- 4640 AR Abrogail I ascends to the throne of Cheliox.
- 4640 AR Hellknights refuse Abrogail I's request that they become her personal guard. The queen permits Hellknight orders to continue to function as independent organizations as recompense for their years of service.
- 4672 AR Abrogail I's son Antonius murders his mother and seizes the throne.
- 4674 AR Antonius is fatally poisoned from eating incorrectly prepared safu'u fish. His cousin Terthule becomes the third member of his family to rule Cheliox.
- 4682 AR Terthule disappears. Carellia Thrune, his niece, takes his place.
- 4692 AR Abrogail II is born in Egorian.
- 4696 AR Carellia drowns, and her death is never thoroughly investigated. Her cousin Infrexus rises to power.
- 4709 AR Infrexus falls through the ice of the Adivian River and drowns. Abrogail II, great-granddaughter of Abrogail I, becomes the new infernal majestrix of Cheliox.
- 4709 AR Abrogail II makes a compact with devils, selling the soul of Cheliox to Hell. Thereafter, House Thrune is known as the Thrice-Damned House of Thrune.

when she was 17 years old, and quickly increased the stakes of her family's bargain with Hell by selling not a mortal soul, but the soul of the nation of Cheliox itself—the legendary Third Damnation of House Thrune. While priests, philosophers, and lawyers from other nations argue endlessly about the ability of a monarch to legally bind her nation's "soul," the full implications of this metaphysical bargain and what it might mean for the future of Cheliox remain unclear.

ORDER OF THE HOUSE

The current ruler of House Thrune, Abrogail II, stands at the top of the house's hierarchy. The hierarchy below her is not entirely determined by parentage. Any member of House Thrune is technically eligible for the throne of Cheliox, and the house's formal structure of inheritance changes more frequently than Cheliox's official histories. However, there are a few consistent rules that determine the relative power of members of the house. Those who are descended from Abrogail I enjoy greater status than those who are not, as do those who are currently in the favor of Abrogail II. Her Infernal Majestrix is keenly aware that her predecessors all perished in unfortunate accidents while in the company of their most trusted family members, and so keeps sycophants and advisors at a distance.

At first glance, the inner workings of House Thrune appear to be meritocratic; those who attain significant personal power, publicly advance the goals of House Thrune, or master the intricacies of infernal contracts find that their names and accomplishments precede them. Members of the House who loyally serve their superiors find glowing tales of their accomplishments decorating the pages of the official histories. Station within the court is heavily weighted toward recent successes, however, and those who rest on their laurels or fall out of favor with their superiors just as quickly find their accomplishments erased. The least powerful members of House Thrune are those who spend their efforts indulging in the spoils of their wealth rather than engaging in politics, as most Thrunes consider such unambitious people derelict in their duties to the house.

Alliances within the house are common, and typically sealed with formal contracts that the signatories readily twist to their own ends. The most complicated contracts of alliance surround marriages. Marriages within the House of Thrune are a complicated and regulated affair, and anyone hoping to marry into House Thrune must prove to influential family members that their wealth, influence, or abilities will be an asset to the family. Yet while outside marriages are complicated, they are not uncommon—Thrune leaders understand that it's far easier to control the nation's nobles if they can aspire to marry into the power structure themselves. Such

newly minted Thrunes often eagerly take the house's name, regardless of gender.

Notably absent from the hierarchy of House Thrune is the Church of Asmodeus. While both House Thrune and the Church of Asmodeus exercise extraordinary control over the lives of ordinary citizens, the two organizations compete for power privately while bolstering each other publicly. The secular laws of House Thrune require lip service to Asmodeus, and the mandate to obey those who hold lawful authority is a central tenet of Asmodean faith. The fiercest battleground between House Thrune and the Church of Asmodeus lies in the hearts of those who pay their respects to Asmodeus out of obligation rather than faith. House Thrune allows the citizens of Cheliox to worship other non-chaotic deities, in an effort to keep as many people as possible loyal to the crown above Asmodeus. As ardently as the members of House Thrune proclaim their dominion over devils, they are wary of the possibility that Asmodeus will twist his contract with Abrogail I if they allow him a more expedient path to his goals. For its part, the Church of Asmodeus seeks to win the hearts and minds of all those who attend its state-sponsored services.

GOALS

While House Thrune is not a monolithic entity, its members share several common goals that range beyond simply maintaining their position at the head of the Chelish state.

As a whole, they seek to twist the historical vision of Chelaxians from a people who derive their greatness from Aroden to a people whose many accomplishments arise from unquestioning obedience to House Thrune. The crown mandates that each new printing of the official histories of Cheliox be revised to further inflate the role of House Thrune and to destroy the reputations of families that have fallen out of their favor. Whenever any challenge to the authority of House Thrune arises, the members of the house set aside their individual differences to put offenders in their place.

In addition to expanding its power within Cheliox, House Thrune aims to increase its prominence abroad. Its members have brought their formidable propaganda engine to bear against Andoran and other nations that were formerly part of Cheliox, maintaining that the Goblinblood Wars were far longer and bloodier than they would have been if the people

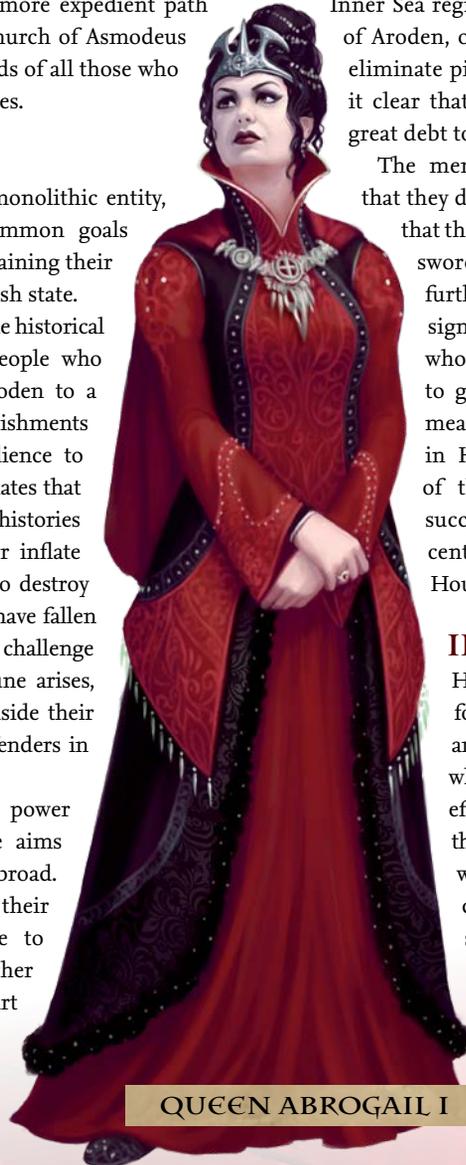
of Andoran had been part of Cheliox. They see little need to spread propaganda about Galt, as those who flee the revolutionary nation are prone to speaking at length about the terrors of mob rule. By exaggerating the faults and hypocrisies of these newly independent states, House Thrune aims to prey upon the fears of their citizens and sow doubt in their hearts about the wisdom of remaining independent, while at the same time tamping down thoughts of rebellion within Cheliox itself. House Thrune lionizes Aspek the Even-Tongued for his skill at gaining power through subterfuge rather than bloodshed, and family members attempt to follow his example in enticing "rogue nations" to rejoin their homeland.

While House Thrune does not often use its army to expand its influence, the same cannot be said for its navy. With the leadership of figures like Admiral Druvalia Thrune, House Thrune wishes to establish the Chelish navy as the greatest seaborne force in the Inner Sea region. As they already control the Arch of Aroden, one of their primary objectives is to eliminate piracy on the Inner Sea, while making it clear that merchants from all nations owe a great debt to Cheliox for this service.

The members of House Thrune recognize that they draw enormous power from Hell, and that their source of power is a double-edged sword. They continually scheme to gain further power from Hell without making significant personal sacrifices. Those who have signed away their souls seek to gain immortality, or take significant measures to ensure their prominence in Hell. Only Asmodeus knows which of these measures, if any, will prove successful, but belief in their efficacy is a central component of the philosophy of House Thrune.

INTERNAL FACTIONS

Her Infernal Majestrix has little patience for empty flattery or hereditary station, and only those advisors and courtiers who prove themselves consistently effective last long in her court. While this means that upward mobility is within every Thrune's power, the queen's attention is a double-edged sword, as frivolous social climbers find themselves granted inevitably fatal opportunities to increase the nation's glory. More so than any previous ruler of Cheliox, Abrogail II periodically terrorizes her inner circle by revealing



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NOTABLE MEMBERS OF HOUSE THRUNE

The following members of House Thrune are particularly prominent in modern politics, as well as adventures set in Chelixa.

Abrogail Thrune: Her Infernal Majestrix Abrogail II is the current queen of Chelixa. She ascended to the throne in 4609 AR, and has since combined her significant personal power, political shrewdness, and unflinching ruthlessness to advance her goals.

Barzillai Thrune: Barzillai is a high inquisitor of the Church of Asmodeus. He has risen as far as he can in the hierarchies of family and church without abandoning ties to either one. He is neither liked nor greatly feared.

Druvalia Thrune: Chelish admiral Druvalia Thrune is most famous for destroying several entire networks dedicated to freeing slaves from Chelixa, as well as capturing countless smugglers.

Lucian Thrune: Haughty even by his family's standards, Lucian Thrune tirelessly promotes his own reputation. He relies on his handsome appearance and family name to increase his influence, and is unwilling to take risks.

Velenne Thrune: Though an accomplished diabolist, the young scion Velenne Thrune is best known as a master manipulator, having negotiated advantageous alliances for House Thrune both in Nidal and at home. While none can fault her record or loyalty, her obvious skill and ambition make some of her superiors nervous.

evidence of treasonous activities in their midst and causing the accused to disappear. As a result, the queen's closest supporters vie to outdo each other in displays of loyalty and worth, while at the same time producing evidence against each other to protect themselves from scrutiny.

No living member of House Thrune has revealed a desire to take the throne, for to do so is tantamount to suicide. Nevertheless, there is at least one faction within the house that rallies behind a replacement for Abrogail II under the cover of utmost secrecy. A man claiming to be Abrogail's predecessor, Infrexus Thrune, has amassed a small following, carefully targeting only his most trusted relatives, and binding devils to weave elaborate enchantments and abjurations to evade detection. He recognizes that his forces are not yet great enough to bypass the queen's protections, and is content to bide his time, waiting for someone else to kill the monarch before riding a hidden wave of support onto the throne.

Another clandestine faction within House Thrune calls itself the Truthseekers. The control of information in Chelixa is so thorough that even members of House Thrune are stymied by secrets and misinformation at every turn. However, the Truthseekers' social standing

gives them access to resources out of reach to others. The faction includes a few individuals who are not members of House Thrune: spies within the Hellknight Order of the Rack who help the Truthseekers cover their tracks. The Hellknight Pellius Thrune serves as a linchpin for these spies. The Truthseekers have no interest in sharing their findings with the general public—instead, they seek secrets that they can leverage for their own personal gain. They also pay close attention to information about Chelixa's true history that could point the way to forgotten treasures.

A few members of House Thrune are also members of the Pathfinder Society, such as the sorceress Asperia Thrune. By order of House Thrune, attempting to uncover information about Chelixa's past by excavating historical sites is a grievous crime. Some Thrunes in the Pathfinder Society pore over the Society's records for pieces of undoctored history, while others monitor the Society for illegal activity in Chelixa, or seek treasures and lore that could increase their standing at home.

Outside of much of the typical scheming for power, some members of House Thrune wish only to use their station to indulge in the most extravagant of vices. These hedonists frequent attractions such as Chelish murder plays, which cloak bloodsport in a veneer of refinement. Most prominent members of House Thrune find such indulgence beneath them, and the hedonists sometimes use the tendency of their relatives to underestimate them to their advantage.

Faithful followers of Asmodeus balance their station within family and church in an attempt to maximize their personal power. They are among the most prolific devil-binders, as well as the most willing to make great sacrifices to Hell, yet neither the crown nor the church allows people with such divided loyalties to reach its highest ranks. As a result, devout Asmodeans tend to prioritize gaining the absolute loyalty of a smaller group of people rather than the nominal loyalty of a broader population.

Despite rumors to the contrary, there is no faction of disguised devils impersonating members of House Thrune. House Thrune is exceedingly careful with the devils in its service, and even the smallest children receive lectures on techniques for spotting the disguised creatures of Hell. Trysts with devils and tieflings are highly taboo, and devilblooded bastards rarely survive.

The most unlikely faction within House Thrune is comprised of followers of the resistance group leader currently known as Tyranny's Bane. Unrecognized by his rebellious allies, Tyranny's Bane is actually a member of House Thrune, who carefully arranges for only the most problematic operations to be caught at opportune moments. He regularly changes the name of his alias to avoid gathering attention. The few within House Thrune who know his identity maintain it as a closely guarded secret, while subtly assisting him in his missions.

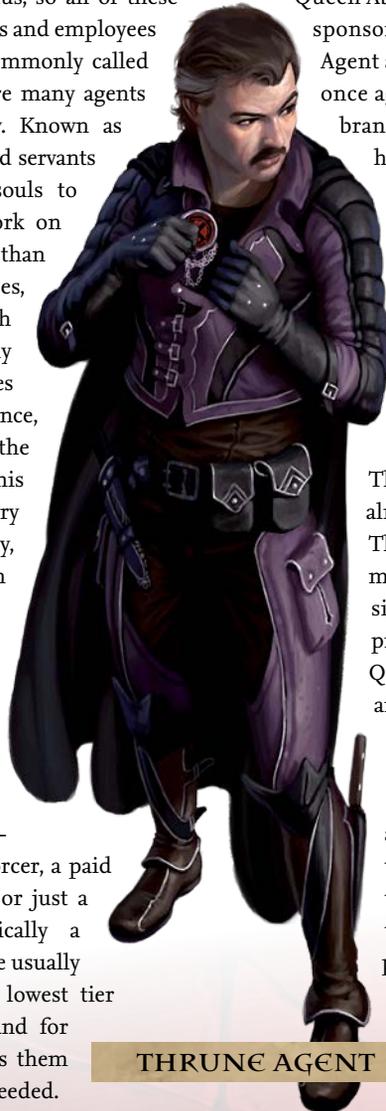
Some Thrunes leave Cheliox to escape the cutthroat competition of family life, seeking a safer place to grow their own reputations and power before returning home. Most members of House Thrune believe in their own superiority as a family, and those who publicly contradict this narrative find their existence erased from history. However, a small faction of dissident Thrunes has fled Cheliox, changing their names and using their extensive knowledge of the inner workings of Chelish government to support its enemies. House Thrune wishes to eliminate these separatists, but the risk of exposing their nature to the public prevents them from assigning the task to any but the most loyal of their spies.

THRUNE AGENTS

House Thrune is more than just the ruling family of Cheliox; throughout the empire and its client states, the family maintains a network of informers, spies, inquisitors, thugs, and even assassins. To most Chelaxians, there is little to distinguish House Thrune from Cheliox's government apparatus, so all of these individuals, as well as the bureaucrats and employees of the imperial government, are commonly called "Throne agents." However, there are many agents who serve House Thrune directly. Known as sworn Throne agents, these dedicated servants swear their bodies, minds, and souls to Queen Abrogail II herself, and work on behalf of the Thrune family rather than the nation of Cheliox. In many cases, House Thrune's interests overlap with those of Cheliox itself, but the family has its own schemes and strategies that have nothing to do with governance, and uses sworn agents loyal to the family to further those plans. In this respect, House Thrune functions very much like an organized crime family, or even a non-familial organization like the Aspis Consortium, with a hierarchy of agents at varying levels of loyalty and authority.

The various levels of service, or ranks, within the Throne organization are detailed below.

Throne Agent: Anyone who works for House Thrune or Cheliox—whether a titled noble, a hired enforcer, a paid informant, a spy in a rival family, or just a government employee—is technically a Throne agent. While these agents are usually paid for their service, this is the lowest tier within the Throne organization, and for the most part, House Thrune views them as tools to be used or discarded as needed.



THRUNE AGENT

Throne Loyal Agent: Servants of Thrune who seek greater responsibility and greater rewards can become Throne Loyal Agents, joining the first level of sworn Throne agents. Within the Throne organization, these agents are simply referred to as "the Loyal." An aspiring Loyal agent must be inducted by an existing Throne agent in a ritual ceremony witnessed by a devil. The agent signs a document with his own blood, swearing to give his life, if necessary, in service to Queen Abrogail and House Thrune. The agent is then given an invisible *arcane mark* to identify his association with House Thrune, gains the Throne Loyal Agent trait, and is welcomed into the ranks of the Loyal. For more information on Throne Loyal Agents and the Throne Loyal Agent trait, see page 6.

Throne Trusted Agent: Those Throne Loyal Agents who have proved their loyalty and ability can be promoted to Throne Trusted Agents, the second level of sworn Throne agents. Known as "the Trusted" within the Throne organization, these agents must swear their minds—and their absolute loyalty—to Queen Abrogail. A Throne Trusted Agent must be sponsored by a higher-ranking Throne Bound Agent and participate in a new ritual ceremony once again witnessed by a devil. The Trusted is branded with a *mark of justice* that prohibits him from betraying House Thrune, and gains the Throne Trusted Agent bonus feat. More information on Throne Trusted Agents and the Throne Trusted Agent feat can be found in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #105: The Inferno Gate*.

Throne Bound Agent: Exceptional Throne Trusted Agents can advance to the third and final level of sworn Throne agents, called "the Bound." Having already sworn his body and mind to Thrune, a prospective Throne Bound Agent must now swear his soul to Asmodeus by signing an infernal contract in a ceremony presided over by a contract devil and Queen Abrogail herself. In addition to any boons gained by signing the infernal contract, the Bound enjoy the highest level of authority within the Throne organization, as well as the personal attention of the Infernal Majestrix. At the same time, they are damned, and their souls belong to Asmodeus when they die—a small price to pay for the prestige and power they now wield. For more information on Throne Bound Agents and the infernal boons they are granted, see *Pathfinder Adventure Path #106: For Queen & Empire*.

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A SERPENT'S TONGUE

Pathfinder's Journal: Cowards and Crows 2 of 6

I guided Khem out of the charred ruins of his workshop. The boy held his singed tome, one of the only items salvaged from the fiery destruction. Apparently it contained the many arcane studies and spell theories he'd compiled over the years to enhance his crafting and sate his innate curiosity. He clutched it under one arm and braced on his cane with the other. He kept trying to wave me off. Every time he did so, however, he wobbled and had to lean against me to avoid toppling. He kept glancing down at his chest, where the restorative amulet had rested oh-so-temporarily.

At last, we hobbled out into the street and got clear of the smoking rubble. I led us away as alarm bells and shouts rose. No doubt nearby shops and homes had enchanted wards about their premises, summoning security of all sorts.

We limped off the scene just in time. A squad of black-cloaked guards raced by, scattering any lingering pedestrians and gawkers.

Briefly letting Khem stagger on without me, I draped my multicolored cloak over an arm and tilted my head just so. I snagged a passing guard's tunic and rumbled in a heavily accented voice.

"Saw it m'self, Cap'n. Some elven lord done a right nasty spell, what's true. Called 'imself Lord Dolviric and was sayin' he done plan to burn this whole block to muddy ashes."

The guard started to question, but a commander's bark made him run off. I shifted my cloak and posture to avoid being identified again. I helped Khem into a dark corner between two buildings, where we paused to catch our breaths.

Khem panted from what was no doubt an unusual amount of physical activity in his cursed state, while I fought to keep my jittering muscles under control before they betrayed me altogether.

Shakes for a snake, I thought. No matter how many fights I got in, no matter how many times I wriggled out of the brambles, the shakes always sank their fangs in. Such reactions would get me killed if I wasn't careful, either making me marvel at my survival while remaining enemies closed in or giving me a sense of invulnerability that made for fatal mistakes.

I checked myself over to occupy my mind. A nasty gash tracked down my leg, soaking my breeches with blood, but I'd suffered nothing from the lightning itself. I reached into a vest pocket. One of my trinkets—a brass shield—no longer tingled when I touched it. I'd have

to have the charm enspelled once more, and such work rarely came cheap.

I turned to Khem, who huddled against the wall. The boy scowled down at his book, clasped in a shaky hand, his shoulders hunched as if readying to swing the tome like a club.

"Who were those brigands?" I asked. "Did you recognize any of them?"

Khem's displeasure turned to confusion. "I never saw either of them." He tucked his book into a large inner pocket of his robe. "I recognize all my clients and their associates, and those two have never been by my place before."

"What about the woman outside? Ever heard her voice?" She'd been the one in charge, sure enough. If I'd had a chance to glimpse her I might've...

Might've what? Tried to give her one of Khem's baubles in the hopes she'd flutter her lashes and leave me alone?

"Never." Khem wobbled for a second, but caught himself and shook off further help. "But they must've been working for Drayven."

That made me squint. "The devil your friend mentioned? How do you figure that?"

"They came for the amulet." Khem touched his chest. "They knew I'd have it. Which means they must've been sent by Drayven after Liset stole it from him. Who else would've had such timing?"

I pondered this and saw no particular flaw to the logic. "Even if so, what can we do about it?"

The boy's hands looked like claws as they throttled the cane. "We have to find them before they return to Drayven. I have to get that amulet back. If I can be cured again," he swatted at his soot-stained robe in frustration, "I might be able to get to Liset and my mother. Find a way to help them both."

"Her letter made it sound like they were both already beyond helping."

Khem whacked a barrel with his cane. "No! They can't be. I'd know if they were."

"How? Got a feeling in your gut? Most times that's from having a bit of spoiled cream in your mash."

The boy shook his head, whipping scraggly white hair about. "I can just tell. There's a chance to save them both still."

I bottled up a sigh in my belly. *Ah, the delusions of the young. I had such once, though they were quickly cured.*

"Khem, listen to yourself. Just because you made that lord tuck tail with a flashy trick doesn't mean you're able to skip off after a bunch of killers. Did they make a mess

of your place? Certainly. But are you in any condition to even bloody their noses?"

I nudged Khem's cane with a toe, making the boy fight for balance.

"I was," Khem grouched. "For a few minutes, at least." He straightened and rolled his shoulders, making painful-sounding cracklings down his spine. "Can you imagine what it's like to feel helpless for so long and finally have a chance to wield my real strength? I don't at all agree with what my mother has done to accomplish a cure, but if I can at least use it to save her from herself—and from Drayven—then I have to try."

I noted a few aches that had settled deep into my bones over the past few years alone; the boy wasn't the only one to miss a more prime physicality. "And the chance to act the hero for your lady friend isn't skewing your thinking at all, is it?"

"You think I'm trying to run off on some silly adventure for riches and romance?" Khem asked. "I'm trying to save my mother's soul—and Liset's life."

"Mm." I tapped my lips. "While you're at it, shall we heal the Worldwound and resurrect Aroden, too?"

"Abyss take you." Khem's words rasped. "If you won't help me, I'll do it alone."

"Khem, this is foolish!"

Khem smirked. "You told me all men are fools, and that I just have to find someone worth being one for."

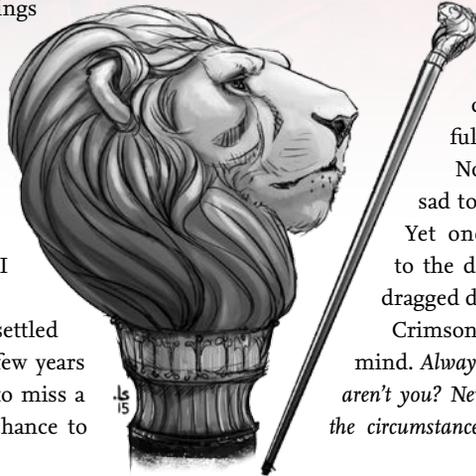
I crossed arms over my stomach, aware of how well-rounded it had become since I was Khem's age. "You're far too young to be using my words against me, boy."

Yet those words gnawed nonetheless. A coward I might be when it came to direct action these days, but I wasn't immune to Khem's need. If anyone in the whole empire deserved a turn of fortune, the boy did. Who stood even slightly capable of helping, other than me?

Well, then. Find the coward's reasoning in this.

If I remained in Khari, I believed Khem would find a way to head off into the wilderness on his own. Even if I never heard from the boy again, I'd have a difficult time believing the attempt ended happily. And that left my own troubles unresolved, namely the debts stacked up against my name. Too much more financial teetering and those accounts might have to be paid in blood.

I smiled slightly as a knot loosened in my mind. *Ah, there it is. A fool's path, straight as the crow flies.*



Khem's cane befits a master craftsman such as himself. He carved the ivory handle into a lion's head, perhaps symbolic of the poise and strength he'd prefer to possess.

If Khem's mother had found such a precious relic as the amulet, others almost certainly waited to be discovered alongside it. Most likely I could keep Khem alive long enough to reach whatever ruins our little expedition stumbled across. We'd find a couple bodies waiting, no

doubt. While Khem had a good weep, I could scrounge the area for valuables. Then we could return to Khari and I could pawn off my findings to fulfill the last of my debts.

Not that I didn't find it achingly sad to see the boy suffer such a loss. Yet one had to be realistic. Clinging to the dead would only ensure one got dragged down with them.

Crimson feathers fluttered through my mind. *Always so ready to leave the dead behind, aren't you? Never willing to accept your hand in the circumstances. Doesn't matter who they were when breathing; soon as the blood stops flowing, they stop meaning anything to you. So long as you survive. That's all that ever matters.*

I growled low, arguing with myself.

I'm not responsible for this.

Neither is the boy, however much he wants to be.

And yet...

Sighing, I tugged my cloak a bit tighter about my shoulders. I had to at least make sure the boy truly wanted to commit. "We can't just trot out the gates without any idea of where we're heading, hear?"

Khem reached into a robe pocket and pulled out the silver raven. "I grabbed this before things turned too nasty. I should be able to reverse the spell Liset used to send it to me. It could guide us back to her."

I hummed in thought. "That's one problem solved then, but we'd still need provisions. Supplies, foremost. And supplies require funds."

"Don't you have some coin?" Khem ducked his head. "I'm not asking for handouts. I'll do whatever work you wish on our return to pay off any debt. As many pieces crafted for your lady friends as you desire."

I tapped my chin in thought—and then sighed, realizing I was already formulating a plan, as if the journey had been decided.

With a jut of my chin, I headed for the muddy streets. "Let's go."

"Go where?" Khem thumped along beside me.

"I'm thirsty," I said. "And I'm about to be late for my appointment with a rather beautiful flower."

We crept through the city, letting the growing crowds conceal us from any prying eyes. As we went, I matched

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Khem's shuffling pace and kept my cloak draped to obscure my identity.

As the day's growing heat added eye-watering fumes to the air, I guided Khem to a nicer city quarter, where drinking houses didn't water down their ale and thieves washed blood off their blades between muggings. I nodded to the guards out front of an unmarked door, who didn't blink as we entered.

Inside, the front foyer held a variety of cushioned furniture, with several halls running off through curtain-covered archways. A heady mix of herbs and spices swirled through the air. I breathed deep, while Khem sneezed several times.

A halfling bustled up, wearing a dress trimmed in draping lace. She curtsied to me as I slipped her a coin, then led us through one curtain and down past a dozen alcoves and numerous doorways. A hush lingered about the establishment, broken by occasional murmurs and clinks of china or dining ware. The art on the walls ranged from royal portraits to a scene of a chimera attacking people around a campfire.

Our attendant sat us in a corner alcove, where cushions created a semicircle around a low table. A platter of syrup-soaked cakes and a pot of mint tea waited for us.

Khem settled into a seat with a groan of relief. "What is this place?" he asked.

"It's a tea parlor," I said, reclining along a padded bench. "They have blends from all over the known lands, and then some."



It seems even the enlightenment-seeking samsarans are not immune to the temptations of the flesh. I wonder how many incarnations this one has experienced.

Khem frowned as I poured us both a cup. I glanced over as a couple passed by in the hall. A man with pale blue skin and a silver beard let himself be guided along by a younger man wearing black breeches and a tailored vest. The younger tugged at the older's beard and whispered in his ear. Chuckling and pressing closer together, the two moved out of sight.

"I may not get out much," Khem said, "but I'm not that naive, Master Atrius."

I sipped my tea and savored the brew. Perfect temperature, as always. "The establishment we sit within is a tea parlor. Nothing but delicacies and delightful conversation to be had here." I tipped my head to indicate the ceiling. "The floors above, though, are another establishment entirely. What goes on there, no one can rightly say." I winked at Khem. "Unless you pay the entry fee."

The boy flushed as another silk-clad attendant sashayed by, bearing a platter of steaming teacups and sweets.

I spoke through a mouthful of cake crumbs. "Perhaps once we recover the amulet and restore your vitality, you can test out your virility as well. With your skill at crafting, I'm sure you'd impress with your nimble fingers—"

Khem coughed and wiped at the splutterings that spilled down the front of his robe. "Master Atrius, I don't understand what we're doing here."

"Why, we're seeking an investor for our upcoming venture."

"Investor?"

"I fear my finances are a bit lacking," I said. "Since we can't amble off after a devil unprepared, we must find someone willing to see the value in keeping us alive."

"But... here?" Khem looked about doubtfully. "What about approaching the Pathfinder Society? Isn't there a lodge in town? We could barter information in exchange for goods."

I forced my fingers to relax before I shattered my cup. "Cast that thought aside. They're an unreliable lot. Little more than vagabonds aspiring to dreams of glory."

"My mother was a Pathfinder. She talked about some of them as if they were heroes. Surely they'd want to know whatever she's uncovered about the *Poleiheira*. To find a way to protect others from it."

I glowered. "With all respect to your mother, there's no such thing as heroes. Just the living and the dead. That's all that separates anyone." I clamped my mouth shut, stopping myself from asking whether he would consider his mother to be one of those so-called heroes. No need to jiggle a dagger already plunged deep.

Silence thickened, as did the syrup on the back of my tongue, no matter how much I swallowed.

At last, Khem leaned forward, his cane between his knees. "Have you lost someone, Master Atrius?"

I stared into my teacup. "Live long enough and it's inevitable."

Khem winced; I pushed aside any guilt at causing him distress. If the boy meant to pursue this fool's errand, best not to spare him any illusions.

"Tea for three?" a voice murmured. "Atrius. You know I don't enjoy crowds."

A woman slipped into the alcove and stood before us. Jevlia's umber skin contrasted beautifully with the golden dress she wore, crimson ribbons securing it around her waist, as well as strapped to her wrists, elbows, and a band about her throat. Her glossy black hair was done up in a short, spiky fashion, and she'd dusted the tips with chalk. She regarded us with eyes that shifted from light gray to silver, as if the color depended on the thoughts behind them.

I rose to take her hand and kissed the back. "Business before pleasure in this instance, m'dear."

Jevlia reached behind her and undid a cord, letting a curtain fall into place and block us from sight. Her touch was playful as she shoved me back onto the cushions, and her lips still held a smile, but her gaze turned to iron.

"So, you're paying in different coin this time, hm?" She glanced at Khem. "Welcome, Master Khem."

Khem started. "You know me?"

"There are few enough cursed craftsmen in Khari," she said. "Besides, when your mother first started seeking a cure for your condition, she came here, wanting any relevant information we might've gathered."

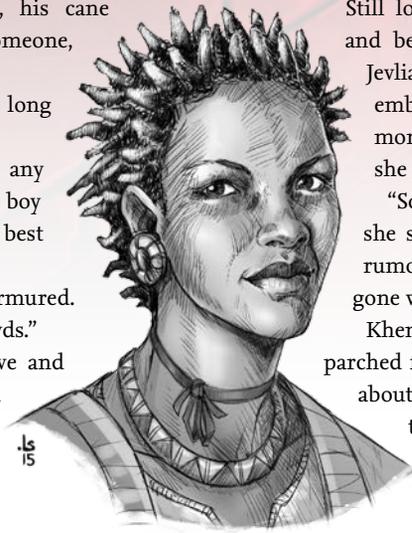
"I don't understand," Khem said. "Why would she have come here? What information could you have?"

Jevlia's laugh made my pulse flutter. She truly was a beauty. She sat beside me and laid a firm hand on my knee. "He really is an innocent soul, isn't he?"

"Oh, I don't know," I said. "You should see him haggle. He can drive a harder bargain for his services than a contract devil." I folded my hand over hers. "Jevlia, fairest, I've a favor to ask."

Her broad lips quirked upward. "Aren't you the one usually bringing me favors? I do recall your promise to procure an undying rose. And you already owe me for adding another to our little soirée."

I nodded to Khem. "Why not give our hostess a recounting of this morning's events? You can entertain while I finish my tea."



Jevlia may be the latest in the long line of flowers I've fancied, yet her eyes hold deeper secrets and her tongue a sharper wit than all the rest combined.

Still looking a bit puzzled, Khem complied and began his tale, if in a halting fashion. Jevlia listened intently. I added a few embellishments to make myself sound a bit more daring and dashing in the fight, but she gave me a knowing smirk each time.

"So that's what the commotion was about," she said once the boy finished. "There are rumors aplenty, mostly thinking it a robbery gone wrong."

Khem gulped his tea, his throat no doubt parched from all the talking. "You already knew about the attack? But we just came from there."

Jevlia winked at him. "By the time you reached our parlor, nearly an hour had passed. Word moves quickly if you tip your ears to the right lips."

I chuckled. "This parlor trades in more than tea and teasings. It also holds many secrets for sale, for those who know the value of them."

That's partially why we're here."

"And the other part?" Jevlia asked. "Let's hear the heart of the bargain you wish to make."

"All those secrets sold and spent have most certainly filled your coffers." I made a show of patting down my pockets. "Sadly, this old bird has few eggs left in the nest these days. I'd enjoy nothing more than helping Khem save his loved ones from almost certain doom, but after this morning's unfortunate incident, we've not enough to even buy moldy bread from a beggar."

Jevlia adjusted one of the ribbons on her arm. "You want a loan. Funding for your journey?"

I waited, half expecting her to laugh and show us out. Yet she held silent, watching me through her lashes. Despite the hours we'd already spent together, and despite my knowing the truth behind the parlor's presence, I'd not yet seen this look—a far more intense scrutiny, aimed directly at me, rather than her distant sifting of my words for information she might sell elsewhere.

At last, she rose and motioned for us to follow. "Come. Bring your tea."

I exchanged a look with Khem and tried to smile in encouragement. The boy struggled to his feet and shuffled after as quickly as he could, teacup in one hand, cane gripping the other.

We moved down another long hall and around a corner, where several tiny rooms held little more than bare beds. Smoky incense wafted out of one, and Jevlia ushered us inside. There, a gnome sat on a stool in the corner, so wrapped up in rumpled silk that only her hands and face peeked out of the pile. Wispy white

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hair floated around her head, and her eyes had a gray film to them. She fixed them on us straightaway, however, and the skin around them puckered as she looked to Jevlia.

"Do you have a mystery for me?" she asked, voice like a drizzle of sand.

Jevlia gestured to Khem. "Give Bezza your cup."

Khem's hand shook as he handed over his teacup. Then a greater tremor wracked his body and the cup slipped from his fingers. Before I could blink, Jevlia caught the cup on her palm without spilling a drop. Admittedly, only a swallow of tea remained, barely enough to float the soggy leaves. Still, her quick reflexes both surprised and impressed me. I didn't know if I could've matched the move.

"Sorry," Khem mumbled. Color crept up his neck. "Should've been more careful."

Jevlia hushed him as she turned to set the cup in Bezza's dainty hands.

The gnome stared into the contents for so long, I wondered if she'd gone to sleep with her eyes open. Then she stirred. She turned the cup around, her oddly pale skin matching the bone china. Was it a form of the plague wracking the city? Did she suffer from a gnome malady of sorts? Whatever her affliction, I hoped it wasn't catching.

Bezza sipped the dregs. Turned her head and spat. Licked her crinkly lips. Her pale tongue dabbed about, reminding me of a serpent tasting the air.

"Tastes of death," she said.

Khem and I leaned in as one.

"Death?" Khem echoed.

"Tragedy awaits. Death and tragedy." Bezza said this as if commenting on an oddly shaped cloud. "Betrayal has opened the door and suffering marches through. Damnation cannot be undone and choices made cannot be forgiven."

"That can't be true," Khem said. "I don't believe that. There's always a way to make things right. There has to be."

Bezza blinked. "What's seen is said, nothing more."

The boy's voice strengthened as he straightened. "Then you aren't seeing it correctly."

The gnome cackled. "If you stumble blindly forward, their death will become yours."

"I don't care," Khem said. "I'm already mostly dead as it is. What's living any longer matter to me if I spend my last days cowering and useless? I have to go, no matter what."

I eyed the boy sidelong, worried. From all accounts, his mother, Maharai, had exhibited an increasingly fervent manner until she became obsessive in her questing. Could her son already be falling prey to the same compulsive nature?

The gnome snorted. "Then go. Find your grave and rot in it."

She tossed the cup to the floor, where it shattered. Khem lurched back, and I caught him before he toppled. We kicked shards aside as we left the gnome behind.

Jevlia took Khem's arm and walked him back to the alcove. Once he was secure, she let the curtain fall so she and I stood in the semiprivacy of the hall.

"I needed to know," she said.

I bent my ear nearer to her lips, enjoying their closeness. "Know what?"

"That he was committed. That he understood what might have to be paid in the end. It's always more than coin or the toll it will take on his body."

"But we would still need coin," I said, priding myself on slipping in an ever-so-subtle reminder.

She reached into the folds of her outfit and drew out a heavy purse made of a scaly leather. I wondered if she'd had it all along, and what might've caused her to bring it in the first place.

"This should be enough to secure supplies and whatever transportation will move you the swiftest.

You'll want to be gone

before Tolomuk bars the way."

I grinned. I'd never told her the name of my creditor.

Bowing, I kissed her hand once more. "I am in your debt a hundredfold."

She gripped my chin and made me meet her eyes. Her words turned solemn.

"The scrying wasn't just for Khem's sake, you know. While Bezza studied his fate, I studied you."

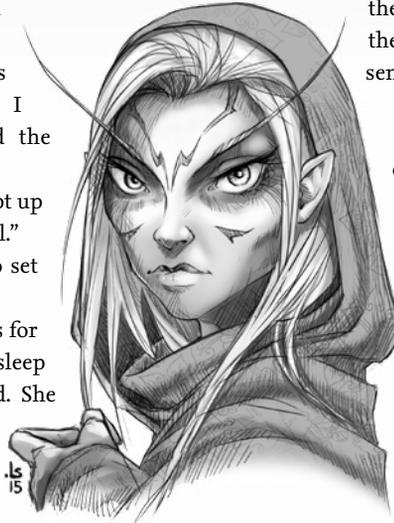
"And what did you see?"

Her look pinned me in place as surely as a dagger through the foot. "The man you once were, aching to reemerge."

I stiffened. "I fear that man is dead, whoever he was. Never to be heard from again."

She held my gaze for another moment, then shrugged, casting off the weight of her statement. "Well, whichever one you turn out to be in the end, you still owe me a great favor."

"I can repay you with a priceless treasure this very moment."



The gnome's dull eyes held a listless quality that disturbed even me. She almost seemed bored, as if nothing in life could ever again surprise or interest her.



This teahouse has long been a favorite haunt of mine, offering all manner of comforts to soothe body, mind, and soul. I often debate with myself whether I keep returning more for the delicious fare or the alluring company. Perhaps, if I'm honest, it may simply be an old man's futile attempt to distract himself and keep darker memories at bay.

Amusement brightened her features. "Oh? And what would that be?"

"A farewell kiss." I leaned in.

Jevlia placed a hand on my chest, gentle but firm enough to hold me back. Her soft laughter both prompted a smile and pricked my vanity.

Seems I have pride enough left to smart from rejection.

Then she surprised me by gripping my shirt and pulling my lips to hers. This was no measured show of affection for a client. Instead, the contact held a rawness that left me breathless—I, who had tasted kisses aplenty over the years.

She broke off and stepped back. "Don't think you can shirk this debt. You will repay me in full sooner or later."

I cleared the huskiness from my throat. "That assumes our survival."

She pursed her lips, and I found myself fixated on them in an entirely new way. Thoughts belonging to a much younger man, I reminded myself. Not a broke, old coward.

"Yes, it does," she said. "I suppose I must do what I can to secure your safe return."

"Prayer?" I shrugged. "Save your words and sacrifices, m'lady. I doubt you'd find any of the gods willing to look favorably on this wandering soul."

"It might take divine intervention to keep you from always being so melodramatic." She swatted my shoulder. "Go. Help your friend. Those who help others receive it in kind."

I turned to duck into the alcove, wanting to polish off what remained of the tea and cakes. With potentially dismal circumstances in our future, it wouldn't be wise to squander a ready and warm meal. "Now why would I believe such a quaint notion?"

"Because the Golden Crow knows it's true," came her whisper.

The name struck me like a spear through the spine. I whirled about, but the hallway stood empty. Not so much as a curtain fluttered to hint at where she'd gone.

I stared at the shadows. How did she know? *What did she know?* Had the Pathfinder Society tracked me down at last? She couldn't possibly be one of them... could she?

Thoughts darting every which way, I forced my breathing to even out and smoothed hair down over my bald spot. It seemed Jevlia's stash of secrets ran even deeper than I'd imagined.

Khem looked up expectantly as I passed through the curtain.

I forced a grin. "Good news. We get to hunt down a devil after all."

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We make much of our infernal ties—that we wield the power of Hell itself in our blazing swords and fiendish spells. We preach about carrying the favor of Asmodeus, who grants us his devilish hordes to impose our will wherever we tread. It's all true. I've seen it myself, but we are unwise to discount our enemies' power. Until you've faced a host of erelims, with their shining lances and glowing mounts galloping toward you full bore, don't assume you can defeat the agents of the celestial realm. Neither Her Infernal Majestrix nor the Lord of the Pit offers aid to fools, and I would never dare to face the fury of Heaven without their help."

—Dario Wincheen, Thrune loyalist

This volume of the Hell's Vengeance Adventure Path takes place largely in Kantaria, where the adventurers seek to wrest control of the town from the Glorious Reclamation and return it to House Throne. Sure to challenge good and evil heroes alike, this bestiary includes an angelic knight, a vicious spirit that commands the power of the wind, a celestial watchdog, and an aberrant fusion of human and jellyfish.

EXPLORING KANTARIA

The random encounter table presented here features dangers the PCs might face while they attempt to infiltrate Kantaria and foment unrest among its citizens, as well as when they venture outside of town to explore or pursue other nefarious purposes. During the course of the adventure, the PCs have a 40% chance of a random encounter every hour they spend outside the town exploring. While they are within the town, they have a 30% chance of a random encounter every hour they spend on generic activities, such as shopping for gear or gathering information. The PCs should have no more than two random encounters per day.

GMs should use their discretion when rolling random encounters, and reroll when a result is inappropriate for the PCs' current location. For example, the PCs are unlikely to encounter a guard patrol while exploring outside of Kantaria, and are equally unlikely to encounter several of the table's monsters while adventuring in town, such as the dire boar and shambling mound. Further, since this adventure spans a range of character levels, some random encounters might be too easy or too difficult for the PCs, depending on where they are in the course of the adventure. If the result rolled is outside the Challenge Rating range appropriate for the PCs, roll again on the random encounter table or choose a different encounter.

The following are descriptions of the relevant entries listed on the Kantaria Environs Encounters table.

Faceless Gang (CR 6): Although the hidden faceless stalker community in Kantaria is clandestine, preferring to hold human identities and jobs while secretly feeding on the populace, a few individuals have recently become bolder while hunting. These duos of renegade faceless stalkers assume humanoid forms and follow the PCs stealthily for 1d4 rounds before attacking from cover. They attempt to knock one or more of the PCs unconscious and drag them into a nearby building, which serves as their lair. (For more information about the faceless stalkers in Kantaria, see page 65; statistics for the faceless stalker are on page 122 of *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2*.)

Guard Patrol (CR 5): A guard patrol in Kantaria consists of four Glorious Reclamation squires (see page 10), and the patrols serve the same function as a city watch. These guards make regular rounds on Kantaria's

KANTARIA ENVIRONS ENCOUNTERS			
d%	Result	Avg. CR	Source
1-4	1 dire wolf	3	<i>Bestiary 278</i>
5-9	1 giant locust	3	<i>Bestiary 4 183</i>
10-15	1 dire boar	4	<i>Bestiary 36</i>
16-19	1 giant stag beetle	4	<i>Bestiary 33</i>
20-25	1 mimic	4	<i>Bestiary 205</i>
26-29	Throne Loyalists	4	See below
30-39	1d4 ankhegs	5	<i>Bestiary 15</i>
40-49	1 giant owl	5	<i>Bestiary 3 213</i>
50-59	Guard Patrol	5	See below
60-69	1 phase spider	5	<i>Bestiary 226</i>
70-74	Faceless Gang	6	See below
75-79	1d4 giant dragonflies	6	<i>Bestiary 2 105</i>
80-84	1 hungry fog	6	<i>Bestiary 3 152</i>
85-89	1 shambling mound	6	<i>Bestiary 246</i>
90-95	1d4 giant vultures	6	<i>Bestiary 3 284</i>
96-100	1 rot grub swarm	7	<i>Bestiary 3 215</i>

streets and may have heard rumors that the PCs aren't who they say they are. Perhaps the guards happen upon the PCs while they are doing or saying something that indicates their true loyalties. At the GM's discretion, the guard patrol could have one fewer or one additional squire. Such modifications would make an encounter with a guard patrol CR 4 or CR 6, respectively, allowing this to serve as a viable random encounter option throughout the entire adventure.

Throne Loyalists (CR 4): The majority of citizens in Kantaria openly or tacitly support the Glorious Reclamation, but House Throne had an iron grip on all of Cheliox for decades, and loyalists to the infernal throne exist even in this town. Throne loyalists certainly don't openly roam Kantaria's streets, given Kantaria's current political situation. However, in alleys, taverns, or even markets, the loyalists menace individuals who they believe are contributing to the Glorious Reclamation or its overall revolutionary cause. If the PCs face this random encounter, three Throne loyalists accost them (use the statistics for a street thug on page 265 of the *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*). Allow the PCs 1 round to try and discreetly convince the thugs that they are staunch allies of House Throne; otherwise, the thugs initiate combat. The loyalists fight until reduced to 5 hit points or fewer, then try to surrender. If the PCs accept the Throne loyalists' surrender, the thugs may offer to work as the PCs' clandestine allies, scouting Kantaria and using their status as locals to gain information the PCs might otherwise have difficulty obtaining.

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ANGEL, ERELIM

This athletic, winged humanoid has handsome features and wields a shining lance.

ANGEL, ERELIM**CR 6****XP 2,400**

NG Medium outsider (angel, extraplanar, good)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, detect evil; Perception +13

Aura protective aura

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+3 Dex, +5 natural); +4 deflection vs. evil

hp 68 (8d10+24)

Fort +9, **Ref** +5, **Will** +8; +4 vs. poison, +4 resistance vs. evil

DR 5/evil; **Immune** acid, cold, petrification; **Resist** electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 17

OFFENSE

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

Melee +1 lance +11/+6 (1d8+4/x3), or mwk greatsword +11/+6 (2d6+3/19-20)

Ranged mwk longbow +12/+7 (1d8/x3)

Special Attacks celestial charge, righteous challenge

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th; concentration +6)

Constant—*detect evil*

At will—*light, remove fear, stabilize, virtue*

3/day—*bless weapon, cure light wounds, remove curse*

1/day—*consecrate*

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 17, **Con** 16, **Int** 11, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 23

Feats Cavalry Formation^{APG}, Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack, Spirited Charge

Skills Fly +7, Handle Animal +12, Heal +11, Knowledge (planes) +7, Perception +13, Profession (soldier) +13, Ride +14, Sense Motive +11

Languages Celestial, Common, Infernal; truespeech

SQ inspiring presence, shining mount

ECOLOGY

Environment any good-aligned plane

Organization solitary, formation (3-10), or host (5-12 formations)

Treasure double (+1 lance, mwk greatsword, mwk longbow, other treasure)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Celestial Charge (Su) A mounted erelim is a force to be reckoned with. An erelim receives a +4 bonus on melee attack rolls on a charge while mounted (instead of the normal +2), and does not take any penalty to AC after making a charge attack while mounted. In addition, if an erelim confirms a critical hit on a mounted charge, the nearby area is washed in holy light. Each evil-aligned enemy in a 20-foot-radius burst takes 2d8 points of damage and is blinded for 1 round. A successful DC 15 Will saving throw reduces the damage

by half and negates the blinded effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Inspiring Presence (Ex) When an erelim is mounted, all good-aligned allies within 60 feet that can see the erelim receive a +1 morale bonus on attack rolls and weapon damage rolls against evil-aligned creatures.

Righteous Challenge (Ex) Three times per day, an erelim can challenge evil foes. As a swift action, the erelim chooses one target within sight to challenge. The erelim's melee attacks deal 2d4 additional points of damage to the target (or 2d6 points of damage to evil outsiders). The erelim takes a -2 penalty to AC, except against attacks made by the target of the challenge. An erelim's challenge and additional damage only apply to evil-aligned creatures; if an erelim attempts to challenge a creature that is not evil, that use of challenge is expended for the day with no effect. The challenge remains in effect until the target is dead or unconscious or until the combat ends.

Shining Mount (Su) As a standard action, an erelim can conjure forth a quasi-real mount made of pure light. This functions as per *phantom steed* (CL 8th), conjuring a mount with an Armor Class of 18, 15 hit points, a speed of 100 feet, and the ability to run or charge over sandy, muddy, or marshy terrain without penalty. The mount glows with a brightness equivalent to a *daylight* spell. Only the erelim who conjured it can ride the mount, and the erelim must be astride the mount to use celestial charge and inspiring presence. An erelim can dismiss the mount as a free action.

Erelims serve as cavalry in celestial armies, charging into battle atop steeds of pure light and inspiring allies with valiant words and deeds. These angelic knights laugh in the face of overwhelming odds and love nothing more than to face destruction without fear, even going so far as to scorn armor. Honorable and respectful, erelims obediently follow the commands of celestial generals, but sometimes their fervor for righteous battle makes them frustratingly difficult to organize or call to retreat.

Erelims appear as a variety of humanoid races from the Material Plane, though usually with dark, close-cropped hair. An erelim's wings are smaller and more elegant than those of other angels. A typical erelim stands 6 feet tall and weighs 180 pounds.

ECOLOGY

Erelims arise from the souls of valiant mortals who fell honorably in battle, or who died defending the weak against insurmountable evils. Many paladins, cavaliers, and other crusaders find themselves among this legion after death, but even a humble peasant may find herself among the knights of Heaven so long as she stood up to evil while others backed down. The appearances of the angels may vary greatly from the mortal forms they

once inhabited, and many erelims arise from the celestial planes spontaneously—from wisps of soulstuff collected from a dozen or more brave petitioners—rather than emerging from a single, courageous warrior. They may present a huge variety of racial features in one stunningly beautiful and athletic form.

Erelims who stand out thanks to cunning and resourcefulness in battle—for all erelims are blessed with bravery and prowess—are sometimes “promoted” to higher angelic choirs. If erelims can be said to covet anything, it is the title of deva.

HABITAT AND SOCIETY

Erelims are best suited for combat on the open fields of battle in large-scale conflicts between the forces of good and evil. They depend heavily on their shining mounts—projections of their own radiant souls—as their wings are smaller and weaker than most of the angelic host. Most guard the borders of Heaven, or ride across the yawning planes of Elysium on constant patrol for protean intruders. They serve as the cavalry for celestial forays into the evil Outer Planes, but lack the cunning and restraint to act as covert agents. Despite their zeal, erelims are careful to avoid civilian injuries or destruction, and work to steer conflicts away from unaffiliated settlements.

Very rarely, erelims take mortal form on the Material Plane to act as knights or field marshals for armies they deem righteous. These erelims are fair but uncreative strategists, relying heavily on straightforward tactics and superior numbers to win the day. While erelims see any resulting casualties as a failure of their leadership, they tolerate the deaths so long as an important objective is won in the process. Erelims on the Material Plane attempt to disguise their celestial nature, only reverting to their true forms in times of desperation. Once danger has passed, such revealed erelims return to the Outer Planes.

The concept of relaxation is alien to erelims. Their free time is filled with endless drills, jousts, patrols, and short breaks to maintain their weapons or strategize with other angels. Such a warlike existence leaves them suited for little else. Even in times of peace, most erelims find it difficult to lay their duty aside and embrace simple pleasures; without some measure of routine, many become anxious and reactionary, seeking conflict even when engaged in the most mundane activities.

Erelims who serve together in a celestial formation share a camaraderie akin to that of many mortal armies. Members of an erelim formation learn to act in harmony, and grow as close as siblings, able to coordinate and work together without speaking a word. Multiple formations brought together into a single host often develop friendly

rivalries, becoming especially competitive in battle, to the point of recklessness. Celestial commanders frown upon this divergence in the ranks, but can rarely discourage the boisterous angels for long.

CALLING AN ERELIM

Erelims can be called with *planar ally*, and the payment they require depends on the boldness of the request. These angels belittle any tasks that don't test their mettle or call for incredible heroism, and demand to be presented with extravagant weapons or for large sums to be donated to an appropriate church. Conversely, they exuberantly agree to requests that put them in direct conflict with powerful evil beings, and often ask no more of the callers than to fight alongside them as equals. Erelims do not accept obviously suicidal tasks, but sometimes vastly underestimate the threat mortal dangers can pose.



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GALE SPIRIT

This translucent, floating head has a bluish tinge and a humanoid face twisted in an enraged scowl.

GALE SPIRIT

CR 6



XP 2,400

CE Small undead (incorporeal)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., lifesense; Perception +9**Aura** unnatural aura (30 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 20, flat-footed 16 (+5 deflection, +4 Dex, +1 size)**hp** 57 (6d8+30)**Fort** +7, **Ref** +8, **Will** +5**Defensive Abilities** incorporeal; **Immune** undead traits**Weaknesses** light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed fly 60 ft. (good)**Melee** incorporeal touch +9 (2d6 negative energy)**Special Attacks** baleful gust, create spawn

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 18, **Con** —, **Int** 10, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 21**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 22**Feats** Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes**Skills** Fly +19, Intimidate +14, Perception +9, Stealth +17**Languages** Common

ECOLOGY

Environment any**Organization** solitary, pair, or pack (3–6)**Treasure** none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Baleful Gust (Su) Three times per day as a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunities, a gale spirit can whip the wind around it into a terrible, howling gust. This baleful gust lasts for 1 round, and creatures and objects within a 15-foot radius of the gale spirit are affected as if by a *gust of wind*. Additionally, when the gust begins, the howling winds deal 4d6 points of sonic damage to creatures in the area. A successful DC 18 Fortitude save negates the *gust of wind* effect and reduces the sonic damage by half. The gale spirit is immune to this ability's effects. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Create Spawn (Su) A humanoid slain by a gale spirit becomes a gale spirit in 1d4 rounds. These spawn are less powerful than typical gale spirits, and take a –2 penalty on d20 rolls and checks, have 2 fewer hit points per Hit Die, and only deal 1d6 points of negative energy damage. Spawn are under the command of the gale spirit that created them until its destruction, at which point they lose their spawn penalties and become free-willed gale spirits. They do not have any of the abilities they had in life.

Lifesense (Su) A gale spirit notices and locates living creatures within 60 feet, just as if it possessed the blindsight ability.

Unnatural Aura (Su) Animals don't willingly approach within

30 feet of a gale spirit, unless their master succeeds at a DC 25 Handle Animal, Ride, or wild empathy check.

Gale spirits are the remnants of wicked individuals who have fallen a great distance through the air—usually from bridges or mountainsides—and died alone, broken on the ground, while cursing the world for leaving them to their terrible demise. These malicious creatures haunt the places of their deaths, hungrily seeking victims with whom they can share their fate. Although they are not typically friendly with any creatures, even others of their kind, gale spirits do occasionally work with each other in combat; the result is often a terrible, haunted place of howling winds and spooky terrain that is as unnerving as it is deadly.

Gale spirits resemble 2-foot-tall, disembodied heads with twisted features that are eerily similar to those the creatures had in life.

ECOLOGY

Gale spirits' facial features are the only physical remnants of the individuals they once were. Each gale spirit is still recognizable to those who knew the creature while it lived, even though the undead horror's seething rage twists its features into something unnatural. A cold blue glow emanates from its translucent face, and wisps of spirit essence trail behind it. Whirling winds typically following the spirit, leaving undulating patterns on the ground as it passes above. This wind screams louder and louder when the gale spirit circles in preparation for a fight, sounding like a gust mixed with screams of agony. Sometimes, gale spirits that had personal ties to the creatures they are attacking convey taunting or tormenting words along with their gales, but more often than not, gale spirits merely scream and howl unintelligibly as they descend upon their victims.

A gale spirit retains some of its former personality, though the murderous rage that plagues its mind greatly warps its outlook. Even when it's not attacking, it is capable of speech, though it hardly ever sees any reason for conversation when it comes to the living. A gale spirit rarely has any goals beyond visiting suffering upon others; in this way, gale spirits make their own tortured existence more bearable. If a gale spirit can still feel any measure of happiness, it is only when it is staring at the broken bodies of multiple victims of its whipping winds, waiting for them to rise as its spawn.

HABITAT AND SOCIETY

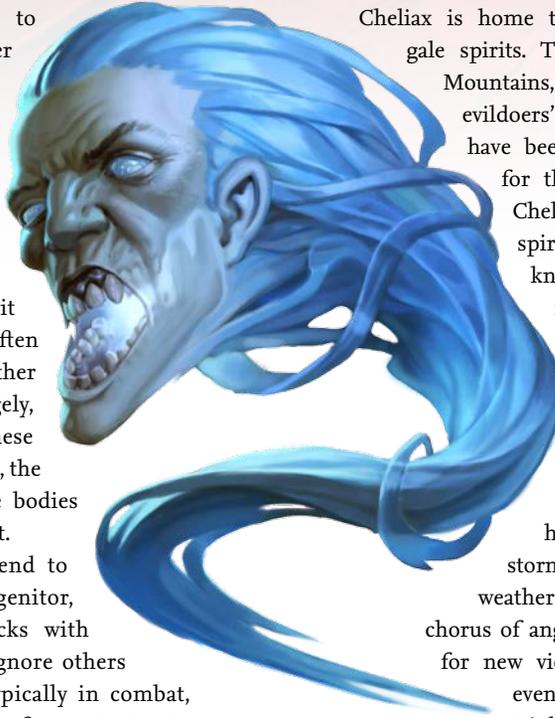
Throughout Golarion, there are deadly drops with particularly ominous reputations: bridges that cross deep canyons, thin paths atop sheer cliffs, abandoned manors built on mountains, and waterfalls hundreds of feet tall. Some of these places are tied to myths about specific villainous individuals who fell to their deaths there; less commonly known, however, is that many of

these myths are actually origin stories for the gale spirits that haunt these areas. Some even say that gale spirits take pride in residing in places with particularly dangerous reputations, and that they sometimes purposely leave straggling survivors to ensure that their malevolent reputations continue to grow. However, it's unclear whether such pride is characteristic of gale spirits in general, or if individual spirits simply embody the trait.

Often, such a haunted place's dangerous reputation stems from these angry spirits' activities rather than the natural danger its geography presents. After a gale spirit begins to haunt a place, bodies are often found on these places' precipices rather than solely at their bases. Strangely, although it seems impossible for these victims to have fallen to their deaths, the ground surrounding each of these bodies appears to be a point of great impact.

Though a gale spirit's spawn tend to haunt the same areas as their progenitor, sometimes forming ravenous packs with their creator, gale spirits usually ignore others of their kind. The exception is typically in combat, when gale spirits sometimes join forces to try to destroy as many living creatures as possible. In places where their numbers have swelled, gale spirits tend to become more communicative. If a traveler listens closely enough, words are audible along with the constantly howling wind up to a mile away. Such phrases are almost always terrible threats or macabre boasts, spoken in Common in a chorus of eerie, barely discernible voices.

Gale spirits are most common in rural areas, particularly in mountainous terrain or in forests with extreme elevation differences. They are found in all climates and wander their territories at all times of day, although they tend to avoid bright daylight, which makes it hard for them to see. For this reason, gale spirits attacks are most common at night. Darkness offers them cover from which to surprise victims, kill them, and turn them into hateful progeny. Gale spirits and their packs thrive best in secluded areas that nonetheless have regular foot traffic, which provides them with a slow but steady influx of potential victims. Nearly forgotten religious shrines or abandoned temples of minor deities with dangerous precipices nearby are choice hunting grounds for a gale spirit or two. Although it's uncommon, some particularly old gale spirits even roam from the sites of their mortal death to other, more dangerous or notorious places that are better suited to attracting victims. Even then,



a gale spirit rarely changes its lair more than once in a hundred years.

With its wide swaths of rural, mountainous areas—not to mention its preponderance of villainous individuals since House Thrune seized control of the nation—

Cheliox is home to a large number of gale spirits. The northern Menador Mountains, as the location of many evildoers' hideouts over the years, have been a particular hotbed for the creatures. Some of Cheliox's more active gale spirits have even been known to venture forth from the mountains onto the plains north of the Barrowood and Whisperwood. Rumors hold that, outside of towns such as Kantaria, the howling of the winds on stormy nights is not a simple weather phenomenon but a chorus of angry gale spirits looking for new victims. An old folktale even tells of murderous triplets from Kantaria who supposedly committed

suicide together by jumping off a bluff in the northern Whisperwood rather than face judgment for their crimes. It's said that the siblings joined together to form a massive, supremely deadly gale spirit that actively tries to lure unhappy citizens from Kantaria into the woods. Such stories are often told to scare children into behaving well, but scholars believe there might actually be some truth to them, and that certain gale spirits with such terrible origins might be far more powerful than those born from lone deaths.

Varisia, with its massive Storval Rise and towering Thassilonian ruins, is also a gale spirit hotbed. Scholars posit that Varisia is home to some of the oldest gale spirits in the Inner Sea region, and that some existing in the most rural locales may even have been Thassilonian slave masters. In the wilds outside of Magnimar, it is also rumored that there are a handful of gale spirits that are friendlier to mortals than others of their kind. These gale spirits are said to work with living partners—supposedly individuals who knew the gale spirits while they lived—to lure unsuspecting victims to their territories, where the gale spirits brutally murder them. These gale spirits supposedly have tribes of progeny that number a dozen or more. Their aims in building these tribes—and whether they are under the influence of even more sinister forces—are unclear.

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HIRACAPATH

Silvery armor in the shape of a powerful ram barely contains the brilliant radiance shining from within it, and curling, steel horns emerge from its helm.

HIRACAPATH

CR 7



XP 3,200

LG Large outsider (extraplanar, good, lawful)

Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 17 (+1 Dex, +8 natural, -1 size)

hp 94 (9d10+45)

Fort +11, Ref +6, Will +9

DR 5/evil; Resist electricity 5, fire 5

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee gore +14 (1d8+6), 2 hooves +12 (1d6+3)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft.

Special Attacks nonlethal mastery, powerful charge (gore, 2d8+9)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th; concentration +12)

Constant—*air walk*1/day—*plane shift* (self only)

STATISTICS

Str 22, Dex 12, Con 21, Int 3, Wis 16, Cha 17

Base Atk +9; CMB +16 (+20 bull rush); CMD 27 (29 vs. bull rush, 31 vs. trip)

Feats Greater Bull Rush, Improved Bull Rush, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack, Power Attack

Skills Intimidate +12, Perception +12, Survival +12

Languages Celestial (can't speak)

SQ glorious nimbus

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Heaven)

Organization solitary or herd (3–16)

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Glorious Nimbus (Su) A hiracapath sheds the blinding light of righteous loyalty, which burns betrayers and staggers deceivers. Their radiance increases the light level within the area of the aura by one step and counts as magical light equivalent to a *continual light* spell for the purposes of dispelling magical darkness. Chaotic- or evil-aligned creatures that make a successful melee attack against a hiracapath take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage. Chaotic evil creatures suffer 2d6 points of nonlethal damage from striking the hiracapath while within the aura.

Nonlethal Mastery (Ex) A hiracapath can deal nonlethal damage with any of its natural attacks without taking a penalty on the attack roll. When making nonlethal attacks, the hiracapath increases the critical threat range on all natural attacks to 19–20.

Hiracapaths are inhabitants of Heaven—outsiders formed from the celestial plane—but they are not true angels or

archons. They exist below the lowest tiers of Heaven's hierarchy and are commanders of celestial animals, holding no official place among Heaven's formal ranks or society. They dwell primarily at the base of the mountain that makes up the plane, wandering the idyllic realm alone or in great, golden herds. Despite their placid appearances, hiracapaths act as Heaven's watchdogs, running down any discovered interlopers and dragging them before more formal authorities for judgment. To hiracapaths, this arrangement is not lopsided; rather, it's preferable, as it allows them to indulge in their natural affinity for tracking intruders while remaining outside of the official celestial hierarchy, which they find too complex and unappealing, when they even consider the matter at all.

In its natural form, a hiracapath is as an intangible cloud of soulstuff and celestial energy. Heaven itself provides each glorious creature with silver and steel armor to give it both form and purpose. Clad in gleaming plates, a hiracapath stands 9 feet tall and weighs almost 1,500 pounds.

ECOLOGY

Sometimes called the “bulls of Heaven,” hiracapaths are born from Heaven itself, often forming from the souls of loyal mounts and animal companions of righteous heroes. Newly formed hiracapaths burst forth as jets of light and sound from the ground of Heaven's lowest tiers. Their armor eventually emerges from these same fonts hours later, beginning a long process that is equal parts birthing and unification of their disparate elements. The creatures remember nothing of their creation, and are driven only by an imbued sense of their place in the rigid hierarchy of Heaven's inhabitants.

The same force that empowers its existence allows a hiracapath to expertly sap the life energies from enemies without mortally wounding them. In spite of the hiracapath's bulk and size, its powerful blows strike an enemy carefully, and rarely draw blood or open wounds. Born trusting humanoid masters more than their own judgment, hiracapaths dread the possibility of accidentally injuring or killing a creature that deserved a kinder fate, and under no circumstances do they wish to pass judgment on any creatures themselves. Against foes immune to nonlethal damage—such as constructs or undead—a hiracapath simply wields its curled horns and powerful hooves to devastating effect, trusting that a soulless creature cannot feel the pain it brings, and hoping only to stop, rather than totally destroy, its opponent.

A hiracapath's intangible core grants it many benefits, including a shining light that burns evil and the disobedient, plus the ability to tread upon air as if its armor weighed nothing. This same holy light allows them to slip between the planes as they wish.

Small populations wander Nirvana from time to time, or charge though the borders of Hell and the Maelstrom. As outsiders, they have no need to eat or sleep, but enjoy both—great herds roam Heaven, chewing thoughtfully at mouthfuls of plant matter, dirt, or stones, resembling contented herds of mortal cattle, sheep, or goats. If they spot an intruder, however, the hiracapaths do not hesitate to meet the threat head on, even if they don't wish to visit mortal harm upon it.

HABITAT AND SOCIETY

After their emergence at the base of Heaven's mountain, hiracapaths swiftly define their territory, or join other hiracapath herds without much fanfare. Instinctively knowing their role, hiracapaths serve as vigilant protectors, shepherding celestial animals and guarding against threats from other planes. They suspiciously stalk new petitioners and planar travelers alike, only satisfied when they see newcomers judged worthy by angels, archons, or other celestials. Obvious threats—such as the rare fiendish incursion—are dealt with swiftly but mercifully. A hiracapath carries incapacitated foes to the nearest authority figure, and ultimately loves nothing more than praise from its celestial superiors for a job well done.

When the threat of invasion is not a concern, hiracapaths enjoy the rigid beauty of heaven. Though herd animals, they can wander off alone to spend extended periods of time in simple but careful introspection. Bold and stubborn, hiracapaths are ultimately gentle creatures who dread the thought of causing undue harm; they move with careful grace across the fields and pastures they patrol to avoid crushing smaller creatures beneath their bulk. Hiracapaths follow a simplified paladin's code, refusing to hurt helpless opponents and offering assistance to those in need. Thanks to their dull wits and prodigious strength, a hiracapath is often painfully straightforward. For instance, a hiracapath may help a lost traveler by carrying her in a straight line—through any and all obstacles—until the traveler spies familiar surroundings. Or a hiracapath may lead a wayward visitor around the mountains in a winding or circular path, waiting until it comes across a trusted angel or archon who can help direct its charge.

While hiracapaths' dogged defense of Heaven seems at odds with their ability to plane shift, they do use their planar traveling ability to pursue enemies who escape justice. Angels joke that hiracapaths' ability to jump between worlds is a symptom of their stubbornness—even the walls of reality can't sway one of Heaven's bulls once it eyes a target. Because a hiracapath is unable to bring a target it pursues across cosmic borders, those beasts who leave their home often regretfully switch

to deadly force, especially against infernal or other obviously evil prey.

Other times, high-ranking angels or archons gift the services of hiracapaths to virtuous mortals. The hiracapaths proudly serve as paladin mounts when so called—many filled this same role in life and vaguely recall the sense of purpose it offered. Though rare, such alliances offer valuable training a hiracapath can bring back to its herd, and the majestic beasts themselves serve as proud warriors and surprisingly capable trackers.

Though many angelic lords of Heaven view them as simple brutes and watchdogs, hiracapaths maintain a special relationship with the empyreal lord Ragathiel. The empyreal lord opens his territories to myriad herds of hiracapaths to serve as both protectors and symbols of strength, and respects the dogged and just nature of the hiracapaths, rewarding those who uproot nascent evils or track down escaped enemies. The General of Vengeance selects those hiracapaths who prove themselves worthy to wander the grounds within his own fortress, and dispatches them as mounts for his messengers and scouts in his wars against the infernal. These hiracapaths are clad in crimson-and-gold armor, and their interior nimbuses of golden light are replaced with righteous fire. Such champions of their kind have the advanced simple creature template, and often possess unique abjuration and conjuration spell-like abilities.



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MERLUCENT

A mane of long, writhing tentacles crowns this translucent, humanoid figure. A crystalline skeleton supports its faintly glowing flesh.

MERLUCENT

CR 3



XP 800

CN Medium aberration (aquatic)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+3 Dex, +3 natural)

hp 26 (4d8+8)

Fort +3, **Ref** +4, **Will** +6

Resist cold 5

OFFENSE

Speed 15 ft., swim 40 ft.

Melee 3 tentacles +6 (1d4+1 plus poison)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (15 ft. with tentacle)

Special Attacks arcane echo, poison, pull (tentacle, 5 ft.), vitrify

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th; concentration +4)

Constant—*detect magic*

3/day—*delay poison, light*

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 16, **Con** 15, **Int** 11, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 17

Feats Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

Skills Climb +6, Handle Animal +4, Perception +7, Stealth +10, Survival +11, Swim +14; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Survival

Languages Aklo; telepathy 30 ft.

SQ jellyfish empathy, transparent flesh

ECOLOGY

Environment any ocean

Organization solitary, hunting group (3–6), or clan (9–14)

Treasure incidental

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Arcane Echo (Su) Merlucents naturally filter arcane energies from the world around them, and can produce large displays of magical power. Three times per day as a standard action, a merlucent can replicate the effects of a single arcane spell cast within 20 feet of it, directing the spell's effect and choosing a target as if it were the caster. This echo uses the merlucent's caster level rather than that of the original spellcaster, and a merlucent can't echo any effect with a spell level greater than half the merlucent's own Hit Dice (generally limiting it to second-level spells). A merlucent can't echo the spells, spell-like abilities, or arcane echo effects created by other merlucents.

Jellyfish Empathy (Ex) This ability functions as a druid's wild empathy ability, save that it works only on jellyfish. A merlucent gains a racial bonus on this check equal to its Hit Dice (normally +4). Jellyfish are normally mindless, but this empathic communication imparts upon them a modicum of implanted intelligence, allowing merlucents

to train jellyfish and use them as guardians (though it does not grant them skills or feats).

Poison (Ex) Tentacle—injury; *save* Fort DC 14; *frequency* 1/round for 4 rounds; *effect* 1d3 Dex; *cure* 1 save. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Transparent Flesh (Ex) A merlucent's transparent flesh becomes hazy and indistinct in water, granting it concealment while the creature is submerged.

Vitrify (Su) A merlucent can produce a polyp and implant it in the ear of a willing or helpless creature over the course of 1 minute, during which the merlucent is flat-footed. The polyp begins slowly consuming its host's brain, transforming the creature's flesh into a transparent jelly and replacing its bone with delicate crystal. A creature that takes any amount of Intelligence damage from a merlucent polyp can breathe while underwater, but loses the ability to breathe air. If a humanoid creature takes ability damage in excess of its Intelligence score, it transforms into a new merlucent, losing all abilities or class levels it previously possessed. The polyp can be destroyed by any effect that removes disease, but the inability to breathe air persists until a creature's Intelligence damage is healed.

Vitrify: Implantation; *save* Fort 12; *onset* 12 hours; *frequency* 1/day; *effect* 1d4 Int damage; *cure* 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Merlucents are strange creatures formed from the fusion of human and jellyfish. As a species, they are simple-minded ascetics. Individual clans claim small stretches of coastline where they hunt fish and shellfish, and scratch strange glyphs into coral, coaxing it to grow in unnatural though beautiful formations. Naturally sensitive to arcane energy, they settle in locations rife with ambient magic, such as along ley lines or near schools of magic built on islands or coasts. Local communities generally consider merlucents to be pests for stripping fishing grounds bare, but the aberrations also keep more aggressive aquatic threats away. This small blessing turns bane every 2 to 5 years when merlucents enter their mating phase and become extremely aggressive.

To reproduce, each merlucent spawns dozens of ant-sized polyps, each of which must mature inside the skull of a humanoid host. Depending on the host, it can take anywhere from days to weeks for the tiny parasite to take over its host's mind and convert the bony, flesh-covered body into its own adult form. To support their children, merlucents conduct fanatical crusades, kidnapping surface dwellers to act as incubators. Relying on its members' stealth and paralytic poison, a single clan may snatch dozens of unwary sailors or coastal residents in a single season.

Merlucents range from 4 to 5 feet in height and weigh around 180 pounds, though smaller or larger specimens may be spawned depending on the size of the host.

ECOLOGY

A merlucent's natural ability to sniff out and reproduce arcane magic—as well as its dependence on humanoids to reproduce—is suggestive of unnatural origins, though none of Golarion's usual culprits known for creating grotesque hybrids have ever been associated with the jellyfish-folk. Merlucents prefer kidnapping arcane spellcasters to host their young, even though they can spawn in any humanoid and their young rarely inherit a host's spellcasting ability. They also show little interest in the flavor of magic their targets wield. Merlucents were likely an accidental creation, spawned at some unknown point in the past—a grim reminder that magic remains a powerful force beyond any creature's complete control, and its use may produce unexpected consequences.

Merlucents are carnivores, eating fish, shellfish, and the occasional seabird—with their translucent skin exposing the digestive process for any to see. They have no need for sleep; instead, they tend to drift with the currents, waiting for small fish to swim into their tentacles. They can wait weeks between meals, and ride the tides for hundreds of miles in a state of torpor. However, they can also become ravenous and deplete entire coves in a matter of days.

HABITAT AND SOCIETY

Merlucents have little in the way of religion or philosophy, and focus primarily on eating and creating art until the mating frenzy consumes them. Long-established colonies may shape coral reefs into elaborate cave systems over generations, complete with air pockets where they keep captives until the colony is ready to implant them with polyps. While merlucents understand other humanoids to be intelligent, they see them as alien and needlessly complex—more akin to termites than neighbors. On rare occasions, merlucents trade with surface dwellers, offering fish, reconnaissance, and scavenged goods in exchange for magic baubles. They rarely use these acquired treasures, instead working them into their ever-expanding coral formations. Merlucents can eventually come to see long-time surface neighbors as beloved pets or a private herd, and show affection by nurturing barnacles to grow on docks and boats to keep the waters clean, or dragging the bloated carcasses of large sea animals to shore for their pets to eat.

To merlucents' alien senses, magical auras twinkle like soft music or pleasant lights. They treasure potions or wands as humans might treasure music boxes or other delicate trinkets, and they see arcane spellcasters as itinerant performers. Thanks to merlucents' fascination with magic, several clans may follow or worship particularly powerful aquatic wizards

and sorcerers, but such aggregations rarely outlast the group's leader.

After a merlucent rears an indeterminate number of young, a strange new instinct takes over its mind, calling it down into the deepest ocean trenches. These elders form large colonies—sometimes a hundred strong—around thermal vents on the ocean floor. Here, they rear massive schools of jellyfish and cultivate farms of tube worms in vast, swirling formations. Elder merlucents show little interest in eating their livestock, but aggressively defend their colonies against intruders. They become especially aggressive toward deep merfolk, with whom they fight constantly for control of the richest vents. Rather than implanting their young into captive merfolk, merlucents instead hurl their unfortunate enemies into the sea floor's boiling fissures, cooking them alive.



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NEXT MONTH

THE INFERNO GATE

By Patrick Renie

The Thrice-Damned House of Thruene wants to seal the Inferno Gate, an uncontrolled portal to Hell, and the nefarious player characters are tapped to accomplish the task. To perform the required ritual, they must acquire key components from a hellspawn thieves' guild and the Hellknight Order of the Pike, as well as battle angelic foes and the Glorious Reclamation. But before they can complete the ritual, one of the characters' closest allies betrays them. Will the villains defeat the traitor and close the infernal gate—or better yet, make a deal with a devil for control of the portal—or will they become sacrifices to the Inferno Gate?

MOLOCH

By F. Wesley Schneider

Uncover the terrible secrets of the archdevil known as the General of Hell. The embodiment of unquenchable rage, the Lord of the Sixth ensures that Hell's armies are unrivaled in legion, cruelty, and skill.

ROADS TO HELL

By F. Wesley Schneider

The routes to Hell are many and varied, ranging from fiendish ferrymen to infernal gates to spells and talismans. Learn how to journey through reality and into the Pit itself.

AND MORE!

Surprising revelations in the Pathfinder's Journal by Josh Vogt! Plus, diverse monsters populate a fresh installment in the Hell's Vengeance Adventure Path bestiary.

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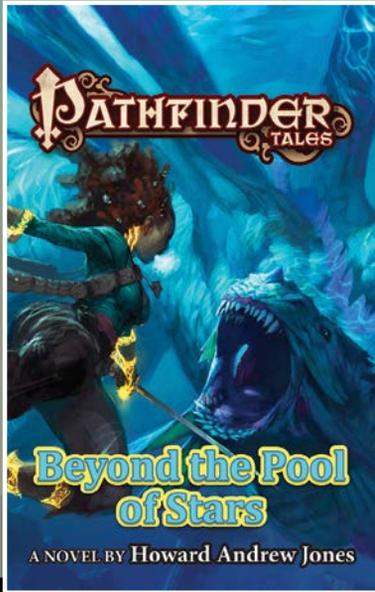
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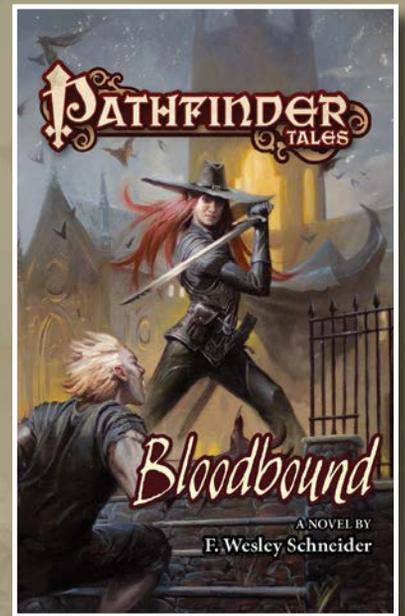


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- A look at the history and inner workings of Cheliah's most powerful noble family, the Thrice-Damned House of Thrune, by Linda Zayas-Palmer.
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