

**By Jim Groves** 



PATHFINDER SOCIETY SCENARIO #3-24

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Pathfinder Society Scenario #3–24: The Golden Serpent is a Pathfinder Society Scenario designed for 5th- to 9th-level characters (Tier 5–9; Subtiers 5–6 and 8–9). This scenario is designed for play in the Pathfinder Society Organized Play campaign, but can easily be adapted for use with any world.

This product makes use of the Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook, the Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide, the Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3, the Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2, and the Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3. These rules can be found online for free as part of the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Reference Document at **paizo.com/prd**.

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By Jim Groves

few short years ago, two women from different corners of Golarion were set on a collision course in the city of Absalom. The first was one of two daughters to survive in a family haunted by spectres of murder, magic, and suicide. A scion of the Varisian Foxglove family, Sendeli Foxglove is a woman whose personal strength is matched only by her beauty and her determination to be the captain of her own destiny. Raised by her extended family in Korvosa after her parents' tragic death, Sendeli sold what remained of her own personal Foxglove inheritance when she reached adulthood and immigrated to Absalom, intent on forgetting her own past and getting a fresh start. With the upbringing and resources of a young noblewoman, Sendeli found a place for herself in the wealthy and popular Ivy District as a local entrepreneur and restaurateur.

The second woman was every bit as driven, and could appear every bit as lovely despite the fact that she was not even remotely human. She was the marai rakshasa Maelpheta, who arrived in Absalom from distant Vudra around the same time as Sendeli arrived from Korvosa. Maelpheta sought to carve out her own realm of corruption and worship among the ancient arcane wonders of the City at the Center of the World. Driven by the need to discover and master new magical powers, she set to work in building a power base from which she could infiltrate the centers of influence and learning that dominate the city.

Yet these two women would have had no reason to cross paths if not for a third individual—an elven dilettante by the name of Syrdathiel who fancied himself an amateur detective, researcher, and historian, despite his addictive personality. His life pursuits of luxury, wealth, and personal station through academics led him to acquire a considerable collection of legends, lore, and potentially authentic treasure maps from all across the Inner Sea. This impressive collection was unable to keep Syrdathiel from mortal peril, however, and actually contributed to it, for the relics in the elf's collection came at no small price. Desperate to alleviate his debt, Syrdathiel gambled and frittered away his money on empty luxuries and philandering. Several loan sharks actively sought to

## WHERE ON GOLARION?

The Golden Serpent takes place in the Ivy District of the city of Absalom-the premiere quarter of the city for artisans, craftsman, and culture alike. The artisans here produce high-quality goods for sale, from fabrics, perfumes, and exquisite carpentry to masterwork armor and weapons. There are no ruined buildings here. Instead, there are beautiful homes, attractive shops and businesses, and the headquarters of Absalom's most important merchants and guilds. Ordinary pedestrian crime is rare here, but the district's tight security serves to breed shrewd and ruthless rogues. For more information and detailed maps on the Ivy District, its citizenry, and the Golden Serpent restaurant, see Pathfinder Module U2: Gallery of Evil or Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Guide to Absalom, available in bookstores and game stores everywhere, and online at paizo.com.



recoup their losses from him, so the elf opted to cash in his collection in order to buy his way out of trouble. Syrdathiel sought many buyers for his collection, including the Pathfinder Society, the Aspis Consortium, and various powerful private collectors.

But legitimate buyers weren't the only ones to hear word of Syrdathiel's collection and his desire to part with it. Among the unintended parties interested in the maps and lore up for sale is an Ivy District thieves'

Venture-Captain Ambrus Valsin

guild known as the Crowsworn. The guild's mysterious leader-known only as the Mistress-is none other than Maelpheta, who killed the previous guildmaster, impersonated him, and later supplanted him with her own human alias. Knowing the value of the knowledge contained within Syrdathiel's library, she sent a band of thugs to interrupt the transaction between the elf and his Pathfinder Society buyers, which was to take place at the Golden Serpent, a prominent Ivy District restaurant owned and operated by none other than Sendeli Foxglove. The Crowsworn took the restaurant's entire staff and all its patrons hostage, kidnapped Syrdathiel and his cache of secrets, and now wait for the Pathfinder Society's representatives to show up so they too can be taken for all they're worth.

## SUMMARY

The Pathfinders are debriefed on what seems to be a simple and straightforward assignment: to rendezvous with the elf Syrdathiel at the Golden Serpent in the Ivy District. He expects to close the sale on several valuable maps for cash then and there, but the PCs are

tasked to persuade him to travel with them to a Society safe house while his collection is authenticated prior to payment. Through no fault of their venture-captain, however, this plan has already gone wrong even as the PCs receive their instructions.

Syrdathiel has attracted the attention of more than one interested party seeking to acquire his collection. A relatively new gang of talented thieves who call themselves the Crowsworn have come to occupy a forgotten hideout beneath Absalom's great walls that once allowed underground traffic in and out of the city with impunity, and even to other parts of the city via the sewers. Under the remote direction of their powerful and charismatic leader, the marai rakshasa Maelpheta, the Crowsworn have seized the Golden Serpent and taken its entire staff and its patrons hostage prior to the PCs' arrival, and already removed Syrdathiel and his collection from the scene. The remaining Crowsworn intend to swindle the Pathfinder Society if they can, and rob all the wealthy patrons of the establishment when they're done. Sendeli Foxglove is at cross-purposes to the Crowsworn. She's determined to do everything she can to warn the party so they can help her prevent the impending mayhem.

Once the PC free the Golden Serpent from the Crowsworn's control, Sendeli informs them she has

deduced the likely location of the Crowsworn hideout. The trail of the abducted elven dilettante sends the PCs underground to a glassblower's shop along the wall separating the Ivy District and the settlement of Westerhold just outside Absalom. Beneath Absalom's streets, the PCs confront not merely another gang of humanoid thugs, but also the thralls of powerful evil spirits and supernatural horrors.

## GETTING STARTED

Around midday, just after lunchtime, the Pathfinders are called into Venture-Captain Ambrus Valsin's office in the Grand Lodge of Absalom for an important new mission. Read the following to get the adventure underway.

Venture-Captain Ambrus Valsin is seated behind his large and meticulously arranged desk, and he is not alone. At his side behind the desk stands the smirking, mustachioed likeness of Guaril Karela. Ambrus gestures to the chairs set forth before the desk, then begins his briefing.

"Some of you may not be acquainted with Mr. Karela. He's an ally of the Society and he's provided the Decemvirate

pertinent information concerning this situation. I've invited him to participate in your briefing. Please extend to him every courtesy." Ambrus nods at Guaril to take the lead.

Guaril preens at the recognition and sets aside his dockside slang. "By way of my own resources, it's come to my attention there's an individual looking for a buyer for a collection of valuable lore. These are legends-researched, annotated, and correlated with allegedly verifiable sources and maps. This poor, unfortunate soul has gotten himself in over his head with the loan sharks, and he's seeking to liquidate his assets before he finds himself liquidated-if you follow me." Guaril grins toothily before sobering. "Cap'n Vaslin and I have arranged a meeting with him. We've let him think he's getting paid on the spot, but that's just to ensure that he actually shows up. He needs that money. But the Pathfinder Society doesn't survive by trust alone. You're going to need to talk him into coming to a safe house while we authenticate his collection and verify it's worth the gold we've promised him. It's the best offer he's going to get without also eating his own entrails, because the Aspis Consortium has no reason to look out for a man with a price on his head. This is not a complex job. No deep politics, planar gallivantin', or diggin' fleas out of your trousers. Nevertheless, this collection could spur many more meaningful missions to come. Good coin and uh—lost secrets and such—"

"Exactly," Ambrus Vaslin interjects. "I'm already aware

Grandmaster Torch thinks this is beneath your station. What he needs to understand is that the Ten view any success as a victory, especially if it opens up more leads for the entire Society. This individual, by the name of Syrdathiel, is an elf with expensive tastes. He wants to meet somewhere he feels safe. The Golden Serpent is a high-class restaurant in the Ivy District. That quarter of the city is routinely patrolled by its own paid mercenary force and the volunteer efforts of an order of paladins. Security shouldn't be a problem, but by selecting you we're leaving nothing to chance. Just persuade him to come in for the night, and in the morning he can walk out with cash in hand to settle his problems. If all goes well, you can be in soft beds before the night is over. There's no travel expenses required here, but the Society is glad to reimburse you for dinner. I've eaten there myself; the menu is impeccable."

The PCs have until dinnertime to make any purchases they want. Feel free to emphasize that time is short and they're not going on a long journey or to an extreme climate; appropriate attire is more crucial than specific adventuring gear.

The PCs may have additional questions for the venture-captain and Sczarni mastermind. Several potential questions and their answers are listed below.

There's got to be more to it than this. "No, there isn't. But something always goes wrong when the situation is too good to be true, and you're the response to that concern. That's exactly why we've assigned it to you instead of brand-new field agents."

How much leeway do we have when we persuade Syrdathiel? "Don't kill him, obviously, but we're aware he's not thinking clearly, and has self-destructive tendencies. If you have to apply some 'five knuckle persuasion,' or charm him through guile or magic, so be it. Either way, we'll look after his best interests after the transaction is complete. We do have a positive reputation to maintain."

What if something goes wrong? "Fix it. If there's third-party interference, don't come back here for reinforcements or permission—take the initiative and chase the target. You know Absalom is the worst possible place to lose track of anything. But remember you're operating in a very public venue."

### The Ivy District

PCs who seek insight into the local community in advance of the meeting can learn the following facts by making a Diplomacy check to gather information or a Knowledge (local) check.

**15+** The Ivy District is among the safest quarters of the city. It's the home of many craftsmen, artisans, and minor nobles.

**20+** The district is routinely patrolled by its own mercenary police force, known as the Ivy District Watch. The watch is supplemented by the Brotherhood of Abadar, a group of paladins who patrol the same area as a matter of personal spiritual devotion.

25+ The Brotherhood of Abadar and the Ivy District Watch are close to open conflict. The watch does a fine job, but the brotherhood has presented itself as a free (albeit faith-based) alternative, which makes it quite popular among some taxpayers. Both organizations have their supporters and critics. Their dispute seems territorial.

**30+** The Brotherhood of Abadar does exemplary work, but unlike the watch, these paladins are not above evangelism and often

> promote a moral ethos. The local theater often features daring and even risqué performances, and the brotherhood and the watch have clashed on the theater's legal right to do so.

## The Golden Serpent

PCs who seek information about the restaurant can learn the following facts

by making a Diplomacy check to gather information or a Knowledge (local) check.

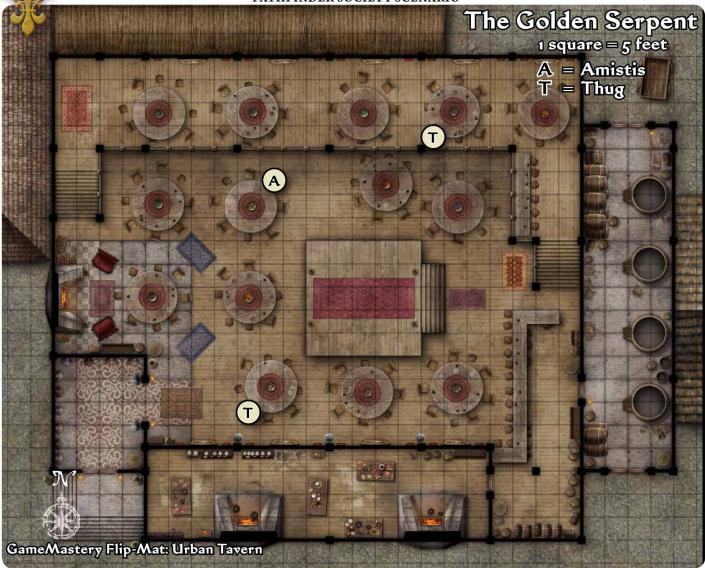
15+ The restaurant recently came under new management, but this has not diminished its sterling reputation. Famous artists, politicians, and city celebrities frequently dine there.

**20+** The new owner of the restaurant is a young woman with a noble air named Sendeli Foxglove. She is not a native of Absalom, but rather a wealthy immigrant who bought the Golden Serpent outright with the bulk of some personal inheritance. She is considered a local mystery.

## ACT 1: SHOWDOWN AT THE GOLDEN SERPENT (CR 7 OR CR 10)

The Golden Serpent is a sizeable, well-lit establishment with a raised stage occupying the center of its common room, a roaring fireplace on the south wall, and a long bar along the north. An elevated row of tables overlooks the main floor on the room's western edge. The mood is subdued, but very few pause to take any notice of new arrivals. Over a dozen wide round tables fill the room, most packed with customers; one table is conspicuously empty.

## Guaril Karela



The PCs arrive at the Golden Serpent without incident, but the situation there is not as it appears. In his hasty desire to appease his creditors as fast as possible, Syrdathiel attracted a criminal gang known as the Crowsworn. The rogues ferreted out the time and location of Syrdathiel's meeting with the Pathfinders and slipped quietly inside the restaurant, where they took its owner, staff, and all its patrons hostage. Under the threat of wholesale slaughter, the crowd is forced to participate in a charade for the PCs' benefit. The PCs meet with one of the Crowsworn—also an elf—masquerading as their contact. The imposter wants to exchange a false collection of maps and data in exchange for the gold that Syrdathiel expected, and, once the meeting concludes, to rob all the restaurant's patrons.

The sound of conversation and the appearance of wait staff serving guests belie that something is wrong. The Crowsworn have coached the patrons and staff of the Golden Serpent so the hostages do not to tip the Pathfinders off to the reality of the situation. People notice the Pathfinders arrive, but carefully and artificially do not pay much attention to them. Dinner guests do not move around the room. The wait staff does so carefully, bringing drinks and food to tables, but exchange no more than a few sentences with their customers. There is conversation at every table, but it is intimate, which can legitimately be attributed to the ambiance of the restaurant. A successful DC 20 Sense Motive check on any individual, or even the entire room, verifies there is definite tension present that is deliberately being held in check.

The Crowsworn have discouraged the NPCs (under pain of death) from taking any initiative in this situation other than for Sendeli to take the PCs' dinner order when they arrive; nevertheless, if the ruse works, it is not in the Crowsworn's best interest to bristle too much at the slightest bit of improvisational behavior on the part of the other NPCs, so long as they do not betray the truth. Feel free to have the room respond to the PCs carefully if that's what it takes to maintain appearances. This alone does not drive the Crowsworn to attack.

**Creatures:** Amistis, the elven Crowsworn leader posing as Syrdathiel, is seated at the otherwise empty table in the center of the room, southwest of the raised dais. He gives the PCs a meaningful stare when they first enter, and nods and gestures to them to sit once they notice him. Resting on top of the table is a leather folio, tied shut with leather straps. Amistis knows enough about Syrdathiel and the situation to lie convincingly, but opposed Bluff and Sense Motive checks are effective here (as is truthdetermining magic, though overt use of such is taken as an act of hostility by the Crowsworn and may accelerate a dangerous confrontation).

Amistis expects to sell his false collection right here and now, just as Syrdathiel expected to sell the true documents. The Crowsworn thief knows the fakes won't stand up to scrutiny, and doesn't want to abandon the rest of his potential take by leaving the rest of the customers here unmolested. Thus, he refuses to follow the PCs to the safe house for payment later. Instead, he attempts to ascertain whether that decision is set in stone and he can talk the Pathfinders into changing their minds. If he cannot (and he shouldn't be able to; Ambrus Valsin and Guaril Karela were explicit), he alters the plan, instead trying to convince the PCs to leave the Golden Serpent so he and his allies can rob it.

The PCs may demand to inspect the folio to try to authenticate them here in the field. Amistis permits up to two PCs to examine the documents briefly, asserting that the value is in the knowledge, and that were he to present all the documents to the whole party, they'd have no need to pay him anything. A successful DC 25 Appraise or Knowledge (geography, history, or religion) check reveals the documents are clever but worthless fakes.

Sendeli Foxglove interrupts the negotiations, ideally before they get too close to a conclusion. She is a stunning woman with a prominent features, long blonde hair pulled back with a begemmed hairpin, and fine clothing. Under the pretense of taking the PCs' dinner or beverage orders, she attempts to pass a Pathfinder a secret message without drawing Amistis's attention. Sendeli believes that if the Pathfinders don't intervene against the Crowsworn, many innocent people are going to be hurt or killed, and her restaurant is doomed. Toward that end, she does whatever is necessary to warn the PCs so they can get the drop on the Crowsworn. If the PCs refuse to take the hint, she forces a confrontation if she has to. She believes a confrontation is preferable to ending the hostage crisis with the Crowsworn still in control.

Sendeli has a prewritten note she wants to get to a PC without Amistis noticing (see the **Player Handout** on

#### SECRET INFORMATION

If Sendeli passes a PC her quickly scrawled note, it's not something the player should read aloud, as only his character would have yet seen its contents. Encourage PCs to use Bluff, Sleight of Hand, or other creative means to disseminate the information to the rest of the party. Such attempts are subject to notice by Amistis just as when Sendeli attempted to alert the PCs to the truth of the situation in the Golden Serpent.

page 27). She can only deliver the note to one PC, and the method in which she does this is situational to each individual game session. She may attempt a Sleight of Hand check opposed by Amistis's Perception check (at a +4 bonus due to the note's small size) or use a DC 15 Bluff check to send a secret message through innuendo to the PCs to let them know she has a message to slip them. If she attempts the second option, Amistis can attempt a Sense Motive check to uncover her deception. If the elf catches Sendeli in the act of tipping off the PCs, he knows the jig is up, and immediately becomes hostile to both the restaurateur and the PCs.

There are two Crowsworn thugs positioned on opposite ends of the restaurant to keep an eye on the patrons and wait staff and to back up Amistis in the event of a conflict. They take their cues from the elf, and move quickly to his aid should a fight break out. The thug on the raised platform overlooking the room has a *necklace of fireballs* that he uses to panic the crowd and cover an escape. He lobs fireballs into the largely vacant center of the room starting with the least powerful balls on the necklace, more to make a scene—and catch any PCs in the blast he can than to injure the restaurant's patrons, hoping instead to deliver a clear message to the assembled citizenry that the Crowsworn gang is ruthless and not to be taken lightly.

The silent, secret threat in this encounter is Skoras, the raktavarna rakshasa. This creature is a spy whose master is Maelpheta herself, the ultimate villain of the scenario. Maelpheta gifted Skoras to Amistis in the guise of a gilt and bejeweled masterwork short sword, not telling the criminal of its true nature. In this way, she can check in on what the gang is doing without them being aware. Skoras does not intervene in this encounter no matter what happens. Instead, it allows itself to be scooped up by the PCs as treasure or remains as a silent, disguised spying device on Maelpheta's agents.

## Subtier 5-6 (CR 7)

#### Αμιςτις

Male elf ranger (urban ranger) 6 (Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide 129)



NE Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +3 (+5 in Absalom); Senses low-light vision; Perception +8 (+10 in Absalom)

#### DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+6 armor, +3 Dex, +1 shield) hp 55 (6d10+18)

Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +3; +2 vs. enchantments Immune sleep

#### OFFENSE

#### Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk longsword +8/+3 (1d8+2/19-20), mwk short sword +7/+2 (1d6+1/19-20)

Special Attacks favored enemy (elves +2, humans +4)

Ranger Spells Prepared (CL 3rd;

#### concentration +4)

1st—longstrider, pass without trace

#### TACTICS

During Combat Amistis favors human and elven targets to gain his favored enemy bonuses. He grants the rogues his companion bond bonus against the PC who seems the most dangerous.

Morale Amistis throws down his weapons and surrenders, given the chance, when reduced to 10 hit points or fewer.

#### STATISTICS

## Str 15, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10

Base Atk +6; CMB +8; CMD 21

Feats Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Toughness, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (longsword)

- Skills Acrobatics +9, Bluff +6, Disable Device +12, Knowledge (local) +9 (+11 in Absalom), Perception +8 (+10 in Absalom), Sleight of Hand +9, Stealth +10 (+12 in Absalom)
- Languages Common, Elven
- SQ favored community (Absalom +2), hunter's bond (companions), track +3, trapfinding, wild empathy +6

Gear +2 glamered mithral shirt, masterwork longsword,

masterwork short sword (disguised raktavarna), key to area B2 SPECIAL ABILITIES

Favored Community (Ex) Amistis gains a +2 bonus on initiative checks and Knowledge (local), Perception, Stealth, and Survival checks while in his favored community. The ranger leaves no trail while traveling through his favored community (though he may if he wishes).

#### CROWSWORN THUGS (2)

Human rogue 4 NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; Senses Perception +8

#### DEFENSE

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

**hp** 37 each (4d8+16)

Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +2

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft. **Melee** rapier +6 (1d6+2/18-20) **Ranged** mwk shortbow +7 (1d6+1/×3)

TACTICS

Special Attacks sneak attack +2d6

During Combat The rogue with the necklace of fireballs looks for likely clusters of targets, but refrains from injuring his own allies. Sneak attacks with flanks or feints are preferred to gain the additional bleed damage.

Morale When reduced to 10 hit points or fewer, the rogues surrender.

#### STATISTICS

Str 15, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8 Base Atk +3; CMB +5; CMD 18

Feats Combat Reflexes, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Finesse Skills Acrobatics +9, Bluff +6,

Disable Device +9, Escape Artist +9, Knowledge (local) +7, Perception +8, Sense Motive +8, Sleight of Hand +10, Stealth +9

CR 2

Languages Common

- SQ rogue talents (bleeding attack +2, combat trick), trapfinding +2
- Combat Gear potion of blur, necklace of fireballs type I; Other Gear studded leather, masterwork shortbow with 10 +1 arrows, rapier, key to area B2

#### Sendeli Foxglove

Female human aristocrat 1/expert 3
NG Medium humanoid (human)
Init +1; Senses Perception +6
DEFENSE
AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10 (+1 Dex)
<b>hp</b> 20 (4d8–1)
Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +5
OFFENSE
Speed 30 ft.
<b>Melee</b> dagger +1 (1d4-1/19-20), unarmed strike +1 (1d3-1)
<b>Ranged</b> dagger +3 (1d4–1/19–20)
TACTICS
During Combat Sendeli gets out of the way of the
combatants, but bravely aids any PC defending the Golden
Serpent if doing so isn't suicidal.
Morale Sendeli fights to the death to save her patrons or keep
from being taken as a long-term prisoner of the Crowsworn.
STATISTICS
Str 8, Dex 12, Con 9, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 16



CR 3

CR 2

CR9

#### Base Atk +2; CMB +1; CMD 12

Feats Deceitful, Deft Hands, Skill Focus (Profession [restaurateur])

**Skills** Bluff +12, Diplomacy +10, Disable Device +3, Disguise +5, Knowledge (local) +6, Perception +6, Profession

(restaurateur)+10, Sense Motive +7, Sleight of Hand +10 Languages Common

Gear dagger

#### Skoras

Raktavarna (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3 229) hp 22 (see page 22)

## Subtier 8-9 (CR 10)

#### AMISTIS

(+14 in Absalom)	
Init +3 (+7 in Absalom); Senses low-light vision; Perception	on +10
NE Medium humanoid (elf)	
Player's Guide 129)	
Male elf ranger (urban ranger) 10 (Pathfinder RPG Advand	ced

#### DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 14, flat-footed 17 (+6 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 shield)

hp 89 (10d10+30)

Fort +8, Ref +10, Will +4; +2 vs. enchantments

Defensive Abilities evasion; Immune sleep

#### OFFENSE Speed 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 longsword +13/+8 (1d8+4/19-20), mwk short sword +12/+7 (1d6+3/19-20)

Special Attacks favored enemy (dwarves +2, elves +2, humans +6) Ranger Spells Prepared (CL 7th; concentration +8)

2nd—barkskin

1st—longstrider, pass without trace, resist energy

#### TACTICS

- Before Combat Amistis relies on his glamered armor and magic sheath to complement his disguise as Syrdathiel and appear less militant or suspicious. Quick Draw gets him in the fight fast.
- During Combat Amistis favors human, dwarf, and elf targets to gain his favored enemy bonuses. He grants the rogues his companion bond bonus against the PC who seems the most dangerous.
- Morale Amistis throws down his weapons and surrenders, given the chance, when reduced to 10 hit points or fewer. STATISTICS

#### Str 16, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10

#### Base Atk +10; CMB +13; CMD 27

Feats Dodge, Double Slice, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Quick Draw, Toughness, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Skills Acrobatics +11, Bluff +10, Disable Device +16, Knowledge

(local) +13 (+17 in Absalom), Perception +10 (+14 in Absalom), Sleight of Hand +13, Stealth +14 (+18 in Absalom) Languages Common, Elven

- SQ elven magic, favored community (Absalom +4, Westerhold +2), evasion, hunter's bond (companions), push through, swift tracker, track +5, trapfinding, wild empathy +10
- Gear +2 glamered mithral shirt, +1 longsword, masterwork short sword (disguised raktavarna), sheath of bladestealthAPG, key to area B2

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

- Favored Community (Ex) Amistis gains a bonus on initiative checks and Knowledge (local), Perception, Stealth, and Survival checks while in his favored communities. The ranger leaves no trail while traveling through his favored communities (though he may if he wishes).
- Push Through (Ex) Amistis is never slowed by difficult terrain in his favored communities. In addition, he can move through the space occupied by local citizens as if they were allies. This does not apply to creatures intent on harming the ranger. Areas that are enchanted or magically manipulated to impede motion, however, still affect him.
- <sup>APG</sup> See the Advanced Player's Guide.

CROWSWORN THUGS (2) CR 5
Human rogue 6
NE Medium humanoid (human)
Init +3; Senses Perception +9
DEFENSE
AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +3 Dex)
<b>hp</b> 48 each (6d8+18)
Fort +3, Ref +8, Will +2
<b>Defensive Abilities</b> evasion, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge
OFFENSE
Speed 30 ft.
<b>Melee</b> mwk rapier +8 (1d6+2/18-20)
Ranged mwk shortbow +8 (1d6+1/×3)
Special Attacks sneak attack +3d6
TACTICS
During Combat The rogue with the necklace of fireballs looks
for likely clusters of targets, but refrains from injuring his
own allies. Sneak attacks with flanks or feints are preferred
to gain the additional bleed damage.
Morale When reduced to 10 hit points or fewer, the rogues
surrender.

#### STATISTICS

Str 15, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 8

Base Atk +4; CMB +6; CMD 19

Feats Combat Expertise, Improved Feint, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +12, Bluff +8, Disable Device +12, Escape Artist +12, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (local) +10, Perception +9,

Sense Motive +9, Sleight of Hand +12, Stealth +12

Languages Common, Elven

#### SAVING SENDELI

At the GM's discretion, the hostage situation in the Golden Serpent may serve as a catalyst to forge a strong bond between Sendeli Foxglove and one or more of the PCs. Circumstances that might precipitate such a connection may include exceptionally witty banter or flirtation between Sendeli and a PC during the passing of the note, a PC protecting the dinner guests courageously, or a PC cleverly thwarting the Crowsworn in a manner that goes above and beyond mere swordplay and violence.

Awarding or withholding the Sendeli Foxglove's Favor boon is entirely optional and should feel like a reward for immersive roleplaying rather than an automatic achievement for completing the encounter. This boon has no impact upon this scenario and doesn't affect character advancement, but it may play a role in future adventures involving Sendeli or those close to her. You may award the boon to multiple players or none at all, but you are strongly encouraged to be judicious and sparing with its use to maintain its special status.

SQ rogue talents (bleeding attack +3, combat trick, slow reactions), trapfinding +3

**Combat Gear** potion of blur, necklace of fireballs, type II; **Other Gear** +1 studded leather, masterwork rapier, masterwork shortbow with 10 +1 arrows, key to area **B2** 

hp 21 (use the stats from Subtier 5–6)

#### Skoras

**hp** 22 (use the stats from Subtier 5–6)

**Development:** For simplicity's sake, there is no mechanic provided for the crowd during the combat. The GM is free to improvise the sense of fear and panic from the patrons in the room. Dinner guests may get in the way of the fight, dishes and objects might be thrown at the hostage-takers, and parts of the Golden Serpent may catch fire from a stray fireball. Keep in mind such events shouldn't arbitrarily prevent the faction missions from being achieved, although Sendeli can be killed which prevents missions requiring interaction with her from being completed.

After the Crowsworn are defeated, the two local constabularies—the Ivy District Watch and the Brotherhood of Abadar—arrive simultaneously, whereupon they vie to take statements on what occurred and to escort important citizens and politicians back to their homes. Afterward, many survivors choose to remain to gather their wits, speak to the authorities, comfort one another, and be available for many of the faction missions.

If any of the Crowsworn survive the encounter, a successful Intimidate check forces them to reveal the location of their hideout. The DC for this check equals 10 + the target's Hit Dice + the target's Wisdom modifier; the PCs receive a +4 circumstance bonus on this check for defeating the Crowsworn in combat. If the PCs can't get the Crowsworn to talk, they can make a DC 20 Diplomacy check to gather information or a DC 20 Knowledge (local) check to retrace the Crowsworn thugs' recent movements, leading them back to the Glass Menagerie.

Sendeli is grateful to the PCs provided they made an effort to protect her, her restaurant, and the Golden Serpent's patrons, and remains on the scene to chat with them. She offers a special boon for PCs who are exceptional in their interaction with her during the hostage crisis, be it a particularly heroic act or a show of cunning. The boon indicates a special relationship between Sendeli and the PC has been forged. This may signify admiration and friendship or it might be romantic. The exact nature of it should be the player's choice. For more information on this boon, see the Saving Sendeli sidebar, above.

Maelpheta expects Aristis and his thugs to return from their job eventually, and if they don't return quickly, she looks through the raktavarna Skoris's eyes to check up on them (see Treasure, below). If the PCs take too long to reach the Glass Menagerie, Maelpheta discovers the fate of her lieutenant and puts the Crowsworn beneath the glassblower's shot on high alert.

Mission Notes: Cheliax faction PCs will likely want to converse with Sendeli Foxglove. She isn't offended by their interest but is extremely private in respect to her personal history prior to coming to Absalom. A successful DC 25 Diplomacy check gets her to open up about her past as an orphaned noble in Magnimar and then Korvosa. A successful Knowledge (local) check, Diplomacy check to gather information from the crowd, or Linguistics check (all DC 25) before speaking with Sendeli reveals small tidbits about her (i.e., history, rumors, her accent) that can be used as conversational inroads. Each successful alternate skill grants a +2 circumstance bonus (maximum +6) toward making the final Diplomacy check for the faction mission. A PC who earns the Sendeli Foxglove's Favor boon gains a +10 bonus on this check. Convincing Sendeli to open up about her past earns Cheliax faction PCs 1 Prestige Point.

Grand Lodge faction PCs cannot complete their mission in this encounter, but to help avoid confusion, any captured Crowsworn confess their "Mistress" has a list of third parties interested in Syrdathiel's collection back in their hideout (revealed under Development, above).

Lantern Lodge faction PCs who speak to any dinner guest or local constable and also makes a successful DC 25 Bluff, Diplomacy check to gather information,



CR 2

Intimidate check, or Knowledge (local) check can get someone to divulge the common belief that Sendeli acquired some personal information on the previous owner that "persuaded" them to give preference to her bid to buy out the property. This information may have come to her from a Varisian relative associated with a group with the means to dig up useful secrets. Learning such information earns Lantern Lodge faction PCs 1 Prestige Point.

Qadira faction PCs can speak with either members of the Brotherhood of Abadar or their rivals, the Ivy District Watch, after the crisis. A successful DC 25 Knowledge (local), Knowledge (religion), or Sense Motive check can ascertain that the Brotherhood puts moral (good) behavior above and beyond preservation of the law and trade. This is an interesting spin on their core faith, and a discovery that earns Qadira faction PCs 1 Prestige Point.

Silver Crusade PCs have the opportunity to speak directly to the Brotherhood of Abadar after the conflict. A successful DC 25 Diplomacy check or a secret message delivered through a successful Bluff check conveys the Silver Crusade's support of the Brotherhood in such a way that it does not reflect poorly on the Crusade. Making such known to a member of the Brotherhood of Abadar earns Silver Crusade faction PCs 1 Prestige Point.

Taldor faction PCs can discover the identity of Alain Always's secret lover by making a bold assertion (positive or negative) about the local councilman with a DC 25 Bluff check. Success indicates that the PCs trick Always's lover into coming to his defense, or overtly agreeing with the statement. Alternatively, a successful DC 25 Knowledge (local) check also uncovers the truth. In either case, identifying Always's lover—a local painter named Xaran Hidock—earns Taldor faction PCs 1 Prestige Point.

**Treasure**: Among the treasure on Amistis's body is the raktavarna rakshasa Skoras, disguised as a bejeweled short sword. The raktavarna acts as a spy for Maelpheta and knows it is most effective while remaining in sword form. If a PC loots Amistis and takes the sword, Skoras remains hidden and observes the PCs' actions, allowing Skoras to see through its eyes as the Pathfinders carry it with them on the rest of the adventure. Be sure to note which PC loots Amistis's body (or confiscates his gear if he's captured), as you'll need to know who has Skoras in the scenario's final encounter (see page 21 for more information). If no PC takes the sword, or Amistis is arrested by the authorities with his gear intact, the sword reverts to its true form and attempts to return to its mistress to report on the fate of her servants.

**Rewards**: If the PCs defeat the Crowsworn, reward each subtier thusly:

**Subtier 5–6**: Give each PC 1,001 gp. **Subtier 8–9**: Give each PC 1,913 gp.

## ACT 2: THE LAIR OF THE CROWSWORN

When Maelpheta first arrived in Absalom, she was overwhelmed-so many thousands of people to corrupt, so many secrets of power and antiquity to learn. Unsure where to start in her quest to build her own empire, the rakshasa was drawn to the beauty and luxury of the Ivy District, where she quickly found kindred spirits in avarice and greed in the local thieves' guild. She surreptitiously charmed and seduced its guild master to learn the Crowsworn's secrets, insinuating herself into the guild as his lover and lieutenant. When she had learned all she needed from him, she killed, devoured him, and supplanted him, taking his own form to keep the other Crowsworn from becoming aware of his demise. When he retired a few weeks later and ceded control to Maelpheta, none realized she was merely passing power from one hand to the other—smoke and mirrors.

### **B.** The Glass Menagerie

Maelpheta's predecessor had already acquired a local glassblower's shop named the Glass Menagerie situated directly above their lair. A family member of one of the gang's neophyte members possesses basic glassblowing skills and maintains the shop by day, lending the appearance of legitimacy and honest trade to the guild's operation. Meanwhile, most of the guild has a key to the shop's back door and can enter and leave quietly in the dead of night whenever necessary.

## **B1. Front Lobby**

This unlit showroom is lined with three display cases filled with delicate glass, crystal baubles, and novelty art objects. A set of double doors is centered in the south wall, while a double door to the north stands between the counters.

The front doors are locked in the evening, as are the doors to areas **B2** and **B3**. A successful DC 25 Disable Device check opens them.

**Treasure**: Scavenging PCs can acquire a handful of small glass and crystal art objects here worth a total of 100 gp. These goods mostly aid in the suspension of disbelief concerning the legitimacy of the shop and have no use other than decoration.

 ${\bf Rewards}:$  If the PCs scavenge the display cases, give each PC 17 gp.

## **B2. Storage Room**

This is a storage room. It contains nothing of value aside from simple tools and cleaning equipment. The door to the east is unlocked.

## B3. Workshop (CR 6 or CR 9)

This unlit workshop features two workbenches covered with tools and equipment relevant to the art of glassblowing. Against the southern wall is a large barrel of water. Along the north wall are three separate kilns with chimneys leading to the roof. To the east is a closed door.

The eastern door is locked tight. A successful DC 25 Disable Device opens it, but the Crowsworn at the Golden Serpent all carried a key to this lock.

Inside of the east kiln is a secret trap door to the guild lair below. A successful DC 20 Perception check allows a PC to notice the secret door where the dust pile is significantly smaller than the other kilns, and most of it is swept away from the center instead of piled in the middle. A rope ladder is attached just under the trap door, permitting descent to hallway 30 feet below at area **C1**. All of the kilns are currently cool, and up to four Medium creatures can step inside any of them without needing to squeeze.

**Trap**: Aside from being concealed, the secret door is also trapped, triggering when touched. If the PCs locate the trap's bypass mechanism, a key to the door to **B2** door also disables it.

## Subtier 5–6 (CR 6)

#### FALLING BLOCK TRAP

Type mechanical; Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 20 EFFECTS

**Trigger** touch; **Reset** manual; **Bypass** hidden lock (DC 25 Perception, DC 30 Disable Device)

Effect Atk +15 melee (6d6); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft. square)

## Subtier 8–6 (CR 9)

# FALLING CEILING TRAPCR 9Type mechanical; Perception DC 30; Disable Device DC 25EFFECTS

**Trigger** touch; **Reset** manual; **Bypass** hidden lock (DC 25 Perception, DC 30 Disable Device)

Effect Atk +20 melee (6d6); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft. square)

## C. Crowsworn Hideout

The Ivy District is well defended by Absalom's high walls against which the district abuts. Absalom's strict

laws and regulations focus on the flow of traffic in and out of the city as a result of countless sieges over the centuries. This is a real deterrent to criminal activity, particularly in a gated community of wealthy citizens. Two thousand years ago, a dwarf by the name of Drun Deepkeg established a roadside inn to accommodate those who were locked out of the city for the night, and over time the entire town of Westerhold sprang up around him and his family. In the generations that followed, the members of the Westerhold community dug a secret tunnel underneath Absalom's walls and into the Ivy District. The original intent may not have been criminal, but any covert means to enter and exit the city undetected lends itself to being exploited for profit. Certainly, access and control of these tunnels has changed hands many times over the past 2,000 years. The existing passages lead to an underground complex beneath a glassblower's shop directly adjacent to the Ivy District's northwestern wall. The chambers are suited to the rise and fall of various thieves' guilds over the generations. The hideout was also connected to the sewer system centuries ago, enabling one shrewd guild to move contraband inside barrels. They floated stolen goods in sealed barrels, and it was here the containers were fished out of the filth and then carried outside the city underneath the walls.

A successful DC 20 Knowledge (dungeoneering or engineering) check confirms the construction is ancient and dwarven, and remains in good condition. A successful DC 25 Knowledge (geography or history) check correlates the location with Westerhold, and the ancient town's early history. Down below, the wood doors, furniture, and finishing have been replaced in the last 20 years, and the ceilings are typically 12 feet high.

## C1. Entry Hall

This ten-foot-wide corridor begins underneath a trap door and rope ladder, and runs south. Doors are set in the east and west walls, and a pair of double doors lies at the southern end. At either end, the hallway is lit by a flickering torch set in the wall. The area appears swept and well trafficked.

**Treasure**: Few of the Crowsworn have darkvision, so this hallway is kept lit with a pair of everburning torches. All of the doors leading out of this area and unlocked.

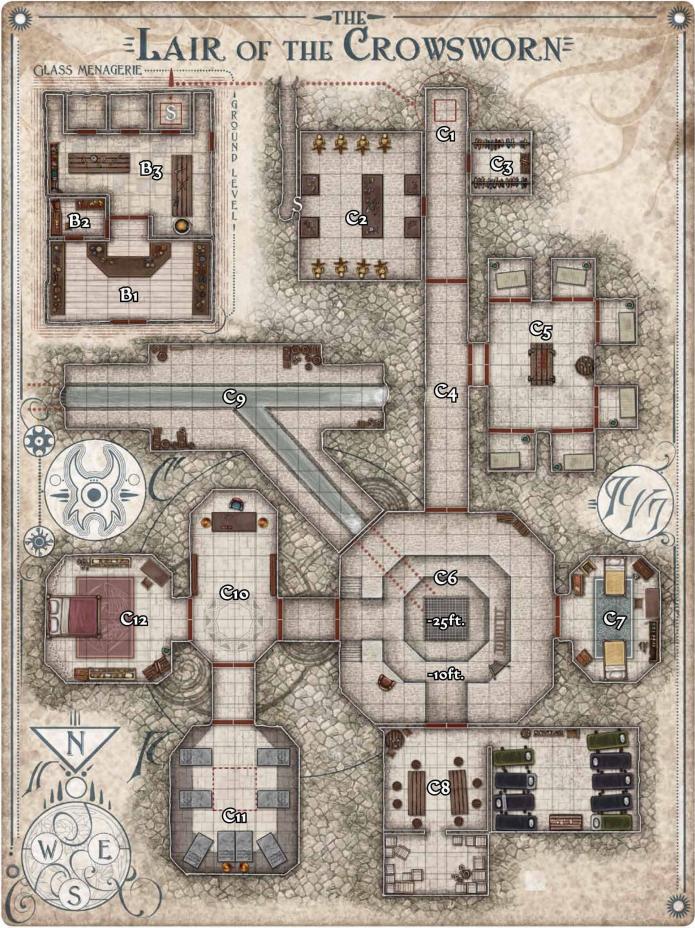
**Rewards**: If the PCs take the everburning torches, give each PC 37 gp.

## C2. Practice Room

This room is lined with eight combat practice dummies along the north and south walls. Five tables occupy the center of



CR 6



\* 13 🞇

the room and the west and east walls. The tables are covered mechanical devices and objects.

The tables are covered with practice locks, two sandfilled hourglasses, a handful of broken skeleton keys and thieves tools, and an assortment of trap components and pieces. It is here that the Crowsworn practice their craft. The padded linen combat dummies show numerous stab wounds and tears from multiple points and angles.

The western wall contains a secret door, which can be located with a DC 25 Perception check. It opens into a dark, earthy (but stable) passage that goes due north. Eventually it passes underneath Absalom's walls and leads to a staircase that ascends to a cellar door built into the side of an abandoned house in Westerhold.

**Development:** If the PCs trace the tunnel all the way to Westerhold without dealing with Maelpheta first, it is sufficient cause for her to check on the thugs she sent to the Golden Serpent by looking through Skoras's eyes. No matter whether the PCs have the raktavarna in their possession or it's with Amistis, what she sees alerts her that something has gone wrong and puts the remaining enemies in the hideout on alert.

**Mission Note:** Sczarni faction PCs should be particularly interested in the discovery of the secret door and tunnel. Reporting their existence to Guaril Karela completes the first half of their mission. See area **C11** for the second half of their faction mission.

## C3. Costume Closet

Racks of costumes and clothing line the north and south walls of this tight chamber, while a single dresser is pushed to the east wall.

Operating in and out of the Ivy District for any length of time requires a certain appearance without also expecting to draw attention as an outsider. The Crowsworn have amassed a collection of outfits to enable them to walk among the upper- and middle-class without standing out. They usually change to more casual dress when taking the tunnel to Westerhold and this also helps them elude city and community watchmen who might be on the lookout for a specific gang member. There is no lighting in this room.

**Treasure**: This room contains at least 300 gp worth of fancy clothes, hats, wigs, and other attire in good repair that can be collected and sold.

**Rewards**: If the PCs confiscate the wardrobe, give each PC 50 gp.

## C4. Trapped Hallway (CR 6 or CR 9)

This corridor features a set of double doors on each end and one set into the eastern wall approximately halfway down the hallway. The doors at each end of the corridor are unlocked, as is the first set of double doors to area **C5**, though the latter are magically trapped (see below). The second set of doors to area **C5** is locked but can be opened with a successful DC 20 Disable Device check (hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 25).

**Trap**: These are magical traps set with an *alarm* spell and a secret spoken password ("ravenheart"). Remember that the trapfinding class feature is required to use Disable Device and Perception skills on magical traps.

CR 6

## Subtier 5–6 (CR 6)

#### Flame Strike Trap

Type magic; Perception DC 30; Disable Device DC 30 EFFECTS

Trigger proximity (alarm); Reset none

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

## Subtier 8-9 (CR 9)

SHOCKING FLOOR TRAP	CR 9
Type magic; Perception DC 26; Disable Device DC 26	
EFFECTS	
Trigger proximity (alarm); Duration 1d6 rounds; Reset n	ione
Effect spell effect (shocking grasp, Atk +9 melee touch [4	d6
	-

electricity damage]); multiple targets (all targets in a 15-ft.by-10-ft.-area from interior door to west wall)

**Development:** If the PCs trigger this trap, the sound of the resulting explosion or electrical discharge alerts the Crowsworn in area **C5** to the PCs' presence and they prepare to defend themselves accordingly.

## C5. Prisoner Cells (CR 7 or CR 10)

This large lit room features a small table and four chairs in the center. Six barred jail cells, each of which contains a cot and bucket, surround the entire room.

Many of the guilds that have controlled this hideout over the centuries have had need to keep prisoners. The Crowsworn seldom have more than a couple prisoners at a time. The gang has not realized that the Mistress and the Twins are actually eating them when most of the mortal guild is out of the hideout. The cells currently contain two prisoners: elven dilettante **Syrdathiel** (CN male elf expert 2/bard 1) and **Josiah** (NG male human cleric of Shelyn 2) are the only prisoners at the moment. Syrdathiel was just brought here a short while ago. Josiah is a cleric of the local temple of Shelyn. Josiah became suspicious of evil supernatural activity in the

STATISTICS

community some time ago. When he investigated the Glass Menagerie one night, the rogues picked him up and imprisoned him. Since then, Maelpheta has taken great delight in his torture. Both prisoners are unconscious and currently have o hit points.

**Creatures:** Syrdathiel's interrogation and torture has been left to Panivenn, the gang's resident sorcerer, who has only just begun toying with the recent arrival. Two Crowsworn thugs assist him in managing the prisoners (neither thug has a *necklace of fireballs* as one did in Act 1). Each of the three Crowsworn in the room also has a skeleton key that opens the cells within.

Once Panivenn becomes aware of intruders, he stabs Syrdathiel, hoping to get rid of a potential witness against him and his torturous ways. This reduces the elf to -4 hit points and he begins dying. With a Constitution score of 12, he has 8 rounds before he will die if not stabilized. For simplicity, the elf makes stabilization checks every round at the start of Panivenn's turn.

## Subtier 5–6 (CR 7)

PANIVENN CR 5 Male human sorcerer 6
NE Medium humanoid (human)
Init +3; Senses Perception -1
DEFENSE
<b>AC</b> 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge)
<b>hp</b> 35 (6d6+12)
Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +4
Defensive Abilities +2 vs. poison; Resist fire 5
OFFENSE
Speed 30 ft.
<b>Melee</b> +1 swordbreaker dagger +4 (1d4+1/19–20)
Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th; concentration +9)
6/day—corrupting touch (3 rounds)
Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 6th; concentration +9)
3rd (4/day)—vampiric touch
2nd (6/day)—glitterdust (DC 15), flaming sphere (DC 15)
scorching ray
1st (7/day)—alarm, grease, mage armor, protection from good,
shocking grasp
0 (at will)—acid splash, bleed (DC 13), detect magic, flare (DC 13),
light, mending, open/close
<b>Bloodline</b> infernal
TACTICS
Before Combat Panivenn starts each day by casting mage
<i>armor</i> . If he is alerted to the PCs' approach, he casts
protection from good and readies scorching ray to target the

armor. If he is alerted to the PCs' approach, he casts protection from good and readies scorching ray to target the first creature that passes through the doors.

**During Combat** Panivenn uses *flaming sphere* and *scorching ray* to fight the PCs from range, reserving melee combat to disarm opponents with his swordbreaker dagger.

#### Morale Panivenn fights to the death.

Str 10	Dex 16	Con 12	Int 12	Wis 8	Cha 16

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +3 (+8 disarm, +12 disarm vs. bladed weapons); **CMD** 17 (19 vs. disarm)

Feats Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Eschew Materials, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (swordbreaker dagger), Improved Disarm

Skills Acrobatics +9, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Spellcraft +10, Use Magic Device +12

Languages Common, Infernal

SQ bloodline arcana (+2 DC for charm spells), infernal resistances

CR 3

**Combat Gear** potions of cure moderate wounds (2), scrolls of align weapon (2); **Other Gear** +1 swordbreaker dagger<sup>APG</sup>, skeleton key

APG See the Advanced Player's Guide.

#### Crowsworn Thugs (2)

**hp** 37 each (use the stats on page 9)

## Subtier 8–9 (CR 10)

Panivenn CR 9
Male human sorcerer 10
NE Medium humanoid (human)
Init +3; Senses Perception +9
DEFENSE
AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge)
<b>hp</b> 67 (10d6+30)
Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +7
Defensive Abilities +4 vs. poison; Resist fire 10
OFFENSE
Speed 30 ft.
<b>Melee</b> +1 swordbreaker dagger +6 (1d4+1)
Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th; concentration +13)
6/day—corrupting touch (5 rounds)
1/day—hellfire (10d6 fire, DC 18)
Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 10th; concentration +13)
5th (3/day)—cone of cold (DC 19)
4th (5/day)—charm monster (DC 19), enervation, shout (DC 18)
3rd (7/day)—fireball (DC 17), haste, suggestion (DC 16),
vampiric touch
2nd (7/day)—blur, glitterdust (DC 15), flaming sphere (DC 16),
scorching ray, touch of idiocy
1st (7/day)—alarm, grease, mage armor, protection from good,
shield, shocking grasp
0 (at will)—acid splash, bleed (DC 13), detect magic, flare (DC
14), light, mage hand, open/close, mending, touch of fatigue
(DC 13)
Bloodline infernal
TACTICS

**Before Combat** Panivenn starts each day by casting *mage armor*. If he is alerted to the PCs' approach, he casts *shield*, CR 5



protection from good, and haste, in that order, then readies scorching ray to target the first creature that passes through the doors.

**During Combat** On Panivenn's first round of combat, he uses his hellfire spell-like ability, targeting as many PCs as he can get in its area of effect. He continues using ranged spells to damage foes, reserving melee combat to disarm opponents with his swordbreaker dagger.

Morale Panivenn fights to the death.

#### STATISTICS

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

- Base Atk +5; CMB +5 (+10 disarm, +14 disarm vs. bladed weapons); CMD 19 (21 vs. disarm)
- Feats Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Eschew Materials, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (swordbreaker dagger), Improved Disarm, Spell Focus (evocation), Toughness
- Skills Acrobatics +13, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Perception +9, Spellcraft +15, Use Magic Device +16
- Languages Common, Infernal, Skald
- SQ bloodline arcana (+2 DC for charm spells), infernal resistances
- **Combat Gear** potions of cure serious wounds (2), scrolls of align weapon (2); **Other Gear** +1 swordbreaker dagger<sup>APG</sup>, cloak of resistance +1, skeleton key
- <sup>APG</sup> See the Advanced Player's Guide.

#### Crowsworn Thugs (2)

**hp** 48 each (use the stats on page 9)

**Development:** Josiah can tell the PCs of the torment he's experienced at the hands of the Mistress, whom he describes as a sultry woman of incredible evil who he's certain isn't actually human as she appears. While the scrolls and potions in Panivenn's possession originally belonged to Josiah, he offers them to the PCs in thanks for rescuing him. He doesn't know where his holy symbol and the rest of his gear were taken, but he guesses they were long ago fenced into Absalom's black markets.

Syrdathiel explains how he was captured by a band of Crowsworn in the Golden Serpent pretending to be Pathfinders, and how they took his documents from him when they abducted him. He's not sure what the gang's plan for him was, but he is grateful for the PCs' help and promises to make their sacrifice to save him worth their while, though without his documents he's not sure how he can actually do that.

If freed from their cells, the two prisoners flee the hideout up the rope ladder. They agree to seek help and avoid trouble until they can rendezvous with the PCs after the adventure's conclusion.

**Mission Notes:** Andoran faction PCs should be interested in saving Syrdathiel's life. Once Syrdathiel is rescued from a near death confrontation, it is possible to free him from his imprisonment. In fact, it is essential to

save him from the Crowsworn to complete the mission. Saving Syrdathiel's life and freeing him from captivity earns Andoran faction PCs 1 Prestige Point.

**Rewards**: If the PCs defeat the Crowsworn here, reward each subtier thusly:

**Subtier 5–6**: Give each PC 446 gp. **Subtier 8–9**: Give each PC 846 gp.

## C6. The Octagon

The floor of this large octagonal shaped room is separated into three descending tiers. The middle floor is ten feet below the top, and the bottom is fifteen feet lower yet. Sets of double doors face north and east on the top tier, while similar doors face west and south on the middle tier. Stairs on the west end of the room connect the top and middle tiers, as does a mounted ladder to the southwest. Nothing connects to bottom floor, but a solitary ladder lies on the floor of the middle tier. A hinged ten-foot-by-ten-foot iron grate sits at the very bottom, from which comes the sound of running water. A comfortable chair is perched in the southeast corner of the upper tier, affording a bird's-eye view of the whole chamber.

In ages past, this room was used for a variety of purposes, from the collection barrels full of smuggled goods, to the disposal of unwanted bodies to the sewer creatures that slip through the gates, to a makeshift gladiatorial arena. Currently, Maelpheta uses it for a little bit of all three.

The area is unlit and the walls are sheer and smooth. The bottom grate can be lifted along the north edge with a successful DC 15 Strength check, and leaned back and propped open indefinitely along the south wall with a successful DC 20 Strength check. Underneath is another 5-foot drop to a sewer well and a tunnel leading to the northwest. The tunnel is not completely submerged and is navigable with a successful DC 5 Swim check. The water is unpleasant but not as foul as other city districts (requiring no save against disease).

## C7. The Twins (CR 7 or CR 10)

This octagonal room is lavishly decorated with fine carpets, wall hangings, and two comfortable beds. Each bed is paired with its own table and chest, while a single basin and mirror sits on another table against the center of the east wall.

The door to this room is unlocked, but the chamber itself is almost always occupied. The rakshasas who dwell here have no need for a light source, so it remains darkened.

Creatures: The two shapeshifters who call this chamber their own are subordinates to Maelpheta, and belong to a lesser caste of rakshasa. Maelpheta refers to them as the Twins, though whether they are actually twins—or even siblings only they know, and they're not sharing. They are schemers who hope to advance their own wickedness in order to be promoted in their next reincarnation. This ambition gives them a willingness to surrender quickly in combat (particularly if one of them is already dead and not a witness to the other's infidelity to their Mistress, or if both are reduced to half their total respective hit points). In exchange for their lives, they can only offer a truthful vow to leave Absalom forever, their treasure, and to provide basic information about Maelpheta or unresolved faction mission objectives. The twins may want to confirm the Pathfinders' good faith with their detect thoughts ability (with or without consent).

The twins initially appear as diabolical halflings with large, eerie, toothsome, and unwholesome grins. They dance and caper when they move about the battle area, chuckling and hooting at nothing amusing. They drop these disguises when their special abilities require their true hideous forms.

## Subtier 5–6 (CR 7)

#### NARIUS AND NOYS (2)

Male and female dandasuka rakshasas (Pathfinder RPG
Bestiary 3 225)
LE Small outsider (native, rakshasa, shapechanger)
Init +4; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +9
DEFENSE
AC 19, touch 16, flat-footed 14 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +3 natural, +1 size)
<b>hp</b> 51 each (6d10+18)
Fort +5, Ref +9, Will +6
DR 5/good or piercing; SR 20
OFFENSE
Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft.
Melee bite +8 (1d6+1 plus bleed), 2 claws +8 (1d4+1)
Special Attacks bleed 1d4, detect thoughts (DC 15), sneak
attack +1d6
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th; concentration +7)
1/day—clairaudience/clairvoyance
Spells Known (CL 2nd; concentration +4)
1st (5/day)—charm person (DC 13), ventriloquism (DC 13)
0 (at will)—bleed (DC 12), daze (DC 12), detect magic, ghost
sound (DC 12), mage hand
TACTICS

#### TACTICS

Before Combat The Twins have no preparatory magic to cast,

but with warning use detect thoughts and *clairaudience/ clairvoyance* to evaluate the PCs.

Narius

**During Combat** The Twins favor melee over spellcasting, and they look for opportunities to gain sneak attacks whenever possible.

**Morale** As long as both dandasukas are alive and have more than half their respective hit points, they fight mercilessly. If either is killed, the other surrenders when reduced to 10 hit points or fewer if he can negotiate terms for long-term escape. If both are reduced to fewer than half their total hit points, the Twins surrender together, and express a desire to depart the lair and Absalom in general out of fear of the Mistress.

#### STATISTICS

CR 5

#### Str 13, Dex 18, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 15 Base Atk +6; CMB +6; CMD 21

Feats Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack

**Skills** Acrobatics +10, Bluff +15, Climb +10, Disguise +19, Perception +9, Sense Motive +10, Sleight of Hand +10, Stealth +17; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Bluff, +8 Disguise



**Languages** Common, Infernal, Undercommon **SQ** change shape (any humanoid; *alter self*)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Spells Dandasukas casts arcane spells as 2nd-level sorcerers.

## Subtier 8–9 (CR 10)

#### NARIUS AND NOYS (2)

#### CR 8

Male and female dandasuka rakshasa rogue 3 (*Pathfinder RPG* Bestiary 3 225) LE Small outsider (rakshasa, native, shapechanger) Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 fl.; Perception +13

#### DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 18, flat-footed 14 (+6 Dex, +1 dodge, +3 natural, +1 size) hp 91 each (9 HD; 6d10+3d8+45)

Fort +7, Ref +14, Will +7

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +1; DR 5/good or piercing; SR 20

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

**Melee** bite +15 (1d6+2 plus bleed), 2 claws +15 (1d4+2)

Special Attacks bleed (1d4), detect thoughts (DC 17), sneak attack +3d6

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th; concentration +9) 1/day—clairaudience/clairvoyance

Spells Known (caster level 2nd; concentration +6) 1st (5)—charm person (DC 15), ventriloquism (DC 15) 0 (at will)—bleed (DC 14), daze (DC 14), detect magic, ghost sound (DC 14), mage hand

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The Twins have no preparatory magic to cast, but with warning use detect thoughts and *clairaudience/ clairvoyance* to evaluate the PCs.

**During Combat** The Twins favor melee over spellcasting, and they look for opportunities to gain sneak attacks whenever possible.

Morale As long as both dandasukas are alive and have more than half their respective hit points, they fight mercilessly. If either is killed, the other surrenders when reduced to 10 hit points or fewer if he can negotiate terms for long-term escape. If both are reduced to fewer than half their total hit points, the Twins surrender together, and express a desire to depart the lair and Absalom in general out of fear of the Mistress.

#### STATISTICS

Str 15, Dex 22, Con 18, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 19

Base Atk +8; CMB +9; CMD 26

Feats Dodge, Lunge, Mobility, Spring Attack, Toughness, Weapon Finesse

**Skills** Acrobatics +18, Bluff +20, Climb +19, Disguise +24, Perception +13, Sense Motive +10, Sleight of Hand +15, Stealth +22; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Bluff, +8 Disguise

Languages Common, Infernal, Undercommon

SQ change shape (any humanoid; *alter self*), rogue talents (combat trick), trapfinding +1

SPECIAL	ABILITIES	

Spells Dandasuka casts arcane spells as 2nd-level sorcerers.

Mission Notes: No mission can be satisfied through this encounter alone, but the Twins can give some valuable information if the PCs release them. They can offer that the deed to the Glass Menagerie is in area C11. They also know that Syrdathiel's collection is in the possession of the Mistress, who has a list of other interested parties who want the collection. The Twins refuse to speak to the Shadow Lodge faction mission, citing another binding oath, but offer the hint that the answer lies with the "Mistress's family."

**Treasure**: Each of the Twins has a personal chest of gold and magic items they've acquired but have no immediate personal use for. In Subtier 5–6, the chests contain a total of 100 gp, a scroll of displacement, and a scroll of keen edge. In Subtier 8–9, the chests contact a total of 100 gp and a ring of mind shielding.

**Rewards**: If the PCs defeat the Twins, reward each subtier thusly:

Subtier 5–6: Give each PC 79 gp. Subtier 8–9: Give each PC 683 gp.

## C8. The Barracks and Kitchen

The double doors to this area are unlocked and the rooms are unlit.

Three rooms make up this area. The two western rooms are connected by an open doorway. The northern room is occupied by two long makeshift dining tables surrounded by chairs and stools. The southern room is a small kitchen and pantry. East of these two rooms through another open doorway is a barracks area with nine bunks.

The Crowsworn don't typically take lodging or long-term residence in the Ivy District, living instead in Westerhold if they crave community beyond their fellow guildmates. When their criminal operations mandate they move quickly, this common area serves as temporary lodging. This has been less popular in recent weeks since one guild member mysteriously vanished (first to Maelpheta's bed and then into her stomach). Even with a careful search, there is nothing of interest in this area.

## C9. Sewerport (CR 6 or CR 9)

This area can only be accessed by a partially submerged tunnel leading from area C6. There is no lighting in this area.



The ceiling is raised above and around the drainage channel to create a sewer access chamber. A grate exists at either end, but the bars have been broken, bent, and pushed aside to grant unrestricted access into and out of the channel. On the walkways on either side are rotted wooden poles and debris.

A successful DC 12 Craft (carpentry or ships) or Profession (woodworking) check or DC 20 Intelligence check reveals the debris as ancient ruined barrels and low flat-bottom canoes. Predecessors of the Crowsworn once smuggled goods from other portions of Absalom through the sewer channels in sealed barrels and smuggled them through the tunnels to Westerhold. The Crowsworn have not yet expanded their operations to use this resource.

Infrequent visits from creatures, particularly oozes, who move underneath the city complicate that possibility. In recent decades the Perfumers Conglomerate—a collection of florists, druids, and alchemists who keep the Ivy District parks and trees blooming all year long have relied on more and more extravagant magic. Some of their efforts now menace this area as residual effects of their work drain into the sewers and amass in the mire below the district's streets.

**Creature:** A mud elemental tasked with keeping the soil moist and aerated has strayed from its work area and is slogging through the sewers. Confused and angry, it lashes out at PCs encountered in this area and may pursue them into area **C6** (squeezing through the tunnel if necessary). The elder mud elemental in Subtier 8–9 is tall enough to pull itself up the tiered floors in pursuit.

## Subtier 5-6 (CR 6)

#### MUD ELEMENTAL

Advanced large mud elemental (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2 120)
N Large outsider (earth, elemental, extraplanar, water)
Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 30 ft.;
Perception +13
DEFENSE
AC 21, touch 12, flat-footed 18 (+3 Dex, +9 natural, -1 size)
<b>hp</b> 84 (8d10+40)
Fort +11, Ref +9, Will +4
DR 5/—; Immune acid, elemental traits
OFFENSE
<b>Speed</b> 20 ft., burrow 10 ft., swim 30 ft.; earth glide
<b>Melee</b> 2 slams +14 (1d8+7 plus entrap)
Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.
Special Attacks entrap (DC 19, 10 minutes, hardness 5, hp 10)
STATISTICS
Str 24, Dex 16, Con 21, Int 8, Wis 15, Cha 15
Base Atk +8; CMB +16; CMD 29
Feats Cleave, Great Cleave, Greater Bull Rush, Improved Bull

Rush<sup>B</sup>, Power Attack

#### **OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER**

The encounter in area C9 is optional and should only be run if there is sufficient time in which to complete the scenario. If the first encounter ran long or the players have less than an hour and a half to finish the scenario, remove the creatures from this encounter area. There are no rewards or faction missions associated with this encounter.

Skills Climb +14, Escape Artist +8, Knowledge (nature) +5, Knowledge (planes) +8, Perception +13, Stealth +10, Swim +15

Languages Terran

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

- Earth Glide (Ex) A burrowing mud elemental can pass through dirt, gravel, or other loose or porous solid matter as easily as a fish swims through water. It cannot use this ability to pass through a solid barrier such as a stone or brick wall. Its burrowing leaves behind no tunnel or hole, nor does it create any ripple or other sign of its presence. A *move earth* spell cast on an area containing a burrowing mud elemental flings the elemental back 30 feet, stunning the creature for 1 round unless it succeeds at a DC 15 Fortitude save.
- **Entrap (Ex)** The mud from an elemental's entrap ability can be washed away in 1d3 rounds of immersion in water.

## Subtier 8–9 (CR 9)

CR 6

GREATER MUD ELEMENTAL CR 9
N Huge outsider (earth, elemental, extraplanar, water)
Init +4; Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 30 ft.;
Perception +16
DEFENSE
AC 22, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +9 natural,
–2 size)
<b>hp</b> 123 (13d10+52)
Fort +12, Ref +14, Will +4
DR 10/—; Immune acid, elemental traits
OFFENSE
Speed 20 ft., burrow 10 ft., swim 30 ft.; earth glide
<b>Melee</b> 2 slams +20 (2d8+9 plus entrap)
<b>Space</b> 15 ft.; <b>Reach</b> 15 ft.
Special Attacks entrap (DC 20, 10 minutes, hardness 10, hp 15)
STATISTICS
Str 28, Dex 18, Con 19, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 11
Base Atk +13; CM B +24; CMD 39
Feats Awesome Blow, Cleave, Dodge, Great Cleave, Greater Bull
Rush, Improved Bull Rush <sup>B</sup> , Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack
<b>Skills</b> Climb +25, Escape Artist +20, Knowledge (planes) +15,
Perception +16, Stealth +12, Swim +17
SPECIAL ABILITIES
See Subtier 5–6.

#### NEW POISON: LOTUS SCENT

Lotus scent is a powerful sleeping gas used by Vudran healers to numb patients before painful or anxietyinducing procedures. Each failed save of exposure imparts the fatigued condition on the target, which is heightened to exhausted on a second failed save, and finally unconsciousness on a third failed save. When incorporated into a trap, lotus scent increases the trap's challenge rating by 3. One dose of lotus scent costs 1,200 gp.

#### Lotus Scent

Type poison, inhaled; Save Fortitude DC 15

Frequency 1/round for 6 rounds

**Effect** become fatigued; a creature that becomes exhausted from this poison and fails an additional save falls

unconscious for 1d4 hours; Cure 1 save

## C10. Audience Chamber

This spacious room is bare except for a polished wooden desk at its north end. A comfortable padded chair sits behind the desk, while two less luxurious chairs flank either side of it. A banner of a flying crow hangs on the wall behind the desk. Two tables abut either wall. Each table has heavy gouges in its surface, as if blades have been embedded in it temporarily. The double doors to the south are partially ajar.

This area is unlit. The both sets of double doors leading to **C6** are unlocked. The doors to the immediate south are ajar. The doors to area **C12** are locked (described below).

Maelpheta holds court over the guild in this chamber, with the only other chairs reserved for the Twins who sit at her side. By the time the PCs reach this point, Maelpheta likely already knows they're coming. As she realizes the guild members who took the Golden Serpent hostage have not yet reported in, she looks through Skoras's eyes. She deliberately leaves the door to the south open in the hope they'll investigate there first, weakening them for the final confrontation. She waits in area **C12**, behind the locked doors in the room's western wall.

# C11. Cenotaphs of the Fallen (CR 6 or CR 9)

This chamber has no light source, and its doors are locked; a successful DC 20 Disable Device check is required to open them. These are the only stone doors in the complex, and they have the words "Cenotaphs of the Fallen" engraved on the northern side. At 14 feet high, the ceiling in this specific room is slightly higher than those in the others. Eight large vertical standing crypts form a semicircle around the room. The covers face the exterior wall and most have a name and date engraved on the surface. The floor is polished white marble in the center, and black marble along an exterior circle. The area is clean and free of dust.

The original dwarven architects of this subterranean complex constructed this room to commemorate their work, but few, if any, wanted to be buried here in anonymity when they reached old age. As the complex fell under control of generations of different thieves' guilds, those guild masters have opted to make this their final resting place. The crypts are not locked, but are solid stone and difficult to pry open, requiring a successful DC 20 Strength check to open. Only five have names engraved. The northeastern two appear untouched or unused. Inside, the crypts are empty, but there are signs they once contained mementos, tokens, and small stores of treasures, which were ironically stolen by the rogues of other gangs that replaced the ones that came before; nevertheless, Maelpheta has secreted a few objects of value in the unmarked crypt to the east of the entrance.

**Trap**: A pressure plate is set in the floor in the center of the room. Maelpheta forced her charmed predecessor to reset it before she devoured him and took his place. When the pressure plate is depressed, the room fills with a potent sleeping poison called lotus scent, and the inner door to area **C10** slams shut and locks. This is a stone door (hardness 8, hp 60, Break DC 28) secured with a simple lock (DC 20 Disable Device). Inhaled poisons have cumulative effects, but players can also hold their breath to avoid the compounding effects; refer to page 558 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* for rules concerning inhaled poisons.

## Subtier 5–6 (CR 6)

#### SLEEPING GAS TRAP

Type mechanical; Perception DC 20; Disable Device DC 20	
EFFECTS	

CR 6

CR o

Trigger touch; Reset repair

Effect poison gas (lotus scent); never miss; onset delay (1 round); multiple targets (all targets in a 30-ft.-by-30-ft. area); north door slams shut and locks; chime rings in area C12.

## Subtier 8–9 (CR 9)

#### SLEEPING GAS TRAP

Type mechanical; Perception DC 27; Disable Device DC 25 EFFECTS

#### Trigger touch; Reset repair

Effect poison gas (lotus scent); never miss; onset delay (1 round); multiple targets (all targets in a 30-ft.-by-30-ft. area); north door slams shut and locks; chime rings in area C12. **Development:** If the PCs set off the chime in area **C12** before dealing with Maelpheta, she gathers her keys, prepares for combat, and heads to this area in the hope of finding some of the intruders incapacitated. See below for Maelpheta's statistics and tactics. If she reaches the Cenotaphs of the Fallen to find the entire party unconscious, she places each PC in a cell in area **C5** and ransoms them back to the Pathfinder Society for 2,500 gp each, a price that each PC must pay from his or her own wealth. Alternatively, a PC may spend 6 Prestige Points for the same result. This outcome ends the scenario, and characters who do not pay the appropriate ransom in money or Prestige Points are removed from play. Aside from the denoted ransom amount, a captured PC loses none of its equipment.

**Treasure**: The cenotaph just east of the doorway contains the following items in both subtiers: 2 *potions* of *cure moderate wounds*, a vacuum-sealed scroll case, and 200 gp. Inside the scroll case is the recent deed to the Glass Menagerie, the property above the hideout.

**Mission Notes**: Sczarni faction players should be interested in the deed to the Glass Menagerie. While possession doesn't permit immediate transfer of the shop to the Sczarni faction, it does give Guaril Karela tremendous advantage in pursuing that agenda. Recovery of this and discovery of the secret passage in C2 completes their faction mission and earns Sczarni faction PCs 1 Prestige Point.

**Rewards**: If the PCs recover the stashed items in the cenotaph, give each PC 83 gp.

## C12. Maelpheta's Bedroom (CR 8 or CR 11)

This opulently decorated bedroom is dominated by a huge comfortable bed along the center of the west wall. Silk privacy curtains embroidered with exotic Vudran designs flank either side of the headboard, while a dresser and wardrobe rest against the north and south walls. To the northeast is a personal table with vanity mirror and basin, and to the southeast is a small writing table.

Maelpheta has locked the door to her chamber (hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 28, Disable Device DC 25). Possessing darkvision, she has no need for lighting, and the room shrouded in darkness.

**Creature**: The marai rakshasa Maelpheta makes her final stand here, if she hasn't surprised the party in area **C11**. Initially, she appears in the form of Sendeli Foxglove, whom she observed through Skoras's eyes while Amistis conducted the first half of his operation at the Golden Serpent. She looks down at her body with a look of admiration. "She's a little slender for my taste, but she has a pretty face, don't you think?" the guild leader coos seductively. She follows this up with an ear splitting scream and assumes her true form.

When not sheathed behind a mask of humanity, Maelpheta has a lithe humanoid form with a scaly red skin and a viciously fanged mouth from which a long forked tongue extends. In place of arms, she has a writhing mass of three colorful vipers protruding from her silken sleeves. She wears no armor but rather a clinging black-and-red silk robe and a flashy goldembroidered cape.

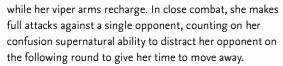
The raktavarna Skoras, which is likely in one of the PCs' possession, takes this opportunity to reveal itself. The disguised spy reverts to its true form, a serpentine creature made of gold, blood, and smoke, with glowing ruby eyes and teeth that look like forged silver blades. It attacks the creature possessing it relentlessly, and if dropped or otherwise not in a target's square, the raktavarna fights as best it can in concert with its mistress, Maelpheta. If Maelpheta is slain, the raktavarna reverts to item form in the hope it can find its way into another's hands and find a new master.

## Subtier 5–6 (CR 8)

MAELPHETA CR 8
Female marai rakshasa (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3 228)
LE Medium outsider (native, rakshasa, shapechanger)
Init +5; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +10
DEFENSE
<b>AC</b> 25, touch 16, flat-footed 19 (+4 armor, +5 Dex, +1 dodge,
+5 natural)
<b>hp</b> 94 (9d10+45)
Fort +8, <b>Ref</b> +11, <b>Will</b> +9
DR 10/good and piercing; SR 23
OFFENSE
Speed 40 ft.
<b>Melee</b> 7 bites +14 (1d4+2 plus confusion)
<b>Ranged</b> 6 energy bolts +14 touch (1d8 plus special)
Special Attacks detect thoughts (DC 18), energy bolts
Spells Known (CL 5th; concentration +9)
2nd (5/day)—invisibility, scorching ray
1st (7/day)—charm person (DC 15), jump, mage armor,
magic missile
o (at will)—bleed (DC 14), detect magic, ghost sound (DC 14),
mage hand, open/close, read magic
TACTICS
Before Combat If aware that something has gone wrong at the
Golden Serpent, Maelpheta casts mage armor in anticipation
of conflict. This spell effect is already included in her statistics

**During Combat** If the PCs do not force her into close combat, Maelpheta uses her energy bolts to target as many PCs as possible, following up with *scorching ray* and *magic missile* 

Maelpheta



**Morale** Maelpheta flees if brought down to 15 hit points or fewer, using her *cape of the mountebank* to get as far from the PCs as possible.

#### STATISTICS

Str 14, Dex 21, Con 20, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 18 Base Atk +9; CMB +11; CMD 27 Feats Dodge, Iron Will, Silent Spell, Still Spell, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +14 (+18 when jumping), Bluff+20, Climb +7, Disguise +16, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Perception +10, Sense Motive +12, Spellcraft +8; Racial Modifiers +4 Bluff, +8 Disguise

Languages Common, Infernal, Undercommon

**SQ** change shape (any humanoid; alter self) **Gear** cape of the mountebank

SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Confusion (Su)** A creature bitten by a marai's bite (from either its actual mouth or the snakes it has for hands) must

succeed at a DC 19 Will save or become confused for 1 round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Energy Bolts (Ex)** Once every 1d4 rounds as a standard action that provokes an attack of opportunity, Maelpheta's six snake arms can each spit a bolt of energy to a maximum range of 60 feet. Each bolt deals 1d8 points of damage and has an additional effect if the target fails to resist it with a DC 19 Fortitude save, as summarized below. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Amethyst Viper: Cold damage plus sickened for 1d4 rounds. Crimson Viper: Fire damage plus burn (1d4, DC 19). Emerald Viper: Acid damage plus nauseated for 1 round. Magenta Viper: Electricity damage plus staggered for 1 round.

*Turquoise Viper*: Sonic damage plus stunned for 1 round. *Violet Viper*: Force damage plus knocked prone.

Spells A marai casts arcane spells as a 5th-level sorcerer.

#### Skoras

CR 2

Raktavarna rakshasa (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 229) LE Tiny outsider (native, rakshasa, shapechanger) **Init** +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *detect magic*; Perception +9 DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 15, flat-footed 14 (+3 Dex, +2 natural, +2 size) hp 22 (3d10+6) Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +4 DR 5/good or piercing; SR 17

#### OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.

Melee bite +8 (1d4-2 plus poison)

Special Attacks detect thoughts (DC 13)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th; concentration +8)

Constant—comprehend languages

1/day—charm person (DC 13), suggestion (DC 15) 1/week—commune (CL 12th, 6 questions)

#### STATISTICS

Str 7, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 14 Base Atk +3; CMB +4; CMD 12 (can't be tripped)

Feats Alertness, Weapon Finesse
 Skills Bluff+12, Climb +9, Disguise
 +16, Escape Artist+6, Perception +9,
 Sense Motive +9, Stealth +17, Swim +6;
 Racial Modifiers +4 Bluff, +8 Disguise
 Languages Common, Infernal,

Undercommon; comprehend languages

**SQ** change shape (Tiny object), master's eyes

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Change Shape (Su) As a fullround action, a raktavarna can take the shape of a handheld object,

most often an ornamental light, a one-handed weapon, or a piece of treasure. If the rakshasa remains stationary in such a form, it can attempt Stealth checks even while being observed. It can remain motionless in object form indefinitely, but reverts to its true form as soon as it takes any action.

- Master's Eyes (Su) A raktavarna can designate a single creature as its master as a standard action. If the raktavarna is a spellcaster's familiar, its master is automatically that spellcaster, and the raktavarna cannot change this. As a full-round action, a raktavarna's master can observe the world as if looking through the raktavarna's eyes. The master must concentrate to maintain this link each round. The master's visual senses are suppressed for this time, and he uses the raktavarna's darkvision, *detect magic*, and regular eyesight to observe the world. This ability has no limit on range, and functions even across planar boundaries. If the raktavarna is slain while its master is using this ability, the master is stunned for 1d4 rounds (no save).
- **Poison (Su)** Bite—injury; save Fort DC 13; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect 1d2 Wis plus modify memory; cure 1 save. Each time a victim takes Wisdom damage from this poison, a modify memory effect causes the victim to forget the previous minute's interactions with the raktavarna, as long as the raktavarna is no longer visible or is in object form. The save DC is Constitution-based.

DAZED

## Subtier 8-9 (CR 11)

#### MAELPHETA

#### CR 11

Female marai rakshasa sorcerer 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 228) LE Medium outsider (rakshasa, native, shapechanger) **Init** +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +11

#### DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 17, flat-footed 19 (+4 armor, +6 Dex, +1 dodge, +5 natural)

**hp** 146 (12 HD; 9d10+3d6+87)

Fort +11, Ref +13, Will +13

DR 10/good and piercing; SR 23

#### OFFENSE Speed 40 ft.

Melee 7 bites +17 (1d4+1 plus confusion)

Ranged 6 energy bolts +16 touch (1d8 plus special)

Special Attacks detect thoughts (DC 20), energy bolts (DC 21)

**Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 8th; concentration +14) 9/day—touch of destiny (+1

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 8th; concentration +14)

4th (4/day)—crushing despair (DC 20)

3rd (6/day)—blink, dispel magic

2nd (8/day)—acid arrow, invisibility, scorching ray

1st (8/day)—alarm, charm person (DC 17), jump, mage armor, magic missile, true strike

o (at will)—bleed (DC 16), daze (DC 16), detect magic, ghost sound (DC 16), mage hand, open/close, read magic, touch of fatigue (DC 16)

Bloodline destined

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** If aware that something has gone wrong at the Golden Serpent, Maelpheta casts *mage armor* in anticipation of conflict. This spell effect is already included in her statistics.

**During Combat** If the PCs do not force her into close combat, Maelpheta uses her energy bolts to target as many PCs as possible, following up with *crushing despair, scorching ray,* and *acid arrow* while her viper arms recharge. She uses *blink* to increase her survivability while continuing her energy bolt assault and employing *dispel magic* to eliminate any particularly powerful spell effects. In close combat, she makes full attacks against a single opponent, counting on her confusion supernatural ability to distract her opponent on the following round to give her time to move away.

**Morale** Maelpheta flees if brought down to 25 hit points or fewer, using her *cape of the mountebank* to get as far from the PCs as possible.

#### STATISTICS

Str 12, Dex 23, Con 24, Int 11, Wis 15, Cha 22 Base Atk +10; CMB +11; CMD 28

Feats Dodge, Eschew Materials, Iron Will, Silent Spell, Still Spell, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (bites)

Skills Acrobatics +15 (+19 when jumping), Bluff +25, Climb

#### QUICK CONDITIONS

Maelpheta's energy bolt attack produces a number of different secondary effects that run the gamut of conditions from sickened to stunned. Because applying and

> tracking the effects of numerous conditions can slow down combat (especially when she can impart six different conditions in a single attack), you may consider using *GameMastery Condition Cards* as handouts for your players to speed up the combat. Condition Cards are available in game stores and hobby stores everywhere, and

online at paizo.com.

+6, Disguise +18, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Perception +11, Sense Motive +16, Spellcraft +8; Racial Modifiers +4 Bluff, +8 Disguise

Languages Common, Infernal, Undercommon

**SQ** bloodline arcana (gain luck bonus to saves when casting personal-range spells), change shape (any humanoid; *alter self*), fated (+1)

**Gear** cape of the mountebank, pearl of power (2nd level spell), ring of forcefangs<sup>APG</sup>, key to all locks in area **C** 

SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Confusion (Su)** A creature bitten by a marai's bite (from either its actual mouth or the snakes it has for hands) must succeed at a DC 21 Will save or become confused for 1 round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Energy Bolts (Ex)** Once every 1d4 rounds as a standard action that provokes an attack of opportunity, Maelpheta's six snake arms can each spit a bolt of energy to a maximum range of 60 feet. Each bolt deals 1d8 points of damage and has an additional effect if the target fails to resist it with a successful DC 21 Fortitude save, as summarized below. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Amethyst Viper: Cold damage plus sickened for 1d4 rounds. Crimson Viper: Fire damage plus burn (1d4, DC 19). Emerald Viper: Acid damage plus nauseated for 1 round. Magenta Viper: Electricity damage plus staggered for 1 round. Turquoise Viper: Sonic damage plus stunned for 1 round. Violet Viper: Force damage plus knocked prone.

CR 2

APG See the Advanced Player's Guide.

#### Skoras

**hp** 22 (use the stats from Subtier 5–6)

**Development:** A thorough search of Maelpheta's dresser with a successful DC 25 Perception check locates a secret panel behind a drawer. Inside is a folio containing the collection of lore Syrdathiel planned to



sell to the Pathfinder Society, as well as a list and some unsent correspondence to other criminal groups and organizations, including the Aspis Consortium. In these letters, Maelpheta offers the sale of Syrdathiel's collection in exchange for gold, political favors, and access to further lore. Maelpheta is interested in reselling the information after thoroughly studying it herself, or using it to manipulate and exploit other potential buyers as the Crowsworn attempted to do to the Pathfinder Society.

**Mission Notes**: Grand Lodge faction PCs should be interested in recovering not only the folio of Syrdathiel's lore, but also the evidence of Maelpheta's other potential buyers. Discovering and retrieving this information earns Grand Lodge faction PCs 1 Prestige Point.

Osirion faction PCs need to remove Amenopheus's personal seal from one of the critical maps in Syrdathiel's collection. This need not be a secret to the other PCs (but should be a secret to Society leadership). The *erase* spell works perfectly in this task. Alternatively, a successful DC 15 Profession (scribe) check or DC 25 Knowledge (geography) check allows a PC to reproduce the map in such detail that the copy will suffice for the Society's needs, while the original can be destroyed. Eliminating the evidence of Amenopheus's hand in Syrdathiel's collection earns Osirion faction PCs 1 Prestige Point.

Shadow Lodge faction PCs should be drawn to Maelpheta's diary, though it is not labeled as such. The diary is written in an obscure Vudrani dialect and requires a successful DC 25 Linguistics check or magical means to be deciphered (a PC who speaks Vudrani can make this check untrained and gains a +10 bonus on the check). Any translation uncovers that Maelpheta has connections in a noble family in Korvosa, though the diary does not reveal the family's name, only that they are powerful in the Old Korvosa district. Discovering this information satisfies the Shadow Lodge faction mission, earning Shadow Lodge faction PCs 1 Prestige Point.

## CONCLUSION

If the PCs return with Syrdathiel's collection of lore, Ambrus Valsin and Guaril Karela are pleased at their determination and initiative. They thank the team, as the collection makes many more missions possible. If the PCs succeeded at the Sczarni faction mission ,Guaril sets about the process of acquiring the Glass Menagerie when it is seized and put up for sale, promising to allow the Pathfinder Society access to its smuggling potential "at a significant discount."

If the PCs return to the Golden Serpent and discuss subsequent events with Sendeli Foxglove, she is stunned to learn that such a powerful supernatural entity was involved in what she already considered a traumatic event at her establishment. She is doubly indebted to the PCs, and if they didn't earn the Sendeli Foxglove's Favor boon in Act 1, this may be one last chance to earn her favor (but attaining the boon should still require a high standard of roleplaying and not be awarded lightly).

Finally, if the raktavarna Skoras survived the final encounter and was retrieved as treasure in its new item form, and the PCs killed all three other rakshasas (Maelpheta and the Twins), Skoras finds itself without a master and despondent. A 7th-level spellcaster with the Improved Familiar feat can bind the raktavarna as her familiar if she is lawful neutral (all other alignments are too far from Skoras's lawful evil worldview for the raktavarna to consider such a caster a potential master).

## **Success Conditions**

The PCs were tasked with bringing Syrdathiel's collection of maps and lore in for authentication. Doing so earns the entire group 1 Prestige Point.

## **Faction Missions**

Members of each faction have the ability to earn an additional Prestige Point when they complete their respective faction missions as detailed below.

Andoran Faction: Andoran faction PCs who rescue Syrdathiel in area C5 earn 1 Prestige Point.

**Cheliax Faction:** Cheliax faction PCs who persuade Sendeli to discuss her background (specifically learning of her wealth and social station) in Act 1 earn 1 Prestige Point.

**Grand Lodge Faction**: Grand Lodge faction PCs who locate the secret list of potential rival buyers for the collection area **C12** earn 1 Prestige Point.

Lantern Lodge Faction: Lantern Lodge faction PCs who find someone who can speak to Sendeli's aggressive acquisition of the Golden Serpent in Act 1 earn 1 Prestige Point.

**Osirion Faction**: Osirion faction PCs who remove Amenopheus's mark from a critical map in area **C12** earn 1 Prestige Point.

**Qadira Faction**: Qadira faction PCs who ascertain the Brotherhood of Abadar's core agenda in Act 1 earn 1 Prestige Point.

Sczarni Faction: Sczarni faction PCs who locate both the secret tunnel in area C2 and the deed in area C11 earn 1 Prestige Point.

**Shadow Lodge Faction**: Shadow Lodge faction PCs who find the link between Maelpheta and a noble family in Korvosa in area **C12** earn 1 Prestige Point.

**Silver Crusade Faction**: Silver Crusade faction PCs who reassure without emboldening the Brotherhood of Abadar in Act 1 earn 1 Prestige Point.

**Taldor Faction**: Taldor faction PCs who discover who Councilman Alain Always's secret lover is in Act 1 earn 1 Prestige Point.





Child of the Eagles,

This Syrdathiel sounds as if he's quite intelligent despite being a proven ne'er-do-well. Tell you what, after the Pathfinder Society obtains whatever he's selling and discards him, we're going to see if we can't salvage something in the man himself. But we can't do that if he gets himself killed. The next 24 hours will be critical. So keep him alive, and he and I will have a little talk on the other side of "no tomorrow." They say most of our shackles are self-imposed.

Keep your faith in freedom, Major Colson Maldris





#### Darling,

Nature abhors a vacuum, but I abhor pasty-faced, nervous boys and mysteries (unless they're mysteries of my own manufacture, of course). This meeting at the restaurant tonight? It's owned by a little wisp of mystery named of Sendeli Foxglove. She breezed into Absalom a few years ago and out of nowhere purchased a rather choice piece of property, and she's been turning heads in the Ivy District ever since. I'm not threatened, of course. There's no cause for it, but I'm curious. There are too many unanswered questions here for my liking. Find out where she came from and how she's so wealthy. Just look, my naughty one, but don't you touch.

Zoute Druch Paracountess Zarta Dralneen

Never forget you're mine,



#### Agent,

This assignment is fairly straightforward. My chief concern is how many rival groups, individuals, and organizations Syrdathiel has approached with the offer he made us. It begs the question of how much competition we should expect if we follow up on these leads. The Ten is comforted knowing you're doing some clean-up. If we know who these other groups are, we can be on the lookout for their involvement when setting up and establishing expeditions. We know he was talking to other people-find out who they were. Mind you, this may not be something you can solve at the Golden Serpent. Syrdathiel could be tight lipped, or it might just require research and legwork.

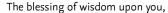
Be safe and smart, nture-Captain Ambrus Valsin

Lantern Lodge



#### Esteemed Investigators,

When I first petitioned for my own lodge and permanent residence in Absalom, it took many seasons to find our own modest home in the Petal District. The real estate market in the Ivy District is every bit as competitive. I was surprised at the ease and speed with which Mistress Foxglove acquired the Golden Serpent property. Had I known it was for sale, I might have even reached into my own modest resources to make a bid. Yet the sale wasn't even public. How was that even possible? Ask some discreet questions about the purchase of the Golden Serpent. But I suggest not to interrogate Miss Foxglove, but rather the greater community if given the opportunity. The answers to these questions would tell us much about the nature of our new neighbor.





Venture-Captain Amara Li

#### Osirion



Trusted Servants of the Prince,

I require your discretion, not on His Majesty's behalf, but my own. Many of the stories and legends this elf is peddling are based upon documents I once owned myself long ago. They were stolen by someone I trusted, and it appears they've finally resurfaced. It was many, many years ago, and alas, I wasn't as prudent concerning security as I would later become. It is my concern that once we acquire this collection my own seal and stamp will be seen on one of the documents. This would not only embarrass me, but also call into question my competence as an information broker. Bah! Scour the maps and look for my mark. If you see it, remove it very carefully. I don't care if your fellows observe you, so long as I have plausible deniability within the Society's leadership.

#### Qadira



Trusted Servant,

Pleased as I am with the prospects of new legends to pursue, your primary mission is not the reason I am writing today. As you are aware, we concern ourselves with all things relevant to trade and commerce. Usually this interest has nothing whatsoever to do with theology, but today I bring you a potentially surprising exception. Within the Ivy District there is conflict between the contracted Ivy District Watch and the Brotherhood of Abadar. The former alleges the latter is interfering with business—which flies in the face of everything I would expect from followers of the Keeper of the First Vault. If there is any trouble surrounding your interests in the Ivy District you might have the opportunity to ask some questions and make some discreet inquiries, no? If so, determine the Brotherhood of Abadar's core agenda.

I wait your findings with interest, Trade Prince Aagir al'Hakam

menophene

Ámenopheus, the Sapphire Sage

SCZARNI



#### I dropped by for a visit!

hard to crack this one, but you'll know it when you see it.

Did you like that? EXTEND TO ME ALL YOUR COURTESIES! I damn near danced a jig. To business then—our main assignment is solid. I think the collection is legitimate, but I have a secondary concern. I didn't think there was a thieves' guild of any worth operating out of the Ivy District. I have believed it too difficult, save for a couple fumblefingers whispering in an alley. Yet Syrdathiel seems to think a guild is stalking him. If that's true, find out how they move in and out of the district without being noticed. But that's not all! Once you have that sussed out, figure out how I can take it over for the Sczarni. You may have to dig



#### SHADOW LODGE



#### Watchers,

It goes without saying that Vaslin doesn't understand me in the slightest. Regarding his wisecrack in your briefing: I didn't bother to inform him that I already had a covert agent installed in a criminal group operating inside of the Ivy District. That contact was recently silenced. Permanently. Yet not before tipping me off that this group is somehow connected to a much more powerful political force. This is a long shot, but if this elf has been shopping these materials around, this gang is going to be aware of it. If you find yourself crossing them, follow the clues all the way and find out who they're plugged into and where they can be found—which might not even be in Absalom. This should be interesting.

Keep your head down,

I know where you live now!

Guaril Karela

#### Silver Crusado



#### Allies in the Light,

As you and I know both know, it's hard to make a stand. Usually my requests are directed toward the defeat of evil in its many forms, but this time I think our calling is more one of support. There are brothers in arms in the Ivy District known as the Brotherhood of Abadar. While their master's passion for the Light is cool, the brothers themselves are righteous. It would be unwise for me to personally cross theological lines, devoted as I am to another god; nevertheless, I would have you pass a discreet word of support and praise for their efforts. All good is beautiful in this weary world. Yet the Brotherhood can be quite zealous and has been prone to overreacting. When you extend our support, make sure they don't get too carried away and start bandying it about like some political endorsement. That would be taking it too far. Many Blessings,

TALDOR



#### Beloved of the Empire,

It is vital for the Empire that we keep our hand on the pulse here in Absalom. The Ivy District is significant in that it controls much of the city's artisan markets and is the source of many high quality goods. The District Council is exceedingly democratic, but we suspect we might have an in with the Ivy District's flamboyant council member, Alain Always. Alain likes to play both sides of the fence, politically and socially. I think I might capture his attention if I knew the identity of his latest love interest. Informants tell me that Alain distances himself from his lover in public and so has him or her wait at the Golden Serpent until they can meet up after Alain attends the theater for the evening. There must be a way to get his lover to reveal him- or herself. Say something controversial that begs response, or even disguise yourself as the council member. You just need his lover to tip his or her hand.

Counting on you, blouan Could

allyon Zadeia

Lady Gloriana Morilla

Ollysta Zadrian

#### **PLAYER HANDOUT**

That is not the elf you're here to meet! Someone else got here first and took the other elf and left, along with whatever else it is you hoped to obtain. These bastards have taken everyone hostage in order to fleece you Pathfinders; and once they get you out of here, they plan on robbing everyone in my restaurant.

There's one by the door and another one up above. They claim they'll burn the place down if we warn you.

For the love of everything decent-help us! Even if you leave, I know many of these people are going to die!

Sendeli Foxólove

PAT Le		SOCIETY SCEN Ie Golden Serpen		4
Event			Date	
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GM Name			GM Prestige Earn	ed
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□Qadira	Sczarni	Shadow Lodge	Silver Crusade	Taldor
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□Qadira	Sczarni	Shadow Lodge	Silver Crusade	□Taldor
Character #			Prestige Points	
Character Na	me			
Andoran	Cheliax	Grand Lodge	Lantern Lodge	Osirion
□Qadira	Sczarni 🗌	□ Shadow Lodge	Silver Crusade	□Taldor

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## PATHFINDER SOCIETY SCENARIO #3-24: THE GOLDEN SERPENT

Scenario Chronicle #

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