

PATHFINDER SOCIETY



Scenario #3-19

Levels 7-10

MEAN STREETS OF
SHADOW ABSALOM

By Amber Stewart



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AUTHOR

Amber Stewart

DEVELOPMENT LEAD

Mike Kimmel

ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Linda Zayas-Palmer

EDITING LEAD

Solomon St. John

EDITOR

K. Tessa Newton and Solomon St. John

COVER ARTISTS

Maurice Risulmi and Allan Santos da Silva

INTERIOR ARTISTS

Josef Kucera and Allan Santos da Silva

CARTOGRAPHER

Jason Engle

ART DIRECTION

Emily Crowell

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Justin Lucas

DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

Linda Zayas-Palmer

ORGANIZED PLAY COORDINATOR

Alex Speidel

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

James Jacobs

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY

Tonya Woldridge

DIRECTOR OF GAME DEVELOPMENT

Adam Daigle

PUBLISHER

Erik Mona

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GM RESOURCES

Campaign Home Page: pathfindersociety.club

Books: *Pathfinder Core Rulebook*, *Pathfinder Bestiary 2*, and *Pathfinder Guns & Gears*

Maps: *Pathfinder Flip-Tiles: Dungeon Starter Set*

Online Resource: Pathfinder Reference Document at paizo.com/prd

SCENARIO TAGS

Scenario tags provide additional information about an adventure's contents. For more information on scenario tags, see the *Guide to Organized Play: Pathfinder Society* at <http://www.organizedplayfoundation.org/paizo/guides/>.



METAPLOT (SHATTERED SANCTUARIES)



FACTION (ENVOY'S ALLIANCE)

SUMMARY

Having learned of the night hag Aslynn's plot to pit the Onyx Alliance and Pathfinder Society against each other and steal the Onyx Alliance's treasures, the Society sends the PCs to Shadow Absalom to thwart Aslynn's scheme. In Shadow Absalom, the warped "reflection" of Absalom on the Shadow Plane, the PCs investigate and discover a way inside the Onyx Repository, the infamously impenetrable vault where the Onyx Alliance has secured its treasures. After finding and conversing with a number of Society contacts, the PCs gain a better understanding of the Onyx Alliance's recent and current circumstances, and find a way into the Onyx Repository.

Inside the Repository, the PCs contend with traps and wards, then confront Marcien Blakros and his must trusted Onyx Alliance agents. Finally, the PCs have to fend off one of the night hag Aslynn's powerful changeling children before he manages to plunder the vault!

HOW TO PLAY



PLAY TIME: 4–5 HOURS



LEVELS: 7–10



PLAYERS: 3–6



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

paizo.com

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ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Over the past year, the Pathfinder Society has contended with numerous attacks and strange events at its lodges across the Inner Sea. The Society's leaders have long believed these attacks were the deeds of the Onyx Alliance, a cunning and ruthless mercantile group from the Shadow Plane. The Society couldn't determine the reasons for these confusing attacks, seemingly orchestrated by a group with whom they had recently formed a tentative truce.

In truth, the same enemy who deceived the Pathfinder Society into suspecting the Onyx Alliance was also able to trick the leader of the Onyx Alliance, Sarnia Blakros, into thinking that the Pathfinder Society had been acting against her organization. Shortly after striking against the Society, believing them to be her enemies, Sarnia found herself trapped in a nightmarish mindscape. This horrific realm existed partially on the Shadow Plane, partially in Sarnia's own mind, and partially in a shard of the Dimension of Dreams stolen by the night hag Aslynn, an old enemy of the Society.

Aslynn peered into Sarnia's memories, along with the memories of a veteran Pathfinder sea captain, to learn information and enable her many changeling children to conduct attacks against both the Pathfinder Society and the Onyx Alliance. By pitting the two groups against one another, Aslynn hopes to ruin them both, in time, and test the capabilities of her grown children to see which were most deserving of her twisted affection.

But the night hag's plans do not stop there. The Onyx Alliance previously kept their vast stores of treasure and magic items in vaults scattered across Shadow Absalom. After contending with several well-coordinated attacks, Marcien Blakros—Sarnia's son and second-in-command of the Onyx Alliance—ordered all of the Alliance's treasures to be secured in their heretofore impenetrable vault,

WHERE ON GOLARION?

This adventure takes place not on Golarion itself, but in the Plane of Shadow, in the city of Shadow Absalom, the distorted dark mirror reflection of Absalom and the home city of the Onyx Alliance. More information on the Shadow Plane can be found on page 141 of the *Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*, and more information on Absalom and the Onyx Alliance can be found in *Absalom, City of Lost Omens*.

the Onyx Repository. In doing so, he played right into Aslynn's plans, as her children had already positioned strange devices in the Onyx Alliance's hoards, which went unnoticed during transfer to the repository. When activated, these devices would allow Aslynn's children to open a portal direct into the vault, leaving its treasure free for the plunder.

Thankfully, Sarnia Blakros managed to send a psychic message to the Pathfinder Society. During the events of *Pathfinder Society Scenario #3-17: Dreams of a Dustbound Isle*, a group of daring Pathfinders traveled into Sarnia's prison and released her from the endless nightmares. Though Sarnia has yet to contact the Society since then, the group managed to peer briefly into Aslynn's mind and learn about her plot.

The Society has been unable to contact Marcien Blakros to warn him, so now they've assembled another team to travel to Shadow Absalom, find a way into the Onyx Repository, and prevent Aslynn's plundering!

GETTING STARTED

The adventure begins with the PCs in familiar territory in Absalom's Grand Lodge. Here, they receive a briefing from Venture-Captain **Ambrus Valsin** (LN male human chamberlain),



SESHUUN

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whose impressive mutton chops are somewhat more disheveled than usual. Also in attendance are Envoy's Alliance faction leader **Fola Barun** (CG female half-elf ambassador), who is deep in thought; head of security **Toldrar** (LN male hobgoblin tactician), whose heavy armor and battle scars suggest he's ready for anything; and **Seshuun** (LG female azarketi historian; *Absalom City of Lost Omens* 393), the curator adjutant of Absalom's Blakros Museum, who fidgets nervously with a heavy leather satchel and has trouble meeting anyone's eye.

Once the PCs are settled, read or paraphrase the following.

Once everyone has gathered around the large meeting table, Ambrus Valsin gestures for Toldrar to shut the door. "I'll get right to it. We need to you travel to the Shadow Plane, find a way into an impenetrable vault, and prevent a wicked night hag from plundering it! Our sources inform us that agents of the night hag Aslynn have set their sights on plundering the Onyx Repository, primary treasure vault of the group known as the Onyx Alliance. We've worked hard in recent years to establish an uneasy truce with the Onyx Alliance, but they've orchestrated multiple attacks against us this past year—or so we were led to believe! In truth, it seems, the source of these attacks was Aslynn's forces, and she's deceived the Onyx Alliance as well. We can't simply warn them, as recent events have complicated the situation."

Fola nods, "I've tried to contact the Alliance's de-facto leader, Marcien Blakros, directly. He hasn't responded. Perhaps he does not trust us. Of course, the true leader of the Onyx Alliance is Sarnia Blakros, who we recently freed from a psychic prison of Aslynn's design. Unfortunately, we haven't been able to contact Sarnia since those events transpired. It's possible she's still recovering from her ordeal. Whatever the reason, we're left trying to deal with her son ourselves."

Ambrus explains, "Recent events have made him paranoid, which leaves us with no other option than to thwart Aslynn ourselves, in the Onyx Alliance's most secure fortress."

Toldrar chuckles. "For once, perhaps the tables are being turned. Attacks on our own lodges have become tiring of late."

"Ironical or not," Fola adds, "We've reached out to the Blakros Museum for help, given how they've allowed us to use their *shadow obelisk* for travel to Shadow Absalom in the past. Thankfully, Seshuun here has agreed to assist us."

Seshuun removes a glossy black obelisk from her satchel. "I am certain that the Blakros family would prefer not to invite danger by getting involved in the troubles that have been plaguing your lodges of late, but I am just as certain that assisting you in this manner is the right thing to do." Seshuun smiles knowingly. "Besides, Aslynn caused the events which ruined my lobaria exhibit! Technically, I'm acting in the museum's best interest."

Ambrus concludes the briefing. "When you reach Shadow Absalom, I need you to investigate across the city and gather as much information as you can about recent events, Aslynn's plans, and how to enter the Onyx Repository." He frowns sternly. "This is not a frontal assault. The Repository is too well guarded for such foolishness, and your investigation needs to be just that, with words rather than blades, unless all else fails."

Toldrar gives the PCs **Handout #1: Sites of Shadow Absalom** (page 28) and answers the PCs' questions about the list of locations therein. Likely inquiries and his responses are below.

What manner of creatures might we expect to find in Shadow Absalom? "As an umbral reflection of Absalom, Shadow Absalom is equally cosmopolitan and filled with a wide variety of Shadow Plane natives and others, including fetchlings, Material Plane humanoids, insectile d'zirak, various creatures from other planes, and some varieties of intelligent undead. The umbral dragon Argrinyxia rules Shadow Absalom, but we don't expect you'll encounter her forces directly."

How much opposition should be expected from the Onyx Alliance? "Until you locate and breach the Onyx Repository, we expect little opposition from the Onyx Alliance. According to our sources, the Onyx Alliance is operating as low to the ground as they can. Perhaps they're trying to protect their treasure, or perhaps they've faced hardships of late, like the Society. Part of your job involves learning what's happened to them recently—such information may help if you manage to contact Marcien Blakros."

Where should the investigation begin? "There's no absolute starting point. Make sure you stick to the locations and contacts we've provided. While we have some idea of what Shadow Absalom is like, there is much we don't know, so going beyond the scope of your assignment may be dangerous."

How dangerous is Shadow Absalom? "Unless you go out of your way to instigate conflict, you're unlikely to face any aggression so long as you stick to these contacts, unless the Onyx Alliance puts up a fight at the Onyx Repository. Aslynn's forces may confront you as well. Our understanding is that their attack on the Repository is imminent. But, across the city itself, the umbral dragon Argrinyxia keeps everyone in line. She has little tolerance for disruptions and rule-breakers."

What's this about an lobaria exhibit? Seshuun answers this question, "Pathfinder agents determined that Onyx Alliance agents stole a shipment of relics bound for the Blakros Museum, replacing them with forgeries and cursed items. Whether the saboteurs were truly part of

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the Onyx Alliance or the situation was a set-up, I doubt the attack would have happened without Aslynn's meddling." PCs who played *Pathfinder Society Intro: Year of Shattered Sanctuaries* recall discovering the fake relics and confronting agents of the Onyx Alliance.

How do we get out of Shadow Absalom? "Travel to the Glare. It's a giant beacon of light at the center of the city. You can't miss it! It'll send you back to where you were just before you entered Shadow Absalom."

What do you know about Aslynn? "She's a planar merchant of sorts who deals in all manner of treasures, as well as mortal souls. She routinely manipulates or controls others. She was involved in several schemes against the Society a few years ago, including an attempt to steal the soul of our former Master of Spells, a bid to plunder the extraplanar realm known as the *Hao Jin Tapestry*, and several other plots. Truly, we're not sure of the full extent of her plots—or her power. But everything she stands for is anathema to the Society's goals, and it seems she holds a severe grudge against us!"

LORE OR OCCULTISM (RECALL KNOWLEDGE)

A PC who succeeds at a relevant DC 20 Lore check (such as Shadow Absalom Lore or Shadow Plane Lore) or DC 23 Occultism check knows more about Shadow Absalom and potential threats encountered in the Shadow Plane. A failure grants no information, and a critical success grants the additional information in the critical success entry. These checks should be rolled secretly.

Critical Success In addition to the information in the success entry, the PC recalls that Shadow Absalom's power structure is a cultivated chess board of internecine competition between various organizations including the Onyx Alliance, the Light-Weaver's Guild, the Collegium Desoleum, and others. They all exist and operate at the whimsy of the shadow dragon Argrinyxia, Lady of Shifting Shadows, who is the sole and unquestioned ruler of Shadow Absalom.

Success Shadow Absalom is a shining jewel of cross-planar trade and safety within the surrounding desolate wilderness of shifting shadows. Much of the city exists as a warped mirror-image of Absalom itself, with similar buildings and even oddly parallel events in the course of time. Unless one goes searching for danger, most areas of the city are relatively safe, as few dare defy the city's ruler.

Critical Failure Deep within the Shadow Plane, creatures from the Material Plane and their sources of light raise feelings of anger and suspicion from Shadow Absalom's nefarious residents. Creatures that require supplemental light are at an automatic disadvantage in dealing with most of the city's natives and are advised to extinguish them.

SOCIETY (RECALL KNOWLEDGE)

A PC who succeeds at a DC 23 Society check to Recall Knowledge knows more about Marcien Blakros. A failure grants no information, and a critical success grants the additional information in the critical success entry. These checks should be rolled secretly. Any PC with a Chronicle Sheet for *Pathfinder Society Intro: Year of Shattered Sanctuaries*, *Pathfinder Society Scenario #3-06: Struck by Shadows*, or *Pathfinder Society Scenario #3-17: Dreams of a Dustbound Isle* reduces the DC by 1 for each Chronicle Sheet they possess due to their experiences in those adventures.

Critical Success Marcien Blakros greatly prefers to work behind his operatives rather than directly fight. He wields a magical pistol named Backbiter. The firearm operates much like a flintlock gun, but also curses its targets to fight amongst themselves.

Success Marcien Blakros is a capable spellcaster, specializing in shadow-based illusion magic and enchantments. Both of these have been powerful tools for his rise within the ranks of the Onyx Alliance, so much so that even his enemies never challenged him when he stepped up to lead after his mother disappeared. None dare to claim that his status is related to any nepotism on his mother's part.

Critical Failure Marcien Blakros owes little allegiance to his organization and has risen through the ranks by virtue of nepotism and his own fire-based evocation magic.

Rewards: Toldrar gives the PCs four *moderate healing potions* before they depart.

Development: Ambrus takes the PCs to the side before they leave, a concerned and sympathetic look playing across his face, "Before you go, I need you to understand something about the Soul Stalls. Things of grotesque evil go on there on a daily basis, and we're asking you to go there and talk to someone intimately involved in the trade of souls. As difficult as it may be, don't take any actions against the trade therein while you're on this mission. Yes, it's abhorrent, and we're taking steps against it where we can, but for now we need information on the present matter. Learn what you can and leave without causing a disturbance, regardless of what you might witness. In thwarting Aslynn's power grab, we'll deal a significant blow to her own trading activities, which should be far more significant than we could manage if we tried to cause trouble in the Soul Stalls. After all, Argrinyxia's forces watch over the market, and we're no match for an ancient umbral dragon's wrath."

Fola adds, "I hear she can be even more grumpy than Ambrus, here. As for working against abhorrent practices in Shadow Absalom, that's where the Envoy's Alliance faction comes in. I'd like you to do everything

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you can to secure the trust and allegiance of Onyx Alliance members. The group recently reformed in some ways under Sarnia's leadership, ending all involvement in slavery and the soul trade, but there are those who would continue to steer it toward evil practices. Try to restore the Onyx Alliance's trust in the Pathfinder Society. You might even be able to convince some of its members to join our ranks, which would be an incredible boon for the Society in these troubled times."

If the PCs did not ask about a return route, Ambrus tells the PCs about the Glare before they leave, as described on page 5.

INVESTIGATING SHADOW ABSALOM

When the PCs are ready to depart, Seshuun instructs them to focus on the *onyx obelisk* shard. Read or paraphrase the following.

The obelisk shard erupts with a cold flash of light, burrowing a doorway across the planes and into the heart of Absalom's dark mirror twin, Shadow Absalom. The gloomy surroundings are both strange and familiar at once, the street layout is close to that of Absalom, but populated by buildings all in dusky shades of gray and black beneath a starless twilight sky. Beyond the gray and gloom, down the broad, central boulevard is the bright, nearly iridescent lambency of the Glare at Shadow Absalom's heart, a mystery all its own—and a way out of the city.

Far to the south a sea of dust shimmers with nearly liquid motion as trading ships dock at the Powdered Harbor, and reaching up over the bleak and muddled skyline are points of brilliant, dancing color: the multicolored towers of the Light-Weaver's Guild and myriad organic towers decorated by intricate, sometimes garish displays of physically woven light. Light spills out from the occasional doorway or window, and magical lanterns hover above the streets, casting an array of colors and illuminating the passage of the city's deeply diverse population.

Human-descended fetchlings abound, mixed with various shadow fey, shadow giants, termite-like d'ziriaks, and, rarely, a velstrac lurking within the deepest shadows. Visitors from another plane draw the occasional curious glance, but in a place of such wonders, few seem truly out of place.

The PCs arrive near the center of Shadow Absalom on a wide boulevard that runs north to south with a distant view of the docks of the Powdered Harbor to one side, and the brilliant streaming light of the Glare to the other side. To the southeast, rising up over the city skyline are the multi-colored towers of the Scintillating Rise, headquarters of the Light-Weavers' Guild. Given three such immediate landmarks to see, the PCs have little difficulty in orienting themselves within the landscape of Shadow Absalom.

SHADOW PLANE EFFECTS

The Shadow Plane has the Shadow planar essence trait (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide* 138), which affects light sources as well as shadow and light magic. These effects are described below for ease of reference.

The radius of all light from light sources and the areas of light spells are halved. Shadow magic is enhanced; anyone Casting a Spell with the shadow trait gains a +1 circumstance bonus to their spell DC or spell attack roll with that spell. Light magic is impeded; anyone who Casts a Spell or Activates an Item with the light trait must succeed at a DC 6 flat check or lose the spell or activation.

RUNNING THE INVESTIGATION

The PCs are free to go about their investigation of Shadow Absalom in whichever order they choose. The four locations they need to investigate, as described in **Handout #1**, are the entrance to Hive Izt Sixt'Zym (page 8), the outskirts of the Unspoken City (page 9), the Soul Stalls (page 10), and Wightir House (page 12). As the directions in the handout advise, the PCs should visit Wightir House last, as it's the location where they're most likely to encounter active Onyx Alliance agents. They're far more likely to succeed in convincing those agents to help if they've gathered sufficient information from other sources.

In each location, the PCs' contacts are willing to engage in casual conversation with the PCs and answer their basic questions. To learn more detailed information, the PCs must typically succeed at one or more skill checks after speaking with their contact. The key information the PCs can learn appears in each location's Investigation section. Use the descriptions of each area, and the example questions and answers, to roleplay each scene—don't let the adventure fly by with a simple series of skill checks!

Once they've investigated all three initial locations, then Wightir House, the PCs should have the information they need to make their way into the Onyx Repository (page 14).

DESCRIBING THE CITY

Shadow Absalom is a unique city filled with interesting people, places, and things, and it could easily set the stage for an entire campaign. To keep the players on track to finish this adventure within the allotted time frame, encourage them to stick to the sites described in the scenario. As they travel between locations, you can use the **Shadow Absalom Scenes** sidebar (page 7) to

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SHADOW ABSALOM SCENES

- The PCs pass by towering, termite-like mounds. The structures' multicolored floating glyphs cast light across the wide city boulevard and give color and contrast to a surrounding landscape and sky otherwise cast in shades of gray.
- The PCs notice that living beings illuminated by the Glare don't cast shadows from the Glare's light, yet another of its mysteries.
- A shae diplomat from another Shadow Plane trade city passes by. Shae are wispy and amorphous creatures of shadow. This diplomat wears white clothes and a white mask that mold their shape into a humanoid form, albeit one surrounded by tendrils of darkness that merge and disconnect with shadows in the surroundings as they pass by. The shae is accompanied by a number of wayang courtiers—stringy, gnome-like humanoids with sharp features, all of whom act as if they're above the common citizens. As they pass by a statue of the city's draconic ruler—one which intentionally shifts between multiple artistic impressions of Argrinyxia—the diplomat adopts a decidedly servile attitude, going so far as to bow towards the artwork.
- A winged azata celestial walks through the city, emitting a rainbow spectrum of radiant light on the surrounding cityscape, a smiling beacon of freedom and compassion in a city of decidedly more dire occupants. He occasionally stops and converses with random passersby, leaving them smiling afterwards.
- The PCs observe a city block with several collapsed buildings and a deep furrow cut through the earth as if by an enormous burrowing creature. The PCs realize that this corresponds to a portion of the city that overlays Absalom's Radiant Festival fairgrounds, which recently faced destruction caused by a runaway machine.
- A shadow giant merchant bellows out a call to interested buyers for "rare Material Plane goods", holding out such random and prosaic objects as an oil lamp, a loaf of stale bread, a copper kettle, and a mewling kitten. The giant, smitten by the tiny feline, refuses to sell the kitten, unless offered an even tinier kitten in trade.
- The PCs pass by a chapel of the goddess Desna illuminated by both d'zirak light-weaving symbols and lanterns shaped like blue and yellow butterflies, casting a warm light out onto the street.
- Graffiti scrawled across the side of a building proclaims, "Chain devils go home!" A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Religion check knows that the term "chain devil" refers to velstracs, a type of fiend that was once imprisoned in Hell, but now lives in the Shadow Plane. They are sadistic creatures that enjoy nothing more than torturing mortals and many of them serve the evil god Zon-Kuthon.

describe interesting things they see in the city. This can help immerse the PCs (and players) in Shadow Absalom. These scenes can provide flavor, but don't dwell on them too long, as they do not directly impact the adventure.

LOCAL RUMORS

When appropriate opportunities arise—such as when the PCs move between the specific locations called out in **Handout #1**, or spend extra time interacting with NPCs (including those in the "Shadow Absalom Scenes" sidebar), allow one of the PCs to attempt a DC 23 Diplomacy or Society check, a DC 25 Perception check, or a DC 21 related Lore check (such as Shadow Absalom Lore or Underworld Lore) to glean information from the locals. Other PCs can attempt to Aid the check. Each time a PC succeeds at such a check, provide them with one of the following local rumors. If the PC critically succeeds, provide them with 2 rumors instead.

- The Onyx Alliance has been the target of a number of break-ins in the past year. It hasn't happened at any of their major public locations, but at smaller, less known locations.

- Onyx Alliance recruiters have been expanding their efforts to sign up more agents, reaching out beyond their traditional fetchling talent pool in Shadow Absalom. Some say they're trying to get a more diverse talent pool, but others say it's because many of their agents have vanished, perished, or defected, and they're desperate to replace their sudden losses.
- The Onyx Alliance is, of late, known as the "Sick Secret of Shadow Absalom," and numerous organizations across the city smell an opportunity to make advances in influence at the Onyx Alliance's expense.
- More than once over the past year, bizarre creatures have shown up at Onyx Alliance events to cause mischief. Few people were injured, but the Onyx Alliance has nonetheless earned a reputation for being unable to keep trouble away from their own occasions.
- Onyx Alliance leadership has been absent from the public for months, but their legal representatives have been seen all over the city. Some case involving the Onyx Alliance is moving through the city courts, but hasn't been made public yet.

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ENTRANCE TO HIVE IZT SIXT'ZYM

Rising up over the Hive Dunes that occupy much of the western side of Shadow Absalom, the organic towers of Hive Izt Sixt'zym are a brilliant, ostentatious display of d'ziriak light-weaving. Elaborate colored runes cover wide swathes of ground, slowly fading in and out and changing colors to display mosaic-like images, most abstract but others not. A steady line of merchants, couriers, and other visitors move in and out of the tunnels leading into the hive's labyrinthine subsurface, along with just as many termite-like d'ziriaxs themselves.

K'kaviim (CN agender d'ziriak lightweaver) waits for the PCs near the edge of an ancillary entrance to the larger hive, their back turned as they work on a new public display of molded light. Even amongst their own, vaguely humanoid kind, K'kaviim is exceptionally unique. Their carapace is gilded in silver and decorated with glowing symbols that periodically shift color or flare especially bright. More uncommon still, their hands, thorax, and face are spattered with motes of light.

When the PCs approach, they experience a minor brush of something against their minds, like a gentle breeze or passing touch, while K'kaviim holds up one arm with a single finger extended as if to tell them to wait. Upon finishing a particular portion of their current work, an elaborate twisting scaffold of individual glowing runes that race up the side of a small d'ziriak hive tower, they finally turn around, chittering excitedly and briefly hopping about from foot to foot. After several more seconds of excited chittering in D'ziriak, they come to their senses and address the PCs telepathically. "So, what do you think?!"

PCs who comment positively on the light weaving art receive a +2 circumstance bonus to checks to gain information from K'kaviim. All of K'kaviim's conversation with the PCs occurs via telepathy, mixed in with chittering in its own audible language, rapid gesticulation with multiple limbs, and sporadic drawing of figures of light in the air to add emphasis.

Basic questions the PCs may have, and K'kaviim's responses, are below.

What do you know of the Onyx Alliance? "They pay well, just as much as the Light-Weaver's Guild, and they don't mind if I do work for both. An artist can't be tied down to such strictures as group loyalty. Working for both groups would have been difficult in the past; fortunately, they've set aside their squabbles, and I can share my craft in peace."

Why was there a conflict between the Onyx Alliance and the Light-Weaver's Guild? "In years past, the Alliance seized whatever it wanted and had no regard for the destruction they left in their wake. They demolished

Guild property, engaged in a variety of unsavory trades, and took actions that threatened to draw the ire of those who should not be crossed. But the Alliance has begun to clean up their act. They're still no celestials, that's for sure, but they've taken steps to make amends and build connections. Are they making connections for a greater scheme, to protect themselves from declining influence, or for some other reason? I don't know, and frankly, it doesn't matter to me. It's dangerous to ask too many questions."

What do you know of the Onyx Repository? "It's an architectural eyesore from the outside, that's for certain. The inside though is filled with wonders. A shame it's all bottled away."



K'KAVIIM

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What is your opinion of Argrinyxia? “She is a delightful patron of the arts, and beyond that I have no opinion, political, personal, or otherwise. That tends to promote longevity in Shadow Absalom.”

What do you know of a night hag named Aslynn? “Absolutely nothing. Should I? Night hags frequent the Soul Stalls, but I wouldn’t be caught dead within that artistic atrocity.”

Investigation: Bargaining for more details regarding the Onyx Repository requires the PCs to attempt DC 23 Crafting, Diplomacy, or Deception checks, or DC 21 Architecture Lore or Art Lore checks. For levels 9–10, increase the DCs by 3. Each PC can attempt a single check. If at least half the PCs (rounded up) succeed, or any PC critically succeeds, K’kaviim admits that he’s been inside the Onyx Repository before, through his work as an architectural consultant. “I’ve been inside before, more than once. They commissioned me to add my own decorative style in places, though I was blindfolded until we arrived inside. I know there’s a secret entrance, but I’m not sure exactly where. I heard there’s a long hallway with a deadly trap, a barrage of shadowy spears.”

If the PCs learn this information, they can use it in their negotiations at Wightir House (page 12) and they gain a +1 circumstance bonus to their Perception checks to notice the trap in area A1.

OUTSKIRTS OF THE UNSPOKEN CITY

Nestled into the northern edge of Shadow Absalom, the Unspoken City is known for including undead among its citizens. It is ruled by the mysterious Collegium Desoleum, a cabal of necromancers and scholars of death. The Pathfinder Society’s contact, **Viriseth** (LE male lich fetchling necromancer) of the Collegium Desoleum has arranged to meet the PCs just outside the district’s gates. The streets are relatively quiet, with minimal traffic to and from the Unspoken City proper. A pair of sentinels in red lacquered armor stand at attention blocking entry to those without business within. Thankfully, the PCs’

contact is rather obvious, waiting near the gates within a covered sedan chair held aloft by a quartet of masked ghouls, dutifully waiting for the Pathfinders’ approach with his neatly dressed apprentice, **Rensivir** (LN male fetchling necromancer) at his side.

Rensivir greets the PCs warmly. “Greetings on behalf of myself, apprentice necromancer Rensivir of the Collegium Desoleum, and my master, the esteemed Viriseth. I will be acting as a go-between for communication. Please ignore the ghouls, they have been recently fed.”

There is a polite chuckle from within the covered sedan chair after Rensivir mentions the recently fed ghouls.

Basic questions the PCs may have, and Rensivir’s responses, are below.

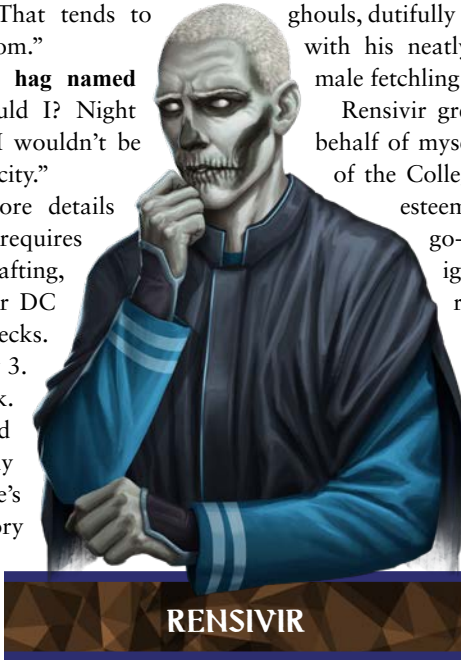
Why won’t Viriseth speak directly to us? “My master prefers to speak only to other undead, necromancers, and scholars of death. Experience has shown that

many among the living tend to react to undead with irrational violence or base prejudice, and the cleanup after such unfortunate incidents is tiresome. Surely you understand.”

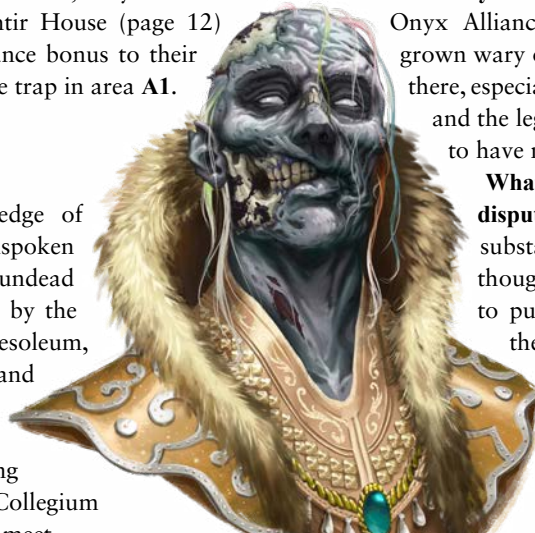
What do you know of the Onyx Repository? “The Onyx Alliance, or rather their leadership, has grown wary of keeping their holdings exclusively there, especially after the events at Wightir House and the legal disputes they face. But they seem to have no other choice.”

What of the Onyx Alliance’s legal disputes? “The Onyx Alliance is facing a substantial suit regarding past activities, though the party behind it remains closed to public knowledge. Whoever they are, they have deep pockets and substantial knowledge of the Onyx Alliance’s internal communications. This is likely a factor in the Alliance’s desire to secret away their holdings.”

What do you know of Marcien Blakros? “He’s a decent mage, for a mortal, though prone to using enchantments as a crutch when leadership fails. He’s doing well for someone faced with so many and myriad recent difficulties. The Alliance is not in a good place.”



RENSIVIR



IRISETH

MEAN STREETS OF SHADOW ABSALOM

What do you know of Aslynn the night hag? “I know that dealing with night hags is never wise. Nor is making enemies of them. I hesitate to say more.”

Investigation: Bargaining for more details regarding the Onyx Repository requires the PCs to attempt DC 23 Arcana, Diplomacy, or Deception checks, or DC 21 Necromancy Lore or Undead Lore checks. For levels 9–10, increase the DCs by 3. Each PC can attempt a single check. If at least half the PCs (rounded up) succeed, or any PC critically succeeds, they sufficiently impress Viriseth, and the lich pulls back the jeweled curtain to reveal himself. “I wasn’t entirely sure what specimens the Pathfinder Society would send my way for information, but I’m impressed. Know this: Aslynn has orchestrated a legal case against the Onyx Alliance, motivating Argrinyxia to levy punishment against them. Marcien increasingly relies on enchantments to keep his forces in line, lest they defect.” Viriseth then produces a small tourmaline gemstone and presents it to the PCs. “You may find this useful. While I enjoy the company of the dead, I’d rather you remained alive.” Viriseth grins and vanishes once more behind the jeweled curtain.

If the PCs learn this information, they can use it in their negotiations at Wightir House (page 12).

Rewards: The tourmaline gemstone Viriseth presents the PCs with if they successfully negotiate with him is a *tourmaline sphere aeon stone*.

THE SOUL STALLS

The Soul Stalls are an outlandish marketplace located outside and just to the west of Shadow Absalom’s walls. Here, the imprisoned souls of mortals are bought and sold, a vile trade practiced most often by daemons and night hags. The marketplace serves to separate this trade from the rest of Shadow Absalom, while keeping the activities out in the open, where Argrinyxia can observe and regulate them.

All entrances to the Stalls are marked by a group of sigils, which the PCs may be able to identify. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Religion check to Recall Knowledge recognizes a clustered quartet of the religious symbols of the daemonic Horsemen of Abaddon. With a separate DC 22 Religion check to Recall Knowledge, the PCs can identify the symbol of Alazhra the Dream Eater, divine patron of night hags. Any PC who succeeds at a DC 22 Society check or a DC 15 Shadow Plane Lore check to Recall Knowledge recognizes the final and largest symbol, that of Shadow Absalom’s draconic ruler Argrinyxia. Collectively, the symbols convey the notion that the soul trade is both allowed and protected within

the Stalls, but to remain here and here alone within its demarcated and permitted locale.

PCs who succeed at a DC 23 Perception check also notice that high atop a massive pillar of black-violet druchite at the northeastern corner of the Soul Stalls perches a single young shadow dragon, its eyes piercing the surrounding shadows like lamp lights as its casually surveys the business dealings ongoing below. A living projection of Argrinyxia’s dominion, the dragon further reinforces the tacit warning carried by the symbols on the Soul Stalls’ entryway.



GREMALA

MEAN STREETS OF SHADOW ABSALOM

Among the hundreds of stalls, night hags from a multitude of competing hag covens ply the fruits of the soul trade. Amidst the grim yet circus-like surroundings, their wares are on display in every manner imaginable: some stalls are festooned with cages at ground level or hanging by chains like horrific wind chimes, filled with mewling mortal-faced larval souls. Other display shelves packed with magically imprisoned souls stuffed into ectoplasm-filled jars, held fast within dimly glimmering black onyx gems, or woven by ink and deed into the words of diabolic contracts purchased and now on display. Looking beyond these displays of atrocity, far more than just souls are for sale, but souls are the only currency accepted.

Read or paraphrase the following once the PCs arrive at Gremala the Dream-Monger's stall.

Situated within the depths of the unholy market, Gremala the Dream-Monger's stall is no grander (or less horrific) than any other, the prosaicness standing at odds with her position as the founder of Shadow Absalom's marketplace of souls. Gremala casually converses with her latest customer as they conclude a trade. The customer is a grotesque bipedal creature with a toothy jaw too big for its body, a mass of tentacles, and red limbs tipped with claws the size of daggers. Light and space distort around its gaunt form. A floating red ball of teeth and spines hovers in the air behind the customer. The customer reaches into the round creature's mouth and pulls out a handful of gems flickering with soul energy, exchanging them with Gremala for a massive black onyx before departing.

All manner of bizarre odds and ends decorate the shelves and blanket-covered tables, each item seeming all the stranger the longer one stares: handcrafted dolls with glowing gemstone eyes that twitch sporadically as if alive, open books whose words move on the page of their own accord, and empty cages whose absent occupants still cast shadows with their movements.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Religion check to Recall Knowledge knows that the round creature being used as a glorified backpack is a cacodaemon, the weakest type of daemon. They are the most common type of daemon to appear on the Material Plane, and evil spellcasters can even summon them to serve as familiars. A PC who succeeds at a DC 35 Religion check to Recall Knowledge recognizes that the bipedal customer is an astradaemon, otherwise known as a void daemon. Astradaemons are metaphysical representation of death caused by damage to the soul or life force. Rarely seen on the Material Plane, they're best known for capturing souls on their way to the afterlife, but some work as assassins for the Horsemen of Abaddon. They are among the most powerful and

fearsome types of daemons; one of them would have no trouble killing all of the PCs singlehandedly. Even if the PCs fail this check, they get a sense that this creature is extremely dangerous.

In stark contrast to the foreboding appearances of her customers, **Gremala** (NE night hag) appears as a grandmotherly fetchling woman with a disarming smile, a symbol of Nethys strung about her neck.

Gremala enjoys the dissonance between the friendly face she presents in the Soul Stalls and the wicked nature of her work. She also enjoys the freedom that her role as the Soul Stall's founder allows her to meddle in the adjacent politics of Shadow Absalom while not technically being one of Argrinyxia's subjects. She considers Aslynn to be a rival and so has no compunctions about sharing her secrets with those who might mean her harm. In fact, she makes a bit of a game out of it, playing with the PCs' morals and their expectations of her and their surroundings, beginning their conversation by offering them a plate of freshly baked-cookies. The cookies are tasty and entirely mundane; she baked them herself using typical ingredients from the Material Plane in a conventional oven. She makes a show of being hurt if the PCs refuse her offer or insist that something about the cookies must be nefarious. If any of the PCs succeed at a DC 23 Perception check, they notice Gremala's reflection in a nearby mirror, or out of the corner of their eye: a towering night hag with a double set of curled horns, gleaming white eyes, and a snarling maw of jagged yellow fangs.

Basic questions the PCs may have, and Gremala's responses, follow.

What do you know about the Onyx Alliance? "Their recent withdrawal from the soul market has had a terrible impact on the Soul Stalls. Sarnia Blakros is to blame, of course, for this, and many other changes in the way the Onyx Alliance operates. It isn't the end of us, not by any means, but it has had an impact. Argrinyxia has taken a keen interest in the Stalls of late, and that may be good—or bad. At the same time, things have gotten so much more interesting here in Shadow Absalom. You're here, and you're part of that. Thank you, my dears!"

What do you know about Aslynn? "Quite a bit, but never enough it seems. She spins webs of intrigue, as one does, just as often as I pass a bottled soul from hand to hand. Oddly, she's also stopped dealing directly in souls. Perhaps her focus is on other pursuits? Yes, she has something up her sleeve, and if I'm right, she'll be playing that card very soon indeed."

What is Aslynn planning? "Well fine, if you wish me to be so blunt about it and spoil my fun dancing around the periphery of it all. She's about to get her hands on

MEAN STREETS OF SHADOW ABSALOM

a truly staggering amount of treasure, and you and I both know precisely where she'll be stealing it from. And by she, I don't mean Aslynn herself in person, but one of her children, surely. Ah, but I've said too much, haven't I?"

Why steal from the Onyx Repository? "Now that's the question, isn't it? What's she planning to do with everything she takes? Exact revenge? Almost certainly. But I figure that she has something big in store. It's sure to be quite horrible. I'd trade anything here to learn her plans!"

You worship Nethys? "What's so wrong with having a patron different from my sisters? Would you prefer I worship Alazhra? One of the Four? Something worse? It's probably good for you and your organization that I don't."

Would you like to buy my soul?/Are you trying to steal my soul? "Oh, you tempt me so! But no. That bit of business is off of the table. You're already spoken for."

Investigation: Bargaining for more details requires the PCs to attempt DC 23 Diplomacy, Deception, Occultism, or Religion checks, or DC 21 Fiend Lore or Merchant Lore checks. For levels 9–10, increase the DCs by 3. Each PC can attempt a single check. If at least half the PCs (rounded up) succeed, or any PC critically succeeds, Gremala speaks more of Aslynn's children. "She's left them littered about like wriggling larvae in the Abyss. Some of them are loyal little ones, some distinctly less so, and others probably have no idea who she is. In total, to the best of my knowledge, she has thirteen of them. More than one is out and about locally, so I'm told, while others are unaccounted for. She's had countless other children in the past, but so few who survive to adulthood. These thirteen must be strong indeed, and I believe at least one of them has infiltrated the Onyx Alliance."

If the PCs learn this information, they can use it in their negotiations at Wightir House.

Rewards: If the PCs successfully negotiate with Gremala and at least one of them tried her cookies, she winks and gives them a *pendant of the occult* that resembles a glowing violet eye, commenting that "old Gremala loves keeping an eye on her favorites." For levels 9–10, it is a *greater pendant of the occult* instead.

WIGHTIR HOUSE

The PCs should visit this location after gathering as much information as possible from the other three sites described in **Handout #1**. If they visit the site earlier, the Onyx Alliance team is not yet present, and the PCs must return later.

Located near the southwestern wall of the Unspoken City—in Shadow Absalom's own warped reflection of Absalom's Wise Quarter, Wightir House was once connected closely to the Blakros Museum, existing conterminously across the planes and sharing the same layout. This connection was broken when Blakros Museum curator Nigel Aldain renovated and expanded his museum, using the same *shadow obelisk* that allowed the PCs to travel to Shadow Absalom as a ritual focus.

Wightir House's imposing gothic structure now lies in utter ruin, reduced to smoldering rubble while its neighboring structures remain intact and untouched. Sporadic eruptions of purple-black lightning snarl amongst and between the larger pieces of broken support columns, and cold fire still flickers on fallen timbers jutting up from the ruin. The largest standing and recognizable portion of the structure that remains is a minor quarter of the entryway atrium, adjacent to which the scorched head of a taxidermied triceratops emerges from the desolation. The cause of the obliteration is openly advertized by a symbol burned into the standing remains of the atrium. Any PC who succeeds at a DC 22 Society check or a DC 15 Shadow Plane Lore check to Recall Knowledge recognizes it as the personal symbol of Shadow Absalom's ruler, Argrinyxia; PCs who already failed the check to identify this symbol in the Soul Stalls cannot attempt it again here.

Yet beyond the former borders of Wightir House, life seemingly goes on as usual, with bustling foot traffic of primarily fetchling citizens. Curious PCs can interact with any of the passing citizens of Shadow Absalom to ask them about what precisely happened. They freely answer with a pithy, "Argrinyxia destroyed it," and "The Dragon Queen of Shadow Absalom took her tithe."

To find out anything more, the PCs need to venture into the ruins themselves. Latent energy from Argrinyxia's



RALZIN

MEAN STREETS OF SHADOW ABSALOM

breath erupts alarmingly from the ruins, but these eruptions never hit the PCs directly.

Behind a pile of broken stones and hidden from casual view on the street are a number of Onyx Alliance operatives half-heartedly digging through the rubble to recover any buried items. **Ralzin** (N female fetchling treasure hunter) is the group's leader. Her group of relatively recent recruits includes two humans, a half-elf, a dark scaled kobold, and one other fetchling.

After a brief moment of tension as Ralzin realizes who the PCs are and determines that they are not hostile, she relaxes and speaks with the PCs.

Basic questions the PCs may have, and Ralzin's responses, are below.

What happened here? "Yeah, about that... I assume that you've seen her symbol all over the rubble like a maker's mark? Suffice it to say Argrinyxia is anything but pleased with the Onyx Alliance. It's all in regards to the legal case brought against our organization. Something about the structure not truly belonging to the Onyx Alliance? The full details are above my pay grade. My job is to find treasure, not fill out paperwork."

What are you doing? "Following orders and digging through the rubble to find anything left over that wasn't obliterated or carted off over a week ago. Everything needed to be moved to a more secure location. Just my luck, coming back after months of treasure hunting, only to have everything go up in flames because Marcien made a dragon mad."

What are your thoughts on Marcien Blakros? "He... Marcien's been rather ruthless lately. I haven't worked directly with him for a while, but he's kept people on a tight leash with everything that's happened. The leash isn't entirely metaphorical. Anyone questioning his decisions rapidly changes their mind. Enchantment magic and all that. At least digging out here I don't have to worry about that, I suppose. I don't like enchantments. Not at all."

Some of the treasure was carted off? "That's right. It's in a more secure location, in theory. With my luck, it'll be destroyed, or stolen, or it's all cursed, or... sorry. It's been a rough few weeks."

Ralzin has worked for the Onyx Alliance for years, but she's fed up. The PCs have her attention for the moment, if not her full trust. She enjoys her position and ability to train new recruits, but worries about what she's getting them and herself into with recent events. Her recruits are generally enthusiastic about the prospect of employment with the Onyx Alliance, both the adventure and excitement and the stable income. However, they are troubled by the idea that the Alliance has earned negative attention from the ruler of Shadow Absalom. They don't

have any real insight or knowledge of the Onyx Alliance's recent troubles, but they do know a secret entrance into the Onyx Repository, having used it themselves when transporting treasure.

Negotiation: The PCs have two tasks to accomplish here. The first is to learn a way to enter the Onyx Repository, a crucial piece of information if they're to succeed in their mission. The second is to convince the Onyx Alliance agents to defect to the Pathfinder Society, as requested by Fola Barun. Ralzin prompts the PCs directly, asking why she should help the PCs and what they have to offer. If the PCs suggest that she and her recruits should reconsider working for the Onyx Alliance and join the Pathfinder Society, she asks them what the Pathfinder Society has to offer.

The PCs' success or failure in this negotiation is represented by the number of Negotiation Points they earn. Each PC must state their case and attempt a relevant check based on their argument, such as Diplomacy, Deception, Intimidation, or a relevant Lore skill. The DC of Lore skill checks is 21, and the DC of other skill checks is 23. Increase the DCs by 3 for levels 9–10. Each PC can attempt a single check. The checks have the following results.

Critical Success The PCs gain 2 Negotiation Points.

Success The PCs gain 1 Negotiation Point.

Critical Failure The PCs lose 1 Negotiation Point.

The PCs gain 1 additional Negotiation Point for each of the following pieces of information they learned from their investigation so far.

- The PCs confirmed the existence of a secret trapped entry when speaking with K'kaviim.
- The PCs learned from Viriseth that Aslynn orchestrated a legal case against the Onyx Alliance, which likely caused the ruler to destroy Wightir House.
- The PCs learned from Gremala that Aslynn has many changeling children, at least one of whom has infiltrated the Onyx Alliance.

The PCs may have participated in (or read the chronicles of) prior adventures related to Sarnia, Wightir House, and the Onyx Alliance. Ralzin is eager to hear what the PCs' know about Sarnia, and her team is quite interested in the PCs' prior adventures. If the PCs spend at least a few moments describing the adventures, they gain additional Negotiation Points.

- The group gains 1 additional Negotiation Point if at least one player at the table has the "Family Feud" legacy boon from *Pathfinder Society Scenario #10-18: The Daughter's Due*; the Chronicle Sheet can be applied to any of the player's characters.

MEAN STREETS OF SHADOW ABSALOM

- The group gains 1 additional Negotiation Point if at least one player at the table has a Chronicle Sheet for *Pathfinder Society Scenario #3-17: Dreams of a Dustbound Isle*; the Chronicle Sheet can be applied to any of the player's characters.

Negotiation Results: The total number of Negotiation Points the PCs earn determines the results of the negotiation, as follows. For groups of more than 4 PCs, adjust the number of Negotiation Points needed as described in the “Scaling Wightir House” sidebar. The PCs cannot recruit Ralzin and her allies if they don't attempt to do so; remind the players of this objective if they seem to have forgotten about it.

0+ Negotiation Points: Ralzin doesn't personally trust the PCs, but it's clear they want to help the Onyx Alliance. After speaking with her team, she reveals the location of a hidden entrance to the Onyx Repository's vaults (see area **A1**), wishes the PCs luck, and thanks them for their help.

3+ Negotiation Points: In addition to revealing the hidden entrance (see above), Ralzin tells the PCs how to avoid triggering the trap in the hallway beyond (area **A1**).

5+ Negotiation Points: In addition to revealing the hidden entrance and telling the PCs how to avoid the trap (see above), Ralzin and her team speak for a few minutes about their options. Ultimately, they decide to throw down their shovels and head to the Glare. “It may take us a while, but we'll find our way to these lodges of yours. We're tired of Marcien's follies. I'll spread the word that the Society is looking for recruits. See you again soon, Pathfinders.”

Faction Mission: If the PCs earn enough Negotiation Points to recruit Ralzin and her team, they successfully complete the Envoy's Alliance faction mission. See the Conclusion for details, and remember to complete the scenario's Reporting Notes.

Rewards: If they earned enough Negotiation Points to learn about the trapped hallway, Ralzin gives the PCs a weapon she found in the rubble. Its hilt resembles a black-scaled serpent with green eyes. For levels 7–8, it is a *dagger of venom*, while for levels 9–10, it is a *gloom blade*.

Development: One way or another, the PCs have learned a way into the Onyx Repository, and they can proceed there to complete their mission.

A. ONYX REPOSITORY

This large, gothic structure has long served as the primary storehouse for the Onyx Alliance's wealth, its nearly city block-sized footprint a visible demonstration of their

SCALING WIGHTIR HOUSE

Make the following adjustments to scale the results described in Negotiation Results for groups of 5 or more PCs.

5 PCs: Increase the number of Negotiation Points needed to learn about the trap to 4+.

6 PCs: Increase the number of Negotiation Points learn about the trap to 4+, and increase the number of successes needed to recruit the Onyx Alliance agents to 6+.

power and influence. The Alliance consolidated their holdings here following the destruction of Wightir House and Sarnia's disappearance. Obvious guards flank the impenetrable primary gate, while other, less conspicuous ones stand watch on patrols, doing their best to appear as prosaic street traffic and nothing more.

The PCs are not here to explore the full extent of the repository, but to make their way through a secret entrance (area **A1**) into its vaults. Encounters in this area use the map on page 15. These areas are in perpetual dim light unless otherwise noted.

Teleportation: The Onyx Repository's wards prevent creatures from teleporting between two rooms with closed doors, or from otherwise passing through the walls and doors, but teleportation otherwise functions normally.

A1. HIDDEN ENTRY

TRIVIAL

The Onyx Repository's hidden entrance is located nearly a block away from the primary structure, at the base of a short stairwell leading below street level and out of view of the city above. It appears as an artistically fashioned false door, a folly of the larger, ornate building rising up over it on the street above. It takes the PCs only a few minutes to find it, as long as they've learned of its location from speaking with the Onyx Alliance team at the ruins of Wightir House.

A closed but unlocked stone door connects this room to area **A2**.

Hazard: A magic trap is concealed at the end of this passage. Members of the Onyx Alliance know where to step to avoid setting off the trap. Unless the PCs learned about the trap from Ralzin, they risk stumbling into it when they pass through. The trap's trigger area is indicated with dotted lines on the map on page 15.

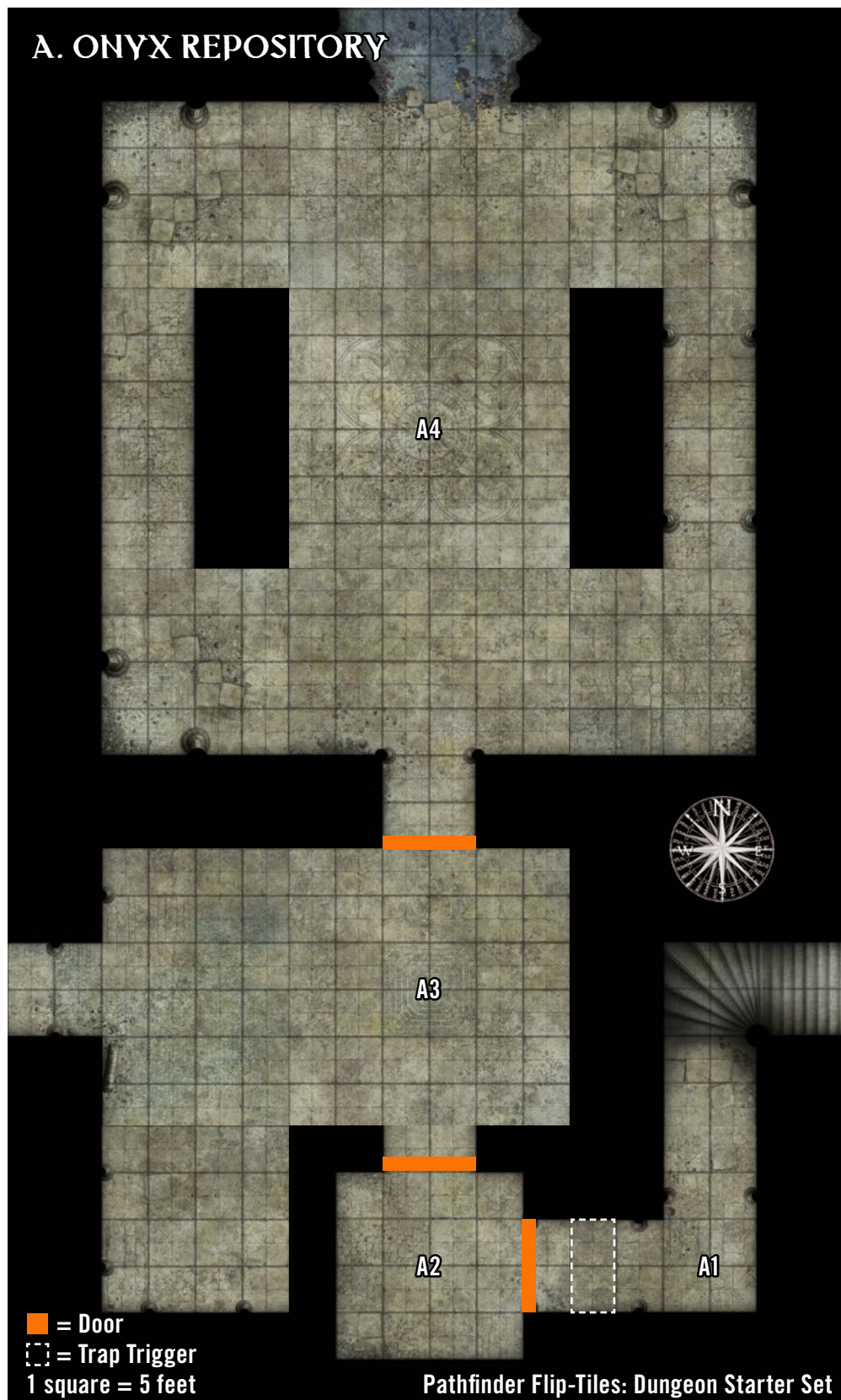
LEVELS 7–8

SHADOW SPEARS

Page 20

HAZARD 7

MEAN STREETS OF SHADOW ABSALOM



MEAN STREETS OF SHADOW ABSALOM

LEVELS 9–10

DEADLY SHADOW SPEARS

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HAZARD 9

A2. ANTECHAMBER

After passing through the hidden passage, the PCs arrive in a small antechamber with a heavy stone door in the north wall. The small room looks like some sort of staging area—empty crates and old museum pieces lie in disorderly piles along the southern wall, abandoned in favor of more valuable objects.

A heavy, enchanted stone door in the north wall blocks passage into area A3.

Read or paraphrase the following once the PCs arrive in this area.

The striking figure of Marcien Blakros steps seemingly straight out of the shadows, his deep orange eyes softly glowing, his long white hair immaculate. His tailored purple great coat provides the Onyx Alliance leader a regal air of authority without so much as a word, nor a need to brandish the pistol at his belt or the jeweled staff cradled in his arms. He sighs dismissively.

“And thus, the circling vultures finally deign to land. You’ll find precious little to feast upon. We’re well on our way to securing our holdings in our deepest vault. I’m impressed that you managed to arrive without a brusque frontal assault at the main gates. I’ll give you credit for that. But humor me, Pathfinders, what at all did you hope to accomplish today? Surely your Society has done enough damage to the Onyx Alliance!”

The PCs can determine that this is not actually Marcien Blakros in the flesh, but some manner of shadow projection, with a successful DC 23 Arcana, Occultism, or Perception check (DC 26 for levels 9–10).

Despite his bravado, Marcien is quite pensive and concerned at the PCs’ intrusion. His converses with the PCs in part as a delaying tactic and in part due to his genuine curiosity. He dismisses concerns about the Onyx Repository’s status as a safe location for the Alliance’s wealth, but he queries the PCs about how they managed to find the hidden

entrance, concerned about the information leak. Marcien genuinely believes that the Pathfinder Society has been orchestrating all of the Onyx Alliance’s recent troubles, from the disappearance of his mother Sarnia to the disruption of Onyx Alliance operations and the legal case that has incurred Argirynxia’s wrath. If the PCs mention any of these troubles to him, Marcien grows agitated, insisting that the Onyx Alliance can weather these present difficulties. Marcien scoffs at any suggestion that the Society might be able to help. If the PCs confront him about his role in various attacks on the Pathfinder Society, including the destruction of the *Sixwing Drake* and the release of bloodsucking monsters in the streets of Absalom (*Pathfinder Society Intro: Year of Shattered Sanctuaries*) or his attack on the Grand Lodge (*Pathfinder Society Scenario #3-06: Struck by Shadows*), Marcien states that he did what he had to do to protect his family’s interests. Then, he demands where the Society is keeping his mother, Sarnia Blakros.

If the PCs mention Aslynn’s manipulation and her likely plans, however much they know of them, Marcien pauses and listens, suspicion and worry on his face. If any of the PCs have a Chronicle Sheet for *Pathfinder Society Scenario #3-17: Dreams of a Dustbound Isle*, and relay Sarnia’s fate to Marcien, he initially rejects the story as some kind of ruse, but doubt is clear in his voice and expression. The PCs gain a +2 circumstance bonus to their subsequent checks to persuade Marcien to listen. Aslynn’s forces have thoroughly deceived Marcien, and a PC must succeed at a DC 25 Diplomacy, Deception, or Intimidation check (DC 28 for levels 9–10) to convince him to listen to the truth: that he’s been tricked, that Aslynn is about to plunder the vaults, and that the Society wants to help.

Development: If the PCs fail to convince him of their intentions, Marcien scoffs and orders them to leave immediately, snapping his fingers in a bluff, as if activating a hazard in the corridor leading to the vault, stating, “Your lies are transparent, and if you do not vacate the premises, you’ll be removed by force. Now go! As for the rest of your friends trying to infiltrate my vaults—I doubt you’ll be seeing them again!” Marcien is speaking of Aslynn’s forces, whom he believes to be Pathfinder agents.



MARCIE BLAKROS

MEAN STREETS OF SHADOW ABSALOM

If the PCs manage to convince Marcien of the truth, his attitude abruptly changes.

"I've been such a fool. Please, listen, the vault is just ahead. You'll find no traps or barriers in your way. My remaining forces are battling intruders in the vault at this very moment—I thought they were more Pathfinders, and that you'd come to distract me! They must be Aslynn's forces. There's little time. I'll have to trust you. Pass through this door, meet with me, and..." At this Marcien pauses, he turns partly as if listen to someone, and a look of shock crosses his face. "Mother?" he says, before he abruptly vanishes, dissolving into shadow.

Whether the PCs convince Marcien of the truth or not, as soon as he is done speaking to them, the voice of **Sarnia Blakros** (LE female fetchling psychic) speaks telepathically into the PCs' minds.

"Pathfinders! This is Sarnia Blakros. Since you freed me from that horrid prison, I've been recovering my strength, while hiding in a corner of Aslynn's mind. I can feel that wretched hag attacking Marcien's mind. I've been trying to ward her off and free him from her influence, but she is watching too closely. I can also sense some of what she's scheming. She's sent her son Arisept to plunder the vault! Quickly, Pathfinders! I'll open this door—but I must save my strength for my last trick. Only you can stop Arisept now!" The stone door in the north wall begins crumbling to black dust.

A sudden cackle echoes aloud through the Repository. Sarnia cries out, and a harsh hag's voice reverberates through the halls. "You're too late! The vault is nearly emptied. You've failed, Pathfinders, and no one will ever know your story. Marcien Blakros, if you wish to see your mother again, slay these meddling fools!"

Moments later, the stone door barring the way to area **A3** is gone, leaving nothing but a thin layer of black dust in its wake.

A3. DISPLAY HALL MODERATE

This larger hallway is lined with statuary and raised plinths, the latter of which once held various display pieces, some of them apparently removed quite hastily. Larger pieces and those unable to be readily transported have been left behind, including a swirling mobile comprised of floating stones and d'zirial light weaving, as well as a taxidermied albino hydra hanging on display from the ceiling.

This chamber stands at the entrance to the Onyx Repository's primary vault, and it is here that Marcien and his most loyal agents wait for the PCs!

Read or paraphrase the following once the PCs arrive in this area.

Discolored outlines on the walls make it clear that pieces of art and large tapestries have been recently removed from this hall, some with their identifying wall plaques still in place showing their ill-gotten provenance from Absalom's Blakros Museum. A massive, sealed vault door lies to the north. The metallic surface is inscribed with a constantly swirling series of magical runes.

Creatures: Marcien Blakros confronts the PCs here, along with some of his most trusted agents. Marcien is standing near the door to area **A4**. Having some advance warning of the PCs' approach and having interacted with them, however briefly, by way of his illusory projection, Marcien Blakros and his closest Onyx Alliance agents have had some time to prepare for combat. Marcien has already cast *stoneskin* on himself, and his commanders lurk in the southwest corner, out of sight and ready to ambush the PCs (using Stealth for initiative when combat begins).

Unfortunately, combat with Marcien is inevitable, even if the PCs successfully negotiated with him. When the PCs arrive, Marcien is grimacing as if in pain. Aslynn has just reached into his mind, shown him images of Sarnia's psychic prison, and commanded Marcien to attack if he ever wishes to see his mother again. Aslynn hopes to buy time for her forces to finish plundering the vault, and force a few more Pathfinders and Onyx Alliance agents to kill one another.

Marcien snaps to attention as the PCs enter. Read or paraphrase the following, then begin combat.

"My mother is trapped! I have seen her horrific prison! I'm left with no choice. Today, you must die, Pathfinders."

Marcien and his forces attack the PCs, either because Marcien believes the Society is somehow responsible for his mother's fate, or because Aslynn has forced his hand. While the PCs battle the Onyx Alliance on the Shadow Plane, Aslynn and Sarnia wrestle for psychic influence—their occasional shouts and cackles pierce the PCs' minds, but their battle does not affect the PCs' fight.

Marcien doesn't fight to the death, but surrenders if reduced to one-fifth or less of his maximum Hit Points. His commanders, among his most loyal agents even before his use of enchantment magic to bolster their devotion, fight to the death, or until Marcien surrenders, whichever comes first.

LEVELS 7–8

ONYX ALLIANCE OFFICER

CREATURE 5

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MEAN STREETS OF SHADOW ABSALOM

MARCIEN BLAKROS

CREATURE 8

Page 21, art on page 27

LEVELS 9-10

ONYX ALLIANCE COMMANDER

CREATURE 7

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MARCIEN BLAKROS

CREATURE 10

Page 24, art on page 27

Development: The massive door to the vault (area A4) begins to grind open soon after the PCs subdue Marcien. It takes 3 full rounds to open, providing the PCs with a short opportunity to heal and prepare for their next fight. Aslynn's voice shrieks aloud in rage, and Sarnia's voice addresses the PCs' minds once more.



ARISEPT

"I've managed to hold Aslynn off. I'm sorry, Marcien. I must draw on your power." Marcien, slumped on the ground, shows no sign of movement. "Sleep, my son. This nightmare will be over soon. Now, Pathfinders, go! Stop Arisept so I can make my move before Aslynn regains control!"

A4. VAULT

SEVERE

Read or paraphrase the following once the PCs arrive in this area.

This chamber's vaulted ceiling rises up nearly a hundred feet, with four terraced levels lining the walls to support individual niches that hold and catalog the Onyx Alliance's most valuable prizes from centuries of acquisition. The vaults floors and shelves are mostly empty, with some items scattered in a disorganized sprawl. Several bodies are strewn on the floor—fetchlings, humans, bugbears, and many others.

The wall's surfaces glitter with the inscribed runes of wards to prevent intrusion and divination alike from all those hoping to plunder the vault's riches. A massive rift in the north wall pulses with billowing shadows, leading to some dark, unknown place. A semi-corporeal sailing vessel hovers in the rift, half inside the vault, and half concealed in shadows. Reddish-purple lightning arcs along massive metal coils affixed to either side of the hull, maintaining some sort of equilibrium between the ship and the portal of shadows.

When the vault door opens and the PCs arrive, Aslynn's forces have already loaded her ship, the *Gale's Grasp*, with the vast majority of the Onyx Repository's wealth. PCs who have a Chronicle Sheet for *Pathfinder Society Scenario #3-14: The Tomb Between Worlds* recognize the strange portal-generating coils on the ship as being similar to the umbral vises discovered in that adventure, though the coils on the ship are far larger. Aslynn's ship uses this magical technology to generate an extraplanar pathway connected directly to the night hag's mind. Unfortunately for Aslynn, Sarnia learned of the ploy and is using her psychic powers to delay the ship's departure as long as possible.

Creatures: When the PCs arrive, Aslynn's sorcerous child Arisept orders his forces to retreat onto the ship. Arisept remains behind to stall or stop the PCs. Several horrifying minions of Aslynn, known as animate dreams, act as Arisept's protectors. These tortured, malicious creatures fight to the death, as does Arisept, who knows his mother has little use for disappointing children. Arisept uses his most powerful magic to destroy the PCs. While he initially avoids catching the animate dreams in the crossfire, if he's reduced below half his maximum Hit Points, he begins to attack more aggressively, not caring whether they are caught in the area of his spells, as long as he is damaging as many PCs as possible.

MEAN STREETS OF SHADOW ABSALOM

During the fight, each PC can attempt a DC 20 Religion or DC 15 Warfare Lore check as a free action to notice something odd about Arisept; though he seems to be a tiefling changeling human, his physical and mental abilities transcend normal humanoid limitations, and his body deflects blows as effectively as a sturdy suit of armor.

LEVELS 7-8

LESSER ANIMATE DREAMS (2)

CREATURE 6

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ARISEPT

CREATURE 8

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LEVELS 9-10

ANIMATE DREAMS (2)

CREATURE 8

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ARISEPT

CREATURE 10

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CONCLUSION

When the PCs defeat Aslynn's forces, the portal is just about to close, allowing the *Gale's Claw* to escape with the Repository's treasures.

Sarnia's voice cuts through the thunder of the portal, which has almost closed on the *Gale's Claw*. "Your forces are defeated, Aslynn—and their dream essence is just what I needed. Thanks! I'll be taking back what's mine... and I'll need a piece of your mind while I'm at it Aslynn. Thanks for letting me in."

Flashes of yellow and purple lightning arc along the ship, overloading the metal coils and setting it alight. The crew frantically fights to keep the ship afloat long enough to pass through the portal, and the storm clouds begin pouring into the vault as the rift fails. Aslynn's psychic scream of pain as Sarnia tears at her mind lasts only a moment before the deafening crash of the failing portal silences her. The ship is gone, and the figure of Sarnia Blakros hovers in its place, her glowing yellow eyes narrowed in concentration.

"Thank you, Pathfinders. Sorry I had to wait so long to reveal my plans. I knew I could count on you. Time to send you home. As for me, I've had enough of hags for now. It's time for a fresh start. If you don't mind, I'll be sending you home with a few... gifts. Hopefully, you can protect these treasures better than I have. Or see that they're destroyed before Aslynn strikes again."

A gossamer snarl of blue-white light fills the room.

Sarnia gathers together the remaining energy of the rift, as well as the defeated dream creatures and a piece

of Aslynn's own mind. Using her own significant psychic abilities, she returns the PCs—and all the contents of the ship's hold—back to the Grand Lodge. When the PCs and their newly acquired treasure trove appear out of thin air, nearby Pathfinder agents stop what they are doing and excitedly hurry over to ask them about their mission. Among them is the fungus leshy initiate Rain in Cloudy Day, who runs off to fetch Ambrus Valsin instead of lingering to pepper the PCs with questions. Ambrus quickly comes out to meet the PCs. After listening to their report, he congratulates them, as it seems they've foiled Aslynn's plans for now. The Society's next priority, of course, is to assess the overwhelming quantity of magical treasures and relics that Sarnia entrusted to them. Ambrus sends Rain in Cloudy Day to find the Society's Chief Archivist Zarta Dralneen so she can begin the process of cataloging and securing the treasures that the PCs have gathered.

If the PCs succeeded in their Envoy's Alliance faction mission, the PCs receive a message from Fola Barun in the coming days. Fola proudly informs them that a number of Onyx Alliance defectors have already turned up at the Grand Lodge and are requesting training as Pathfinder agents!

REPORTING NOTES

If the PCs got through to Marcien and convinced him of their intentions before Aslynn forced him to fight, check box A. If they did not convince him of their intentions, check box B. If the PCs managed to convince Ralzin and any other Onyx Alliance operatives to defect and join the Pathfinder Society, check box C. If they did not convince any of them to join the Society, check box D.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

The PCs fulfill their primary objective if they successfully stop the looting of the Onyx Repository. Doing so earns each PC 2 Reputation with their chosen faction.

SECONDARY OBJECTIVES

The PCs automatically fulfill their secondary objective by fulfilling their primary objective. Doing so earns each PC 2 Reputation with their chosen faction.

FACTION NOTES

The Envoy's Alliance faction takes particular interest in the PCs' mission.

Envoy's Alliance: If the PCs convinced Ralzin to defect and join the Pathfinder Society, the Envoy's Alliance is pleased with the PCs' efforts. Each PC earns 2 additional Reputation with the Envoy's Alliance faction, in addition to any other Reputation earned as a result of completing this scenario.

MEAN STREETS OF SHADOW ABSALOM

APPENDIX 1: LEVEL 7-8 ENCOUNTERS

The statistics presented in this appendix include full stat blocks for creatures and hazards appearing in this scenario. These encounters are written for four 7th-level PCs. If your group has a different composition or size, refer to GM Basics section of the *Guide to Organized Play: Pathfinder Society* for instructions on how to use the scaling sidebars to adjust the encounters for your group.

Some scaling sidebars reference the elite or weak adjustments. Rules for these adjustments appear on page 6 of the *Pathfinder Bestiary*. If a creature is marked “(0)”, don’t include it in the encounter unless otherwise specified (likely from the scaling sidebars).

ENCOUNTER A1 (LEVELS 7-8)

SHADOW SPEARS

HAZARD 7

MAGICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 30 (trained)

Description Invisible runes are concealed within an elaborate light-woven floor mosaic.

Disable DC 27 Thievery (trained) to remove pieces from the mosaic without triggering the magic or *dispel magic* (4th level; counteract DC 23) to counteract the rune

Barrage of Spears ☞ (arcane, illusion, shadow); **Trigger** A creature walks upon the mosaic. **Effect** The trap shoots a fusillade of shadow-wreathed spears out of the walls, making a Strike against each creature in area **A1**. Creatures who take damage from the spears must succeed at a DC 25 Will save or become doomed 1 as the spears tear off part of their shadow.

Ranged shadow spear +22, **Damage** 2d10+5 piercing plus 1d6 cold

MEAN STREETS OF SHADOW ABSALOM

ENCOUNTER A3 (LEVELS 7–8)

ONYX ALLIANCE OFFICER

CREATURE 5

UNCOMMON LE MEDIUM FETCHLING HUMANOID SHADOW

Perception +11; darkvision

Languages Common, Shadowtongue

Skills Acrobatics +11, Athletics +11, Deception +10, Intimidation +12, Shadow Plane Lore +12, Stealth +13, Thievery +13

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

Items dagger (4), leather armor, +1 rapier

AC 21; **Fort** +9, **Ref** +13, **Will** +11

HP 72

Reinforced Loyalty The officer is resistant to mind-affecting magics due to their repeated exposure to Marcien Blakros's enchantments. Whenever the officer rolls a success on a Will save against an enchantment or fear effect, they get a critical success instead, unless that effect originated from Marcien. In addition, anytime they gain the frightened condition, reduce its value by 1.

Shadow Blending When the officer is concealed as a result of dim light, the flat check to target them has a DC of 7, not 5.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ rapier +14 (deadly 1d8, disarm, magical), **Damage** 1d6+8 piercing

Melee ♦ dagger +13 (agile, finesse, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+8 piercing

Ranged ♦ dagger +13 (agile, finesse, thrown 10 feet, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+8 piercing

Shadow Stride ♦ (illusion, occult, shadow) **Requirement** The officer is in dim light; **Effect** The officer Strides. They have a +10-foot status bonus to their Speed during this Stride. The DC from shadow blending increases to 11 during this Stride, and the officer remains concealed by dim light until the end of the movement, even if they leave dim light during the Stride.

Sneak Attack The officer deals an extra 2d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

MARCIEN BLAKROS

CREATURE 8

UNIQUE LE MEDIUM FETCHLING HUMANOID SHADOW

Perception +15; darkvision

Languages Aklo, Common, Necril, Shadowtongue, Undercommon

Skills Arcana +15, Deception +18, Diplomacy +16, Intimidation +18, Occultism +17, Shadow Plane Lore +17, Society +15, Stealth +18

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

Items *Backbiter* (+1 striking dueling pistol), impressive coat, +1 striking staff

AC 25; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +17, **Will** +18

HP 120

SCALING ENCOUNTER A3

To adjust for the PCs' overall strength, use the following Challenge Point adjustments.

10+ Challenge Points: For every 2 Challenge Points beyond 8, add one Onyx Alliance officer to the encounter.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ staff +15 (magical, two-hand d8), **Damage** 2d4+8 bludgeoning

Ranged ♦ *Backbiter* +19 (concealable, concussive, magical, fatal d10), **Damage** 2d6+8 piercing plus Curse of Conflicted Loyalties

Occult Spontaneous Spells DC 27, attack +21; **4th** (4 slots) *calm emotions*, *hideous laughter*, *modify memory*, *stoneskin*, *suggestion*, *telepathy*; **3rd** (4 slots) *enthrall*, *grim tendrils*, *haste*, *mind reading*; **2nd** (4 slots) *augury*, *calm emotions*, *hideous laughter*, *touch of idiocy*; **1st** (4 slots) *bless*, *illusory disguise*, *lock*, *unseen servant*; **Cantrips (4th)** *chill touch*, *daze*, *detect magic*, *guidance*, *shield*

Curse of Conflicted Loyalties (curse) Creatures struck by Marcien's pistol, *Backbiter*, must succeed at a DC 26 Will saving throw or become confused for 1 round (or 1 minute on a critical failure).

Shadow Doubles ♦ or ♦♦ (illusion, occult, shadow)

Frequency once per day; **Effect** For each action spent to use this ability, Marcien creates one shadowy duplicate of himself anywhere within 60 feet of himself. Shadow doubles have the same statistics as Marcien, but they have the summoned trait, have 18 Hit Points, can't use Shadow Doubles or cast spells, their pistols do not cause Curse of Conflicted Loyalties, and they have an attack bonus of +14 for their pistol Strikes and +10 for their staff Strikes. A shadow double that attempts a saving throw against a light effect can't get a result better than failure. Each double remains for 1 round, until it's reduced to 0 Hit Points, or until it moves further than 60 feet from Marcien, whichever comes first. Each round thereafter, Marcien can spend a single action that has the concentrate trait to extend the duration of surviving duplicates by 1 round, to a maximum duration of 5 rounds. Marcien can see through the eyes of all of the shadow doubles at once. A character who Seeks can identify a creature as the real Marcien or a shadow double with a successful DC 27 Perception check.

MEAN STREETS OF SHADOW ABSALOM

ENCOUNTER A4 (LEVELS 7–8)

LESSER ANIMATE DREAMS (2)

CREATURE 6

UNCOMMON NE MEDIUM DREAM INCORPOREAL

Variant animate dream (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 18)

Perception +12; darkvision

Languages telepathy 100 feet

Skills Acrobatics +12, Deception +15, Intimidation +15, Occultism +10, Stealth +14

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

AC 21; **Fort** +13, **Ref** +16, **Will** +12; +1 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 78; **Immunities** disease, paralyzed, poison, precision, sleep; **Resistances** all 4 (except force, ghost touch, or negative; double resistance vs. non-magical)

Speed fly 40 feet

Melee ♦ nightmare tendril +17 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 4d6 negative plus endless nightmare

Occult Innate Spells DC 24; **3rd** *fear, sleep*; **2nd** *paranoia*

Endless Nightmare (curse, emotion, enchantment, fear, mental, occult) An animate dream's touch fills the victim's mind with terrifying visions; **Saving Throw** DC 24 Fortitude; **Stage 1** fatigued (1 day); **Stage 2** fatigued and stupefied 1 (1 day); **Stage 3** The victim falls asleep and can't be awakened as long as they remain at this stage (1 day).

SCALING ENCOUNTER A4

To adjust for the PCs' overall strength, use the following Challenge Point adjustments.

10+ Challenge Points: For every 2 Challenge Points beyond 8, add one lesser animate dream to the encounter.

ARISEPT

CREATURE 8

UNIQUE CE CHANGELING TIEFLING HUMANOID

Perception +15; darkvision

Languages Abyssal, Common, Necril, Shadowtongue

Skills Acrobatics +18, Athletics +16, Arcana +17, Deception +18, Diplomacy +18, Intimidation +20, Occultism +17, Society +17, Stealth +18

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

Items +1 striking rapier

AC 26; **Fort** +13, **Ref** +18, **Will** +17

HP 125

Caress Soul ☞ (curse, necromancy, occult) **Trigger** Arisept critically hits a target with his rapier; **Effect** The target must succeed at a DC 26 Will save or become enfeebled 1 (enfeebled 2 if it critically fails). If the target fails additional saves against this ability, the condition value increases by 1 if failed, or 2 if critically failed (to a maximum of enfeebled 4). This condition value decreases by 1 every 24 hours.

Speed 30 feet

Melee ♦ rapier +19 (deadly d8, disarm, finesse, magical), **Damage** 2d6+8 piercing

Arcane Spontaneous Spells DC 27, attack +19; **4th** (3 slots) *dimension door, dispel magic, fireball*; **3rd** (3 slots) *haste, lightning bolt, slow*; **2nd** (3 slots) *invisibility*; **Cantrips (4th)** *detect magic, mage hand, ray of frost, shield, sigil*

Abyssal Strikes ♦♦♦ Arisept makes a rapier attack against up to 3 targets within 10 feet, his blade extending beyond its normal reach and lashing out like a spear. Each attack counts toward his multiple attack penalty, but the penalty does not increase until after he has made all of his attacks.

MEAN STREETS OF SHADOW ABSALOM

APPENDIX 2: LEVEL 9-10 ENCOUNTERS

The statistics presented in this appendix include full stat blocks for creatures and hazards appearing in this scenario. These encounters are written for four 9th-level PCs. If your group has a different composition or size, refer to GM Basics section of the *Guide to Organized Play: Pathfinder Society* for instructions on how to use the scaling sidebars to adjust the encounters for your group.

Some scaling sidebars reference the elite or weak adjustments. Rules for these adjustments appear on page 6 of the *Pathfinder Bestiary*. If a creature is marked “(0)”, don’t include it in the encounter unless otherwise specified (likely from the scaling sidebars).

ENCOUNTER A1 (LEVELS 9-10)

SHADOW SPEARS

HAZARD 9

MAGICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 33 (expert)

Description Invisible runes are concealed within an elaborate light-woven floor mosaic.

Disable DC 30 Thievery (expert) to remove pieces from the mosaic without triggering the magic or *dispel magic* (5th level; counteract DC 26) to counteract the rune

Barrage of Spears ☞ (arcane, illusion, shadow); **Trigger** A creature walks upon the mosaic. **Effect** The trap shoots a fusillade of shadow-wreathed spears out of the walls, making a Strike against each creature in area **A1**. Creatures who take damage from the spears must succeed at a DC 28 Will save or become doomed 1 as the spears tear off part of their shadow.

Ranged shadow spear +25, **Damage** 2d10+9 piercing plus 1d6 cold

MEAN STREETS OF SHADOW ABSALOM

ENCOUNTER A3 (LEVELS 9–10)

ONYX ALLIANCE COMMANDER

CREATURE 7

UNCOMMON LE MEDIUM FETCHLING HUMANOID SHADOW

Perception +13; darkvision

Languages Common, Shadowtongue

Skills Acrobatics +12, Athletics +14, Deception +13, Intimidation +15, Shadow Plane Lore +19, Stealth +17, Thievery +15

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

Items dagger (4), leather armor, +1 rapier

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

HP 110

Attack of Opportunity ⚡

Reinforced Loyalty The commander is resistant to mind-affecting magics due to their repeated exposure to Marcien Blakros's enchantments. Whenever the commander rolls a success on a Will save against an enchantment or fear effect, they get a critical success instead, unless that effect originated from Marcien. In addition, anytime they gain the frightened condition, reduce its value by 1.

Shadow Blending When the officer is concealed as a result of dim light, the flat check to target them has a DC of 7, not 5.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ⚔ rapier +18 (deadly 1d8, disarm, magical), **Damage** 1d6+11 piercing

Melee ⚔ dagger +17 (agile, finesse, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+11 piercing

Ranged ⚔ dagger +17 (agile, finesse, thrown 10 feet, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+11 piercing

Shadow Stride ⚡ (illusion, occult, shadow) **Requirement** The commander is in dim light; **Effect** The officer Strides. They have a +10-foot status bonus to their Speed during this Stride. The DC from shadow blending increases to 11 during this Stride, and the commander remains concealed by dim light until the end of the movement, even if they leave dim light during the Stride.

Sneak Attack The commander deals an extra 2d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

MARCEN BLAKROS

CREATURE 10

UNIQUE LE MEDIUM FETCHLING HUMANOID SHADOW

Perception +19; darkvision

Languages Aklo, Common, Necril, Shadowtongue, Undercommon

Skills Arcana +19, Deception +22, Diplomacy +18, Intimidation +20, Occultism +21, Shadow Plane Lore +19, Society +17, Stealth +21

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

Items *Backbiter* (+1 striking dueling pistol), impressive coat, +1 striking staff

SCALING ENCOUNTER A3

To adjust for the PCs' overall strength, use the following Challenge Point adjustments.

20+ Challenge Points: For every 4 Challenge Points beyond 16, add one Onyx Alliance commander to the encounter.

AC 28; **Fort** +16, **Ref** +20, **Will** +20

HP 160

Speed 25 feet

Melee ⚔ staff +17 (magical, two-hand d8), **Damage** 2d4+10 bludgeoning

Ranged ⚔ *Backbiter* +22 (concealable, concussive, magical, fatal d10), **Damage** 2d6+10 piercing plus Curse of Conflicted Loyalties

Occult Spontaneous Spells DC 30, attack +24; **5th** (4 slots) *calm emotions*, *cloak of colors*, *crushing despair*, *hideous laughter*, *shadow walk*; **4th** (4 slots) *modify memory*, *stoneskin*, *suggestion*, *telepathy*; **3rd** (4 slots) *enthrall*, *grim tendrils*, *haste*, *mind reading*; **2nd** (4 slots) *augury*, *calm emotions*, *hideous laughter*, *touch of idiocy*; **1st** (4 slots) *bless*, *illusory disguise*, *lock*, *unseen servant*; **Cantrips** (4th) *chill touch*, *daze*, *detect magic*, *guidance*, *shield*

Curse of Conflicted Loyalties (curse) Creatures struck by Marcien's pistol, *Backbiter*, must succeed at a DC 29 Will saving throw or become confused for 1 round (or 1 minute on a critical failure).

Shadow Doubles ⚡ or ⚡⚡ (illusion, occult, shadow)

Frequency once per day; **Effect** For each action spent to use this ability, Marcien creates one shadowy duplicate of himself anywhere within 60 feet of himself. Shadow doubles have the same statistics as Marcien, but they have the summoned trait, have 24 Hit Points, can't use Shadow Doubles or cast spells, their pistols do not cause Curse of Conflicted Loyalties, and they have an attack bonus of +17 for their pistol Strikes and +12 for their staff Strikes. A shadow double that attempts a saving throw against a light effect can't get a result better than failure. Each double remains for 1 round, until it's reduced to 0 Hit Points, or until it moves further than 60 feet from Marcien, whichever comes first. Each round thereafter, Marcien can spend a single action that has the concentrate trait to extend the duration of surviving duplicates by 1 round, to a maximum duration of 5 rounds. Marcien can see through the eyes of all of the shadow doubles at once. A character who Seeks can identify a creature as the real Marcien or a shadow double with a successful DC 30 Perception check.

MEAN STREETS OF SHADOW ABSALOM

ENCOUNTER A4 (LEVELS 9–10)

ANIMATE DREAMS (2)

CREATURE 8

UNCOMMON NE MEDIUM DREAM INCORPOREAL

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 18

Perception +14; darkvision

Languages telepathy 100 feet

Skills Acrobatics +14, Deception +18, Intimidation +18, Occultism +12, Stealth +18

Str –5, **Dex** +4, **Con** +3, **Int** +0, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +6

AC 24; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +18, **Will** +14; +1 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 110; **Immunities** disease, paralyzed, poison, precision, sleep; **Resistances** all 5 (except force, ghost touch, or negative; double resistance vs. non-magical)

Speed fly 40 feet

Melee ♦ nightmare tendril +20 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 4d8 negative plus endless nightmare

Occult Innate Spells DC 26; **4th** *confusion*, *dimension door* (at will), *nightmare*, *phantasmal killer*, *sleep*; **3rd** *fear*

Endless Nightmare (curse, emotion, enchantment, fear, mental, occult) An animate dream's touch fills the victim's mind with terrifying visions; **Saving Throw** DC 26 Fortitude; **Stage 1** fatigued (1 day); **Stage 2** fatigued and stupefied 1 (1 day); **Stage 3** The victim falls asleep and can't be awakened as long as they remain at this stage (1 day).

SCALING ENCOUNTER A4

To adjust for the PCs' overall strength, use the following Challenge Point adjustments.

20+ Challenge Points: For every 4 Challenge Points beyond 16, add one animate dream to the encounter.

ARISEPT

CREATURE 10

UNIQUE CE CHANGELING TIEFLING HUMANOID

Perception +18; darkvision

Languages Abyssal, Common, Necril, Shadowtongue

Skills Acrobatics +21, Athletics +20, Arcana +20, Deception +21, Diplomacy +21, Intimidation +24, Occultism +20, Society +20, Stealth +21

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

Items +1 striking rapier

AC 29; **Fort** +16, **Ref** +21, **Will** +20

HP 160

Caress Soul ☞ (curse, necromancy, occult) **Trigger** Arisept critically hits a target with his rapier; **Effect** The target must succeed at a DC 29 Will save or become enfeebled 1 (enfeebled 2 if it critically fails). If the target fails additional saves against this ability, the condition value increases by 1 if failed, or 2 if critically failed (to a maximum of enfeebled 4). This condition value decreases by 1 every 24 hours.

Speed 30 feet

Melee ♦ rapier +22 (deadly d8, disarm, finesse, magical), **Damage** 2d6+10 piercing

Arcane Spontaneous Spells DC 30, attack +22; **5th** (3 slots) *black tentacles*, *cloudkill*, *dispel magic*; **4th** (3 slots) *dimension door*, *fireball*, *wall of fire*; **3rd** (3 slots) *haste*, *lightning bolt*, *slow*; **2nd** (4 slots) *invisibility*; **Cantrips** (4th) *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *ray of frost*, *shield*, *sigil*

Abyssal Strikes ♦♦♦ Arisept makes a rapier attack against up to 3 targets within 10 feet, his blade extending beyond its normal reach and lashing out like a spear. Each attack counts toward his multiple attack penalty, but the penalty does not increase until after he has made all of his attacks.

MEAN STREETS OF SHADOW ABSALOM

APPENDIX 3: GAME AIDS



SESHUUN

RENSIVIR



K'KAVIIM

VIRISETH



MEAN STREETS OF SHADOW ABSALOM

APPENDIX 3: GAME AIDS



GREMALA

MARCEN BLAKROS



RALZIN

ARISEPT



MEAN STREETS OF SHADOW ABSALOM

HANDOUT #1: SITES OF SHADOW ABSALOM

Location #1: Entrance to Hive Izt Sixt'Zym

You're to meet the d'ziriak lightweaver, K'kaviim, in the western hive dunes. They're well-connected to Shadow Absalom's rumor mill, but also rather particular and egotistical when it comes to their art. They're a member of the secretive Light-Weaver's Guild, which uses proprietary techniques to sculpt light into enduring patterns. The Light-Weaver's Guild has had its share of conflicts with the Onyx Alliance in the past, but the organizations established a truce several years ago. See what K'kaviim knows about the Onyx Repository.

Location #2: Outskirts of the Unspoken City

Desperate times call for desperate measures. Your next contact is Viriseth, whom you'll find at the southern edge of the Unspoken City district of Shadow Absalom. He's a member of the Collegium Desoleum, a secretive group of necromancers that rules over the district. He may not deign to speak to you directly. Despite his nature and profession, he is exceptionally reasonable, knowledgeable, and politically neutral in his city's politics. It's likely he knows more about what's going on behind the scenes, and may be willing to share such knowledge if you impress him. Find out what he knows, and remember that we're not sending you to Shadow Absalom to stamp out every evil being who crosses your path.

Location #3: The Soul Stalls

Located outside of Shadow Absalom's western gate, this place serves as a grand marketplace for dubious planar commerce, including Shadow Absalom's vile soul trade. Our contact here is the night hag known as Gremala the Dream-Monger. While reprehensible in her own right, she has a considerable grudge against our current enemy, Aslynn. Gather what information you can, and remember: our priority is stopping Aslynn.

Location #4: Wightir House

Visit this location only after you have visited the others, as you'll want to acquire leverage for your negotiation with any Onyx Alliance agents you may meet here.

This mirror version of the Blakros Museum was the Onyx Alliance's secondary vault and laboratory until recent weeks. We know some catastrophe has befallen it, but not what. The circumstances of what occurred should provide some clues about the overall situation with the Onyx Alliance and what Aslynn has planned. If you meet Onyx Alliance agents here, try to convince them you're there to help. They might show you how to access the Onyx Repository, and perhaps they'll take an interest in the Pathfinder Society.

MEAN STREETS OF SHADOW ABSALOM

A. ONYX REPOSITORY



MEAN STREETS OF SHADOW ABSALOM

ORGANIZED PLAY

TREASURE TABLE

LEVEL	TREASURE BUNDLE
7	22 gp
8	30 gp
9	44 gp
10	60 gp

TREASURE BUNDLES

- ☐ Entrance to Hive Izt Sixt'zym, page 8: 1 Treasure Bundle for convincing K'kaviim to share his experiences with the Onyx Repository.
- ☐ Outskirts of the Unspoken City, page 9: 1 Treasure Bundle for earning Viriseth's reward.
- ☐ Soul Stalls, page 10: 1 Treasure Bundle for earning Gremala's reward.
- ☐ ☐ Wightir House, page 12: 1 Treasure Bundle for earning Ralzin's reward, 1 Treasure Bundle for convincing Ralzin to defect to the Pathfinder Society.
- ☐ ☐ Area **A3**, page 17: 2 Treasure Bundles for defeating Marcien.
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Area **A4**, page 18: 3 Treasure Bundles for defeating Arisept.



Location _____

			Faction:		
Character Name:			<input type="checkbox"/> Grand Archive	<input type="checkbox"/> Envoy's Alliance	<input type="checkbox"/> Slow Track
			<input type="checkbox"/> Radiant Oath	<input type="checkbox"/> Horizon Hunters	<input type="checkbox"/> Dead
Org Play #:	-2	Level	<input type="checkbox"/> Vigilant Seal	<input type="checkbox"/> Verdant Wheel	<input type="checkbox"/> Infamy
			<input type="checkbox"/>		

MEAN STREETS OF SHADOW ABSALOM

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Development Managers • Jason Keeley and Linda Zayas-Palmer

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Scenario #3-19: Mean Streets of Shadow Absalom

Character Name	Organized Play #	Character # <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; margin: 0 auto; text-align: center;">2</div>
Adventure Summary		
<p>Having learned of the night hag Aslynn's plot to pit the Onyx Alliance and Pathfinder Society against each other and steal the Onyx Alliance's treasures, the Society sent you to Shadow Absalom to thwart Aslynn's scheme. In Shadow Absalom, the mirror of Absalom on the Shadow Plane, you investigated to find a way inside the Onyx Repository, the infamously impenetrable vault where the Onyx Alliance has secured its treasures. After finding and conversing with a number of Society contacts, you gained a better understanding of the Onyx Alliance's recent and current circumstances, and found a way in. Inside the Repository, you contended with traps and wards, then confronted Marcien Blakros. Finally, you battled Aslynn's forces to prevent her from plundering the vault!</p>		
Boons		Rewards
<p>Congratulations on completing the adventure! You've earned Pathfinder Society (second edition) Achievement Points, a currency that be redeemed on our website at paizo.com for special character boons, such as access to rare or uncommon ancestries, feats, and more! To redeem your Achievement Points, go to paizo.com/organizedPlay/myAccount and click on the Boons tab. Note that you must have created a paizo.com account and registered a character before you can begin making Achievement Point transactions.</p> <p>This scenario qualifies you for the following unique Achievement Point boon: Friend from the Shadows.</p>		Starting XP
		XP Gained
		Total XP
		Starting GP
		GP Gained
		Total GP
Reputation Gained		
Items		
<p>You can purchase up to two items from this Chronicle Sheet. Once you have made these purchases, the other options become unavailable for purchase from this Chronicle Sheet, though you can still purchase them normally if you otherwise have access to them.</p> <p><i>gloom blade</i> (Item 9, discounted to 656 gp, limit 1) <i>greater pendant of the occult</i> (item 9, discounted to 606 gp, limit 1) <i>tourmaline sphere aeon stone^U</i> (item 7, 350 gp, limit 1)</p>		
Purchases		
Items Sold / Conditions Gained		
TOTAL VALUE OF ITEMS SOLD <small>Add 1/2 this value to the GP Gained Box</small>		
<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 20px;"></div>		
Items Bought / Conditions Cleared		
TOTAL COST OF ITEMS BOUGHT		
<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 20px;"></div>		
Notes		
FOR GM ONLY		
EVENT	EVENT CODE	DATE
GM Organized Play #		

Chronicle Code: MWH1

For more information about the Pathfinder Society Organized Play program, including how to use this Chronicle Sheet, visit pathfindersociety.club