

EXPLORE AIRSPUR:

AGENTS AND ENEMIES

By Brian Cortijo

illustration by David Hammond and
Shane Watson - Empty Room Studio
cartography by Sean Macdonald

All manner of interesting folk fill the streets and motes of Airspur. Among these folk are the genasi, and a myriad other races wander the roads and flying bridges of the city as well, if in lesser numbers. As with any city, one can find soldiers and merchants, criminals and adventurers. No matter how experienced a party of heroes might be when they first encounter the wondrous capital of Akanûl, the PCs can find adventure in Airspur if they look for it.





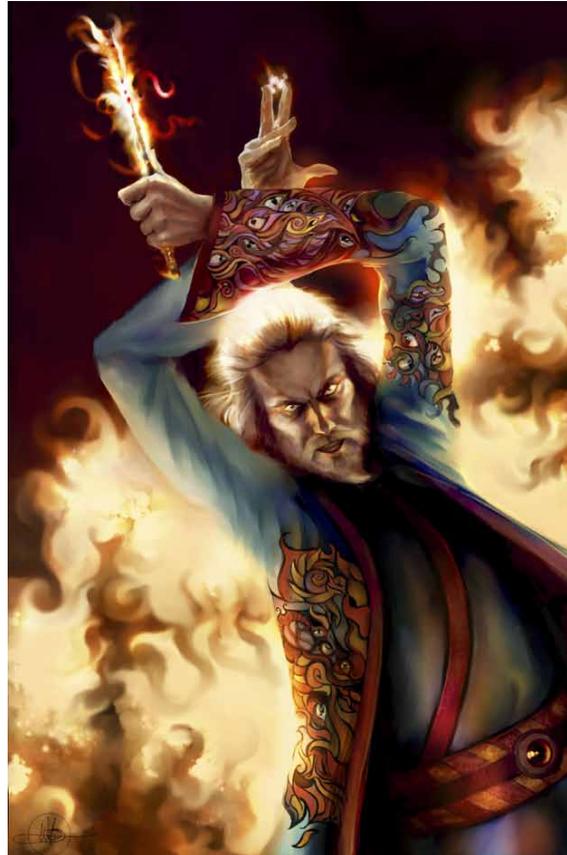
- 1. COURT OF MAJESTY
- 2. STREET OF CERULEAN HUES
- 3. DARKLED DEPTHS
- 4. PLAZA OF LEAPING FOUNTAINS
- 5. THE CATACOMBS

- 6. DRAKEYARDS
- 7. MOTHERHOUSE
- 8. AKANÛL COURTHOUSES
- 9. CLIFF PRISON
- 10. AKANAWATER FALLS

DISTANCE IN FEET
0 1,000

This article references locations on the Airspur city map. See “Airspur: Brightest of the Fallen Stars” in *DRAGON*® #377 for more information about the city.

Chevesh		Level 15 Elite Artillery
Medium natural humanoid (fire), human		XP 2,400
Initiative +8	Senses Perception +10	
HP 228; Bloodied 114		
AC 27; Fortitude 25; Reflex 28; Will 28		
Resist 15 fire		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 6		
Action Points 1		
⚔ Flame Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire, Weapon +20 vs. AC; 1d4 + 4 damage plus 2d8 fire damage.		
🔥 Flame Missile (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire, Implement Ranged 20; +20 vs. Reflex; 3d4 + 7 fire damage.		
🚀 Missile Flurry (standard; at-will) Chevesh makes two <i>flame missile</i> attacks.		
⚡ Lances of Flame (standard; recharge ⏳) ⚡ Close blast 5; targets enemies; +18 vs. Reflex; 4d6 + 6 fire damage, and Chevesh pushes the target 4 squares.		
⚡ Prismatic Beams (standard; encounter) ♦ Fire, Poison Close burst 5; targets enemies; +18 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 7 poison damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends). <i>Effect:</i> Chevesh makes a secondary attack. <i>Secondary Attack:</i> Close burst 5; targets enemies; +18 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 7 fire damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).		
Body of Flame (free when a creature hits Chevesh with a melee attack; at-will) The triggering creature takes 10 fire damage.		
Blur (minor; encounter) ♦ Illusion Enemies 5 or more squares away from Chevesh cannot see him. <i>Sustain Minor:</i> The effect persists.		
Displacement (immediate interrupt, when an attack hits Chevesh; encounter) ♦ Illusion The attacker must reroll the attack.		
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Abyssal, Common, Primordial	
Skills Arcana +18, Dungeoneering +15		
Str 14 (+9)	Dex 12 (+8)	Wis 16 (+10)
Con 18 (+11)	Int 22 (+13)	Cha 13 (+8)
Equipment dagger, wand		



CHEVESH, FLAME MAGE

Nestled among the buildings on the southern cliff-shore of the city is the home of Chevesh, a wandering (and more than slightly insane) fire mage who settled in Airspur nearly a decade ago. Rumors fly that he is centuries old, and these tales detail different sources for his madness: Some believe he was driven mad by the Spellplague, while others whisper that he was among those unfortunate humans that was not revealed to be a genasi when Calimshan fell into its ages old civil war.

Whatever the truth of his origins, Chevesh now spends his days in his laboratory, experimenting with magic beyond even his understanding. Long fascinated with genasi and their connection to elemental forces, Chevesh has tried several times—and failed—to develop rituals that will transform him fully into a member of that race. Some of these attempts have resulted in “improvements” to his form, but he has reached the point where testing new magic has become dangerous. As a result, he secretly obtains nongenasi inmates from the nearby prison as “volunteers” for his experiments.

Among the organizations within Akanûl, Chevesh has concern only for the Firestorm Cabal, whose investigations into plaguechanged creatures comes dangerously close to interfering with his own research.

TACTICS

Chevesh’s insanity in no way hampers his effectiveness in combat. When threatened, he opens an encounter with *missile flurry*. He reserves his *prismatic beams* for a moment when he can affect the maximum number of targets.

ENCOUNTER GROUP

Although Chevesh works alone, he contacts creatures with a connection to fire, and others might find him during one of his negotiations with such creatures.

Level 15 Encounter (XP 6,500)

- ♦ Chevesh (level 15 elite artillery)
- ♦ 2 azer footsoldiers (level 14 soldier; *Monster Manual*, page 22)
- ♦ 1 azer taskmaster (level 16 controller; *Monster Manual*, page 23)
- ♦ 2 azer warriors (level 16 minion; *Monster Manual*, page 22)

HOOK: INTRODUCING CHEVESH

To help you introduce a reclusive mage such as Chevesh as a villain in your campaign, we have a few hooks below that might assist you.

- ◆ The PCs track a shipment of prisoners, exotic ritual components, or *residuum* to Chevesh's home.
- ◆ The PCs encounter an escaped test subject running from Chevesh's laboratory, screaming in agony before being consumed by flame from within her.
- ◆ An enemy that the PCs slew in a previous encounter turns out to be a former subject that Chevesh was observing. Chevesh trails and confronts the PCs about their interference.
- ◆ The Firestorm Cabal reaches out to the PCs, pointing out Chevesh as a threat that must be eliminated—but with which the Cabal is not equipped to deal.

NAIBUR TINOK, SERVANT OF SHADOW

The savagely enthusiastic swordmage called Naibur Tinok is the leader of a small group of Netherese agents within Airspur. Their duties are separate from those agents that directly operate from the embassy. While the official servants of Netheril work to advance trade and diplomatic relations within Akanûl, Tinok and his band operate in the shadows, looking to eliminate potential threats to Netherese interests among the genasi.

More than anything, Tinok craves transformation into a shade in Netheril's service. Naturally pale, he dyes his hair black and dresses in dark hues, emulating the style and mannerisms of the shadar-kai—so much so that many observers cannot tell that Naibur

is truly human. Although Prince Rivalen has offered to transform him into a shadar-kai, the swordmage has politely declined, preferring to wait until he has earned the elevated status of a true shade, and is invited to learn the secrets of the Netherese umbriri (*FORGOTTEN REALMS® Player's Guide*, page 67).

TACTICS

Despite his formidable combat abilities, Naibur prefers to strike in ambush, taking his targets by surprise and eliminating the opportunity for them to plan a counterassault. Once he engages his foes, the swordmage attempts to set up flanking opportunities for his allies, while maintaining the mark from his *aegis of ensnarement* on the nearest defender among the PCs. If the combat becomes tense, or his allies fail to take advantage of his maneuvering, Naibur uses his *shadowstride* to leave the thick of combat, escaping if he feels that the situation can't be salvaged.

ENCOUNTER GROUP

As the leader of the small cadre of Netherese agents inside Airspur, Naibur can expect to call on them in times of conflict. Although he prefers to work alone, the capable swordmage is more than willing to accept the help of other servants of Netheril should the need arise.

Level 8 Encounter (XP 1,750)

- ◆ Naibur Tinok (level 7 elite soldier)
- ◆ 1 shadar-kai chainfighter (level 6 skirmisher; *Monster Manual*, page 230)
- ◆ 1 shadar-kai gloomblade (level 6 lurker; *Monster Manual*, page 230)
- ◆ 1 shadar-kai warrior (level 8 soldier; *Monster Manual*, page 231)
- ◆ 1 shadar-kai witch (level 7 controller; *Monster Manual*, page 231)



Naibur Tinok		Level 7 Elite Soldier
Medium natural humanoid, human		XP 600
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +9	
HP 156; Bloodied 78		
AC 23; Fortitude 18, Reflex 19, Will 20		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 6		
Action Points 1		
⊕ Acidic Slash (standard; at-will) ◆ Acid, Weapon		
+14 vs. AC; 1d10 + 3 acid damage.		
⊕ Corrosive Splash (standard; at will)		
Naibur makes two <i>acidic slash</i> attacks. If either hits, Naibur deals 3 points of acid damage to each enemy adjacent to him that he did not hit.		
⊕ Enervating Slash (standard; encounter) ◆ Weapon		
+14 vs. Fortitude; 2d10 + 4 damage. <i>Miss</i> : Half damage. <i>Effect</i> : The target is weakened (save ends).		
⚡ Lightning Blade (standard; encounter) ◆ Lightning, Weapon		
Close burst 2; targets enemies; +10 vs. Fortitude; 2d10 + 4 lightning damage.		
⚡ Aegis of Ensnarement (minor; at-will) ◆ Teleportation		
Close burst 2; targets one enemy in burst; no attack roll; the target is marked until Naibur marks another target with this power. If a target marked by this power is within 10 squares of Naibur when it hits with an attack that does not include him as a target, Naibur can use an immediate reaction after the target's entire attack is resolved to teleport the target to any space adjacent to him. In addition, the target grants combat advantage to all creatures until the end of Naibur's next turn.		
Shadowstride (move; recharge [1]) ◆ Illusion, Teleportation		
Naibur teleports 6 squares and is invisible until the start of his next turn.		
Skills Arcana +12, Diplomacy +9, History +12		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Netherese, Primordial	
Str 16 (+6)	Dex 10 (+3)	Wis 12 (+4)
Con 14 (+5)	Int 19 (+7)	Cha 13 (+4)
Equipment leather armor, bastard sword		

RILTA OF THE ROOFTOPS

Bounding across rooftops and through the clouds themselves is Rilta, the bold and skilled burglar that makes a living stealing from Airspur's elite and wealthy visitors to the city. Although not malicious about her targets—or the wealth she takes from them—Rilta is nonetheless a proud and somewhat greedy thief who bristles at the thought of being embarrassed or beaten to a score.

Eager to take on any assignment as long as she can avoid direct violence, Rilta has spent years developing her powers of flight. She uses her *cloud hop* ability to leap off the edge of the cliffs or earthmotes of Airspur, floating harmlessly down to one of its lower surfaces to hide among the city's buildings. Rilta is a shrewd thief and is familiar enough with the weather patterns over the Akanawater to know when her attempts will merely evade pursuers, and when she will be entirely concealed by shifting cloud cover, mists, and other obstructions.

TACTICS

Rilta fights for survival rather than for glory or for the rush of violence. If forced to fight at all, she prefers to knock her opponents out rather than slaying them. The moment a combat appears to turn against her, Rilta uses her *evasive flip* to avoid her attackers, and then *cloud hop* to escape. She retains her action point so that she can use an extra move action to aid in evading her enemies.

NETHER-WHO?

Fans of the FORGOTTEN REALMS can recognize Netheril and its plots, but newcomers or those who want to insert Naibur and his plots into non-FORGOTTEN REALMS campaigns might not have this knowledge. A primer on Netheril follows.

Netheril was an ancient empire driven by magic, and a disruption of magic brought it low when one of its archmages usurped the mantle of Mystryl, goddess of magic. A little more than a century ago, one of Netheril's flying cities returned from the planes and began rebuilding the empire. Now, Netheril and its rulers—the powerful, shadow-infused Princes of Shade—seek dominion over all the empire's former lands, as well as many countries that were never part of that vast and sprawling realm. Sembia was the first to fall to Netheril's influence, but the Princes seek nothing less than total rule—or at the very least, influence—over the entire continent.

As a result, Netherese agents work in the capitals and major cities of countless realms, pushing the empire's interests and quietly dispatching its enemies. Humans, shadar-kai, and the favored shades (*FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Guide*, page 260) work to quietly subvert those who would oppose them.

Any expansionist, magically powerful kingdom or empire can serve in place of Netheril; a strong connection to the Shadowfell is helpful, but by no means necessary.

For those interested, more information about the Netherese empire can be found in the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Guide*.

TANRIS

Across Airspur, the merchant Crerorm, the traveling porter Queyh of Calimport, and the rumormonger Inakin are all known, if seldom mentioned. These people all are Tanris, in different guises and under different names, plying his trade among an unsuspecting populace.

Tanris is the faceless head of a nameless crime organization. None know his original name or his motivation for causing such tumult in Airspur; they know that some folks go missing, some nobles suddenly become suspiciously silent, and certain merchants have unforeseen troubles making simple purchases. It is Tanris that causes these troubles.

Tanris was born a stormsoul genasi, but he has taken great pains to conceal his nature beneath the guise of a windsoul. Only when angered, threatened, or insulted does the stormsoul portion of his being manifest, beginning as crackling lightning that runs up and down his *szuldar* (the energy lines that mark the faces of all genasi) and culminating with the sudden emergence of crystalline growths that clearly mark him as a stormsoul.

The primary business of Tanris's enterprise is smuggling, and he has a series of warehouses across Airspur that he uses for that purpose. Tanris can also—for the appropriate price—be contracted for kidnapping, blackmail, intimidation, or fencing stolen goods. He refers any requests for burglaries to the

AN UNEXPECTED ALLY?

Rilta is a good way to introduce a bit of ambiguity into an ongoing campaign. Although she works perfectly well as an enemy to be encountered and defeated, Rilta is best used as a sometimes-ally to the PCs, occasionally working with them, while at other times treating them as rivals or outright enemies.

No matter how long the players interact with Rilta, a big enough score might come along and she might choose to turn on them. Although she doesn't attack them outright, it's not above the young thief to leave her former allies in a dangerous situation.

Hooks to employ Rilta in a campaign include the following:

- ◆ Having Rilta work together with the party for a few missions, aiding them as an advance scout to gain their trust so that she can use them as a distraction to obtain an item she wishes to steal.
- ◆ After a short time as uneasy allies, Rilta and the PCs take missions to recover the same object. The party arrives at the location of the object, only to find that Rilta is already escaping with the loot, and they need to track her down to complete their quest.
- ◆ Rilta has failed in one of her missions for the dangerous crime lord Tanris, and the party needs to find her and bring Tanris proof of her death before he sends his goons after them.
- ◆ Trapped in an untenable situation, the PCs receive unexpected aid from Rilta, only to have her cash in the favor by requesting their help on a dangerous mission.

Rilta can also act as a replacement for a rogue or other striker PC that dies in the course of a campaign. Rather than having the player introduce an entirely new character, Rilta's dealings with the party provide a plausible introduction—have the player create a windsoul genasi rogue (the aerialist rogue build from *Martial Power*™ is a good fit) of the party's level, and off you go!

Rilta		Level 9 Elite Skirmisher	
Medium elemental humanoid (air), genasi		XP 800	
Initiative +10	Senses Perception +10		
HP 188; Bloodied 94			
AC 23; Fortitude 19, Reflex 23, Will 22			
Saving Throws +2			
Resist 5 cold			
Speed 6; see also <i>cloud hop</i>			
Action Points 1			
⬇ Short Sword (standard; at-will) ◆ Cold, Weapon			
+14 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage plus 1d6 cold damage, and Rilta shifts 2 squares.			
⊙ Thrown Dagger (standard; at will) ◆ Weapon			
Ranged 10; +14 vs. AC; 2d4 + 5 damage, and the target cannot make opportunity attacks until the end of Rilta's next turn.			
⬇ Swiftwind Stride (standard; at-will)			
Rilta makes two basic attacks.			
⬅ Steel Whirlwind (standard; encounter) ◆ Weapon			
Close burst 2; targets enemies; +12 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 5 damage, and Rilta pushes the target 1 square and knocks it prone.			
⬇ Knockout Blow (standard; encounter) ◆ Weapon			
+12 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 4 damage and the target is knocked unconscious (save ends). <i>Miss</i> : Half damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).			
⬇ Evasive Flip (immediate reaction, when a creature flanks Rilta; recharge [E]) ◆ Weapon			
Rilta shifts 2 squares, which can move her through occupied squares. At the end of her movement, Rilta deals 4 damage to an adjacent enemy.			
⬇ Cloud Hop (minor; recharge [E][E][E])			
Until the end of her turn, Rilta gains fly 6 and can hover. If Rilta ends her turn without landing, she floats harmlessly to the ground.			
Combat Advantage			
Rilta deals 2d6 extra damage against any target granting combat advantage to her.			
First Strike			
Rilta has combat advantage against any enemy that has not yet acted in the encounter.			
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Common, Primordial	
Skills Acrobatics +12, Stealth +12, Thievery +12			
Str 11 (+4)	Dex 19 (+8)	Wis 12 (+5)	
Con 14 (+6)	Int 13 (+5)	Cha 18 (+8)	
Equipment leather armor, 2 short swords, 6 daggers			

thief, Rilta, though the young genasi has no idea from where such referrals originally stem.

TACTICS

In combat, Tanris's priority is survival, not vengeance, and so he attempts to avoid damage rather than dealing it out himself. He makes liberal use of his *near or far* and *by the throat* powers, reserving his *rising storm* for when the battle turns against him and he tries to make an escape.

ENCOUNTER GROUP

Tanris has a number of minor genasi criminals within his enterprise. When encountered, his trio of loyal bodyguards and the watersoul genasi mage he employs for protection surround him. The crime lord grabs an enemy at the nearest opportunity, punishing that character while his associates deal with the other PCs.

Level 11 Encounter (XP 3,250)

- ◆ 1 genasi hydromancer (level 8 controller; *Monster Manual 2*, page 117)
- ◆ 3 genasi stoneshields (level 10 soldier; *Monster Manual 2*, page 117)
- ◆ Tanris (level 12 elite lurker)



Tanris		Level 12 Elite Lurker	
Medium elemental humanoid (air, water), genasi		XP 1,400	
Initiative +15	Senses Perception +8		
HP 184; Bloodied 92			
AC 26; Fortitude 22, Reflex 26, Will 24			
Saving Throws +2			
Resist 5 lightning			
Speed 6			
Action Points 1			
⚔ Dagger (standard; at-will) ◆ Weapon			
+17 vs. AC; 1d4 + 5 damage.			
⚔ Thrown Dagger (standard; at-will) ◆ Weapon			
Ranged 10; +17 vs. AC; 1d4 + 5 damage.			
⚔ / ⚔ Near or Far (standard; at-will) ◆ Weapon			
Tanris makes two basic attacks.			
⚔ By the Throat (standard; at-will) ◆ Weapon			
+17 vs. AC; 1d4 + 5 damage, and the target is grabbed and takes a -2 penalty to escape checks to escape the grab.			
⚔ Close Shave (standard; at-will) ◆ Weapon			
Targets one creature grabbed by Tanris; +17 vs. AC; 3d6 + 5 damage.			
⚔ Before You Go (free action, when an enemy grabbed by Tanris escapes; at-will) ◆ Weapon			
Targets the escaping enemy; +17 vs. AC; 2d4 + 5 damage.			
⚔ Rising Storm (minor; encounter) ◆ Lightning			
Close burst 2; +14 vs. Reflex; 2d10 lightning damage.			
Effect: Tanris gains fly 6 until the end of his next turn.			
Body Shield (opportunity, when an enemy hits or misses Tanris; must be grabbing a creature; at-will)			
Tanris takes only half damage from the hit, and the grabbed creature takes the rest. If the attack misses and deals damage on a miss, Tanris takes no damage and the grabbed enemy takes all the damage from the attack.			
Combat Advantage			
Tanris deals 1d6 extra damage against any target granting combat advantage to him.			
Skills Bluff +11, Insight +13, Stealth +16			
Alignment Evil		Languages Common, Primordial	
Str 15 (+8)	Dex 20 (+11)	Wis 14 (+8)	
Con 14 (+8)	Int 16 (+9)	Cha 10 (+6)	
Equipment leather armor, 12 daggers			

LAIRS AND THREATS

Not all threats to Airspur walk the streets openly; at times, one must go looking for them.

ABOLETH DEN

Rumors persist of aboleth dens hidden among the waves and rocks beneath the cliff faces that make up the twin shores of Airspur. These areas are remnants of the war with the Abolethic Sovereignty half a century ago. Unfortunately, not only do these rumors hold truth, but one such den lurks close to the Akanawater Falls. None know for sure that these aboleths exist, in part because the caves that harbor them are so well-hidden, and in part because those few genasi that have braved the caverns were transformed into the horrific creatures that now serve the aboleths.

None know whether the aboleths and their servants are the advance force of another assault by the Sovereignty, exiles from that fell kingdom, or aboleths that resided on Toril even before the return of Abeir. What is certain is that none want to find out.

Level 17 Encounter (XP 9,850)

- ◆ 1 aboleth lasher (level 17 brute; *Monster Manual*, page 8)
- ◆ 1 aboleth overseer (level 18 elite controller; *Monster Manual*, page 8)
- ◆ 5 aboleth servitors (level 16 minion; *Monster Manual*, page 9)
- ◆ 5 abolethic skum (level 18 minion brute; *Monster Manual 2*, page 172)

NETHERESE AGENTS

Naibur Tinok and his band patrol the city, but a great many citizens of Netheril serve their nation openly as guards, scribes, and spies within and near the embassy (which rests on the large central island adjacent to the city's courthouses). Given the propensity of the Netherese to cause trouble whenever they gather in large numbers, and the almost pathological need for PCs to meddle in the affairs of shadowy kingdoms, finding a way to introduce these agents as an obstacle to the party isn't difficult. Perhaps the PCs are finding an item, creature, or person that the Princes of the Empire would like brought home for study, so the groups clash.

Alternatively, these agents might serve as a preliminary threat to the PCs, as they uncover the plots of Naibur Tinok against the interests of Airspur. An arc wherein the players confront Naibur after a few levels of dealing with his minions and allies could be a strong ongoing threat for mid-heroic-level PCs.

Level 4 Encounter (XP 900)

- ◆ 2 human bandits (level 2 skirmisher; *Monster Manual*, page 162)
- ◆ 1 human berserker (level 4 brute; *Monster Manual*, page 163)
- ◆ 2 human guards (level 3 soldier; *Monster Manual*, page 162)
- ◆ 1 human mage (level 4 artillery; *Monster Manual*, page 163)

TANRIS'S WAREHOUSE

Despite having no name, Tanris's criminal enterprise has a highly organized structure, with warehouses around the city for smuggling of goods, hiding fugi-

tives, and keeping kidnapped or killed victims until they can be properly disposed. Tanris is not thoroughly involved in the dealings of some of these warehouses, preferring to keep out of the daily operations of those of his employees he can trust to make him coin.

Tanris keeps his most capable "workers" just outside the city, farther along the shore. This allows him to store his most sensitive materiel without being noticed by authorities—and to keep the number of prying eyes and ears quiet when the inevitable conflict (and the ensuing cries of battle) erupts.

Level 10 Encounter (XP 2,950)

- ◆ 1 dragonborn gladiator (level 10 soldier; *Monster Manual*, page 86)
- ◆ 1 drow warrior (level 11 lurker; *Monster Manual*, page 94)
- ◆ 1 duergar hellcaller (level 12 artillery; *Monster Manual 2*, page 94)
- ◆ 1 gnome wolverine (level 9 skirmisher; *Monster Manual 2*, page 129)
- ◆ 5 ogre thugs (level 11 minion; *Monster Manual*, page 198)

About the Author

Brian Cortijo is a freelance designer and full-time university lackey—which means he looks at the college equivalent of character sheets all day. He's undergoing a homecoming of sorts, making his return to the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting (since *DRAGON* #358) after short hiatus on other worlds, including an extended stay in his birth-city of New York. Some of his recent works include *Forgotten Heroes: Scythe and Shroud* and *Qadira: Gateway to the East*.