

MURDER AT THE VULGAR UNICORN



A *THIEVES' WORLD*
ADVENTURE FOR THE
D20 SYSTEM

BY OWEN K.C.
STEPHENS



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MURDER AT THE VULGAR UNICORN

A D20 ADVENTURE FOR THE THIEVES' WORLD CAMPAIGN SETTING

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Welcome to *Murder at the Vulgar Unicorn*, an adventure set in the dynamic and dangerous city of Sanctuary, centerpiece of the *Thieves' World* anthologies. Within these pages, you'll find the skeleton of a complex story of murder, mystery and mayhem. This book is intended only for the Gamemaster (GM) of a *Thieves' World* campaign, so if you're a player stop reading now and pass this over to the GM. If your group hasn't settled on a GM yet, you're elected. Tell the other players you'll run this adventure for them, and start reading through it. Don't worry too much if you're not sure what you're doing, the other players aren't either.

The *Thieves' World* books are anthologies, with different authors coming together under an editor to tell pieces of a larger story—the story of the city of Sanctuary. With the *Thieves' World Player's Manual*, a group of role-players can now become authors of their own stories, with a GM serving as their editor. *Murder at the Vulgar Unicorn* is supposed to serve as an introduction to those stories, bringing PCs into the plots and passions of the city, and introducing them to many of the important people and places from the books. Once players have finished this adventure, a GM should have no difficulty thinking of new adventures for them. The PCs should have a reputation and friends and enemies within the city, perfect for spinning new tales. Most likely the players will have a few ideas on what they want to do next, which will make it even easier for a GM to think of situations to throw at them.

The adventure tries to give guidelines on how to handle most common actions and plans PCs may take, but in any adventure

this long, it's impossible to predict everything the players may decide to try. Advice for new GMs is scattered throughout the text to give some guidance on how to get players back on track if they've lost the plot. More experienced GMs should feel free to ignore this advice in favor of their own game style.

Murder at the Vulgar Unicorn is fairly straightforward, but need not be linear. If the players decide to deal with some side issue, get interested in a clue not detailed until later, guess the direction of the adventure and skip a few steps, or even decide they'd rather set up shop and start some business deals of their own rather than deal with the murder mystery, you can let them. As GM, you can introduce as many side-trips from the main adventure as you want (and some are provided for you in the Interlude section). Once the initial part of the adventure is over, the players can even ignore the whole plot. However, just because the players are ignoring it doesn't mean it stops happening. If the players decide the adventure is over before you're tired of it, a random encounter or two with characters from the later encounters (who may need help, try to kill the PCs, or just be infected by the plague) can easily draw the players back in.

WHAT YOU NEED

To play this adventure as it's intended, you'll need the *Thieves' World Player's Manual*. You'll find information from the *Shadowspawn's Guide to Sanctuary* useful as well (and to a lesser extent the *Thieves' World Gazetteer*), but not mandatory. You

also need a set of core d20 fantasy rulebooks, as mentioned in the *Thieves' World Player's Manual*. It's possible to adapt the adventure to any fantasy d20 RPG (in which case it can be used on its own), but a GM going that route has to do most of the conversion work on his own. The plot line is basic enough it could be moved to Green Ronin's Freeport setting or any of a dozen other rough-and-tumble fantasy cities.

PREPARATION

In order to run this adventure smoothly, the GM must be familiar with the basic rules of the game, the overall plot of the adventure, and the plans and motivations of the NPCs in each encounter. It's important for the GM to know what's going on and why. The best way to do this is to read through this entire adventure before running it. To help you make sense of the detailed encounter descriptions, we've included a summary of both what's going on in general, and how the PCs are supposed

to figure that out. Most likely the game you run isn't going to match either of these exactly. That's great—part of the point of knowing what we intended with the adventure is to be able to make changes to match the attitudes and actions of the PCs in your game.

The adventure also presents a number of side-trips. These are minor encounters that don't have much to do with the overall plot of the adventure, but can be used to keep the action level high and give the PCs time to decide what they need to do next. Part of the point of playing an adventure set in Sanctuary is to do a little sightseeing, and the side-trips are a good way to do that. While you don't need to have all the side-trips prepared and ready to run, it's a good idea to have at least one prepared for each game session. That way, if the PCs get off track, you can entertain the players with a "random" side-trip for the evening. Then, you can figure out how to get the PCs back on track during the time before your next game session.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Murder at the Vulgar Unicorn is structured to allow PCs to get through it in more than one way. A given group of players may not hit every encounter contained in these pages. That's fine, so long as they have some idea of what to do next and are having fun. While an effort has been made to cover the most likely actions the PCs may take, it's impossible to predict every conceivable plan and contingency. It's the GM's job to adjudicate what happens when the PCs veer off the beaten path, and having a good understanding of what's going on is an important part of doing that.

THE SITUATION AS THINGS START

Murder at the Vulgar Unicorn is designed to take place after the events of *Enemies of Fortune*, but could be placed at any time during the Irrune rulership of the city. Moving the adventure to another era would take more work (possibly changing the Hand to another cult, and definitely altering any reference to Irrune characters, including Arizak, to whatever group is in charge of Sanctuary at that time). For example, the events of this adventure could easily be placed during the same time as the Wizardwall War. For more information on the history of the Thieves' World setting, you should go over the timeline provided in the *Thieves' World Gazetteer*.

There are two major factions involved in the plot that is the focus of *Murder at the Vulgar Unicorn*. The first group is a faction of Rankans working for Torril Fel. Torril is a noble in the Rankan Empire who (like many of his ilk) would like to see himself made Emperor of Ranke. He believes his best chance of becoming emperor is to accomplish a major political gain so his popularity will rise. Toward that end, he has approved of a

plan to bring Sanctuary under Rankan rule once more. Torril doesn't appear in person in this adventure, but it's his plans and agents that set the events of the book in motion. (Torril can also serve as a source of ongoing adventures after the players have finished this one, setting in motion any plot the GM wants to pit the PCs against.)

The second faction is a Dyareelan *ircastra* (a secret cell of worshippers), led by *ircastra'n* Sorbeth (a priest who rules over the *ircastra*). Sorbeth has heard rumors that the Mother Temple of the Dyareelan has been taken over by a band of priestesses who are very unhappy with the cult's loss of Sanctuary. Sorbeth hopes if he can return the cult to control of the city, he will survive the wrath of the new ruling priestesses, and may even be able to maintain his position. His concern over his own power base has made him reckless, and pushed him to take steps few of the other surviving Dyareelan cultists in Sanctuary would be willing to risk.

Because the Dyareelan originally came to power in the aftermath of a terrible plague, Sorbeth has convinced himself they can return to power if another plague strikes the city. For best effect, the cultists must be able to prove they have the power to cure the plague. This should prove that the gods are angry with the Irrune for forbidding worship within the city walls, and place the Dyareelans firmly back in power. Through agents far to the north, the Dyareelan have hired Nisibisi witches to create an arcane plague. The plague is transmitted through fleabites, and resists all mundane efforts to cure it. It can be neutralized with a tonic made from a bizarre mixture of ingredients, which Sorbeth intends to keep secret.

The Dyareelan plan is to bring numerous pigs (infested with fleas carrying the plague) into the city for sale just as summer starts. The plague will spread as the fleas spread, resulting in a



sudden and incurable pandemic. The faithful of the cult will be immune, and as the plague brings panic, they will offer the cure to others in return for loyalty to the cult. If the plan goes well, by the end of summer, the cult of Mother Chaos will once more rule Sanctuary.

Of course, there aren't many Nisibisi witches left, but those remaining certainly have an interest in Sanctuary as many believe fragments of the power globes still remain in the city. But, their service doesn't come cheap, so Sorbeth needed to procure funds for the witches' research. He gained it from wealthy Rankan patrons who claimed to be faithful Dyareelans who see the Sanctuary extremists as more true than orthodox cultists found elsewhere. In reality, the Rankans were agents of Torril, who has kept his involvement secret from Sorbeth or any of the Dyareelan faction.

Torril's plan is to wait until the plague starts, then give out the cure freely. At the same time, his agents in Sanctuary will cast blame on the Ilsigi and Irrune for the whole thing. Torril's main contact with the Dyareelans, EriIssi Feyr, is a double agent of Ilsigi descent. He is dying of consumption, and has been paid enough to go to Sanctuary and intentionally die of plague when the outbreak hits (the money will save his family from crushing poverty). He carries papers on him that describe the whole scheme, but place the blame firmly on the Ilsigi and Verrezza's faction of Irrune. (According to his documents, Verrezza's Irrune go along with an Ilsigi plan because the Ilsigi have promised the Irrune aid in raiding the Rankans, allowing them to go back

to a raiding lifestyle and get the hell out of Sanctuary). The Dyareelan are barely mentioned in this version of events, which is fine with Torril—the cultists can be mopped up later, once a grateful population turns to the Rankan nobility for protection and rulership.

These two complex and interconnected plots have not gone wholly unnoticed by others. A few S'danzo outside Sanctuary are aware something is up, even if they are not at all sure what, but they can't get into Sanctuary to operate safely. An actual Ilsigi agent, Rossa Lintle, has grown suspicious. She's identified EriIssi as a Rankan agent, but can't figure out what he's up to as he sits in the Vulgar Unicorn waiting (for the plague). Since she can't figure out what plan he's hatching, she's decided he needs to die.

And, as one might expect, not everything has gone smoothly for the plot itself. Though it's only late winter, the first shipment of infected pigs has already shown up from the far north. There are too many to hide conveniently, but too few to create the kind of crippling plague the Dyareelan cult needs to shake the rulership of the city. For now, the pigs are being guarded by Dyareelans just outside the city at an inn and tavern along the General's Road, but that situation won't remain stable for long. A second shipment was due to arrive a few days ago, but was lost in a storm and dashed to bits on the offshore shoals, perhaps due to the sickness spread by the plague itself. A larger shipment is due soon, and the cult is likely to distribute the infected pigs as soon as that shipload arrives.

ACT I: MURDER AT THE VULGAR UNICORN

The PCs are all at the Vulgar Unicorn. Patronage is light tonight, with cold rain discouraging many regulars from making an appearance. In addition to the PCs, the spies EriIssi and Rossa are present, along with a couple of unimportant scum and Pace, a known hired killer new to Sanctuary.

A gust of wind blows out the few lanterns lighting the tavern, and a smoke bomb goes off, filling the room with dense, black haze. The smoke doesn't last long, and when it clears, EriIssi lays dead with an oddly stylized knife sticking out of his back. No one else is nearby. EriIssi has a scrap of paper clutched in one hand. It states, "It is by the act of no blade or malice of man that I die..." This is the beginning of his death note, which is supposed to state he died of plague. His killer grabbed it after killing him, but EriIssi kept the corner. Pace is missing.

Before the PCs can do much of anything, the city guard bursts in (a lot of them). They demand the PCs come with them and answer for the murder. The PCs are taken (after a scuffle, if need be) to see Magistrate Elisar's Sharda to stand for the accused crime of murder. They may speak for themselves, if they wish. None of the witnesses come forward, so the only evidence against them is what the guards saw and heard from those who were present (no hearsay rule in Sanctuary justice).

Presumably, the PCs proclaim their innocence. A Sharda truthspeaker confirms that what the PCs claim regarding their

innocence is true (though that does not convince Elisar they may not know more than they're letting on). He's not willing to condemn them on such thin evidence, but he isn't willing to let them loose entirely, either. He charges them with the task of finding out who the dead man was, who killed him, and why. They are not to leave the near environs of Sanctuary without doing so. Elisar wants to know what's going on, and this is as good a way as any to find out.

Any even reasonably intelligent search reveals that the knife that killed EriIssi is of the kind used by the Silent Brothers, a small gang of thugs who have begun operating in the Maze. The Brothers have very little to recommend them—they're of average intelligence at best, and there aren't more than about six of them, but they managed to get a batch of knives that all match, which gives them more style than most of the gangs that have begun to develop. If the PCs don't manage to figure that out, the Brothers ambush them a few days later. The Brothers would prefer the only suspects in the murder be dead, so they can't point the finger at the Brothers (who, as it happens, are innocent of this particular crime). Either way, a fight is likely to occur and the PCs likely to win. When it's clear they're losing, the Brothers surrender and offer to sell the PCs info. The Brothers have sold only knives of the kind used from their collection to one man—an Irrune named Karizal, who is an associate of Naimun (son of the Irrune Tyrant ruling Sanctuary).

As an aside, this should raise immediate alarms for anyone familiar with the Irrune, be that an Irrune PC or someone able to make the appropriate Knowledge skill. Irrune don't use money. They for froggin' sure don't buy things. In addition, the Irrune class faces a kind of succession crisis. Arizak's health fails due to his rotting foot, and his sons, the Dragon, Naimun, and Raithe jockey for the position of the tribe's new leader.

There are any number of ways the PCs could hunt down "Karizal," ranging from Gather Information to speaking to an Irrune with authority. It becomes clear there is no Irrune by that name, but someone who could pass for an Irrune is wandering around with it. The person often claims to be close with Naimun, but does not seem to have any actual connection to that worthy. No one can say where he stays... but he moves in and out of the Swamp of Night Secrets every few days.

The other obvious lead is to track down Pace who was, after all, missing just after the murder. (If the PCs happen to decide to find Rossa for some reason, that trail leads them to the same place). Pace has captured Rossa as a for-hire job from an anonymous patron. Once tracked down, Pace can be defeated (or bribed, or threatened), causing him to confess he originally worked for EriIssi, but someone else hired him to grab Rossa using the same information drop. Pace doesn't know who the new patron is, but was ordered to keep Rossa in an abandoned temple until he was contacted again. It's been a couple of days now, and Pace is beginning to fear he's not going to get paid.

While the PCs are talking to Pace, a horrid, orangutan-like creature (*a fenniath*) with blood-red fur bursts into the warehouse. It tries to kill both Pace and Rossa, fighting to the death. If the PCs can save Rossa, she becomes a font of useful information—as



long as they're willing to allow her to flee Sanctuary. She admits to being an agent for the Ilsigi, and she had determined that despite his talk and appearance, Eirilissi was a Rankan agent. She didn't know what he was up to, but saw him talking to Arion Swan on several occasions, and receiving what looked like money purses from Swan. She also saw Eirilissi meet with a short, overweight man in a cloak (Paithas Meed, though Rossa doesn't know his name) on more than one occasion, often passing him purses gained from Swan. The small fat man had a hunched back, was left handed, and obviously didn't want to be spotted with Eirilissi.

The PCs now have a good deal of evidence Eirilissi was killed for being a spy (or at least being involved in intrigue of some kind), and that his killer has some connection to the man claiming to be the Irrune Karizal. Providing that evidence to the Sharda buys the PCs a bit more leeway, enough to try to track down Karizal in the Swamp of Night Secrets, in any case.

ACT II: THE PLOT THICKENS

Having provided extensive evidence they truly aren't involved in Eirilissi's death, the PCs are granted permission by Judge Nevermind to travel to areas within a few days of Sanctuary, if doing so will help solve the details of the murder. (Even if the PCs don't go to the magistrate immediately, they may be able to take care of some of these encounters. No one guards the way into the Swamp—who would want to go there?—so the PCs can make their way in without difficulty.) They may face the dangers of the swamp in random encounters, but their main danger is “Karizal,” who in fact is a master of disguise called “Master Whoever” and has a trained jungle cat. If the PCs find him, they can ambush him in the small ruin he calls home. If not, he ambushes them with his cat.

Either way, after the fight the PCs end up with his possessions, including a note written in Yenized promising him a sum of money to kill the “Rankan Spy Eirilissi.” It further lists a number of places Eirilissi frequents, including the Vulgar Unicorn. It promises a sum of money will be paid by “the fat, lame merchant who contacted you” (Paithas Meed, who also wrote the letter) upon completion of this task. The PCs will most likely need a translator for the note. On their way out of the swamp, the PCs come across a wrecked ship filled with the bodies of dead pigs. After fighting off monstrous crabs, the PCs can get a little loot, and learn the pig carcasses are uncommonly lean and mangy and were being transported by a Rankan crew to a rendezvous point south of Sanctuary itself (an odd thing to do with a cargo of pigs, to be sure). The invoice found floating in the wreckage states Paithas Meed was due to receive the shipment. Although the PCs don't know it yet, this is one of the lost shipments of infected pigs that the cultists are trying to gather to start a new plague.

By all accounts, the best translator in town is Heliz Yunz, the Linguist of Lirt. (The magistrate isn't going to accept the translation of a lesser figure, so the PCs should end up here regardless). For a small fee, he agrees to translate the document, and after doing so informs the PCs that it is written in a rare

dialect not often used by anyone. Further, he tells them the author is using diction that suggests he was male, a religious man, likely an Ilsigi, and was left handed with a hunched back. (Yunz gathers this with his special powers, but only reveals his “expert opinion” to the PCs. In fact, Paithas Meed wrote the note when he decided Eirilissi needed to die. He also intended to kill the person he sent the note to, which Yunz is aware of. He's trying to give the PCs some warning, without exposing himself.)

There aren't that many hunched, overweight merchants in Sanctuary, so the PCs should get the scent for Paithas Meed without too much difficulty. Asking after him quickly reveals Paithas fled Sanctuary a few nights after Eirilissi was killed (he should only be about a day ahead of the PCs), selling his shop cheaply and having the money for it sent after him. Clearly, Paithas was in a hurry.

Paithas Meed fled to the Brown Bear, an inn and tavern along the General's Road, about a day north of Sanctuary. Nearby, the cultists keep the infected pigs that have already been delivered. To keep the farm secure, and keep anyone from discovering what's actually going on with the livestock there, Paithas created a false religious order called the Apostles of Nature. The twenty or so members of this group claim to be religious pilgrims, but are, in fact, Dyareelan cultists. They both guard the inn and do their best to make the inn and surrounding environs inhospitable. They've set fires, ruined crops, killed a few citizens they found alone, claimed to have seen signs of plague among local animals, and carved strange (meaningless) runes in trees and buildings.

Most locals on farmsteads avoid the inn now, but a few still come due to the encouragement of Duncaen, the owner of the Brown Bear inn. Paithas is trying to convince Duncaen to support the idea that the local farms are threatened by plague, but so far the innkeeper has resisted, and he calms the local farmers, telling them there is nothing to fear and that there is no curse. Paithas is prepared to kidnap Duncaen's daughter to force the innkeeper's aid, but hasn't had a chance to do so yet.

When the PCs first approach the inn, they encounter a group of Apostles being accosted by one of Arion Swan's *fenniath*. (The fiendish simian is trying to deliver a message to Paithas, who it smells on the Apostles, but it lacks the skills or patience to explain this to them.) Assuming the PCs save them, the cultists take them to the Brown Bear, where they meet Paithas. Of course, he has no reason to recognize them, and is surrounded by his armed guards, so the PCs may not threaten or question him just yet. That night, the *fenniath* finds Paithas and delivers the message from Arion—if Paithas can't give Arion guarantees that the plague is going to go ahead on schedule, Arion is pulling out all funding for the final phase. Arion's letter insists Paithas meet him at a secret barrow beneath one of the abandoned temples in Sanctuary in three days to provide proof the pigs will be ready.

If the PCs don't interfere beforehand, Paithas has Duncaen's daughter Engela kidnapped and sends a demand that the innkeeper begin promoting the Brothers' version of the area's dangers. Duncaen agrees publicly, but privately asks the PCs

INTRODUCTION



for help (as outsiders who don't seem under Paithas' thumb). Duncaen knows where Paithas stays (at the Pig Farm), and can give the PCs directions there. (Alternatively the PCs may track Paithas to his farm, or even kill him before he gets to it and be led to it by his followers.) At the farm, the PCs must deal with whatever cultists are present (likely including Yurlund, the senior-most of the Apostles of Nature), rescue Engela, and overcome a pig when it breaks out of its stall. The payoff for all this is a document linking Paithas and the plague plot to Arion Swan, one of Paithas' acquaintances in Sanctuary. It also outlines the time of a meeting between Arion and Paithas, to take place in a barrow under a temple back in Sanctuary.

ACT III: FINAL CONFRONTATIONS

The barrow is a complex of basements and tombs that once served a now abandoned temple. A sect of the Dyareelan cult use it for secret meetings now, and it is the meeting place Arion chose for a rendezvous between himself and Paithas. If the PCs go to investigate themselves, there are only a few cultists present along with Arion. If the PCs go for help, there are enough additional cultists to counteract most of the assistance they get. During the fighting, the PCs see Arion make a break for it through a back tunnel. Either way, the PCs must chase and catch Arion, overcoming his fiendish pets and any cultists nearby.

Once it's clear he can't escape, Arion surrenders and offers to trade information for his life. He doesn't know why Eirilissi was killed or who gave the order, but he's aware of most other details of the plot. He knows where a dozen or so Dyareelan sleeper agents are, and where they have marks on their bodies condemning them. He also knows when a ship with the last infected pigs is due to arrive in Sanctuary proper.

The ship is the *Blackguard*, a vessel of Ilsigi origin, though it is now crewed by Rankan agents (including a nobleman sent to establish contact with important people in Sanctuary once the plague strikes) and Demara, a Nisibisi witch overseeing the last shipment of infected pigs. The PCs can turn this information over to the Irrune and do nothing more about it (missing out on the climax of the adventure), or they can go to the Irrune for help but stay part of the party that raids the ship, or they can try to take care of it themselves. In any case, this is the final fight, and if Demara can be taken alive, she reveals all the sordid details of the plot Arion might have been missing.

Arizak rewards the PCs by distributing gifts, taken from the spoils found on the *Blackguard*, for a job well done. Furthermore, the characters now have access to Arizak if they come across future plots. The characters gain reputation and a free contact to represent their increased influence in Sanctuary.

They also face one final threat, as a Rankan assassin tries to kill them. He bears the same signet ring as Arion, clearly a spy working for Torril. The PCs may have saved Sanctuary, but they've also made a powerful enemy who won't forget what they've cost him.

GETTING STARTED

Before you can run the first scene of this adventure, you need to figure out what the various PCs are doing in Sanctuary, and why they're all at the Vulgar Unicorn. This background information can be as basic or as involved as a player wishes. A PC doesn't need any more than "He got stuck in Sanctuary when his funds ran low, and the Vulgar Unicorn is where he buys cheap drinks." If a player wants to outline a more detailed past that's fine too (it can even give you suggestions for side-trips during this adventure, or plots for future adventures).

As the GM, it's your job to discuss each PC with its player, and come up with a reason for the character to be at the Vulgar Unicorn. Your job is a bit easier if the PCs start all knowing and liking each other—that way you only need to get one to the Vulgar Unicorn and the rest can come along for company. A number of possible reasons are listed below, to serve as a guide for you. Obviously not all these ideas will work for a given PC, but at least one should be good enough to get the adventure started.

- The PC is new to Sanctuary, and simply decided to go sightseeing in the Maze. Given the name of that section of town, the PC got lost and ended up at the Vulgar Unicorn. Overhearing someone (Kensel or Fensel) mention leaving the Maze when done here, the PC opted to wait, hoping to follow someone out and back to the "civilized" parts of the city.
- The PC has been contacted by "Arion Swan" to discuss a job protecting an associate. (In fact, Arion is looking to hire someone to protect Eirilissi. Unfortunately, he does so too late.) The PC is supposed to meet Arion at the Vulgar Unicorn, but the rain prevents Arion from arriving before the murder occurs. Obviously, this means that the PC will recognize Swan's name when it comes up in the investigation, but that's not a bad thing.
- The PC was supposed to meet a companion for a quiet assignation to begin at the Vulgar Unicorn. The companion not only doesn't make it in time, but later sends the PC word that the matter of the murder makes the PC "too dangerous" to spend time with right now.
- The PC is a regular at the Vulgar Unicorn. He goes there often, and they know his name (though no one there is really a friend).
- A fortune-teller read the PC's fate in the cards, and said a great destiny began at the tavern. (The fortuneteller isn't actually an oracle, just someone who knows people love to hear they have a great destiny, and that things often happen at the Vulgar Unicorn.)
- The PC was paid to deliver a message to the Vulgar Unicorn (an offer to sell cheaper wine from a semi-legitimate wine monger) and bring back a reply. Pegrin the Ugly hasn't put together a response yet. (Give the PC an extra *pd* as payment for this job.)

Of course, if the players know the name of this adventure, they may resist going to the Vulgar Unicorn, just to avoid the title event—a murder. While not a reasonable choice from the point of view of their characters (who *don't* know the name of the adventure they're starring in), it's a common reaction. The two simplest ways to deal with this are to forbid them to act with out-of-character knowledge and use reason to convince them to show up at the Vulgar Unicorn anyway, or to accept it and move the first scene to a different tavern. You can have the PCs gather at any place inside the Maze, give it any name you like (the Randy Griffon, for example), change the name of the bartender, and then have events proceed as described.

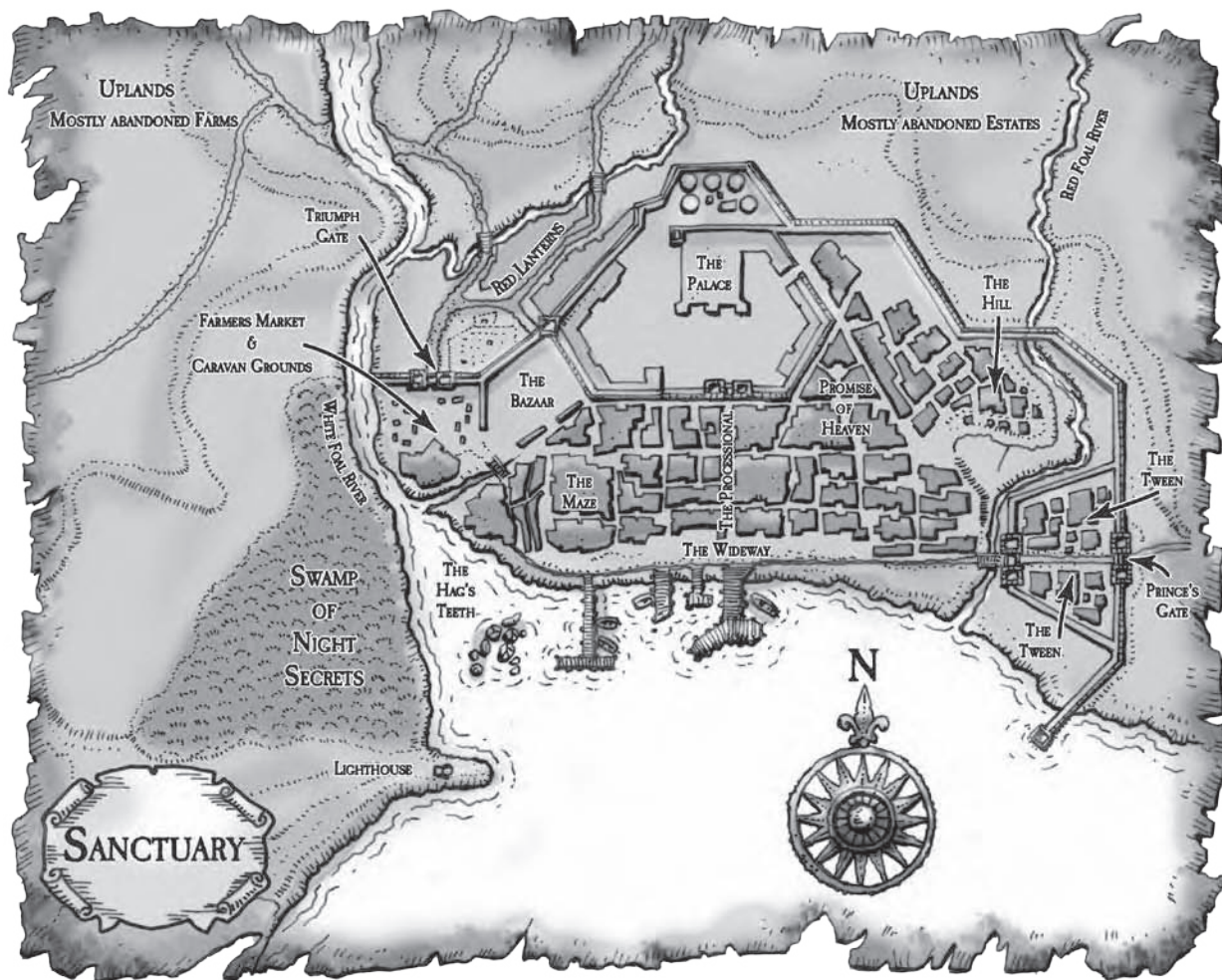
It's important to remember that a GM is often called a "referee" as well. It's the GM's job to interpret the rules, keep the plot moving forward, describe the actions of NPCs, and respond to the actions of the players. For the most part, it's unfair to use this power to force the players to have PCs take actions inconsistent with their desires and personalities. However, it's also important to let players know when an adventure requires some reasonable concession from them in order to move forward (or in this case, even begin). Don't force players or ram a specific course of action down their throats, but don't waste too much time with set-up either. The opening scene for this adventure is the Vulgar Unicorn (or some other Maze tavern). Help the players figure out why their characters are there, but don't bend over backwards to overcome minor complaints and objections. Just set the characters down here if you need to—once the action starts, the players will have an increasing number of options they can pick from without interference.

RUNNING AN ENCOUNTER

If at all possible, read through an encounter before running it. Even if you've read through the whole adventure already, it's a good idea to skim through an encounter just before the players deal with it.

Each encounter has a number of elements. Each includes a box of shaded text, usually at the beginning. This is a description to set the scene for the players. Read the text in the shaded box aloud to the players when they first get to an encounter, or paraphrase the information contained in it. Some have more shaded boxes of text describing major developments that may occur as the encounter progresses. Read these to the players when they encounter the appropriate development. It's important to make sure the players know these descriptions are supposed to give them relevant information, not penalize them in any way. The actions of PCs should never be dictated in a descriptive narrative, and nothing important happens while the players listen to it. Similarly players shouldn't take actions during the description—tell them to wait until you're done before they tell you what they do.

INTRODUCTION



Encounters then give details about what's present and what's going on for only the GM to read. This information isn't for the players automatically, though they may discover some or all of it if they investigate or move around. It's up to the GM to determine exactly what happens during an encounter, but as much information as possible is given in the body of the encounter text to guide the GM. There's nothing wrong with making changes to how an encounter runs or what exactly is found within it (in fact, personalizing adventures for the players running through it can greatly augment their enjoyment), but it's a good idea to consider how any change is going to affect the outcome of the adventure as a whole (see the development entry, described below).

If there are foes the PCs are likely to fight, they are listed after the body of the encounter text. If the foes are creatures found elsewhere, such as in the *MM* or the creature appendix at the end of this book, or in a previous encounter, that location is listed. If there are multiple foes who are the same except for hit points, (such as six thugs), the hp are listed. If the foes are characters being met for the first time, they receive a stat block here. It's often useful to copy out the relevant combat information onto another sheet of paper for easy reference, rather than having to flip back and forth in the adventure book while running a fight.

The tactics entry only appears if a fight is likely in a given encounter. This is a short suggestion for how NPCs act during a battle, given as an aid for the GM. Especially for new GMs, this section is a handy cheat-sheet that prevents the GM from having to figure out what 4 or 5 NPCs try to do during a fight. Even more than other sections, a GM should feel free to deviate from the information given here if a better idea comes along.

A developments entry describes possible complications and responses that may occur as a result of the encounter. Wherever possible, common actions PCs are likely to try are given some attention here, but it's impossible to go over every possible action or idea. These are guidelines for the GM, not hard and fast rules. Especially in encounters that hold clues to the basic mystery at the heart of *Murder at the Vulgar Unicorn*, these entries will also include a reminder of what the PCs should know after finishing the encounter.

The treasure entry is present in encounters that have things of value the PCs are likely to get hold of. Often this is nothing more than money and items carried by foes the PCs fight, though a few caches of other items are scattered throughout the adventure as well. It's worth noting that taking things off the bodies of fallen foes is an acceptable practice in and around Sanctuary. Indeed, the Irrune lose respect for anyone unwilling to claim such "spoils of war."



ACT I: MURDER AT THE VULGAR UNICORN

In Act One of the adventure, the PCs first get into trouble when they are framed for the death of a patron at the Vulgar Unicorn. After being hauled before the Sharda of Magistrate Elisar (also known as Judge Nevermind) the PCs must follow some simple clues to prove their innocence. This leads them to back alleys and the Swamp of Night Secrets. They find sufficient evidence to get them off the hook, but they also find signs of something else going on. Act One ends once the PCs switch from trying to prove they didn't kill anyone to trying to figure out what's actually going on, likely during a second trip to Judge Nevermind's chambers.

SCENE ONE: DEATH OF A PATRON

It's another typical night at the Vulgar Unicorn, though typical covers a wide range of conditions here in the Maze. Unusually cold rain drizzles down outside, the remnants of a storm that blew in off the sea this morning. The wooden building is no better constructed than any other in the Maze, and the creaks and groans it gives up every time the wind blows aren't encouraging. A slow drip proves the roof is in no better shape than the walls, and keeps time as it plops loudly into a pot set on one end of the tavern's counter. A few flickering lamps shed poor light in the lower level of the tavern, and a single lamp illuminates the only

table occupied on the balcony level above. There's no fire in the fireplace, and it's not really cold enough for anyone to complain about that. The tavern isn't pleasant tonight, but it's more gloomy than uncomfortable.

It's not a bad storm, but it's gone on all day and by now most Sanctans have decided it's not worth struggling against. Likely, the only patrons here tonight are those with business that can't wait and those with homes even less comfortable on a rainy night than the tavern. As a result, it's a slow night, with just six people in the common room other than yourselves. Pegrin the Ugly sits behind the tavern's chipped wooden counter tiredly, serving what few drinks are ordered. The lone barmaid here tonight, a fair young woman you've heard Pegrin call Minx, has given up on bright conversation and simply waits near the kitchen door for someone to signal a desire for a drink or food. No minstrel or entertainer is trying his luck here tonight, so the only sounds are the murmurs of low conversations, the splashing of feet going through puddles outside and the wind whistling through shutters that are only a little more secure shut than they would be if open.

Three of the tavern's patrons sit together near the front door, burly men sullenly nursing cheap drinks and quietly talking among themselves. They wear the simple leathers and long knives of hired thugs, and every few minutes one of them shoots an irritated glance at the door. If they have business here tonight, it's with someone who hasn't arrived yet. Not far from the table of ruffians is the fourth patron, an

older man in worn clothes and heavy cloak that are clearly Ilsigi in design, but have seen better days. The man keeps his head down and hasn't spoken since any of you have entered. In fact, he's barely moved at all, with only the occasional sigh or adjustment of his cloak as proof he's alive at all.

Furthest from any other occupied table sits a woman in a heavy, hooded robe, the hood pulled up to conceal her face. The shape hinted at under the cloth and the delicate features that can be glimpsed from time to time suggest she's an attractive woman, but she's making no effort to take advantage of that. She's obviously alert, glancing at any sudden noise or voice, but seems more cautious than nervous. She's actually eating a meal, the only one of the six patrons to do so, and has ordered the best fare the Vulgar Unicorn has to offer (which isn't saying all that much). Above her, the lone patron to sit on the balcony level sits casually, seeming to enjoy the dreary night. He is a trim and fit younger man, obviously full of the confidence often found in braggarts and bullies. He has a longsword dangling from one hip, and wears well-used leather armor and heavy boots. Like the woman, he seems alert, especially when the wind comes howling through the cracks in the walls and sets the tavern's lanterns flickering.

The quiet feels a bit like an audience waiting for a play to begin, as if the main act of the tavern's night is about to begin. There's a little tension in the air, but that's not unusual in the Maze. It's another typical night in the Vulgar Unicorn, and that means anything can happen.

This first encounter sets the stage for the whole adventure, so it's a bit more restrictive and information-heavy than future encounters. If the PCs don't know each other yet, give the players a chance to describe themselves and possibly interact. Don't wait too long before moving on to the crux of the evening (the murder described below), but don't cut players off if everyone is having a good time. New players may be especially interested in getting used to the idea of describing their characters actions and getting to know one another. Also, information and opinions gathered here can impact how the players view the whole adventure. If the players take a particular liking (or suspicion) to a character they meet here, feel free to play with that as the adventure moves on.

The three men by the door are Kensel, Fensel and Brod—three hired thugs who are supposed to meet a client here tonight. Because of the rain, their client isn't coming, something the three are beginning to suspect. They're not in a good mood, but they also aren't looking for trouble unless someone is going to hire them for it. They avoid talking to anyone who approaches them, but aren't rude unless they have to be (it's bad for business to insult potential clients). If forced to talk to someone they stick to innocent topics—how bad the weather is, how terrible the condition of the city is, how watered down the wine is here (all common opinions among common men everywhere, rather than specific observations about this city or this tavern).

Once the lights go out the three stay put and try not to get in anyone's way. When the guard shows up, they all put down their weapons immediately. Unless the PCs drag them into it later, these three have nothing more to do with this adventure. They're window-dressing.

The man sitting near the three thugs is Erilissi Feyr, the guy who is about to be murdered. He's a Rankan agent of Ilsigi blood, pretending to be a bad Ilsigi agent. Erilissi plans to die soon (just not tonight), and as a result he's depressed and not feeling friendly. On the other hand, part of his job is to be spotted prior to his death, so if PCs approach him he'll force himself to talk to them. He sticks to the facts of his cover story—he's an Ilsigi merchant down on his luck in Sanctuary, and he feels the whole city would be better off if the Ilsigi were invited to rule it instead of the Irrune. In particular, he mentions that by throwing all temples out of the city, the Irrune are likely angering the Ilsigi gods, and Erilissi warns a day of divine retribution may soon be at hand. Erilissi wants to be remembered as an Ilsigi so when the plague is traced back to him, the Ilsigi get blamed for it. He doesn't vary much from these themes – he's setting up a complex plot and knows better than to make up new details he'll have to remember later. He has a confession letter on him right now (he keeps it with him in case the plague breaks out suddenly), but does everything in his power to prevent it from being seen or taken by others. In a few minutes, he's going to get killed and set the whole adventure in motion, as well as lose most of his confession letter.

The woman sitting closer to the counter is a Wrigglie named Rossa Lintle, an actual Ilsigi agent sent by King Sepheris IV (the current king of the Ilsigi). She's twigged to the fact Erilissi is one of Jamasharem's (the much improved current emperor of Ranke) agents and that he's up to something, but isn't sure what yet. Her own investigations suggest he's involved with a Rankan noble (which is true), the Dyareelan cult (which is mostly true), and a local merchant, Paithas Meed (true, but she doesn't realize Paithas is a Dyareelan). She's been tailing Erilissi for a few days, and is seriously considering killing him before he can put whatever plot he's working on into motion (but someone's about to beat her to it). Erilissi's noticed her attention, and taken steps to deal with her and figure out who she's working for (read Pace's entry, below).

If approached, Rossa plays the part of shy courtesan waiting for her lover (it's a role she's good at) without ever saying anything specific (even if she misses a Bluff check, she hasn't claimed anything specific so she just seems generically "suspicious," which is fine). If drawn into a conversation, she perks up at any mention of Erilissi (she's looking for information about him, after all), but otherwise stays quiet. When the guard shows up, she also surrenders, as she's not guilty of anything tonight. Most likely you won't need a full statistics block for Rossa, but if you do it can be found in **Act One, Scene Five** page 23.

The man sitting alone on the balcony level is Pace, an assassin and general criminal-for-hire. (He's a much more dangerous

ACT I: MURDER AT THE VULGAR UNICORN

breed than the three thugs by the door.) Erilissi has hired Pace to kidnap or kill Rossa. Pace doesn't know why (as it happens, Rossa's queries regarding Erilissi have made Erilissi nervous), but since he gets paid more for bringing her in alive, that's what he's planning to do. He's been "hiding in plain sight" by pretending to be smitten with Rossa and convinced she'll weaken to his "obvious charms" eventually. So far Rossa hasn't realized he's not just another overbold thug with delusions of being the gods' gift to all women. Pace has noticed Rossa is often at the Vulgar Unicorn (since she's following Erilissi, and he comes here to be noticed by residents of the Maze, though Pace hasn't worked any of that out), and comes here every other night to watch her. Pace is looking for a good opportunity to grab her in an alley, but Rossa has managed either to stay near crowds or to lose him.

Pace is a bit frustrated, and already working on a case. As a result, he has no interest in talking to anyone. If a PC approaches him, he tells them to get lost. If they persist, he tells them to get froggin' lost. As soon as the lights go out (see below) he makes a break for it out a window on the second floor. By the time the guards barge in, Pace is gone off to report to Paithas. When the lights come back up, a DC 15 Spot check reveals Pace is gone.

Once the players have had a chance to get a feel for the situation in the Vulgar Unicorn, it's time to start the plot moving forward. First, an argument breaks out between Kensel and Fensel and Brod. Kensel wants to go now, while Fensel and Brod think they should stay another hour or so. The argument quickly gets loud and rude, with all three standing and putting hands on their swords. Since it looks like a fight may break out, the players shouldn't be too suspicious when you have them tell you exactly where their characters are. This is important, because you need to know who is closest to Erilissi before he gets killed.

Before the three thugs can come to blows, the front door of the Vulgar Unicorn blows open as a particularly strong wind gusts in. This snuffs the few lamps in the tavern, throwing it into total darkness. A PC that makes a DC 18 Listen check can move in the surprise round that occurs first, while everyone else doesn't roll initiative until the surprise round is over.

SURPRISE ROUND

During the surprise round, Master Whoever (an assassin), who just drank a *potion of darkvision*, dashes in through the front door toward Erilissi and sets off a smoke bomb to conceal his actions even if light returns. (Hopefully Master Whoever manages to avoid interacting with any PC, so you won't need his statistic block. He can see in the dark, so he's not at a disadvantage here, and has disguised himself as a member of the city guard in case he's spotted. If you do need his statistics for some reason, they can be found in **Act Two, Scene Three** on page 42.) At the same time, Pace dashes over to a window.

ROUND 1

During the first full round of combat, have the PCs and NPCs act in initiative order. Master Whoever stabs and kills Erilissi.



ACT I: MURDER AT THE VULGAR UNICORN

(Feel free to roll some dice behind a screen, but ignore the result. The plot needs Eirilissi dead, so Master Whoever manages to kill him). Pace jumps out a window. Rossa screams (it's in keeping with her disguise) and ducks under her table. Pegrin and Minx duck behind the counter and don't risk themselves at all. Most likely, you won't need full statistics for them.

Kensel, Fensel and Brod assume they're under attack, and move towards the nearest people they remember seeing before the lights went out (hopefully including at least one PC). The three thugs attack with fists rather than swords (it's a bar fight to the best of their knowledge). If they manage to knock out a PC, they rifle through that unfortunate's pockets in the dark, taking any one bag or small item.

ROUND 2

On the second round, Master Whoever rifles through Eirilissi's possessions and takes the dead man's letter of confession (well, most of it— Eirilissi manages to hold onto a corner of it, as described in the next encounter) and leaves a bloody knife with a boar's head pommel stuck in the body. Pace is gone, and everyone else continues doing what they did last round.

ROUND 3

On the third round, Master Whoever picks one of the PCs to act as a patsy, and tosses another bloody boar's-head dagger at the PC's feet, then moves to the front door.

A DC 10 Listen check allows the PC in question to know that *something* just skittered across the floor to stop at his feet. Unless there's now light from somewhere (and there isn't unless a PC has managed to produce it), there's no way for the PC to know what it is unless he states he touches it or picks it up. In this case, a DC 10 Search check reveals it's a large, bloody knife. (Of course, any touching of the knife gets blood all over the hands of the PC too.)

By the end of the third round, the city guard has the building surrounded. That signals the end of this encounter and the beginning of encounter two, though the PCs may not even notice the transition.

ENCOUNTERS

These are the statistics for all the patrons in the Vulgar Unicorn at the time of the murder.

KENSEL, FENSEL, AND BROD

Male Wrigglie criminal, warrior 1; CR 1/2; Medium humanoid (human); HD 1d8+3; hp 9; Mdt 13; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grap +2; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1/19–20, short sword) or +2 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+1/19–20, short sword) or +2 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); SQ criminal trait, jaded; Rep +0; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Background Skills: Bluff, Gather Information.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +3, Gather Information +3, Listen +2, Spot +2 (+4 notice thievery); Alertness^B, Toughness.

Languages: Wrigglie (S).

Contacts: Information (1).

Possessions: Leather armor, short sword, light crossbow with 10 bolts, bullseye lantern, flint and steel, oil flask, traveler's outfit, 1 *sb*, 12 *pd*.

ERILISSI

The victim doesn't need a statistics block—he's dying no matter what. Give him a +0 initiative check and a +4 bonus to any skill that seems appropriate if he has to interact before dying. His possessions are listed in treasure, below.

MINX

Use the typical Sanctan beggar found in **Appendix II**.

MASTER WHOEVER

See **Act I, Scene Three**, page 42.

PACE

See **Act I, Scene Five**, page 22.

ROSSA

See **Act I, Scene Five**, page 23.

PEGRIN THE UGLY

Male Wrigglie criminal, thief 4; CR 4; Medium humanoid (human); HD 4d6+4; hp 20; Mdt 13; Init +6; Spd 30ft.; AC 14, touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +3; Grap +3; Atk +2 melee (1d8, morningstar) or +3 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); Full Atk +2 melee (1d8, morningstar) or +3 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); SA sneak attack +2d6; SQ criminal trait, evasion, jaded, trap sense +1, trapfinding, uncanny dodge; Rep +1; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +4; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Background Skills: Gather Information, Sleight of Hand.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +5, Diplomacy +9 (+11 with scum), Disable Device +6, Disguise –2 (+0 acting), Gather Information +10, Hide +7, Intimidate +0, Knowledge (local) +9 (+11 navigating the Maze), Listen +7, Move Silently +7, Search +5, Sense Motive +7, Sleight of Hand +14, Spot +6 (+8 notice thievery); Improved Initiative, Maze-Savvy*, Streetwise^{B*}.

*New feat, see *Thieves' World Player's Manual* for details.

Languages: Trade Tongue (S), Wrigglie (S).

Contacts: Information (2).

Possessions: Padded armor, morningstar, light crossbow, 10 bolts, potion of *levitate*, *ring of protection +1*, masterwork thieves' tools, vial of acid, 46 *sh*.

Notes: Pegrin has suffered permanent injuries which have reduced his Charisma by 4 points; he is also blind in one eye and is permanently considered dazzled. Only magic can restore his faculties.

TACTICS

Master Whoever has four goals—to kill EriIssi, to get a letter off his body, to frame someone by getting the dagger near them, and to blend in with the guard once they arrive. Most likely, he'll stick to the round-by-round actions listed above, but if you have to deviate from those, keep his primary goals in mind.

Pace just needs to escape. With luck he can just jump through a window, but failing that he climbs into the rafters and kicks his way through the leaky spot in the roof over the counter. It's not critical Pace escape—it's just a clue for the PCs to go look for him. He certainly doesn't risk his life in order to escape. Similarly, Rossa isn't planning on doing anything, but takes whatever steps seem called for to escape serious harm.

Kensel, Fensel and Brod think this is all about them until the guards show up in the next encounter. They bumble about the tavern, blindly fighting anyone they stumble into or can find with a Listen check. They don't play any part in the rest of the adventure unless the PCs drag them into it, so any change you want to make to them is fine. They're mostly here to sow confusion and give the PCs something to fight while Master Whoever offs EriIssi.

DEVELOPMENTS

The worst possible outcome for this encounter is for EriIssi to somehow survive. Therefore, he doesn't, not even if the PCs manage to surround him so Master Whoever can't possibly kill him. If things get that out of control, you'll have to change reality a bit. In that case, assume EriIssi was poisoned by Master Whoever hours ago, and this entire attack was just an effort to get the letter Whoever knows EriIssi has on him. If Whoever can't even manage that, EriIssi manages to pour wine over the letter before dying of the poison on Round 2, and the ink runs so nothing is legible except the corner described in **Encounter 2**, below. (Yes, this is very heavy handed. If the whole adventure didn't depend on a murder occurring, it'd be a bad idea.)

TREASURE

The three thugs have a few items and coins a PC could take if the thug is knocked out or killed. EriIssi has 20 *sh*, 42 *pd*, and a masterwork dagger on him.

SCENE TWO: WHERE'S A GUARD WHEN YOU NEED ONE?

Less than a minute has passed since the lights went out, and the confusion hasn't settled yet. Everyone's attention is suddenly drawn to the front door when several men with torches appear in the doorway. They wear the patches of the town guard, and already have their weapons drawn. The thin, waxed paper windows on the bottom floor begin to glow with flickering light from the outside, suggesting the guard have the other exits covered as well.

The largest of the men in the doorway calls out with a booming voice "Everyone stop where they are! I'm Captain Macklin. This is a guard matter now!"

On the fourth round after the lights go out, the guards show up. There are a total of 14 town guards (two at each window, three in the doorway, and another three just outside the front door). They've been waiting outside for several minutes, led here by a tip that a serious crime is going to happen at the tavern on this night, around this time, right after the tavern goes dark. This information was leaked to one of the senior guards, through a contact, by Master Whoever. He had thought the smokebomb would have to do for "going dark," but took the opportunity when the wind blew out the lanterns. Whoever has been concealed right by the door for quite some time. He knows the guards are nearby, and thus he has disguised himself as a guard (with a cloak over that to allow him to move unnoticed through the streets of the Maze). Master Whoever is, in fact, one of the three guards standing at the front door. This is all part of his plan—by involving the guard he can set up someone else to be blamed for the murder, and make good his escape using his skill for deception.

Now that the guards' torches are shedding light (both at the front door and through the windows) the situation within the tavern becomes obvious again. EriIssi is dead, with a knife stuck in his back and a shred of paper still grasped in his hand. A second knife sits where Master Whoever threw it, unless a PC picked it up. A wet cloak lies between EriIssi's body and the front door (this is Master Whoever's, but there's nothing distinctive about it).

Because it's dark and rainy, the guard hasn't noticed Master Whoever enter, or seen Pace leave. They also don't notice Whoever's snuck in among their number. The thirteen other guards don't all work together normally, instead coming from three different patrols. Everyone simply assumes he's from a different patrol, if they even get a close enough look to realize they don't recognize him. As far as the guards are concerned, the murderer must be one of the people still in the tavern. If one of the PCs has a bloody knife in his hand, it's easy to justify arresting that character. If the PCs don't look particularly guilty,

ACT I: MURDER AT THE VULGAR UNICORN



Macklin, the captain of this squad of guards, simply arrests everyone except Minx and Pegrin (who wouldn't be stupid enough to kill someone in their own tavern). If everyone comes along quietly, the guards don't make any trouble. If not, they take everyone by force.

Obviously, the entire set-up of *Murder at the Vulgar Unicorn* assumes the PCs are captured by the town guard at the end of this encounter. Unfortunately, this is also the plot point that players are most likely to resist. Being captured often feels like “losing,” and players hate to lose. Especially since the adventure is designed to make the PCs look guilty, it's not unreasonable for players to seek to avoid capture. Since the game goes more smoothly if the PCs don't deviate from the planned script this early, you need to carefully handle player efforts to avoid capture.

Before allowing the PCs to act, make it clear all the other NPCs present immediately surrender. There are simply too many guards for anyone to realistically hope to escape now, and fighting the guard is just likely to get someone hurt. By having everyone else surrender, you can show the players that this situation is beyond their ability to fight through. Also, if other patrons seem unsurprised and unafraid, it reinforces the idea that being captured by the guard isn't a death-sentence. You may even want to have Macklin reinforce that idea. (“Easy now. If you've done nothing wrong, you've got nothing to fear. The Sharda will know if you're guilty or not.”) The PCs should know who the Sharda are as their presence in the city is becoming common knowledge. Reinforce the fact that the Sharda are a new law enforcement agency known for being incorruptible. They were created by Judge Nevermind

in response to the rampant corruption found in the watch and the guard.

If possible, don't have a guard start a fight. The guards know combat is lethal and dangerous, and talk as long as they can without coming to blows. They won't allow PCs to escape, but they will talk for a good long time if there's any chance they can bring in the PCs without risking their lives. If things do come to a fight, the guards should try to deal nonlethal damage for one or two blows before doing lethal damage. (A character that takes nonlethal damage even once during a fight is unlikely to be killed accidentally by a later lethal blow, just knocked unconscious.)

It's also perfectly acceptable to simply tell players that their characters are taken by the guards to see Judge Nevermind. If they complain, blame it on the writing of the adventure (we don't mind), and assure them they won't be penalized for allowing a “narrative” moment to dictate the outcome of the encounter. Obviously you should never tell players what their characters are thinking or trying, but it's within a GM's purview to let them know a sequence of events turns out in a predetermined way (as long as that's never used to penalize them or short-circuit clever thinking or good luck on the player's part). If you're going to use this option, use it before players actually start making rolls to try to escape.

Players may want to memorize details of who is here, who has escaped, and where everything is. Since part of *Murder at the Vulgar Unicorn* is a mystery, it's perfectly reasonable to allow a player to write down any details he thinks to ask about now. Trying to come up with a detail later requires a DC 15 Intelligence check for each specific question. A DC 15 Spot check allows a character to notice Pace is missing, even if the players don't think to ask.

TYPICAL WATCHMAN (14)

Male Wrigglie constable, warrior 1; CR 1/2; Medium humanoid (human); HD 1d8; hp 4 each; Mdt 14; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +1; Grap +1; Atk +1 melee (1d6/19–20, short sword) or +2 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); Full Atk +1 melee (1d6/19–20, short sword) or +2 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); SQ constable trait, jaded; Rep +0; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 11, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Background Skills: Knowledge (local), Spot.

Skills and Feats: Intimidate +9, Knowledge (local) +4, Listen +4, Sense Motive +2 (+4 lies), Spot +6; Alertness^B, Weapon Focus (light crossbow).

Languages: Wrigglie (S).

Contacts: Information (1).

Possessions: Studded leather armor, short sword, light crossbow with 10 bolts, rawhide strap (for binding hands), bullseye lantern, flint and steel, oil flask, traveler's outfit, 6 *sh*, 12 *pd*.

MACKLIN (TOWN GUARD CAPTAIN)

Wrigglic constable, fighter 4; CR 4; Medium humanoid (human); HD 4d10+11; hp 35; Mdt 23; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +4; Grap +6; Atk +7 melee (1d8+4/19–20, longsword) or +6 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+4/19–20, longsword) or +6 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); SQ constable trait, jaded; Rep +1; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Background Skills: Knowledge (local), Spot.

Skills and Feats: Gather Information +1, Knowledge (local) +7, Intimidate +3, Listen +3, Sense Motive +1 (+3 lies), Spot +8; Alertness^B, Improved Damage Threshold*, Improved Initiative^B, Toughness, Weapon Focus (longsword)^B, Weapon Specialization (longsword)^B.

*New feat, see *Thieves' World Player's Manual* for details.

Languages: Wrigglic (S).

Contacts: Influence (1), information (1).

Possessions: Chain shirt, longsword, light crossbow with 10 bolts, bullseye lantern, flint and steel, oil flask, traveler's outfit, 12 *sb*, 16 *pd*.

TACTICS

Although Macklin tries to arrest everyone without violence if he can, he has no intention of allowing anyone to escape. Each pair of guards has one with a sword drawn and one with a crossbow loaded, ensuring they can defend themselves in close quarters or shoot a fleeing fugitive as the situation dictates. Macklin moves the guards not watching the windows into the tavern, to secure the stairs and balcony level. No guard goes anywhere alone, and everyone is considered a threat until they're disarmed and have their hands bound. None of the NPCs present resist this treatment.

DEVELOPMENTS

If the PCs do manage to escape, you have to let them. Anyone who can actually get out of the no-win situation the adventure proposes needs to be rewarded, not punished. Don't panic; the adventure can still be put back on track. Escaping from the Vulgar Unicorn is a far cry from escaping Sanctuary. Soon, guards and the militia are searching the streets and watching all exits, armed with descriptions of the PCs and looking to arrest them. Word gets out that Judge Nevermind wants to question the PCs, and use his truthspeakers to determine their guilt.

Further, word's out that he's offering a 300 *sb* reward to anyone who turns in the PCs, and promises the safety of whoever does so. One obvious way out for the PCs, therefore, is to turn themselves in. This gets them some money (Elisar gives them the reward for turning themselves in—fair's fair), and lets them be in an even

stronger position to protest their innocence. Alternatively, you can have the PCs run into bands of guards looking for them, or even mercenaries or Irrune adventurers seeking to bring them in for the fame and fortune. Either way, unless the PCs somehow manage to flee Sanctuary quickly and quietly (without running into a guard or a criminal looking to turn bounty hunter), they eventually end up in front of the Magistrate. From there, the adventure proceeds as written.

SCENE THREE: FACING THE MUSIC

Read or paraphrase this information as the PCs are taken under arrest from the Maze to the hall of Justice.

The drizzle isn't heavy enough to restrict your vision, but it is enough to ensure you're soaked to the bone after a twenty minute walk. Your escort takes you from the twisted alleys and ramshackle walls of the Maze toward the palace precinct. The streets are nearly empty, with just a few beggars huddling for warmth under archways and the occasional cloaked figure rushing to an appointment that can't wait until morning. As you pass into the palace grounds, even those few individuals cease to be present, replaced by a few sleepy-looking guards and the occasional drunk Irrune sleeping against a wall under a fur cloak.

You are taken along the inner wall of the palace grounds, but not to the main building of the palace itself. Instead, the guards guide you to a large, imposing structure that shows signs of wear and age: the Hall of Justice. Though the fires in the Palace caused extensive damage to this compound, the structure has since been restored to the standards before the fires. Four town guards stand watch over the entrance, which sits at the top of a wide set of stairs and is surrounded by large marble columns.

One of the guards chuckles as you approach the stairs. "Welcome to the Hall of Justice. Lord Nevermind is going to be in a particularly good mood this time of night."

This is indeed the Hall of Justice, home of most of Sanctuary's legal records, a number of minor administrators, and Magistrate Elisar (also known as Lord Nevermind) and his personal security force, the Sharda. A DC 13 Knowledge (local) check can provide a PC with all this information, as well as the fact that the magistrate is known to be a strong-arming bully, but not an idiot or a cruel man. He also rarely sees cases himself, instead depending on the judgment of his Sharda, investigators that answer to him directly. It's known that the Sharda include truthspeakers, who know a lie as soon as they hear it. The PCs may not get a fair deal from the Hall of Justice, but they won't end up hanging from a gallows without an opportunity to argue their innocence either.

ACT I: MURDER AT THE VULGAR UNICORN

The PCs are taken to a holding cell. Anyone else taken from the Vulgar Unicorn is placed in different cells, too far away to be heard. The cell is a simple 20-ft.-by-20-ft. stone room with four pallets of hay on the floor and an empty bucket that smells like a latrine. The iron barred gate has a Good lock (DC 35 to pick), hardness 20 and 60 hit points. A single guard patrols the hall beyond the cell, but never gets within arms reach or enters the cell without three other guards supporting him. It's very, very unlikely the PCs can get out of this, and even if they do they're in the middle of the hall of Justice. It would take no fewer than ten Hide and Move Silently checks (opposed by the Listen and Spot checks of typical guards) to get out of the palace grounds, with any failed check bringing down at least a dozen guards.

Give the PCs all the time they seem to need to talk among themselves. They may want to ask more questions about exactly what happened at the Vulgar Unicorn, which is fine (see **Scene One** for details about remembering details). Don't rush the players if they need to talk amongst themselves, but also don't wait so long that they get bored. The characters are stuck in this cell for several hours, but there's no reason the PCs can't skip to the next point of action if they're ready.

After four or five hours, two men approach the cell. Both are dressed in the tunics of the Sharda, marking them as Lord Nevermind's personal investigators. These are Astar, a young man with simple features and a nondescript appearance, and Vernic, a tall, thin Wriggie with narrow eyes and thinning hair. Vernic is a Truthspeaker, and says nothing through the entire interview. Astar explains he's here to listen to the PCs side of



events. Rossa and the three thugs have already been questioned and determined to not have had anything to do with the death of Eirilissi, though Astar admits Rossa knew the victim's name.

Astar asks the following questions at a minimum, plus anything that seems reasonable based on the PCs responses.

- What were the PCs doing at the Vulgar Unicorn on such a rotten night? (Be sure you've discussed this with each PC before putting them on the spot with this question.)
- Did any of the PCs know Eirilissi?
- Did any of them speak to Eirilissi?
- Did they see anyone else speak to Eirilissi?
- During the total blackout, did any PC struggle with anyone? If so, are they sure it wasn't Eirilissi?
- Did anyone see who killed Eirilissi?
- Was anyone missing after the murder who had been there before? (This is another opportunity for a PC to realize Pace disappeared, if they haven't already mentioned and asked about the question.)
- Was there any sign of bad blood between Eirilissi and anyone present at the bar?
- If the PCs claim they didn't kill Eirilissi, can they provide any better explanation to why he died?
- (Only if a PC was found with the knife)—How did a bloody knife end up in the PCs' hands?

To determine how well the PCs do during questioning, have them all make Diplomacy checks. If they do a good job answering the questions, give them a bonus of up to +5. If any of them are deceptive, have them make Bluff checks to see if Vernic picks up on it. A deception noticed by Vernic is a -5 penalty to that character's Diplomacy check. A deception that passes Vernic's notice allows that PC to use the better of a Bluff or Diplomacy check on this roll. Take the best PC Diplomacy check, and add +2 for each other Diplomacy check that managed to beat DC 10. Compare the total to the chart below.

Regardless of how convincing the PCs have been, Elisar intends to get answers from them one way or another. Life in Sanctuary often isn't fair, and this is one of those cases. When Astar and Vernic return to give the PCs the mixed news, read or paraphrase the information below. The more innocent the PCs seem to be, the more gentle and polite Astar's attitude is, but in no case is not solving this murder a realistic option for the PCs.

Astar reappears after a little more than an hour. You can tell by the light filtering into the hallway from a barred window that it's nearly dawn. Vernic is nowhere to be seen, though three town guards accompany Astar. His voice sounds tired, but firm.

GETTING INFORMATION

Total Diplomacy Check	Result
10 or less	The Sharda suspect the PCs are guilty. Though the magistrate still orders their release, word gets out they're going to prison soon. The PCs suffer a -2 penalty to all Cha-based checks (except Intimidate) until they clear their name to some degree.
11–20	The Sharda don't think the PCs were directly involved in Eirilissi's murder, but aren't convinced they don't know more about it than they're admitting. This is the baseline assumption of the adventure, and it requires little modification of attitudes in future encounters.
21–30	The Sharda strongly suspect the PCs have nothing to do with Eirilissi's murder and are being honest, but can't fully convince Elisar of this. Astar offers each 1 <i>sb</i> to help cover expenses of their investigation, and suggests success will be met with further rewards.
31+	The Sharda are sure the PCs are wholly uninvolved, and so is Elisar. However, sending them out to investigate is still a good way to find out what's going on without expending any more of Lord Nevermind's resources. Astar actually apologizes to the PCs for putting them in this spot, but shrugs. The magistrate wants answers, and for being in the wrong place at the wrong time the PCs are charged with getting them. Astar offers each PC 4 <i>pd</i> as payment for working for the magistrate, and promises a safe place to stay if they get into trouble, and further rewards if they uncover anything.

“The Magistrate feels there isn't enough evidence to convict you of tonight's killing. However, he also doesn't feel you're totally uninvolved in the act or whatever plot precipitated it. It's well within his authority to keep you imprisoned until the matter is cleared up, but that does little to actually find the truth. Instead, Judge Nevermind has decided to charge you with the task of unraveling this mystery. Even if you're in no way responsible for the deadly deed, someone has now tried to frame you for it. One way or another, you're involved now.

Therefore, you are ordered and authorized by the magistrate to investigate the murder at the Vulgar Unicorn. The militia and guard will both be made aware of this, and as long as you don't seek to leave the immediate area, they won't harass you in this matter. We will provide you with what little information we have, and it's up to you to fill in the gaps.

What we need are three things. To know who actually stuck the knife in Eirilissi. To know who ordered the assassination., And, to know why they decided this particular man had to die. Once you can look a Sharda truthspeaker in the eye and explain the truth of the act, the order, and the reason for this killing, the Magistrate will be satisfied. Until then, you're ordered to remain within Sanctuary's walls as suspects in the death of Eirilissi the Tradesman. If you find something that helps prove your innocence bring it to me, and we'll see if these restrictions can be eased a bit.

Should you succeed, the magistrate has even suggested there may be a reward in your future. I suspect the faster you come up with answers, and the more satisfying they are, the more likely it is you'll actually make a profit from this unfortunate turn of events.”

The Sharda know very little at this time. They know Eirilissi was killed with a single stab wound to the back with a boar's head dagger, identical to the one tossed at one of the PC's feet. They know he was a poor merchant from Ilsig who never seemed rich, but also never ran out of coin despite having been jobless for several months now. Rumor associates Eirilissi with at least one other man in Sanctuary, but no one can agree who that was. Additionally, a member of the town guard claims the boar head dagger is very similar to those used by the Silent Brothers, a gang of thugs operating out of the Maze.

With that slim scrap of information, the PCs are let out of the Hall of Justice and sent out into the early morning hours of Sanctuary's new day. As long as they seem to be making an effort to investigate, and stay out of too much trouble, the militia, guard and Sharda leave them alone. If they slack off, or try to leave the city, the guards of the city begin to suggest their leniency is wearing thin after a few days. (If the PCs try to leave the city, follow the suggestions listed in the developments section of Scene Two).

THE INVESTIGATION

There's no telling what order the PCs will investigate their leads in, or even if they will investigate all of them. That's fine. This section of the adventure is designed to be very open for the players (in part to make up for how restrictive the first few encounters were). The PCs have a few leads, and may want to investigate others that the players think up themselves. Although the scenes are numbered, the PCs can hit them in any order that makes sense. There's no rush, but it's important to keep the players from getting frustrated if they don't make progress quickly. If the investigation stalls, have a day or two pass. Then you can have the PCs run into a random encounter (see **Interludes** starting on page 25). Rather than receive the normal reward of money or a potential contact, instead have a successful outcome by the PCs result in one of

the people involved giving the PCs a clue. Word has gotten out that the PCs are investigating the death of Eirilissi, so it stands to reason that the few people who know anything important might tell the PCs if given a reason to be grateful (or if in need of a way to placate the PCs).

If the players think of a creative line of inquiry not covered here, allow them to follow it and try to give them useful information as they go. One of the reasons it's important for you as GM to know what's actually going on in the adventure is so you can handle unusual or unexpected actions the PCs take. As the investigation progresses, try to take note of what kinds of things the players seem to be enjoying. If they only appreciate the fight sequences, there's nothing wrong with having contacts, saved NPCs, or even the Sharda bring them new leads so the players don't have to slog through clues they find boring. On the other hand, if the players are having a good time sightseeing in sanctuary, talking to NPCs, and speculating about what might be going on but don't seem to like fighting, feel free to let them talk to anyone they think of and minimize the combat aspects.

Regardless of how the investigation pans out, there are a few points the PCs need to discover and preferably have evidence of that they can bring to the Sharda, though stating they know these things to be true in front of Vernic will do in a pinch. Until they have at least the first of this minimum level of information, the PCs can't really progress onto Act Two. If the PCs decide to move on with just the Karizal lead before you're ready for them to leave Sanctuary proper, simply have the Sharda decide one hint of something relevant isn't enough to allow the PCs out of the city gates. The PCs will be forced to look for more evidence, allowing you to keep them in the city until you're ready for Act Two.

- Karizal has been seen going back and forth to the Swamp of Night Secrets.
- Pace was hired by Eirilissi to kill or kidnap Rossa, though he doesn't know why. After Eirilissi was killed, Pace received another payment through the same contact offering to renew Eirilissi's contract on Rossa.
- Eirilissi had only one known friend or associate, a dilettante named Arion Swan.
- Eirilissi made a point of being seen and overheard in different places around Sanctuary.

The two bits about Eirilissi can be gotten out of Rossa if the PCs rescue her, or picked up on the streets of Sanctuary if a player opts to use an information contact or Gather Information check to find out more about the murder victim.

SCENE FOUR: THE SILENT BROTHERS

Read or paraphrase the following when and if the PCs actually find themselves confronting the Silent Brothers.

There are six of them, desperate looking men with desperate expressions. They have armor, but it's worn and stained. Their clothes and other equipment is similarly old and in poor shape. Their hard eyes dart nervously back and forth, as they try to track every possible foe and movement. Only two things stand out about these men. First, each has in hand a wicked, well-oiled dagger with a boar's head pommel, and second, the fact that they move with surprising stealth, their every movement muffled and quiet.

The Silent Brothers are, in fact, a gang of six thugs (Beta, Fen, Honhon, Needer, Schwit and Urza. If anyone bothers to ask for their names) who have recently begun operating out of the Maze. In an effort to make a name for themselves quickly, they bought a set of nine matching boar's head daggers several months ago from a traveling merchant. They wear the daggers openly, making it a trademark of their group in an effort to seem tougher and more stylish than they truly are. So far the tactic has worked poorly at best—the only people who have really noticed are members of the militia and town guard. The Silent Brothers lack the numbers, skill or contacts to run a successful protection racket or get enough work as hired thugs to live comfortably.

As a result, they were forced last month to sell three of their precious boar's head daggers. In fact, they were pretty well literally forced to sell them, by an Irrune named Karizal. When the Silent Brothers were hassling a street vendor for food they didn't want to pay for, Karizal appeared and mused aloud that he needed to report such cowardly actions to Naimun (son of the Irrune tyrant ruling the city). Karizal had learned of the daggers' existence from a merchant who mentioned offhand that the style must be popular for he had sold nine the last time he was in town. Karizal quickly moved to intercept the Silent Brothers and snatch the knives for himself. As the Silent Brothers tried to decide how to handle an Irrune who knew the tyrant's son, Karizal demanded they sell him three daggers, so they would have enough money to buy food instead of trying to extort it. Too cowardly to risk the wrath of the Irrune if they hurt a friend of Naimun, the Silent Brothers agreed.

It's a decision they've regretted ever since. If anything, they're now taken less seriously in the Maze and have even had an Irrune or two seek them out and beat on them. The Silent Brothers are on the verge of looking like easy prey, a status that few gangs ever recover from (or even survive).

Since the Sharda mentioned the Silent Brother's connection to the boar head daggers, the PCs may well decide to hunt them down. That's not particularly difficult. If the PCs do a good job hunting down the Silent Brothers, they can ambush them. If they don't, the Silent Brothers get the drop on the PCs. If the PCs don't even go looking for the Silent Brothers, the Brothers ambush the PCs two days later (after hearing about the connection between their knives and the murder at the Vulgar Unicorn).

ACT I: MURDER AT THE VULGAR UNICORN

- A DC 15 Knowledge (local) check tells a PC who the Silent Brothers are and that they hang out in the Maze. If the PCs go to the Maze hunting for them, have every PC make both Spot and Hide checks, and make the same checks for all the Silent Brothers. Compare the best Spot check on each side with the worst Hide check on the opposing side. Whichever group's best Spot check beats the opponent's worst Hide check by the most notices the opposing force first.
- A DC 13 Gather Information check outlines where the Silent Brothers can be found at the time the check is made, and where they're likely to go soon (both locations in the Maze). With this information, the PCs can set up an ambush without needing to worry about Hide checks, since they know where the silent Brothers are going.
- A DC 10 Intimidate check made against any reasonably well informed beggar or similar street-folk lets the PCs know where the Silent Brothers are going to be soon. However, unless the Intimidated NPC is paid off or somehow restrained, he gets word to the Silent Brothers in retribution for being threatened. As a result, it's the PCs who are ambushed at the stated locale.



If the Silent Brothers manage to Spot the PCs first or set up an ambush for them, they keep it very simple. When the PCs pass by an alley, the Silent Brothers rush out from it in an effort to kill the PCs. This begins with a surprise round, with the PCs all needing to make Listen checks against the lowest Move Silently check the Silent Brothers manage. Anyone who succeeds can move on the surprise round, but those who fail are unable to act until the first full round.

SILENT BROTHERS

Wrigglic bandit, warrior 1; CR 1/2; Medium humanoid (human); HD 1d8; hp 6; Mdt 13; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grap +2; Atk +3 melee (1d4+1/19–20, masterwork dagger) or +2 ranged (1d4+1/19–20, throwing dagger); Full Atk +3 melee (1d4+1/19–20, masterwork dagger) or +3 ranged (1d4+1/19–20, throwing dagger); SQ bandit trait, jaded; Rep +0; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Background Skills: Hide, Move Silently.

Skills and Feats: Hide +6, Intimidate –1 (+1 recognized), Knowledge (local) +2, Listen +0, Move Silently +9, Spot +0; Skill Focus (Move Silently)^B, Stealthy.

Languages: Wrigglic (S).

Contacts: Influence (1).

Possessions: Leather armor, masterwork dagger, dagger, traveler's outfit, 6 *pd*.

TACTICS

If the Silent Brothers manage to set up an ambush for the PCs, they depend on their whisper-silent movements to allow them to charge and stab as many PCs as possible in the first round of combat. If they are themselves ambushed, they try to stay close together to prevent themselves from being flanked or cut off from one another.

In either case, in the Silent Brothers' experience, a wounded merchant is more likely to surrender than fight, so each Brother targets an uninjured foe if given a choice between that and an enemy who is already bleeding. Although there are six of them, the fact they are just warriors (rather than fighters) and they are armed with only two daggers each make them, at best, a challenge for a well-prepared group of 4 PCs. If it's clear they are losing, the Brothers flee, though if ordered to halt by someone with a ranged attack they obey (with only 6 hp, it's easy to believe a single attack can bring you down).

DEVELOPMENTS

If captured, the Silent Brothers outline where they got their daggers, and how they came to lose 3 of them. This last story is important, because anyone with even passing familiarity with the Irrune know they don't pay for anything. Karizal may have looked like an Irrune, but he must have been something else. (An Irrune PC knows this without having to roll. Anyone else can figure it out with a DC 10 Knowledge (local) or other appropriate skill.) Obviously, this leads directly to looking for Karizal (see **Scene Six**).

The Silent Brothers have no other part in this adventure—unless the PCs give them one. They could become a contact of some kind, or even be browbeaten into working for the PCs. In fact, the Silent Brothers are very broke and getting hungry. If the PCs manage to improve the Brother's starting attitude from Unfriendly to Friendly with a Diplomacy check, the Silent Brothers will work (albeit not loyally) for the PCs for a modest fee.

TREASURE

Each Silent Brother still has one masterwork boar-head dagger. Other than that, even their change is grubby and unpleasant, though it'll spend.

SCENE FIVE: KEEPING PACE

Another likely lead is the man called Pace, who was present when Eirilissi was killed, but gone by the time the guard burst into the tavern forty seconds later. He's not mentioned to the PCs by the Sharda, but they may remember him on their own. Even if they don't, it would be possible to discover he was missing any number of ways—go back to the Vulgar Unicorn and ask Minx about that night (she remembers Pace being present beforehand and gone afterward), ask the Sharda who was taken into custody and realize Pace isn't mentioned, or even a really good (DC 20 or so) Gather Information check about the whole murder. Even if the PCs don't investigate Pace, if they decide to look up Rossa for some reason, they may end up at this encounter.

Pace was contacted the day after Eirilissi was killed and offered more money if he kidnapped Rossa and brought her to an abandoned warehouse in the southern section of the city. Not wanting to waste the investigation he'd done in preparation for grabbing her, Pace agreed and nabbed her the next night. He's been waiting in this warehouse ever since, going out daily to get food for them both. He has Rossa gagged and tied to a stool, so she's not going anywhere just now.

Finding Pace isn't the interesting part of this scene, so any reasonable effort on the PCs part (including checking with an information contact) should be successful. A DC 10 Gather Information check (made by a PC or contact) tracks down someone who saw them walking together a few nights ago. Pace has since been seen going back and forth to an old warehouse, and Rossa hasn't been seen at all. Similar information can be attained with a Diplomacy or Intimidate check of someone in the know or even with a Listen check made over the course of an evening at the Vulgar Unicorn (where the murder is a favorite topic of conversation these days). However, only a DC 15 Gather Information check made by a PC or friendly contact can gather that Rossa didn't seem all that pleased to be with Pace, and that he's been spending more money than usual the past few days.

Once the PCs know where to find Pace, it's up to them to decide how to handle talking to him. He's given up going out until his contact shows up; he fears missing a meeting. He has enough food and water in the warehouse for several days. If the PCs manage

to position themselves so they can watch him, Pace seems bored and slightly agitated, but not worried or frightened. He keeps Rossa tied and gagged, and doesn't talk to her.

If the PCs decide to confront Pace, he's unapologetic about kidnapping Rossa—he's a professional and she's just a job. He doesn't reveal any details about who is paying him or what for, however. Nor will he allow the PCs to take or talk to Rossa without a fight.

However, if the PCs decide to fight, they are interrupted after just one round by the arrival of a *fenniath*—a demonic simian used as an agent by Arion Swan. Swan is nervous about proceeding with the plague plot now that Eirilissi is dead, and wants Pace and Rossa eliminated as possible complications. The *fenniath* is under orders to kill both of them, and won't leave until it's succeeded. (If the PCs never get around to confronting Pace, the *fenniath* shows up and rushes into the warehouse on its own. The PCs can sit this encounter out entirely if they're so inclined, but they won't get much out of it if they do.)

Read or paraphrase the following text when the PCs see the *fenniath* for the first time.

An inhuman scream pierces the air, and a powerful, shaggy form swings down from the rooftop. It appears roughly to be a pot-bellied monkey or misshapen ape, but clearly isn't natural in origin. The creature stands as tall as a man, but has arms longer than it is tall. Its body is covered in blood-red hair and its teeth are jet black. Its arms end in long clear talons that look like glass. The creature moves with surprising speed for its size, and rushes toward Pace with a fierce growl.

FENNIATH (1)

30 hp; see **Appendix II**, page 73 for statistics.

PACE

Male Wrigglic criminal, thief 4; CR 4; Medium humanoid; HD 4d6+4; hp 20; Mdt 13; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +3; Grap +3; Atk +3 melee (1d6/19–20, shortsword) or +5 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6/19–20, shortsword) or +5 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); SA sneak attack +2d6; SQ criminal trait, evasion, jaded, trap sense +1, trapfinding, uncanny dodge; Rep +1; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +4; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Background Skills: Gather Information, Sleight of Hand.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +5, Diplomacy +9, Disguise +0 (+2 acting), Gather Information +10, Hide +7, Intimidate +2, Knowledge (local) +9, Listen +7, Move Silently +7, Search +6, Sense Motive +7, Sleight of Hand +10, Spot +7 (+9 notice thievery), Survival +2 (+4 follow tracks); Improved Initiative, Maze-Savvy*^B, Streetwise*.

*New feat, see *Thieves' World Player's Manual* for details.

ACT I: MURDER AT THE VULGAR UNICORN

Languages: Trade Tongue (S), Wriggle (S).

Contacts: Information (1), Skill (1).

Possessions: Padded armor, shortsword, light crossbow with 10 bolts, *ring of protection* +1, *potion of convert light wounds*, masterwork thieves' tools, 72 *sh*.

ROSSA

Female Wrigglic courtier, thief 3; CR 3; Medium humanoid; HD 3d6+3; hp 16; Mdt 12; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +2; Grap +2; Atk +2 melee (1d3 nonlethal, unarmed strike); Full Atk +2 melee (1d3 nonlethal, unarmed strike); SA sneak attack +2d6; SQ courtier trait, evasion, jaded, trap sense +1, trapfinding; Rep +0; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 14.

Background Skills: Bluff, Gather Information.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +7, Bluff +11, Diplomacy +10 (+12 among peers), Disguise +2 (+4 acting), Gather Information +11, Hide +8, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (local) +8, Listen +8, Move Silently +8, Sleight of Hand +8, Spot +8; Alertness, Skill Focus (Bluff), Streetwise *B.

*New feat, see *Thieves' World Player's Manual* for details.

Languages: Ilsi (S/W), Wrigglic (S).

Contacts: Information (1).

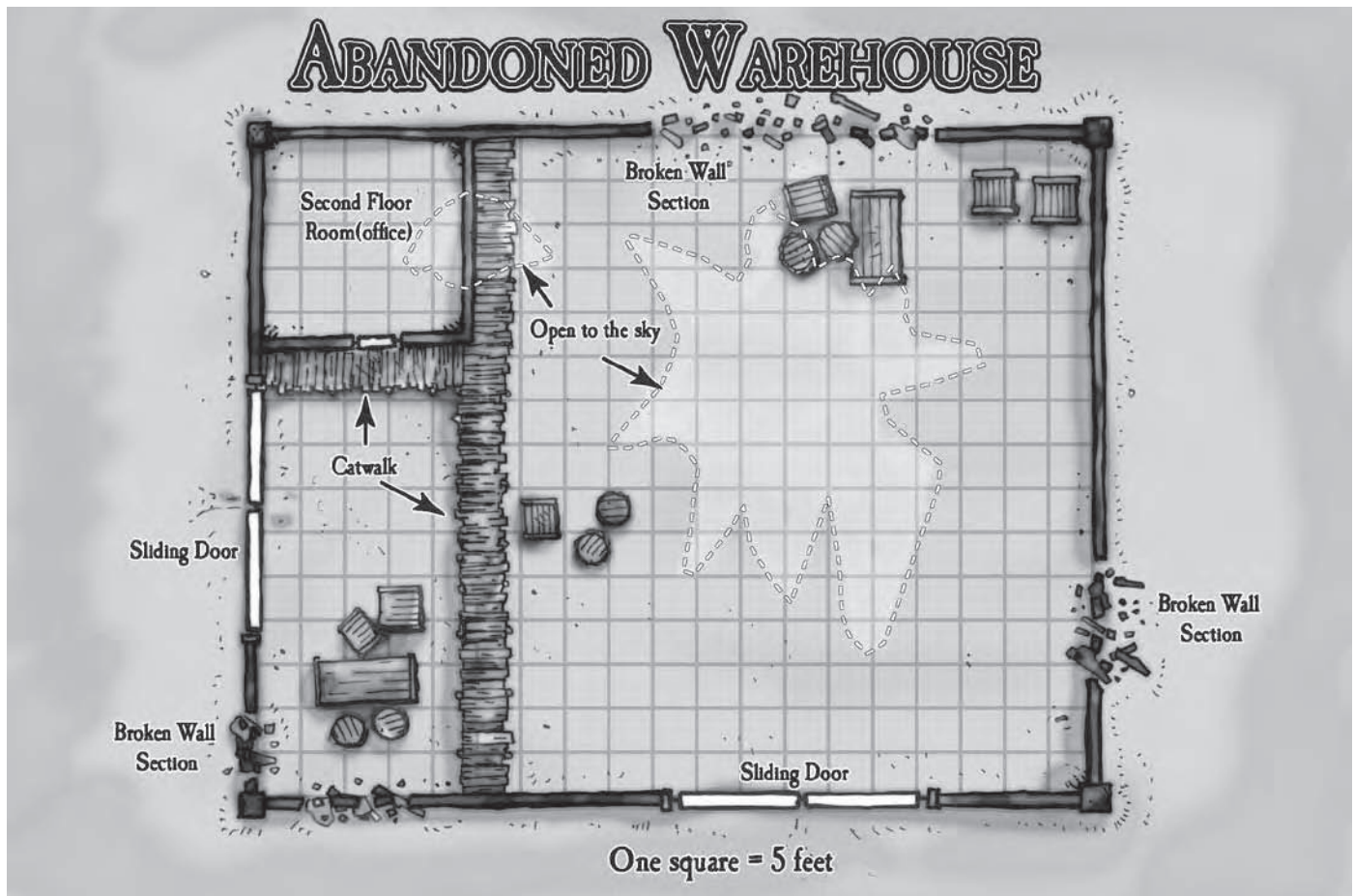
Possessions: None

TACTICS

It's important to remember the *fenniath* is here to kill Pace first and foremost, and Rossa second. That doesn't mean it ignores the PCs if they attack it—the thing is smart enough to know it can't accomplish its mission when dead. But it doesn't go out of its way to hurt the PCs either. If a PC is not acting as a threat, is backing away from the fight, or has been knocked unconscious, the monster moves on to another target. It's been given specific instructions, so it won't leave as long as either Pace or Rossa is alive, fighting to the death if necessary. Once both its targets are dead, the *fenniath* flees.

Pace also fights to the death if he has to (and likely he will die; he's no match for the *fenniath*), but in his case it's all about anger. Pace knows it's no coincidence this monster has showed up in the warehouse Pace was sitting in waiting to get paid. Whoever hired him clearly wants him dead, rather than alive and demanding his money. Even if Pace survives this attack, he assumes his employer will send more things after him, so he's dead sooner or later.

Rossa's tied up, so her tactical options are limited. If freed, she gets behind the biggest looking PC and stays there. If given a weapon she'll defend herself if forced to, but she'd much rather let someone else do the fighting. If it looks like the PCs and



ACT I: MURDER AT THE VULGAR UNICORN



Pace aren't going to be able to hold back the *fenniath*, she flees. If the *fenniath* goes after her and no PC chases after it, it's safe to assume it kills her an alley or two away. The PCs can find her body with "Swan" scrawled in her own blood, as described under **Developments**.

The *fenniath* is a bit much for the PCs to face right now unless they've already gained a level or two. This encounter is only fair to them if the monster and Pace stick pretty close to the script. Once the *fenniath* is weakened after taking out Pace and distracted by trying to get to Rossa, the PCs have a decent chance against it. This encounter is one of tiered success levels. If the PCs beat the *fenniath* before it kills Pace, they gain the most. If they defeat it after Pace is dead but before Rossa dies, they get a standard amount of information. If they don't manage to kill it until after Rossa is dead, or they fail entirely, they get just enough to help them piece together the clues later.

DEVELOPMENTS

If the PCs beat the *fenniath* before Pace is killed, he becomes much more helpful. He's not suddenly the PCs' best friend, but he does believe in helping people who save his life. It's only fair, and it encourages them to do so again if the situation arises. Besides, he's now convinced his employer tried to get rid of him. That means both that he has no ethical obligation to his employer (changing sides without cause is bad for business), and he has no reason to keep Rossa tied up. He's happy to confess he was originally hired to kidnap or kill Rossa by Erilissi, who contacted him through a man named Arion Swan. He doesn't know who hired him now

that Erilissi is dead, but they also got word to him through Swan. (In fact, it was Swan himself who hired Pace the second time, believing both Pace and Rossa to be loose ends that should be wrapped up before the plague breaks out).

If the PCs can save Rossa, she becomes a font of useful information—as long as they're willing to allow her to flee Sanctuary. She's not going to willingly talk to a Sharda or anyone else in authority—she is technically a spy, after all. However, she's decided Sanctuary is simply too dangerous for her now, and plans on changing identities and getting out of town before anyone else comes looking for her. She goes so far as to write out what she knows if the PCs ask—they can always take that to the Hall of Justice as evidence, if not proof, of what she claims. If the PCs manage a Diplomacy or Intimidate check that swings her attitude all the way to helpful, she'll even go to the hall of Justice if they insist, but she's still planning on leaving as soon as possible.

She admits to being an agent for the Kingdom of Ilsig, and she had determined, despite his talk and appearance, that Erilissi was a Rankan agent. He was too earnest about his pro-Ilsigi rants, so Rossa began following him. She didn't know what he was up to, but saw him talking to Arion Swan on several occasions, and receiving what looked like money purses from Swan. She also saw Erilissi meet with a short, overweight man in a cloak (Paithas Meed, though Rossa doesn't know his name) on more than one occasion, often passing him the purses gained from Swan. The small fat man had a hunched back, was left handed, and obviously didn't want to be spotted with Erilissi. Rossa had decided Erilissi was up to no good, and had decided to kill him, but she never got the chance. She heard Pace talk about being contacted through Swan, which leads her to believe Swan and Erilissi were more than casual acquaintances.

If Rossa dies, the PCs get a lot less information. She scrawls the word "Swan" on the floor, in her own blood, if necessary, but the PCs are left with no context to identify the name (though it ties in with clues they get in **Act Two**).

If the *fenniath* doesn't make it back to Arion Swan, he panics and goes underground (hiding in the barrows, as mentioned in **Act Three**). That means no effort to find him is going to succeed right at the moment. If the PCs ask around, they find people who know his normal haunts, but no one has seen him recently, Arion Swan is a matter for later in the adventure.

ACT ONE WRAP-UP

Although you may well want to throw in a few side trips (see **Interludes**), these scenes make up the bulk of **Act One** of the adventure. It's a good idea not to let the PCs out of Sanctuary until they're at least 2nd level, since the adventure just gets harder from here. If they haven't earned enough experience to gain 2nd level, throw in a few more side trips, either now or in the Swamp of Night Secrets before they reach "Karizal." In fact, the investigation to figure out exactly who and what Karizal is may be the best place to add a few extra random encounters to boost the PCs' level.



Sanctuary is a bustling, complex city and it's beyond the scope of this adventure to describe even a fraction of the possible encounters the PCs could get into while searching for the details of Erilissi's death. However, in a free-flowing adventure like this one, it's also impossible to predict what the PCs might decide to do that isn't covered in the normal course of the adventure. Whenever the PCs decide to look into a lead you hadn't even realized you'd given them, or go haring off in a direction no one would have guessed, it's up to you as the GM to handle the unexpected turn and eventually lead them back on track. To help with this, as well as to provide some additional material to flesh out adventuring within the city, a set of interludes is presented below. These are completely optional side trips that the PCs can encounter or not as the pacing and flow of the adventure dictate. Use one or more anytime you need time to think about the PCs new plans, or when they head somewhere not covered in the adventure and you need to present them with something worthwhile at their end destination. You can even use side trips to give the PCs a piece of information they've missed.

These interludes need not be restricted to **Act One**. They can be used anytime the PCs are in the city or a nearby inhabited area. Most of these encounters are balanced for 1st or 2nd level characters, so if you use them when the PCs have reached 3rd or 4th, you'll need to boost the number of opponents encountered, or be prepared for the PCs to have little difficulty winning through by force of arms. (That last isn't necessarily a bad thing—players like to feel above average now and then, and

thugs discovering heroes are tougher than they look is a common enough occurrence in the *Thieves' World* stories.)

SCENE A: BARROOM BRAWL

As you look around the public room of a wood-hewn tavern, four strong-smelling, rough-and-tumble characters enter, obviously looking to make merry. Two sidle up to the bar and pound upon it, demanding grog and hot food. Another, loudly singing a bad, off-key sea chanty, scoops up one of the bar maids and dances around the floor with her. She smiles but shies away from his obvious bad breath and seems relieved when he puts her down, swats her backside and sends her off for a pitcher of drink. The others look around the place and see you, but choose to settle in other spots around the room.

These men are local Irrune, just starting a hard day of rowdiness and looking to have a good time. At first, they are not interested in hurting anyone unless they are attacked first. The biggest man, Ruck, is the ego of the group. He and his buddies shout and laugh loudly, generally behaving like bad house guests until someone interferes. They spend the next hour or so engaging in loud and gregarious boasting, drinking, eating and wench pinching. If the party does nothing during this time, the Irrune become drunk and rowdy and begin to start a ruckus. It starts with a spilled drink, then a shove, and then becomes an all-out fist-fight.



If the party interrupts Ruck's good time before a fight breaks out, he insults and cajoles the offender, pours his drink deliberately on the character's head, and starts a fight as soon as he can. If the PCs have been asking about Karizal buying a boar's head dagger, Ruck recognizes them and challenges them to take back the claim that any Irrune would buy anything.

RUCK AND FRIENDS (4)

hp 10 each; see **Typical Irrune Warrior** in **Appendix I** for statistics.

TACTICS

Once a fight starts, Ruck and his friends are unlikely to harm any innocent bystanders. They only engage other combatants, especially other men, although they engage women who are obviously interested in a fight. They bullrush and grapple just as often as they use their fists, feet, or a handy wooden bench, but they do not draw weapons on the PCs as they are just looking for a good brawl. However, if someone does pull a weapon during the fight, they respond in kind, but only use those weapons against combatants who are armed.

DEVELOPMENTS

Win or lose, if the PCs engage in a fair fight (*i.e.* use only fists, chairs, unbroken bottles, other blunt objects, etc.), they gain Ruck's respect and friendship. When the fight is over, no matter who wins, he and his friends laugh loudly and invite the PCs to sit and drink with them, challenge them to arm-wrestling matches, or whatever the party is interested in doing to pass the rest of the evening. They are potential contacts (of any type) should a PC wish to pick them up when gaining a new contact. They are also a good source of information about Irrune for tonight (as long as the drinks keep flowing), confirming that Karizal can't be an Irrune, and Naimun doesn't keep anyone by that name in his cabal of friends.

If the PCs resort to weaponry during the fight, whether win or lose, Ruck and his friends (assuming they are still alive), do not become friends or contacts.

SCENE B: SOMEBODY ELSE'S PROBLEM

As you turn down the dimly lit alley, you see five figures several feet away, partially hidden by shadow. Two of them are obviously town guards, fully armed. They are accepting a large, full pouch from another figure dressed in dark, mottled clothes with a cowl and a long, billowy cloak. Behind the dark figure looms two other figures in similar, shadowy garb. No weapons are openly visible on the three figures dressed in black, and the darkness conceals their features.

A creepy, quiet whisper slithers forth from the first dark figure, "I assume this will take care of our agreement." He hands over the leathery pouch, full of something that lightly clinks.

A guard takes the heavy pouch and replies, "Until next month anyway, old man."

The dark figure is Gastov, a local *opah* dealer, and employee of Lord Night, who operates his nefarious business in this area. The two figures behind him are his henchmen. Unbeknownst to either the PCs or the two town guards standing here, there are two more of these henchmen up on the rooftops nearby.

The guards, Gorin and Krench, are two of a squad of town guards who are responsible for the law in this neighborhood. On behalf of the entire squad, they receive regular payments from Gastov to look the other way, and in some cases, protect Gastov's operatives. If the party makes no effort to conceal their presence, the NPCs will see them and attack immediately. If the party tries to sneak up on them by using Move Silently or Hide, allow the guards and dealers a Spot check to notice them. In either case, the NPCs will attack as soon as they see the PCs.

Should the PCs decide to Hide in order to watch and/or listen, they witness no further conversation or interaction between the dark figures and the guards. Unless the party interferes, the guards take their money and depart together in one direction, looking around to make sure they aren't followed. The shadowy figures scatter, and then fade into the darkness. Only the two henchmen on the rooftops remain to watch the alleyway for a few minutes. If the party enters the side street within five minutes after the NPCs leave, the henchmen on the rooftops automatically see them and attack in an effort to secure Gastov's escape.

TYPICAL TOWN GUARD (2)

hp 11 each; see **Typical Town Guard** in **Appendix I** for statistics.

HENCHMEN (2 ON THE GROUND, 2 ON THE ROOF)

hp 9 each; see **Typical Town Militia** in **Appendix I** for statistics.

GASTOV

Male Wrigglic con artist, thief 3, savant 1; CR 4; Medium humanoid (human); HD 3d6 plus 1d6; hp 14; Mdt 12; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grap +1; Atk +2 melee (1d4/19–20, +1 dagger); Full Atk +2 melee (1d4/19–20, +1 dagger); SA sneak attack +2d6; SQ con artist trait, evasion, jaded, trap sense +1, trapfinding; Rep +0; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +7; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 16.

Background Skills: Intimidate Diplomacy.

NEW BACKGROUND: CON ARTIST

Sanctuary is home to many frauds and fakirs, charlatans and grifters. While not much different from an ordinary thief, you rely on your wit and charm to get others to give you their money and equipment freely.

Age Modifier: +0.

BONUS SKILLS

Select two from the following: Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise, Gather Information, Intimidate, or Sense Motive.

CON ARTIST TRAIT

Con artists are slick negotiators. When trying to sell something, you may make a Bluff check opposed by the target's Sense Motive check. If you succeed, you can resell the item for 75% of its normal price instead of 50% or, if new, 125% of its listed price.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +9, Decipher Script +3, Diplomacy +11, Disguise +5 (+7 acting), Forgery +11, Gather Information +6, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (local) +8, Listen +7, Profession (drug dealer) +10, Sense Motive +5, Sleight of Hand +9, Spot +8, Use Rope +1; Deceitful^B, Iron Will, Run, Skill Focus (Profession: drug dealer)^B.

Languages: Caronnese (S), Rankene (S), Trade Tongue (S), Wrigglic (S).

Contacts: Information (1), Influence (1).

Possessions: Leather armor, +1 dagger.

TACTICS

The two guards are concerned about being identified later, so they fight hard to eliminate the party as a threat. If losing, they try to escape with their lives, preferring to take their chances with the law rather than die if they cannot overcome the PCs. Gastov fights initially with his henchmen, but flees if he gets too close to death, or if the fight seems to be going badly for his side. The henchmen gladly fight to the death to make good Gastov's escape.

The rooftop henchmen do not attack unless Gastov escapes and it looks like the party is going to follow him.

DEVELOPMENTS

The PCs make enemies of Gastov and the town guards if any of them are left alive at the end of this encounter. There is no chance of information, friendship or contact from any of the NPCs. If the guards escape, the PCs can report them to the Sharda, and earn a 20 *sb* reward. If Gastov survives, he tries to make trouble for the PCs later. If he doesn't, the PCs may come

to the attention of other drug dealers and local criminals, possibly being offered jobs as enforcers, knee-breakers and assassins, or possibly even gaining Lord Night's enmity.

TREASURE

Armor and weapons on the guards and the 40 *sb* that is in the pouch Gastov hands over.

SCENE C: BEBE'S DISTRESS

As you wander the seedier streets of Sanctuary, you see up ahead, behind a half-demolished building, a pretty, young woman, crying and cowering up against a cold, stone wall. Although her clothes are of poor quality, they are attractive and revealing. A thin, crooked man cruelly twists her arm, spitting epithets and insults, demanding money from her, "... unless you'd like another good beating!" As the girl cries out, the thin man crowds her and backhands her already bruised face, ordering her again to hand over his money.

Bebe is a local working girl who has never known any other life. Rooster, the thin man, is her pimp; he has owned her for as long as she has been working. This week, Bebe has not paid Rooster enough money, but then, she never does. He demands more than she is able to make most of the time, and as usual, he is taking it out of her hide. This is just another beating as far as she is concerned. It's nothing new and there's nothing to be done for it.

Rooster is an evil man who cares nothing for the girls he pimps, only for the money they bring to him. He is eager to make an example of Bebe for the other girls; it keeps them in line and on task. He isn't interested in excuses from her or anyone else.

Clearly, if the party decides to intervene, Rooster isn't happy about it. But he's not stupid, he sees that he is outnumbered

NEW BACKGROUND: THUG

You are a tough, a minor hood, or a bravo. Other thieves and criminals use you for your muscle, not your smarts. Thanks to your size and strength, others fear you, giving you a wide berth.

Age Modifier: -1.

BONUS SKILLS

Select two from the following: Climb, Intimidate, Jump, or Knowledge (local).

THUG TRAIT

You may use Intimidate to demoralize foes as a move action instead of a standard action.

and retreats if it becomes obvious that he cannot talk his way out of the situation.

ROOSTER

Male Wrigglic thug, thief 1, warrior 1; CR 1; Medium humanoid (human); HD 1d6+1 plus 1d8+1; hp 10; Mdt 15; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +1; Grap +2; Atk +3 melee (1d6+1, masterwork club) or +2 melee (1d6+1 nonlethal, sap) or +1 ranged (1d4+1/19-20, throwing dagger); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+1, masterwork club) or +2 melee (1d6+1 nonlethal, sap) or +1 ranged (1d4+1/19-20, throwing dagger); SA sneak attack +1d6, thug trait; SQ jaded, trapfinding; Rep +0; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 10.

Background Skills: Intimidate, Knowledge (local).

Skills and Feats: Bluff +4, Climb +4, Gather Information +2, Hide +3, Intimidate +10, Jump +4, Knowledge (local) +6, Listen +1, Move Silently +3, Spot +1; Power Attack, Skill Focus (Intimidate) ^B.

Languages: Wrigglic (S).

Contacts: Information (1).

Possessions: Studded leather, masterwork club, sap, 3 throwing daggers, 1d10 *pd*.

BEBE

Female Wrigglic prostitute, commoner 1; CR 1/2; Medium humanoid (human); HD 1d4; hp 2; Mdt 11; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grap +0; Atk +0 melee (1d4/19-20, dagger); Full Atk +0 melee (1d4/19-20, dagger); SQ jaded, prostitute trait; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 11, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 14.

Background Skills: Diplomacy, Perform (courtesan).

Skills and Feats: Bluff +2 (+4 attracted), Diplomacy +7 (+9 attracted), Handle Animal +1, Jump +1, Listen +3, Perform (courtesan) +7, Ride +1, Spot +3, Swim +1; Alertness ^B, Endurance.

Languages: Wrigglic (S).

Contacts: Skill (1).

Possessions: Dagger.

TACTICS

Rooster, at first, is snippy and dismissive of the party and does nothing they demand. Once it becomes clear he has no fighting chance, he tries to talk and threaten his way clear of the encounter, and attempts to take Bebe with him. When that does not appear to be an option, Rooster takes off without his girl, but vows to return with some of his men and "take care" of

the situation properly. If the PCs attack Rooster, he runs away, but throws threats and promises behind him as he runs.

Bebe stays clear of the violence until it is over.

DEVELOPMENTS

Assuming the PCs intervene on Bebe's behalf, Rooster becomes a chronic annoyance to the party. He appears at the most inconvenient times with an ever-growing number of his toadies (typical thugs) in tow in an effort to get his revenge, save his reputation and to put the word out that nobody messes with Rooster or his business!

Bebe is extremely grateful for the party's help, although she doesn't seem to think it will do any good. Rooster will just come around tomorrow and harass her then. Despite her depression and her apparently hopeless situation, Bebe can be of great help to the party in the future. She can give them valuable information, or get them out of a jam. She might even point them in the direction of an honest merchant who will give them a fair deal, perhaps even a discount. Unless the PCs do something to improve her situation, however, Bebe remains on the streets.

SCENE D: SHANGHAI SURPRISE

While taking in the pungent sea air around the docks, you notice a couple of scruffy-looking guys hanging around outside one of the many grog houses that dot the coastal streets of Sanctuary. They are dressed in dirty, poor-quality clothes, smelling of brine. As you watch them, you realize that they are, in fact, watching you. They look away furtively as soon as you meet their gaze.

Jak and Enrok are Ilsigi brokers looking for warm bodies to put on the galleys that make the Inception Isle run. They, and their cohorts, collude with local ships' captains to capture and expropriate unsuspecting citizens, selling them into virtual slavery aboard ships headed out to sea. They watch around the docks for those who seem naïve or vulnerable (easy marks), or skilled individuals who would be of use on a ship (including spellcasters and experienced scrappers). Then, stalking the victim, they wait for a good opportunity to ambush him, knock him out and take him to one of the waiting ships for a quick sale. If they mark several victims, they simply use more men in the acquisition of them.

Unfortunately, Jak and Enrok have targeted members of the party for expropriation, and care little how much fight they put up, as they will simply bring more muscle to the combat. This encounter can happen a few different ways. If

the PCs decide to take a direct approach to the situation and confront them, Jak and Enrok slink away as soon as the party heads in their direction, moving into the shadows and using their knowledge of the back streets to lose their followers. If the characters do not follow, Jak and Enrok simply wait for a good time to jump them in a back alley or dark street nearby. They bring as many men with them as is needed to equal the number in the party. Should there be only one or two party members in this encounter, Jak and Enrok attack alone.

JAK AND ENROK

Male Wrigglie thug, thief 1, warrior 1; CR 1; Medium humanoid (human); HD 1d6+1 plus 1d8+1; hp 10; Mdt 15; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +1; Grap +2; Atk +3 melee (1d6+1, masterwork club) or +1 melee (1d6+1 nonlethal, sap) or +1 ranged (1d4+1/19–20, throwing dagger); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+1, masterwork club) or +1 melee (1d6+1 nonlethal, sap) or +1 ranged (1d4+1/19–20, throwing dagger); SA sneak attack +1d6, thug trait; SQ jaded, trapfinding; Rep +0; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 10.

Background Skills: Intimidate, Knowledge (local).

Skills and Feats: Bluff +4, Climb +4, Gather Information +2, Hide +3, Intimidate +10, Jump +4, Knowledge (local) +6, Listen +1, Move Silently +3, Spot +1; Power Attack, Skill Focus (Intimidate) ^B.

Languages: Wrigglie (S).

Contacts: Information (1).

Possessions: Studded leather, masterwork club, sap, 3 throwing daggers, 1d10 *pd*.



TACTICS

The hijackers are here to capture some able-bodied people to sell for a tidy sum. They do not get as much money if the victims are bloody and close to death. All care is taken to see that they are simply knocked unconscious and are otherwise left unharmed. In fact, they use their saps, though they resort to clubs if they fear for their lives. If they cannot take people alive, the two men flee, but if the PCs continue to hang out near the docks, the hijackers may come back and try again later. If Jak and Enrok succeed in taking any of the PCs captive, they drag the characters off, strip them of all valuables and sell them to a galley.

DEVELOPMENTS

Should the PCs be captured, they wake up on a ship already one day out to sea.

SCENE E: URCHIN THIEVES

While you are walking along a sunny side street, a large group of happy and laughing children come skipping and gamboling down the way in your direction. They are clean, bright and cheery, and you can smell the freshly washed scent of their clothes as they pass you. One pretty little girl, with a big, pink bow in her hair, looks up with large, innocent eyes, waves at the party and smiles broadly, exposing a gap where one upper tooth has recently fallen out. Apparently

unafraid of you, they continue to play their silly, little children's games, occasionally bumping into your legs and arms, while their gleeful group filters through yours as your paths cross on the sidewalk.

The PCs have just been grifted by a band of eight street-urchins. The children who just passed the party are typical young thieves who work for a street fence named Rollo the Hand, and they have just attempted to pickpocket the entire team (using Sleight of Hand). Their swift little fingers sought out pockets, pouches and boot sheaths looking for anything of value or interest to lift and take back to their boss. Use the Sleight of Hand rules to see what the children successfully boosted and give the party a chance to notice the theft.

If the party notices what happened in time to react, a couple of different things can happen. If they decide not to chase the children, nothing further takes place. If they do chase the children, they, of course, attempt to outrun the party, or to lose them in the crowd.

Rollo, if encountered, defends his children fiercely. He first attempts to sweet talk the party into leniency, explaining he takes care of all these children and they have nowhere else to go. He might even offer to return the stolen items. He avoids violence at all costs—he can't risk either himself or the children in a fight against anyone swift enough to realize they've been grifted. Use the typical Sanctan merchant for Rollo (he's a manager, not a pickpocket himself).



URCHINS (8)

Male or female Wrigglie beggar, expert 1; CR 1/2; Small humanoid (human); HD 1d6-2; hp 1; Mdt 3; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grap -6; Atk -2 melee (1d3-2/19-20, dagger); Full Atk -2 melee (1d3-2/19-20, dagger); SQ beggar trait, jaded; Rep +0; SV Fort -2, Ref +0, Will +3; Str 7, Dex 10, Con 7, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Background Skills: Hide, Knowledge (local).

Skills and Feats: Bluff +2, Diplomacy +0 (+2 against scum), Gather Information +2, Hide +7, Knowledge (local) +3 (+5 navigating the Maze), Listen +1, Move Silently +2, Sleight of Hand +2, Spot +2; Maze-Savvy^B, Streetwise.

Languages: Wrigglie (S).

Contacts: Information (1).

Possessions: Rags, Small dagger.

TACTICS

Whether discovered or not, the children all run straight back to Rollo. If any of the children are caught before they can make it back to him, they kick, scream, cry, and beg to be let go. They are all capable of laying down a sob story about being orphans and not knowing any better and having no other way to make money so they can eat every day. Of course, each child is healthy and this is all a lie, but they try everything, including offering to return the stolen goods, in order to be let go.

DEVELOPMENTS

Rollo is willing to offer to help the PCs if they'll release any children they've captured. Similarly, if the PCs aren't cruel to the children, this section of town adopts them. In either case, when dealing with this neighborhood, good fortune finds the party as well. Inn rooms and decent prices in this neighborhood seem more abundant for them. Fencing items they do not wish to keep is simple. If, however, they are harsh in their treatment of the kid cartel, the street urchins become a constant minor annoyance for the PCs, who suddenly find there are things missing from their inn rooms, and items misplaced upon their persons after moving through a crowd. Prices seem to jump up just for them in this particular district. And forget trying to fence anything through less than legitimate means. That bridge is burned.

SCENE F: GANG WAR

A single beat on a drum sounds in the quiet distance, getting your attention. Another beat, followed by another, then silence. Then the trio of beats returns, this time it is closer and louder. As the lonely melody continues, a procession appears from around a street corner. A dozen young men,

all wearing black headbands, march two by two in time with the single beating drum. Beat, step, beat, step, beat, step, step, step. Solemnly, they follow the curve of the road. In the midst of them is a long, wooden box painted black, hoisted on the shoulders of the six in the middle. Except for the drum, the street is silent and respectful.

As the procession passes, furtive figures begin to fill the spaces between the buildings and line the nearby rooftops. They pull weapons and move closer to the marching line. The funeral members clearly see their would-be attackers, but they are not readying for a fight; they are obviously outnumbered.

This is the funeral procession for a member of the Sikkintairs, one of Sanctuary's growing number of street gangs. This group happens to be from The Tween and they are carrying one of their much-loved leaders to his burial. Unfortunately, they are crossing the territory of the Dead Men, a gang from The Hill, on their way to the cemetery and the local gang isn't happy about it. They were never asked for their permission to cross the turf lines and they must now make an example of this rival gang from The Maze in order to maintain a grip on the local area.

Unless the PCs do something to prevent it, the Dead Men are going to attack. (Both groups are unfriendly toward the PCs, and hostile to each other. A nonviolent solution seems unlikely, but isn't impossible). The Sikkintairs do not initially react, but when the attack begins, all bets are off. Weapons come out on both sides and blood flows. Whether the party decides to fight or not, it becomes clear neither side is particularly careful about where the violence goes and collateral damage ensues. Innocents may be injured, but local law enforcement will not arrive in time to do anything about the fight.

Rather than run this entire fight, it's perfectly reasonable to describe how events start and then only run a small fraction of the fight (where it intersects with the PCs), not dealing with more than two or three members of each gang. Assume that however this microcosm of the gang fight turns out is how the larger conflict is resolved.

SIKKINTAIRS AND DEAD MEN THUGS (20+)

Male or female Wrigglie thug, thief 1, warrior 1; CR 1; Medium humanoid (human); HD 1d6+1 plus 1d8+1; hp 10; Mdt 15; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +1; Grap +2; Atk +3 melee (1d6+1, masterwork club) or +2 melee (1d6+1 nonlethal, sap) or +1 ranged (1d4+1/19-20, throwing dagger); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+1, masterwork club) or +2 melee (1d6+1 nonlethal, sap) or +1 ranged (1d4+1/19-20, throwing dagger); SA sneak attack +1d6, thug trait; SQ jaded, trapfinding; Rep +0; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 10.

Background Skills: Intimidate, Knowledge (local).

Skills and Feats: Bluff +4, Climb +4, Gather Information +2, Hide +3, Intimidate +10, Jump +4, Knowledge (local) +6, Listen +1, Move Silently +3, Spot +1; Power Attack, Skill Focus (Intimidate) ^B.

Languages: Wrigglie (S).

Contacts: Information (1).

Possessions: Studded leather, masterwork club, sap, 3 throwing daggers, 1d10 *pd*.

TACTICS

The Dead Men attack the Sikkintairs with abandon, doing as much damage as they can, and trying to get to the coffin in the middle of them so that they can defile it. They also attack anything or anyone who gets in their way of this task. They fight to protect their territory. The Stonefaced mainly protect the coffin, though they see anyone getting too close to it as a threat. A few gang members may fight to the death, but once the tide has turned against one side, the other flees. If the PCs choose a side to fight on, that side takes them as allies and fight alongside as if they had been a part of the gang all along.

DEVELOPMENTS

If the PCs fight with one side or the other, they become friends with the side they fought for and enemies of the side they fought against. If they simply fought for themselves, or stayed out of it, neither side is a friend or an enemy.

TREASURE

Weapons and personal effects of the dead gang members.

SCENE G: CRYPTIC NOTE

While looking over the wares in a mercantile and dry goods store, you hear the bell ring as the door opens. A gentle and feminine voice filters through the opening as a lovely young woman of clean and neat appearance enters the store and begins to speak to the customers nearest her. She carries with her a large hand woven basket full of roses of all colors, each tied with a ribbon and a small slip of paper. Smiling to a stuttering young man, she hands him a paper rose and takes a small coin in exchange. The beautiful maid sees you, smiles, and gracefully moves your way, pulling a single white rose from her basket and bringing it to her nose to sample the perfume scent.

“Care to buy a rose for your love?” she asks, holding the white rose out.

This is Lisle, a local Sanctan girl with a flair for the dramatic, who deals in information. She’s also a message courier for several of the shadier groups in Sanctuary. She has a reputation

for integrity and is therefore able to work for many different factions. She carries her messages without reading them and does so under the guise of a street merchant selling different little things at different times. This time perfumed paper roses provide her front.

She offers the rose to whichever PC wishes to take it. If they do not wish to pay for it, she gives it to them as a gift instead, saying the color is so rare and should not go to waste. If the PCs simply will not take the rose, she secrets the note by itself on one of the party members before she leaves. Lisle does not stick around once she has given the rose and/or the note to the party.

The note says simply: “All is not as it seems. Beware the ratcatcher.” It’s actually a note from Arion Swan. It is an effort to get the PCs to waste their time in an investigation of Hariv, a not quite sane beggar who wanders the streets looking for stray animals. Swan knows Hariv is obsessed with diseased animals and his ravings of such might throw suspicion onto him and keep the investigation from settling on the Dyareelans or Arion himself.

LISLE

Female Wrigglie criminal, thief 3; CR 3; Medium humanoid (human); HD 3d6; hp 10; Mdt 10; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grap +3; Atk +4 melee (1d4+1/x3, masterwork punching dagger); Full +4 melee (1d4+1/x3, masterwork punching dagger); SA sneak attack +2d6; SQ criminal trait, evasion, jaded, trap sense +1, trapfinding; Rep +0; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 14.

Background Skills: Bluff, Sleight of Hand.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +10, Diplomacy +4, Disguise 2 (+4 acting), Gather Information +10, Hide +8, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (local) +7, Listen +8, Move Silently +8, Open Lock +8, Search +7, Sleight of Hand +15, Spot +8 (+10 notice thievery), Survival +2 (+4 follow tracks); Dodge, Run, Skill Focus (Sleight of Hand) ^B.

Languages: Wrigglie (S), Trade Tongue (S).

Contacts: Information (1).

Possessions: Leather armor, masterwork punching dagger, thieves’ tools, 3d6 *pd*.

TACTICS

Lisle was paid to deliver the message to the PCs directly; she does not know by whom or what the note says or means. She is a non-combatant. Once she delivers the message, she leaves the store and disappears. If Lisle is attacked, she runs if she can; if not, she surrenders immediately and tries to bargain with her attackers. She can get messages back to those who arrange to give them to her, but it takes several days. If the PCs send a message to Arion, he doesn’t respond.

DEVELOPMENTS

If the PCs decide to investigate Hariv, they may spend hours of valuable time chasing him around to no avail. Hariv is not involved in the murder or any of the other plot points surrounding it. (See **Scene J: Ratcatcher**, on page 34).

SCENE H: PLEASE, SIR!

A somewhat unkempt little girl approaches you eagerly, looking up with a pleading and somewhat desperate countenance. Asking only for the smallest pittance, she offers up to you a worn basket full of fresh smelling baked goods—muffins, breads, and little dessert pastries.

A little boy, perhaps a year older than she, runs up next to her with his own basket. His contains matches, combs, flint and steel and other similar small items. He too asks only for the smallest amount for his wares, and for his services, “Carry your bags, Sir? Lead your horse? I can show you to the best inn in Sanctuary! Or perhaps you’d like to see the Maze?”

Gabe and Jilly are brother and sister. They are members of the very poor Thatcher family with many children ranging in age from infant to young adult, each carving out a small living as best they can. The children’s mother bakes Jilly’s goods very early every morning before she settles down to the sewing and washing she takes in from other, more affluent families in town. Their father works at one of the local chandleries and sweeps up after hours in several of the nearby stores. The other siblings in this family work whatever small jobs they can find and always bring the money home to their parents in an attempt to keep everyone together, warm and fed. This season is particularly tight because one of their older sisters is going to be married. It is a joyous occasion, but they must raise enough money to pay for her wedding garland.

Jilly offers her mother’s baked goods for a *pd*, and urges the PCs to buy more for another meal later in the day, or perhaps for an upcoming journey. Gabe goes around in the evenings and gathers his goods from castoffs and oversupplied merchants. During the day, he sells his small wares for cheap, and he also offers a myriad of services to the party, insisting that he is old enough, big enough, and strong enough to accomplish any small task, perhaps even big ones. If the PCs are willing to pay him, Gabe is willing to do nearly anything: deliver messages, find people, direct them to various locations, anything for a few coins, especially if he thinks it will bring more work in the future.

In the few short years they have been selling on the streets, Jilly and Gabe have become quite the little sales entrepreneurs. They are quite persuasive and know an easy touch when they find one. They also recognize when they are likely to get nowhere with someone, and have learned to move on if they get too much resistance. Jilly is a sweetheart and uses her innocent looks to

her best advantage. She tells the PCs how kind and thoughtful they are, and what good taste they have when they choose a particular item. She urges them to take several, they’re small, and to store up for later.

Gabe is sharp as a tack and sees opportunity in everything. He compliments the party when they make a choice from his basket and thanks them heartily when they offer him work of any kind.

The Thatcher children are not manipulative or crafty, simply persuasive and aware of their strengths and weaknesses. If the PCs actually buy everything the children offer them, Jilly runs home immediately to give the money to her mother and to reload for more sales. Gabe hangs around the party as much as they allow him to and finds ways to make himself useful and needed.

JILLY AND GABE

hp 2 each; use Urchin statistics on page 31.

TACTICS

If attacked, the children scream and run, looking for a guard or militiaman.

DEVELOPMENTS

Purchasing goods from Gabe and Jilly causes no further consequences. However, if the party goes out of their way to



bring business to Gabe, Jilly or any other member of their family, the Thatchers become very favorably disposed to the team. The PCs may find that decent goods and honest services come more easily from this family. The Thatchers may be able to become information or skill contacts should an individual desire it.

SCENE I: PROTECTION MONEY

Entering the tavern early in the afternoon, you notice only four other people in the room. The innkeeper stands somewhat shaken and scared behind his bar. Two men dressed in black, well-tailored clothes lean over the bar, threateningly. One grasps the innkeeper's tunic in his fist; their faces are very close as the man whispers something menacing in his ear. The second leers lustily at a young girl who peers out at the scene from the kitchen door, terrified of what she hears.

The two men see you and quickly turn to leave. The one holding the innkeeper releases his grip, smooths out the man's tunic, and says "You just take care 'a this quick, Goodman. We'll be back ta visit wit' ya tomarra."

These thugs are Krauss and Slyp, agents of Gastov, a local drug pusher, here to demand protection money of Goodman, the innkeeper. Goodman is just a simple businessman, caught up in a difficult situation, trying to make an honest living for himself and for his daughter. Each week Gastov's goons visit him and demand a large payment in exchange for what they call protection. They claim that they keep his tavern free of violence and vandalism. They don't, of course, but it doesn't stop them from demanding this tribute. Gastov has recently expressed an interest in Goodman's daughter, Franzella, and has been upping his weekly price in an effort to force Goodman's hand. If he cannot pay the price Gastov asks, Franzella will be taken as payment instead, as she would bring a nice price on the street.

Goodman, an older man, is stuck in a bad situation gone worse. He fears for his daughter, Franzella, but is finding it harder and harder to come up with the ever-increasing payments to Gastov. Even so, Goodman is reluctant to tell the PCs anything or to ask for help. He is more concerned with the consequences should Gastov discover what he's done. He would much rather just keep trying to pay the money each week and keep his head down and out of trouble. He is convinced he will find a way to protect his daughter.

If the PCs try to stop or harass the thugs before they leave, Goodman immediately attempts to calm the situation. He offers to buy the PCs a drink and tries to hurry Krauss and Slyp out the door. He does not stop the party if they simply try to leave, even if they are headed after Krauss and Slyp.

FRANZELLA AND GOODMAN

hp 3 each, noncombatants.

KRAUSS AND SLYP

hp 10; use Sikkintair and Dead Man Thug statistics on page 31.

TACTICS

Krauss and Slyp try to leave right away. If pressed by the PCs, they resort to violence very quickly, going for the kill as soon as a combat breaks out. Goodman and Franzella do not get involved in any kind of combat.

DEVELOPMENTS

Goodman is angry at the PCs if they interfere. He does not want them to stay around or cause any trouble. Fran, on the other hand, becomes a friend and ally to the PCs for their help and can be taken as an information contact. If the PCs do cause trouble now, things won't go well for Goodman as long as Gastov is breathing (see **Scene B**).

SCENE J: RATCATCHER

A lone figure wanders the streets, poking empty crates and looking under barrels, seemingly oblivious to the rest of the world. He carries in one hand a long, straight pole with a looped rope attached to one end. In the other hand, he carries an old, much-repaired twine net. He wears ragged, thick clothes that cover him from head to toe, large gloves, heavy boots, and a makeshift helmet of wooden slats. Several lengths of rope wind around his torso, each with a loose lariat at one end. Rummaging through the refuse in the road, he mutters to himself, arguing with no one and punctuating his points with the pole.

Hariv is Sanctuary's self-appointed ratcatcher, though he catches far more than just rats. He is obsessed with the notion that all animals are filthy, disease-ridden pests that bring plague in all forms to the people who share their space. He rises each day, dons his special "protective armor" and armed with a personal quota, sets out to rid the city of the "strays menace." Assuming they are not diseased, Hariv brings each of the animals he captures to the constabulary for removal from the city (the guards humor him, since ratcatching is a useful service). If they are sick, he burns them himself. Hariv sees himself as a champion of the public welfare and besides, a number of merchants pay him a coin or two a month to check their cellars and back rooms for vermin, and he has to make a living somehow.

The problem, as Hariv sees it, is no one takes the growth of the stray animal population seriously. He's irritated that people simply turn their animals loose and let them run around, catching diseases and spreading them throughout the city. He can frequently be heard muttering under his breath about these

“froggin’ fools and their froggin’ fool ways,” and how “diseased animals is what brings on plague!” while gesticulating wildly.

All in all, Hariv is harmless, but he’s very serious about his task. He cannot be dissuaded from gathering up all the street animals he sees. He might even mistakenly attempt to capture a pet that belongs to a member of the party. He can, however, be persuaded to return an animal if someone convinces him it’s not a stray, but a cared-for, healthy animal.

HARIV THE RATCATCHER

Male Wrigglie constable, warrior 1; CR 1/2; Medium humanoid (human); HD 1d8; hp 4; Mdt 13; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 10, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grap +1; Atk +1 melee (1d6, club); Full Atk +1 melee (1d6, club); SQ constable trait, jaded; Rep +0; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 11, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.

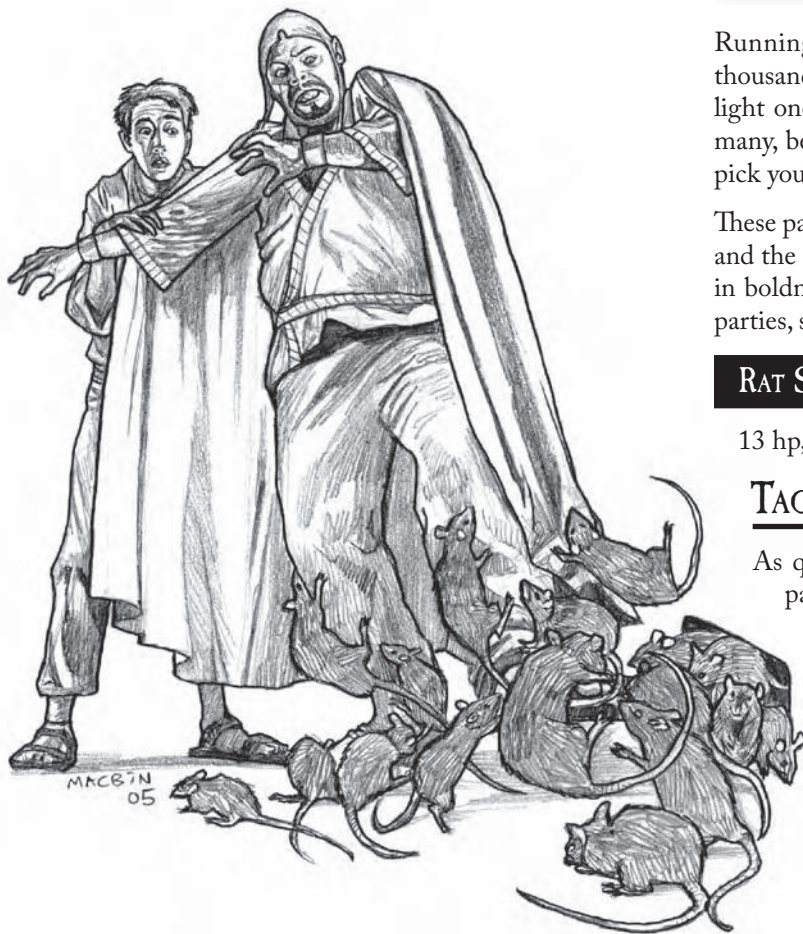
Background Skills: Knowledge (local), Spot.

Skills and Feats: Intimidate +6, Knowledge (local) +6, Listen +2, Sense Motive +2 (+4 lies), Spot +6; Alertness^B, Weapon Focus (club).

Languages: Wrigglie (S).

Contacts: Information (1).

Possessions: Leather, club, a total of 50 feet of rope.



TACTICS

Hariv doesn’t fight; if attacked, he runs away. If cornered, he fights with surprising skill. Some strays are dangerous after all, and Hariv has been doing this for a long time.

SCENE K: SUDDEN RAT ATTACK

This encounter can occur anywhere where the environment is dark and dank, such as a rainy back alley or street, a filthy sewer tunnel system, or an old, leaky, abandoned warehouse. Any place that could conceivably house a large nest of rats would be appropriate for this skirmish.

There, in the distance, you hear a scraping, scratching sound. A smell like pungent musk, dusty hides, and week-old cabbage reaches your nostrils. There’s a fleeting scurrying motion in the darkness. Chittering echoes all around you and tiny claws clatter against the ground. Stale water drips and splashes on your face, the wetness mixing with your sweat. Movement again, quick and furtive. There it is, in the rattling darkness, a form moving, undulating toward you. It breaks out of the darkness and into the light. There are dozens, perhaps hundreds, of them. Rats, their bodies thumping and smashing into each other as the horde pulses, swarms and rushes you.

Running rampant through Sanctuary are hundreds, if not thousands, of filthy rats. Big ones, little ones, dark ones, and light ones, they are not normally seen in this type of pack by many, because usually, you only see them once and then they pick you clean.

These particular rats are hungry and have caught both the sight and the scent of the PCs. In huge numbers like this, they grow in boldness, attacking even the largest and most able-looking parties, seeking to satisfy their hunger.

RAT SWARM (1)

13 hp, see the *MM* for statistics.

TACTICS

As quickly as the rats appear, they swarm over the entire party and attempt to bite and chew them to pieces. They have no concern for personal safety and their only purpose is to satisfy the gnawing hunger in their bellies as they squeak and squeal with eagerness and the thrill of the kill. As soon as the swarm is reduced to half its hit points, the rest of the rats will scatter and run away, just as mysteriously and as quickly as they appeared.

SCENE L: FLIES, FLIES, FLIES

This encounter can occur anywhere in the city, though the Maze is best.

“You froggin’ kids, get the hell out of here,” sounds from a nearby alley as you walk down the street. A loud splashing noise echoes from the same area followed by “Pork you, fatty!” and “Ick, I got it all over me, that froggin’ cadite’s gonna get it!” As you pass the alley, you see a group of children dressed in rags, their fingers stained red, blue, yellow—a veritable rainbow of colors – and in their center is a crestfallen youth covered in nightsoil. Looking down from a second story open window is an incredibly corpulent horror dressed in a stained homespun dress and smiling a wicked smile bereft of teeth.

Years ago, Lalo, an artist gifted with magical skills, doodled and illustrated multicolored flies and insects, breathing life into his creations for the amusement of his son. Though Lalo is long dead, the products of his idle moments survive and bring color to the town. Flies of red, blue, green, and yellow hues are all valuable for dyes, and it seems there is no limit to the number of these strange creatures. And so, the poor harvest these bright bugs from midden heaps to take back and sell to the dyers in the Shambles.

In this case, the gang of urchins thought to use the colors culled from the squashed insects to paint a mocking picture of Fat Alice, a grotesque abomination of a woman, believed by the local urchins to have a taste for the marrow of little boys and girls. Fat Alice, however, had other plans. She warned the children to be off and, when they wouldn’t go, she opted to fling her nightsoil at them to drive them away.

This is a common sight in Sanctuary, urchins having a bit of sport, and the PCs are likely to move on past without a second thought. But for those characters who stick their noses where they don’t belong, this encounter should prove to be an excellent lesson in Sanctan manners.

Assuming the characters approach the group, they might very well reprimand the woman on the act of tossing excrement at common children. At this, the woman shrieks at the PCs, calling them all sorts of filthy names and making a terrible racket. Meanwhile, as the PCs try to deal with the woman, the children move off, but not before they try to lift a purse, dagger, or some other item from the PCs.

Alternatively, the PCs might try to shoo the urchins away, telling them to move along. At this, the woman, who actually hoped to make a meal of one of the children when she offered to let the soiled lad come upstairs to clean himself off, starts shrieking at the PCs, calling them all sorts of filthy names... and well, you get the idea.

In any event, the PCs are in for a terrific tongue-lashing if they stick around, and Fat Alice is guaranteed to attract attention, perhaps of the kind the characters don’t want. As a result of this debacle, the PCs take a –1 penalty to their Reputation scores in this neighborhood for 1d6 days.

URCHINS (6)

hp 2 each, use Urchin statistics on page 31.

FAT ALICE

Female Wrigglie prostitute, warrior 2; CR 1; Medium humanoid (human); HD 2d8+4; hp 13; Mdt 17; Init –1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 9, touch 9, flat-footed 9; Base Atk +2; Grap +3; Atk +3 melee (1d6+1/×3, meat cleaver); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+1/×3, meat cleaver); SQ jaded, prostitute trait; Rep +0; SV Fort +5, Ref –1, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 9, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 13.

Background Skills: Bluff, Sense Motive.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +8 (+10 attracted), Diplomacy +5 (+7 attracted), Disguise +1 (+3 acting), Intimidate +8, Listen +3, Sense Motive +8, Spot +3; Alertness^B, Improved Damage Threshold.

Languages: Wrigglie (S).

Contacts: Information (1).

Possessions: Disgusting stained clothing, meat cleaver, chamberpot, 4 *sb*.

TACTICS

If the PCs attack either Fat Alice or the urchins, the big woman retreats from her window and stomps down the stairs inside the tenement to deal with the characters directly. It takes her 3 rounds for her to get down the stairs and emerge onto the main street. If the PCs are still around, Fat Alice charges, meat cleaver (treat as hand axe) raised. She fights to the death.

DEVELOPMENTS

If the PCs kill Fat Alice, their Reputation penalty worsens to –3 and they gain the enmity of Lord Night, who uses Alice as a source of information. His enmity entails a +5 increase to Gather Information DCs, and 150% increase on all black market purchases for a period of 1 week before the crime lord loses interest.

If the PCs explore Fat Alice’s apartment, they are in for a shock. The place reeks of filth, and bleached bones (from urchins and customers she’s killed and eaten) fill the room. A search of the room turns up 1d20 shaboozh, but characters must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or become nauseated for as long as they remain in the room and for 1d20 minutes thereafter. Fat Alice’s apartment could be a suitable place to plant false leads or to establish future adventures.

SCENE M: WIZARDLY MUTTERS

This scene is best suited for the Old Jeweler's Quarter, but any area will work.

A loud explosion sounds from ahead. A moment later, there's a thin plume of violet smoke that rises above the cluster of buildings. After another moment, you hear high-pitched screams.

Assuming the PCs go to investigate, read or paraphrase the following text.

You round the corner and see the smoking remains of a building, a few sputtering fires moving to the neighboring homes and shops. People flee from the center of the confusion, where a woman with spiky red hair, dressed in violet robes wobbles on her feet. On either side of her is a fat humanoid with empty sockets and gaping maws. Their spindly arms and legs end in long sharp claw tipped hands and feet and they seem to be ready to tear the woman apart.

The woman is Shaelar, an unfortunate mage who botched a spell and accidentally called two demons into the Material Plane. The demons are quite grateful about being called and hope to reward the mage by devouring her.

SHAELAR

Female Illig apprentice, mage 4; CR 4; Medium humanoid (human); HD 4d4; hp 10; Mdt 11; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +2; Grap +1; Atk +1 melee (1d6-1, quarterstaff) or +5 ranged (1d4-1/19-20, masterwork dagger); Full Atk +1 melee (1d6-1, quarterstaff) or +5 ranged (1d4-1/19-20, masterwork dagger); SQ apprentice trait, arcane defenses, skilled; Rep +1; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +7; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 12.

Background Skills: Knowledge (arcana), Spellcraft.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +3 (+5 alchemical items), Concentration +7, Craft (alchemy) +10, Decipher Script +10, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (local) +4, Spellcraft +14; Combat Casting, Iron Will^B, Touch the Otherworld.

Languages: Illig (S/W), Wrigglie (S), Rankene (S).

Contacts: Influence (1), Skill (1).

Spells: safe level 2nd; spellcasting +8; ritualcasting +6; save DC 13 + spell level.

Known Spells (7): *disguise self* (1st, MT 20, price 1), *expeditious retreat* (1st, MT 20, price 1), *hypnotism* (1st, MT 20, price 1), *mage armor* (1st, MT 20, price 1), *magic missile* (1st, MT 20, price 1), *prestidigitation* (0, MT 10, price 0/1), *scorching ray* (2nd, MT 30, price 2).

Familiar Spells (8): *arcane mark* (0, MT 10, price 0/1), *blur* (2nd, MT 30, price 2), *circle of protection* (1st, MT 20, price 1), *detect magic* (0, MT 10, price 0/1), *identify* (1st, MT 20, price 1), *read magic* (0, MT, price 0/1), *summon monster III* (3rd, MT 40, price 3 lethal)

Possessions: Quarterstaff, masterwork dagger, +1 ritual focus, bracers of armor +1.

DRETCHES (2)

hp 13 each; Mdt 15; see the *MM* for statistics.

TACTICS

There are two major threats in this scenario. First, there is the fire. If not stopped, it spreads to the neighboring buildings that may or may not be occupied at your discretion. The fire then spreads to 1d4 buildings before the watch shows up in 1d10 rounds to put the fires out. While the buildings are burning the street is filled with smoke, granting concealment to all combatants.

The demons are the other threat. They attack Shaelar who fights as best as she can. You can run this combat as normal or assume the demons kill her in 2 rounds and spend the next 4 rounds eating her. If still not stopped, they run off in different directions causing problems later in other parts of the city (becoming excellent reoccurring foes). If the PCs interfere, one demon presses the attack against the mage, while the other takes on the characters. Six members of the watch show up to help the characters in 1d10 rounds (use **Typical Town Guard** in **Appendix I**). The demons fight to the death.

DEVELOPMENTS

By risking their lives, the PCs gain several benefits. First, if they put out the fire, word spreads through the entire neighborhood and the people's starting attitude is Friendly for 1d2 months. In addition, the PCs get a favor from the watch. Should the PCs find themselves in legal trouble, the watch lets them go with a warning. Finally, if the PCs save Shaelar's life, she becomes a bonus skill contact for the characters, and will help them identify magic items and may help them out of a scrape (even accompanying them on a future adventure if needed).



Act Two takes the PCs out of Sanctuary and into the surrounding territory. Most likely they'll first travel into the Swamp of Night Secrets to track down "Karizal," and then trek up to the Brown Bear Inn to find the merchant Paithas. The PCs need to get permission to leave Sanctuary first, but a simple conversation with Astar and Vernic (to present what they've learned to the truthspeaker, if nothing else) is enough to grant them a bit more leeway. As far as the Sharda are concerned, the PCs are still suspects (at least officially), but their travel restrictions are eased to allow them to follow leads to nearby locales, including surrounding towns and the Swamp of Night Secrets. If the PCs haven't caused much trouble, and the Sharda are leaning toward believing their innocence, they also receive a 100 *sh* reward for uncovering Erilissi and Rossa as spies. The

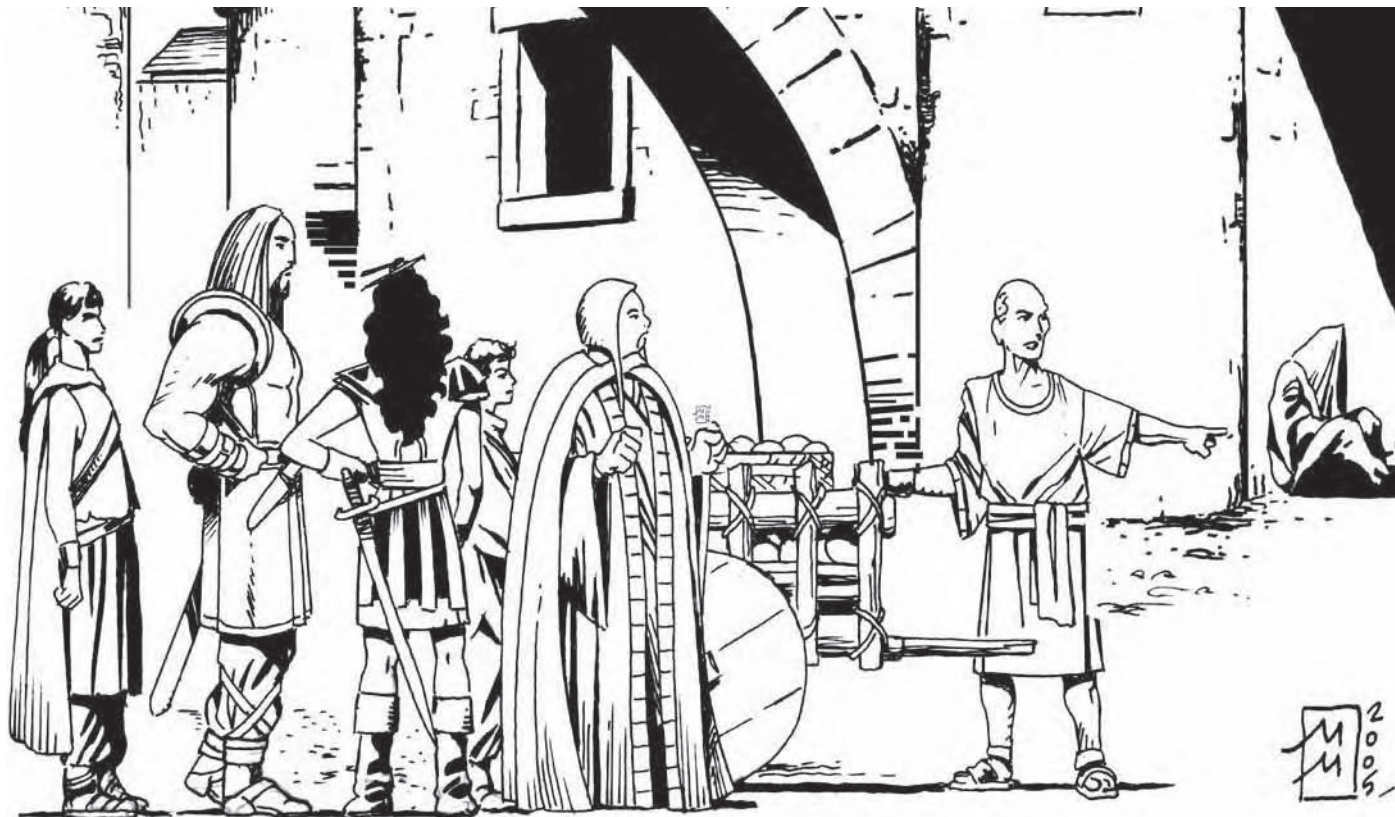
Sharda don't do anything about Rossa—she hasn't admitted to actually breaking any laws, and if there are spies around it's most convenient if you know who they are.

The most likely course for the PCs, at this point, is to track down "Karizal," who they know got boar's head daggers from the Silent Brothers. It should be clear that he's not really an Irrune (since he paid for the daggers), and any investigation regarding his claim to be an associate of Naimun shows that to be untrue as well, and may lead to a barroom brawl with other Irrune, as detailed in the **Interludes** section. Like finding Pace, the most important part of this sequence isn't how the PCs find out where Karizal is hiding, but what they do once they know. Any reasonable plan for investigation that the PCs come up

INVESTIGATION

Check	Information learned
10	Karizal travels in and out of the Swamp of Night Secrets every few days. He's mentioned sleeping in an abandoned tower out in the swamp, which is cheaper and less stuffy than living in the city. Such a tower exists a few hours into the swamp, though no one is known to go there regularly.
13	Karizal is never seen with another Irrune, despite regularly talking about hanging out with them.
15	When he comes out of the swamp, Karizal often has a large, black cat with him.
20	Karizal headed out into the swamp earlier today. (The exact location he left the city from can be determined, and a PC with Track can pick up a set of Whoever's tracks next to panther-tracks with a DC 15 Survival check).
25	Karizal is actually a spy, assassin and skilled disguise artist called Master Whoever. He only takes a few jobs a year, and always demands both payment up-front and a way to contact his employer if things get complicated.

ACT II: THE PLOT THICKENS



with can work, with a Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, or Intimidate check (as appropriate) made by a PC or contact acting as an “investigation check” to determine how much information is turned up. A check reveals the information listed below for its DC, and all information for lesser DCs.

If multiple PCs are investigating, consider having each one pick up a different piece of information. If they confer with each other during the investigation, allow each successful investigation check to add a +2 bonus to future investigation checks. Managing the basic DC 10 is enough to let the PCs go stumbling out into the swamp, but clearly the more they know the better off they are. If a group is enjoying the investigation, allow them to spend as much time on it as they wish.

SCENE ONE: AMBUSH

You can't sneak up on a master of disguise and his pet panther in their home territory without risking an ambush. If the PCs are actually tracking Whoever, they come to an area where the panther's tracks break off and cross over the trail many times. (This is where the panther hunts, which a character with the Track feat can easily determine). The PCs get a +2 bonus to Spot and Listen checks to avoid the coming ambush if they mention watching out for the panther, or take any other reasonable precautions. This being the panther's home turf, it gets a +2 circumstance bonus to its Hide and Move Silently checks here.

In any case, whether they know to expect it or not, the panther eventually catches scent of the PCs and sets up to jump them.

It hides within 10 feet of the trail, and when the PCs walk by, it leaps out to charge them. If a PC manages to either beat the cat's Hide check with a Spot check or its Move Silently check with a Listen check, that PC gets to move in the surprise round. Otherwise, the panther is the only one acting until the first full round of combat.

PANTHER (1)

19 hp; use the leopard in the *MM* for statistics.

TACTICS

This fight is about territory for the panther; it sees the PCs as intruders and competition. Its goal is to drive off the PCs, killing any it can and wounding the rest. The panther tries to bring down the smallest, frailest looking target first, then moves on to whoever has hurt it the most. Once the panther is down to 6 hp or less, it flees back to Fort Wherever if it can. If the PCs flee, it only chases them if it has 10 or more hp.

DEVELOPMENTS

If the panther drives off the PCs, it continues to patrol. If it is driven off, it returns to Fort Wherever to be with Master Whoever. Keep track of how long it takes the PCs to encounter the panther again. It only recovers its hit points at a natural rate—Master Whoever has no way of healing it more quickly. If it doesn't have at least 10 hp when the PCs next encounter it, the panther backs away and only fights if attacked or cornered.

SCENE TWO: FORT WHOEVER GROUND FLOOR

If the PCs manage to track Master Whoever through the swamp, they end up at his lair in one day. If they just wander blindly into the Swamp of Night Secrets, it takes them 1d6 days to find the tower—an old, crumbling stone watchtower built here decades ago by a merchant hoping to set up his own small outpost. It's a simple two-story structure with a single door and windows only on the second floor. Master Whoever is here if the PCs haven't somehow already dealt with him.

Read the following when the PCs reach the door on the ground floor.

A solid, dark door sits in a worn stone archway. Its hinges are cunningly concealed from view, and though made of wood, it has been covered in thick metal-riveted straps. The wood and metal are covered in scratches, some quite deep, but they have done no real damage to it. There is no window or view-port in the door, and it's likely too thick to allow much sound through.

The door is extremely well built and iron-reinforced (Hardness 6, 25 hp, break DC 24) with a good lock (DC 30 to pick). If the PCs smash it open, they alert everyone in the tower. (Master Whoever and/or his swamp panther.) Though none of the rooms on the lower level are now in use as anything but a panther lair, they were once the ground floor of the watchtower. Area A was used for storage, B as an officer's ready room, C-H bedrooms, I a great hall and dining chamber, J a kitchen, and K a pantry. Though little remains of these rooms' original furnishings, they could be used for those purposes again if the tower was restored and restocked.

Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs first enter the ground floor.

The smell of old salt air and stale, wet musk is everywhere. Small piles of rotting clothes sit in corners of the cold stone halls, and the floor has strange drag-marks tracked through ages of dried sand. Broken bits of furniture are scattered across the floor and piled in corners, while a few old torches and rusty lanterns hang from wall sconces. There are the ragged remains of tapestries hanging ruined from the walls and flaking plaster on the ceiling. No one has cared for this place in decades.

A PC with the Track feat can make a DC 12 Survival check to identify the drag-marks as a sign that sacks and small crates have been hauled into the tower many times over the past few days (as Whoever raided the cargos of the wrecked ship). A DC 15 or better Survival check also reveals the tracks of a Medium cat-like creature (Master Whoever's panther). If the PCs Track the

panther tracks (and the creature isn't already dead) and they didn't smash in the front door, they find it in one of the level's rooms (determine randomly) and may surprise it. If the PCs did smash down the door or don't track the cat, it stalks them and attacks at its convenience. Make a Move Silently check for the panther, opposed by Listen checks for the PCs. If it wins, it is the only creature moving in the surprise round when it attacks. Anyone who beats its check is also allowed to act in the surprise round.

Master Whoever keeps the panther here for security, to prevent 'Nighters from sneaking in whenever he's not here. It's tame enough not to attack him, and to go to him if wounded, but knows no tricks and doesn't really obey his orders. He keeps it fed (mostly on old crab meat), which is enough to keep it happy. This is the panther's lair, and if attacked here it acts as it would when cornered in a cave. Of course, if the panther is already dead, there is no threat here to slow the PCs.

TACTICS

Whoever (see statistics on page 42) attacks and fights until dead. If he is badly wounded and the PCs withdraw, he tries to fortify his tower and set up an ambush within its walls. If left alone for a day, he abandons the building and the entire region around Sanctuary (removing him as both a threat and a source of information).

DEVELOPMENTS

The main thing to keep track of here is how much noise the PCs make. If they get into a fight of any kind, smash open the front door or any of the chests, or talk loudly, Master Whoever automatically hears them (allowing him time to make preparations for when they reach the second story). If the PCs are quiet, they have a good chance of sneaking up on the assassin—the thick walls and heavy doors of the tower impose a -4 penalty on any Listen check made to hear something going on at a different level.

TREASURE

After a cursory glance, the rooms seem empty of anything aside from a few cobwebs and a thick layer of dust. However, with a little work, characters can find some things of utility. A DC 10 Search check uncovers five torches, a battered hooded lantern, and three ceramic vials holding a pint of dark oil each.

There are also two chests, one in room D and the other in room E. Both chests are fashioned from hard wood reinforced with iron bands (Hardness 8, hp 35, break DC 25). They are both locked and Master Whoever has the keys. Otherwise, they can be opened by succeeding on a DC 25 Open Lock check.

The chest in room D contains ten packets of flash powder and five small pouches of *kleetel*. For information on these, see the *Thieves' World Player's Manual* page 133 and 134 respectively.

The second chest, in room E, holds a healer's kit and a leather wallet holding a set of masterwork thieves' tools.

THE TOWER

Bottom
Floor



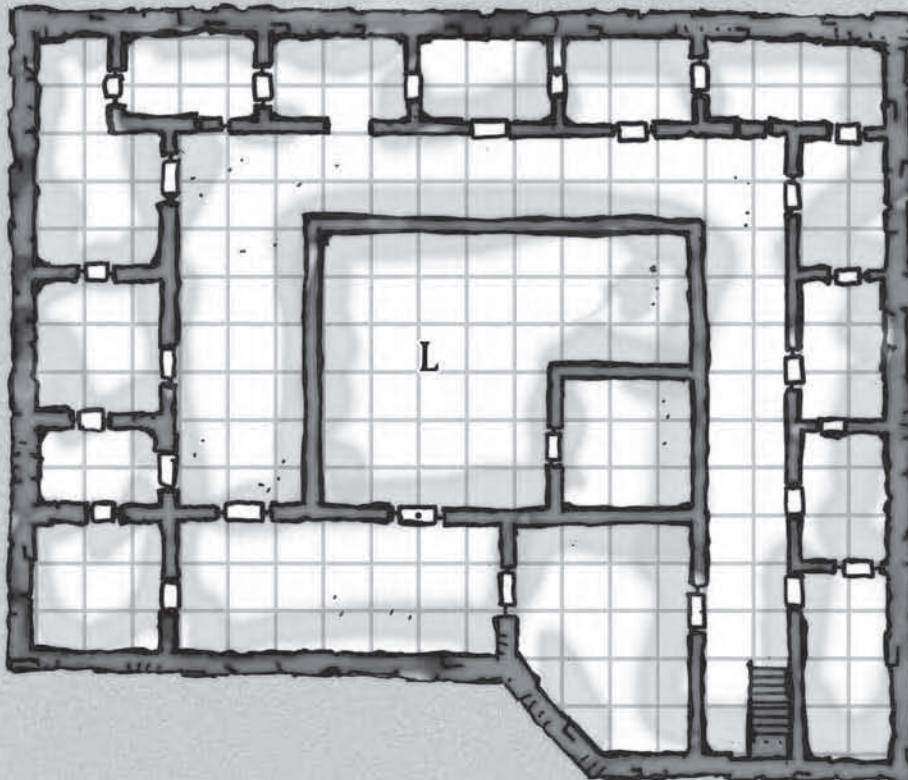
Door



Locked Door

One square = 5 feet

Second
Floor



SCENE THREE: WHOEVER'S LAIR

The air is stale and dark, heavy with the scent of rot. The ocean's roar can be heard in the distance, but no other noise reaches your ears. The stone walls, ceiling and floor show signs of once being covered in bright plasters and wax finishes, but all is long since faded and peeling. The rooms are choked with broken furniture, trash, smashed crab shells, rags, and the debris of years of unclean living. In some places, the rubbish is piled five feet high. Even the stairs are littered with junk, though they are remarkably silent—failing to creak, even slightly, under your weight.

Master Whoever is a despicable fiend, a sadistic monster without scruples. Reclusive, he deals with outsiders only when forced to, through greed or blackmail. Once he can do without any business associate, Whoever robs and kills them or at least hides from them (depending on the associate's combat abilities). Whoever is driven by silver-lust—he wants money itself, not the things money can buy. Whoever trusts no one, and doesn't expect to be trusted. He's cunning and deceptive, but too impatient to think much beyond getting an immediate benefit. He is also very, very good at what he does (which is take advantage of his knack for disguise to steal, kill and cheat others).



The other 'NighTERS avoid him, seeing him as "broken," an anomaly among their kind. No 'NighTER comes to his tower willingly; too many of their kind have wound up dead. And, all would be quite happy to be rid of this cruel man.

The combination of his greed, paranoia and skill ensure Master Whoever gets just enough work to get by on. He insists on being paid in advance and having a way to contact any employer. This second requirement makes him unpopular, but without it, Whoever simply refuses to take a job. Since Whoever uses the contact information to get details about a job and report any irregularity, it's difficult to cheat by giving him false information.

Unless he's short on food, suspects a 'NighTER of sneaking into his tower, or hears anyone moving around in the nearby swamp, Whoever spends his time in his room (area L), counting his money and plotting the downfall of anyone who's ever done him wrong. He has his door locked (Hardness 5, 20 hp, break DC 23) with a fair lock (DC 25 to pick). It's the only locked door in the building. He has a single chair, a rope cot, and a chest, along with the sundry live crabs and old roots he uses for food. All other areas on the upper level are clear of anything but piles of rubbish, though once they were once used for storage and meetings when the tower was first built.

Master Whoever was hired by Paithas Meed to kill EriLissi, and it was at Whoever's hands that EriLissi met his final fate. Master Whoever was well paid for the job, and has only been back to Sanctuary once since then, to buy additional supplies. Currently Whoever's hatred of everyone is greater than his greed, so he's unlikely to go back to Sanctuary for weeks, at least. He's now trying to decide if he should hunt down Paithas Meed to rob and kill him, or avoid the fat merchant from now on. He still has the scrap of paper detailing how to get a message to Paithas Meed at the Brown Bear, but isn't sure what to do with it (see **Appendix III** for the details of the scrap).

MASTER WHOEVER ("KARIZAL")

Male 'NighTER bandit, assassin 3; CR 3; Medium humanoid (human); HD 3d8+3; hp 21; Mdt 17; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grap +1; Atk +5 melee (1d6-1/19-20 plus poison, masterwork short sword) or +5 ranged (1d8/19-20 plus poison, light crossbow); Full Atk +5 melee (1d6-1/19-20 plus poison, masterwork short sword) or +5 ranged (1d8/19-20 plus poison, light crossbow); SA sneak attack +1d6; SQ bandit trait, poison use; Rep +0; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 8, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Background Skills: Handle Animal, Survival.

Skills and Feats: Craft (Poison) +4, Disguise +10 (+12 with disguise kit), Handle Animal +8, Hide +9 (+11 swamp), Intimidate +1 (+3 when known), Knowledge (local) +5, Move Silently +9 (+11 swamp), Listen +6, Spot +6, Survival +7 (+9 swamp); Skill Focus (Disguise), Stealthy^B, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (light crossbow).

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Languages: Yenized (S/W), Wrigglie (S).

Contacts: Information (1).

Possessions: Mithral chain shirt, masterwork short sword, light crossbow with 10 bolts, masterwork dagger (boar's head), 6 doses black adder venom, 2 sets of caltrops, bullseye lantern, flint and steel, oil flash (1), traveler's outfit, personal papers, disguise kit, 1,200 *sb*, 32 *pd*.

TACTICS

If Whoever hears a commotion on the lower level, he readies an action to ambush anyone coming up the stairs. If possible, he hides within sight of the upper end of the stairs to sneak attack the first person that pops up, with a poisoned crossbow bolt. If he can, Whoever keeps control of the upper end of the stairs to prevent himself from being flanked. If driven back from the stairs, he tries to play a cat-and-mouse game on the upper floor, hiding in the junk and refuse until he can strike with poisoned bolt or blade. If possible, he makes a dash for the front door, if the PCs leave the stairs unguarded.

DEVELOPMENTS

Master Whoever fights to the death; if captured he is rude and extremely unhelpful, and tries to goad the PCs into killing him. He doesn't know much anyway, other than the fact that Paithas Meed hired him to kill Eirilissi. Whoever does have a great fear of the Irrune, however, and is willing to talk to avoid being turned over to them or taken to Sanctuary. (If the PCs hand him over to the Irrune, he eventually swallows his own tongue, choking to death). On Whoever's person is the last of the three boar's head daggers taken from the Silent Brothers, along with a disguise kit that includes the items needed to play the part of an Irrune.

If Whoever escapes, he's a constant pain in the PCs' sides, attacking and poisoning them whenever he can manage it. He's a petty, vengeful man who won't rest as long as even one of the people who drove him from his home lives.

The scrap of paper in Whoever's pocket also mentions a ship (The Weeping Maiden, see **Scene Four**). It's a wreck he found in the swamp a few days from here. The ship can just barely be seen from the top of the tower (DC 15 Spot check) if anyone thinks to look around. Whoever's visited it several times, so it's possible to use Track to follow his prints back to it (DC 12 Survival check). A character might even hear the sound of the wreck hitting rocks (DC 12 Listen). If the PCs detect the ship with any of these means, they also notice the hint of something large and moving—a flash of movement seen, or tracks of something the size of a wagon dragged across the path. This is the only warning they'll get to be ready for the giant crab in **Scene Four**.

Whoever also has the original note Paithas used to hire him. It's written in Yenized, and thus illegible to most people. It

promises Whoever 200 *sb* to “kill the Rankan Spy Eirilissi.” It further lists a number of places Eirilissi frequents, including the Vulgar Unicorn. It promises a sum of money will be paid by “the fat, lame merchant who contacted you” (Paithas Meed, who also wrote the letter). Unless one of the PCs happens to speak Yenized, they are unlikely to know all this until they find a translator.

SCENE FOUR: THE WRECK OF THE WEeping MAIDEN

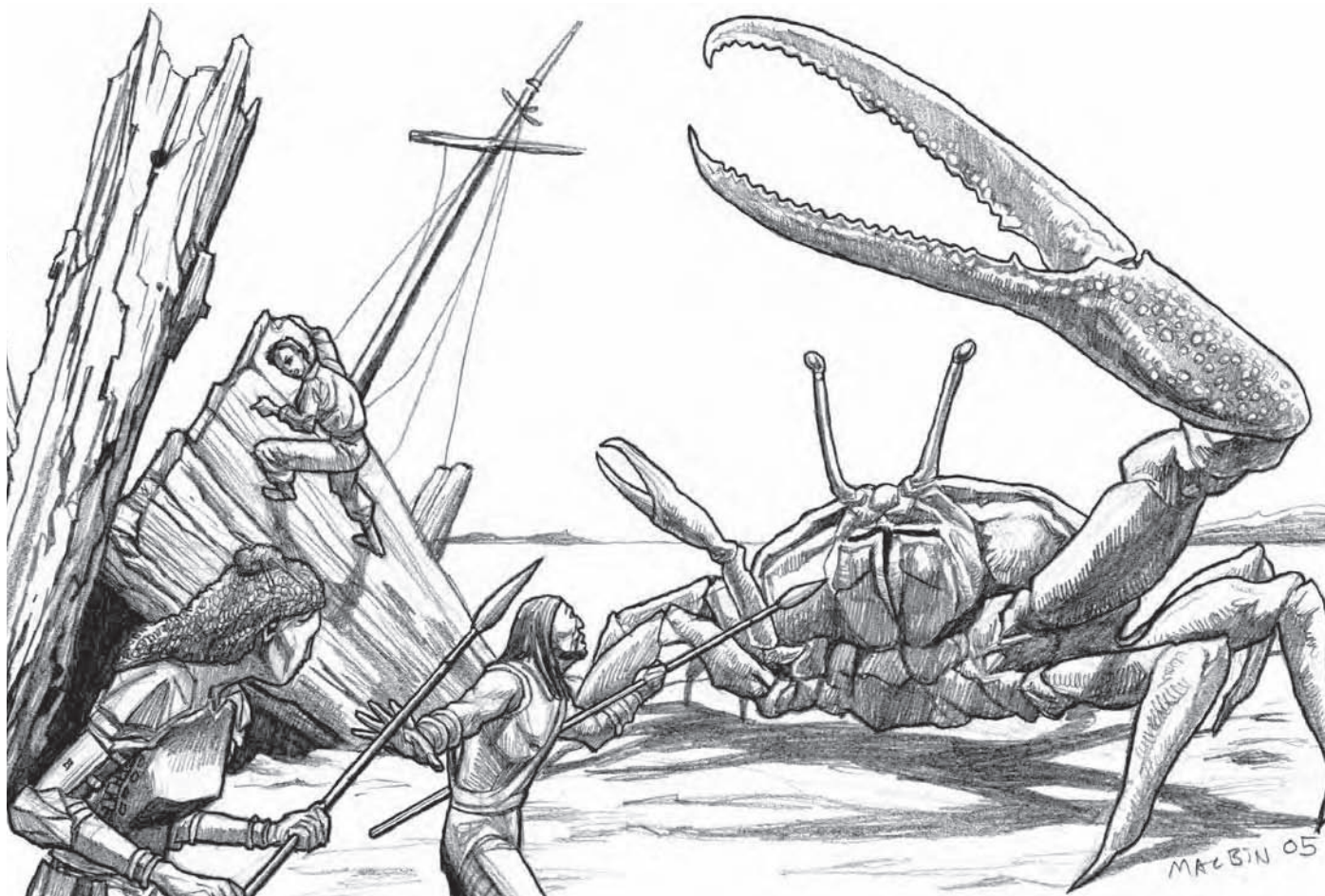
The twisted and shattered remains of a ship are piled on a collection of jagged rocks just barely visible beneath the waves. At high tide the rocks would be invisible, but still able to rip the bottom out of any ship passing overhead. No part of the ship is still intact, with its broken hull and torn beams scattered across the beach. Crabs and other sea borne scavengers pick through the wreckage, and waterlogged refuse covers the sands. The bodies of pigs are scattered everywhere, their carcasses bloated and rotting, as well as torn apart. The smell of rot and salt are powerful, overwhelming the fresh scent of the ocean. Seagulls circle overhead, but none land near the destroyed vessels.

Within the largest section of the remaining hull, the sound of water lapping on wood is mixed with scraping noises. Wood and metal thump and thunk with the lapping waves, but in the black hollow under the broken deck something is scratching and ripping, as though wet cloth were being torn apart.

After dealing with Master Whoever, the PCs eventually must head back to Sanctuary. If they noticed the wreck back in **Scene Three**, they can approach it cautiously. Otherwise, chance brings them to it as they seek an easy path back to the city.

The ship is the Weeping Maiden, which was due the night of the rain (the night Eirilissi was killed), but ended up on the shoals. Its crew is long dead or fled, leaving its cargo of infected pigs to rot on the rocks and be picked apart by scavengers. 'Nighters descended on the wreck after those aboard had died or gone, and raided the shattered hull for both treasure and food. The 'Nighters have long since been driven off, however, by a monstrous crab that's taken up residence. The crab takes shelter in the largest piece of wreckage, scuttling out to feed on bits of carcasses or, if hungry enough, on other crabs. The hull is large and black, keeping the crab from sight. However, the crab knows the PCs are coming thanks to its tremorsense ability, and recognizes them as yet more prey.

In addition to the crab and the bloated bodies of dead pigs, there are the remains of the ship's manifest and logbook. These are fairly obvious (not even requiring a Search check to located), but largely ruined. It's possible to determine the ship is of Ilsigi registry, despite being most recently from Rankan ports far to



the north. It carried no cargo but the pigs, which were to be delivered to “Paithas Meed” at “cove location out of sight of Sanctuary.” A character that actually makes a DC 10 Search check also finds a personal letter to Meed in a waterproof satchel, jammed beneath a bit of wreckage. The letter is from one of the cultists actually arranging for the infected pigs up in the far north, and details some of the problems the plot is suffering (the note is detailed in **Appendix III**).

GREATER BENGIL CRAB (1)

hp 59; see **Appendix I** for statistics.

TACTICS

The crab stays hidden behind chests and beams when in the hull, gaining a +2 circumstance bonus to Hide checks. The crab waits for a target to come within 20 feet before scuttling out to savagely attack. It always attacks the nearest foe, paying no attention to such things as ranged attacks or spells—it just isn’t smart enough to do anything but attack the nearest opponent. Once it drops a foe, the crab moves on to another character. If there are no obvious targets, it goes back to gnawing on corpses—pig or player character, whichever is the closest. If the adventures reduce the crab’s hit points to 5 or less, it retreats to safety.

TREASURE

A few valuables have escaped the swamp dwellers’ raids on the wreckage, but not much. A DC 20 Search check reveals a small chest with 200 *sb* of coins and silver jewelry.

SIDE TRIPS

The Swamp of Night Secrets is not a safe place. If you need a random encounter, you can throw in more ordinary crabs, one or more ‘Nighter scum (see **Appendix II**), or any flora and fauna that is appropriate for a swamp. There’s nothing else directly connected to the murder plot in the swamp, but you can add as much as you need for pacing or to help PCs gain levels. Alternatively, you can add more side trips in Sanctuary, especially if you haven’t used all the Interlude encounters yet. Ideally, the PCs will be close to 3rd level before they move on to the investigation of Paithas Meed and Brown Bear Inn.

BACK TO SANCTUARY

By all accounts, the best translator in town is Heliz Yunz, the Linguist of Lirt. If the PCs ask about getting a document translated, he is the man everyone recommends. Besides, the PCs need to have the note professionally translated for the

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Sharda, who are also likely to insist Heliz be the one to do it. As he has a well known shop, finding Heliz isn't difficult.

For a fee of 2 *sb*, Heliz agrees to translate the document and requires a day to do so. (This is an excellent opportunity to put the PCs through a side trip if they had trouble with Whoever. Things just get tougher from here, so the PCs may need experience to gain a level.)

Heliz is more than a mere translator, however. Though he has managed to keep it secret, he can learn things about people by reading things written in their own hand. He recognizes the handwriting of Paithas Meed and knows the man intends great violence. However, Yunz is not going to expose himself to the PCs, so he couches everything in terms of things he can tell based on the handwriting used in the note. He tells the PCs the note's author is using diction that suggests he was male, a religious man, likely an Ilsiigi, and was left handed with a hunched back. (In fact, Paithas Meed wrote the note when he decided EriIssi needed to die. He also intended to kill the person he sent the note to, which Yunz is aware of. He's trying to give the PCs some warning, without exposing himself.)

There aren't that many hunched, overweight merchants in Sanctuary, so the PCs should get the scent for Paithas Meed without too much difficulty. Asking after him quickly reveals Paithas fled Sanctuary a few nights after EriIssi was killed (he should only be about a day ahead of the PCs), selling the last of his spices cheap, and having the money for it sent after him to the Brown Bear on the General's Road. Clearly, Paithas was in a hurry.

TACTICS

There's absolutely no reason to attack Yunz. While an ass, he is not threatening in anyway. If the PCs do, he flees into the street, calling for the guard. Since he doesn't work on the Hill or in the Maze, help comes in the form of three mid-level typical town guards and Lumm the Staver. Heliz Yunz is fully detailed in Green Ronin's *Shadowspaw'n's Guide to Sanctuary*.

OFF TO THE BROWN BEAR

The rest of **Act Two** takes place in and around the Brown Bear Inn, a roadside hostel and tavern about a day's travel north along the General's Road. The Brown Bear is a popular last stop for travelers heading into Sanctuary, though business has never been all that great. It also caters to the local farmers who come here to swap lies and drinks in the evenings.

Any effort to find Paithas Meed should eventually point to the Brown Bear. Since the PCs should already have the letter Master Whoever kept on him, as well as the notes from the log of the Weeping Maiden, they should be looking for Paithas. If not, you can goad them on with more information from Rossa or the Sharda, either of whom may have heard that the merchant was asking questions about EriIssi. Paithas maintains a low profile, conducting his trade business here instead of in

the city, having lost his shop in the city. Paithas also deals from time to time with Makker (a drug dealer in the Shambles) and brings *opab* to the city from a few outlying towns.

A couple hours away by walking, the Dyareelans have co-opted a farm to store the infected pigs that have already arrived. The cultists send agents into the Brown Bear posing as Apostles of Nature, wandering wise-men attempting to gather enough money to raise a temple to their order near (but not in) Sanctuary. Since a number of odd religious groups are drifting around the villages outside Sanctuary since the Irrune forbade the worship of any non-Irrune gods within the city's walls, the locals haven't yet penetrated this cover story.

The Apostles claim to be a group focused on the bounties of earth (locals ironically suspect they might be an offshoot of Heqt worshippers). They prowl the area around the Brown Bear to witness the local beauty, something no farmer can really comprehend given the largely deforested hills. In truth, they're a cell of armed Dyareelan cultists under the command of Paithas Meed, who is their contact with Sorbeth, the *ircastra'n* running the entire plague plot. The Apostles have been doing their best to drive away anyone who might stumble onto their infected pigs early, including local farmers, travelers, and merchants who trade with the local farmers. They've been setting fires, killing anyone they catch alone, and marking trees and rocks with strange (though meaningless) symbols. They want people to get the idea that the area is cursed, and it's begun to work.

However, the most respected man in town doesn't believe the locals have any more serious problems than some hooligans making trouble. The owner of the Brown Bear, Duncaen, generally acts as principle "citizen" on the rare occasion the independent farmers need to come together to make a decision. As a result, not everyone has abandoned their homes, and in fact, a few citizens have begun to patrol the local territory looking for troublemakers. This is causing problems for the Apostles, who have begun pressuring Duncaen to publicly agree with the idea that the land is cursed. So far Duncaen has refused, but he's slowly beginning to think the Apostles may be more than a superstitious flock of religious nuts.

Paithas just arrived a day or so ago, and is unhappy with the state of affairs. He depended on the inn to be a safe haven for him as he struggles to figure out how to save the entire plague plot. The fact that a shipment of pigs (on the *Weeping Maiden*) was lost, and shipments from the north have been delayed, is placing him in a precarious position. He's running low on money to keep the pigs out of sight, and all efforts to get more out of EriIssi have failed. Paithas became so desperate he had EriIssi killed, hoping the act would convince the old man's contacts of the seriousness of the situation. Since EriIssi's death, Paithas has been sending word to Arion Swan, a known confederate of EriIssi, about the need for Arion's contacts to send more money for "the cause." Arion has yet to return any of Paithas' messages.

If more money doesn't arrive soon, Paithas is going to have to invade nearby farms for feed and space to keep his pigs alive.

Such actions won't go unnoticed, unless the local population is convinced to flee or, at least, move into Sanctuary, abandoning their farms for a season until whatever evil has befallen the area passes. As a member of the Apostles of Nature, Paithas has been trying to spread that message. Since subtle efforts to bring Duncaen around have failed, Paithas is planning to take more drastic measures. In preparation for that, he's sent his followers onto the roads with orders to keep people away from the inn with a story of possible plague.

Paithas' followers are extremely devoted to him. They are all experienced members of the Dyareelan cult who have been in hiding since the Irrune arrived. They were once the most important people in Sanctuary, with their every excess encouraged. The Apostles, in particular, were leg-breakers (about as close to constables as the cultists got). Now they're poor, hungry, and hunted. They're all willing to risk death for the slightest chance that the cult can claim Sanctuary once more, and know they are guardians of the plot that could do that.

As an additional complication, Arion Swan is trying to get back in touch with Paithas, to ensure the plague goes forward as planned. Since Arion was only supposed to aid EriLissi in a serious emergency, he has few resources at his disposal. He's sent one of these, another *fenniath*, to deliver a message to Paithas, and the creature has tracked the merchant's scent to the Inn. It hasn't found Paithas himself, but has smelled his odor on the members of the Apostles patrolling around it. The adventure starts up again once the PCs are en route to the inn to find and possibly question Paithas Meed.

SCENE FIVE: THE APOSTLES OF NATURE

The road is quiet, with only the stirring of tall windblown grass to accompany your footsteps. This is a minor path off the General's Road, but the deep ruts running its length show it normally has heavy cart traffic. You've passed and seen no one since leaving the main road, however. Even animals seem unwilling to make noise, as though some terrible predator lurked among the rocks along the path's route.

Without warning, the solitude is broken by the cries of men fleeing for their lives. From around a bend come six men in simple robes, each carrying a farmer's handaxe. Behind them rages a red creature similar in appearance to a man-sized monkey, with arms twice the length of a human's. The robed figures try to defend themselves with their axes between sprints away from the terror, but clearly they are not a match for the monstrous simian. It makes little effort to harm them, simply batting them about or grabbing them and screaming in their faces. The men are clearly terrified, and show signs of more serious injuries.

The Apostles are cultists patrolling the routes to the Brown Bear Inn for Paithas. The hellish simian is one of Arion Swan's *fenniath*. It tracked the men and recognized Paithas' scent, but was unable to explain itself to them or get them to take its message. It's gotten very frustrated, and had hoped that scaring the Brothers badly enough would cause them to flee back to their home (where hopefully Paithas could be found). It had just decided it might have to kill one of the brothers to drive them to flee, when it spots the PCs. Since they don't look like the same group, the simian isn't going to risk fighting to the death if it can help it.

Remarkably, though the Apostles have worked with Swan for a while, they have not encountered one of these beasts before as Swan tended to use couriers. However, with the failure to get a message to Paithas, he opted for a more guaranteed method. Unfortunately for Swan, things just didn't work as planned.

If saved, the Apostles thank the PCs, and warn them against continuing on to the Brown Bear, warning it is cursed and there may be plague in the hills. They are vague on details, but push hard for the PCs to go back the way they came. They don't resort to force, however. It's obvious to the Apostles that if the PCs could defeat the simian fiend, the Apostles can't hope to overcome them with force of arms. Instead, they relent and ask the PCs to allow the Apostles to pay for a room at the Brown Bear, as way of thanks.

FENNIATH (1)

30 hp. See **Appendix II** for statistics.

APOSTLES OF NATURE (DYAREELAN CULTISTS) (6)

Male Wrigglie constable, fighter 1; CR 1; Medium humanoid (human); HD 1d10+5; hp 11 each; Mdt 15; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +1; Grap +2; Atk +3 melee (1d6+1/x3, handaxe); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+1/x3, handaxe); SQ constable trait, jaded; Rep +0; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Background Skills: Knowledge (local), Spot.

Skills and Feats: Knowledge (local) +6, Listen +5, Sense Motive +1 (+3 lies), Spot +9; Alertness ^B, Toughness, Weapon Focus (handaxe).

Languages: Wrigglie (S/W).

Contacts: Information (1).

Possessions: Handaxe, 2 torches, flint and steel, flask of oil, traveler's outfit, 1 *sb*, 42 *pd*.

TACTICS

Since the *fenniath* is clearly too much for them, the cultists are simply trying to defend themselves and escape. Each one fights defensively, attacking when necessary, but keeping out of

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the combat as much as possible. Obviously, they won't make it very far, but they're willing to die rather than lead such a terror back to the farm and their precious infected pigs. The *fenniath* just wants to find Paithas. If the PCs attack, it defends itself and tries to knock them out. Once it's clearly outmatched, it flees into the hills and the Serripines grain-fields, where its high speed makes it very likely it will escape.

DEVELOPMENTS

Since the *fenniath* is clearly of the same species as the one the PCs encountered when they tracked down Pace (assuming they did so), it's evident the Apostles are not of the same faction as whoever had Pace killed. If they manage to kill it, they get the message it's trying to deliver to Paithas, which is a major clue as to what's going on. If it escapes, they're more likely to get the message after killing Paithas. The note is detailed in **Appendix III**.

SCENE SIX: THE BROWN BEAR

The roadside tavern is fairly small and very old, though it looks well maintained. A wooden sign hangs over its main entrance, showing an oversized bear. The smell of fresh baked bread wafts from the building, and the sounds of baleful muttering come from within its stone walls.

But another noise also reaches you, this one coming from down the road. It's the sound of many men marching

toward the inn. A group of 18 men, all dressed in the same robes and carrying the same axes as the Apostles of Nature that you met on the road, crest the hill and head toward the Brown Bear. At their head is a small, portly man that lacks the firm condition and confidence the other Apostles show, though he seems to lead them. Upon seeing you, the small man raises his voice in greeting, and waves you all to join him inside the inn.

This is Paithas Meed and his cult of 17 fake Apostles (for a total of 23, if the PCs saved all six on the road). (Six more Brothers remain at the pig farm, to watch over their infected livestock.) Paithas introduces himself and asks how the Apostles came to be traveling with strangers. If the PCs saved some of his men, Paithas is told of this and comes to thank them for their kind intentions. However, he asks that the PCs seriously consider leaving immediately. He and his Apostles would rather die than see someone get diseased or cursed while trying to aid them. If the PCs truly want to help the world, says Paithas, they should go back to the road and warn others not to risk themselves.

It's important to note that Paithas has no idea who the PCs are. He knows someone killed Pace, but doesn't know the names or faces of the PCs. If they explain they're investigating the death of Eirilissi, Paithas claims to have no knowledge of it and avoids further questions until he can talk to the Apostles with them and find out why the PCs weren't killed. (Upon learning they drove off a monster that six Apostles couldn't deal with, he



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takes one of the extreme measures outlined below if the PCs give him enough time).

If the PCs confront Paithas here and now, they do so at considerable risk. Paithas has at least 17 Apostles to support him. Because he doesn't want the locals to realize how violent his men can get, he avoids a fight here if he can without letting the PCs blow his cover or get any advantage over him. If the PCs press in trying to accuse him, he warns them to leave before they suffer a serious defeat. If he can convince them to talk to him in private later, he'll do so. However, no matter what he promises, he isn't going to allow them to speak with him at any time without at least a dozen Apostles present.

If the PCs don't tip their hand, Paithas considers them an inconvenience rather than a serious threat. He plays the part of friendly but concerned wise man for now, and continues on with his plans to force Duncaen to help keep the farmers away.

Not long after Paithas arrives at the Brown Bear, its owner comes out to see what the commotion is about. The tavern is owned by Duncaen, an experienced merchant and wily old coot, along with his oldest daughter Engela. Duncaen tries to keep trouble away from his place, and acts to calm anyone getting heated about Paithas. Duncaen is suspicious of the Apostles, but has no reason to think Paithas is a serious danger. Paithas asks permission to speak about dangers facing the village to everyone within the tavern and, though uncomfortable about it, Duncaen agrees.

The gist of Paithas's pitch is simple—the constant and mysterious troubles plaguing the local farms are proof that the area is cursed. He specifically claims to have seen signs of plague among local animals and plants, though he burned all infected creatures so he has none left to show the citizens. He urges everyone to leave the area if they possibly can or to stay in their homes until the problems end if they can't.

There are 12 farmers present. (The locals aren't likely to get into a fight with anyone, so no statistics are provided. If you end up needing details for them, use the numbers for the low-level city militia found in **Appendix II**.) The villagers begin with an initial attitude of Unfriendly to Paithas, but his Diplomacy check may be able to make them consider his words anyway. His Diplomacy check takes 10 minutes, and his followers all attempt to aid another by making unskilled Diplomacy checks. If Paithas manages to bring anyone to Helpful, they agree to leave the area the next day. Those who are only Friendly offer to consider his words, but plan to wait to see if things get worse.

Of course, the PCs may speak out against Paithas. If so, allow them to make their own Diplomacy checks, and subtract their totals from Paithas's. This guarantees no one is going to shift to Helpful, and makes even Friendly results unlikely. Duncaen and his family won't shift to more than Indifferent, regardless of Paithas's check (they're too suspicious of him to trust him, no matter how slick he sounds). After he's done talking, Paithas

asks Duncaen to close the Brown Bear to prevent the spread of the plague, and to ask the PCs (and anyone else from out of town) to leave. Duncaen promises to consider the request (though he obviously has no intention of doing so), and offers Paithas a free room for the night (to get him out of the common room). Paithas agrees once he has free rooms for his cultists as well, and retires for the night.

DUNCAN AND ENGELA

hp 4 each; noncombatants.

PAITHAS MEED

hp 19; see statistics on page 51.

CULTISTS (17)

hp 11 each; see statistics on page 56.

TACTICS

If forced to fight, Paithas immediately seeks cover behind his Apostles. Then, he orders his men to target the toughest-looking combatant among his foes. If anyone is revealed to be a spellcaster, Paithas makes them the target of choice for his troops. Once safely behind his allies, Paithas uses *color spray* and/or *sleep* to try to thin the ranks of his enemies. He's willing to catch one of his men in either spell if doing so is likely to take out a foe.

Paithas's followers are extremely devoted to him. All are willing to die for him and fight viciously to protect him. They throw their bodies in front of him, and attempt to swamp anyone attacking him from range. They obey his every order, including not attacking a specific foe even if that foe hits them; they suffer such blows without complaint). If Paithas dies, the followers present fight to the death.

These tactics apply any time Paithas or the Brothers get into a fight, which is actually more likely to happen later.

Unless directly attacked, Duncaen and Engela stay out of any fighting.

DEVELOPMENTS

Duncaen has just about had it with Paithas, and is looking for any edge he can get over the cult leader. Since the PCs seem to have earned the respect of at least a few of the Apostles, Duncaen feels it might be wise to keep them around. Claiming his inn has plenty of empty rooms at the moment, Duncaen offers to let the PCs stay for a few nights free of charge as a reward for driving off what was obviously a serious threat to him and his own. If pressed, Duncaen admits he's hoping the PCs may be able to discover what's been causing such trouble lately and eliminate it; giving a free room and meals is a small price to pay for that chance.

TREASURE

The only treasure of note is that on Paithas.

SCENE SEVEN: DAMSEL

Early in the morning, Paithas Meed leaves his room to speak to a few of the Apostles. Then Paithas leaves with 6 of the Apostles to head back to the pig farm. Six more Apostles get together to kidnap Engela. The rest head back down the road to resume warning people off.

If the PCs are watching Paithas or the Apostles, they'll see the group split into 3 groups, with 2 heading out and the remaining heading to the common room of the Brown Bear (where Engela has begun her morning chores). They can follow any of the groups easily. If they head to the pig farm, go to **Scene Eight**. If they follow the group headed down the road, nothing of note happens unless the PCs make it happen. If they follow the group walking into the Brown Bear, they see them grab Engela and haul her off kicking and screaming.

If the PCs aren't watching Paithas or his men, their first clue that something is wrong in the early dawn hours is the sound of Engela screaming her heart out. It takes several rounds for the Apostles to successfully gag her, and even then, they can only drag her five feet each round as long as she struggles. Duncaen is likely to reach her first, but can't take on six Apostles, all of whom warn the innkeeper that she dies if he interferes. If the PCs show up, Duncaen asks them to save his daughter, pointing out that if the Apostles wanted her dead they'd have killed her already. If that doesn't work, he offers to give them free room and board in the Brown Bear anytime they like if they'll save Engela.

CULTISTS (9)

hp 11 each; see statistics on page 56.

TACTICS

The cultists need Engela alive, to use as a leverage against Duncaen, and do nothing to harm her. They fight to the death to get her away and back to the pig farm. None leaves unless they can take Engela with them.

DEVELOPMENTS

Duncaen knows where the pig farm is, though he's never been there and doesn't know why it's important. Regardless of what happens with Engela, he's happy to tell the PCs what trail to take to get to the farm, which is where Paithas is likely headed. If Engela is captured, Duncaen tells the PCs what's going on, and stalls anyone else who asks by saying she's missing and he's not sure what happened.

If the PCs follow Paithas before Engela is grabbed, her fate depends on what happens to Paithas. If the PCs kill or capture

him, or destroy the pig farm, her captors release her as she's now useless. If Paithas and the pig farm remain operational, they keep Engela hostage to ensure her father's cooperation.

SCENE EIGHT: THE PIG FARM

Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs first reach the pig farm.

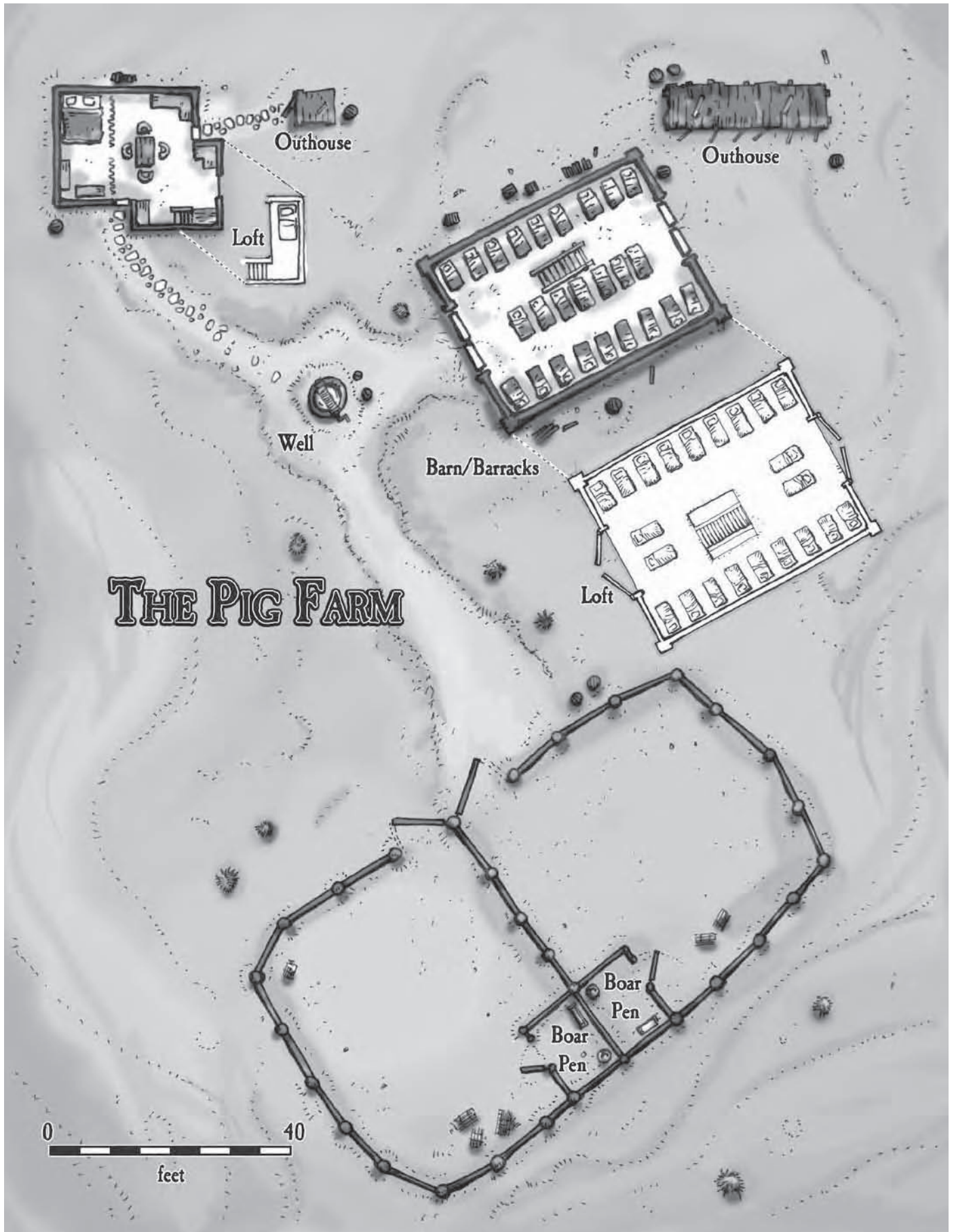
The woods thin, and then clear to reveal a small, aging farm. The buildings are poorly maintained, with holes visible in the roofs and weeds growing thickly. A few men in robes with handaxes stand guard at both the farmhouse and the barn doors. A large fence, the only solidly constructed thing visible, surrounds an open paddock where more than a dozen large, angry pigs can be seen snarling at one another. A group of six robed men emerge from the farmhouse and jog into the woods, headed toward the far-off road to the inn. A tall, powerfully built man stands in the doorway of the farmhouse briefly, before turning to speak to Paithas Meed. The two then head back inside.

This small farmhouse is the crux of the Dyareelan's plot to bring a plague back to Sanctuary. It is here that the pigs, infested with plague-carrying fleas, are held and kept healthy until there are enough of them to spread the plague through the city. There are only 24 pigs here right now, and the Dyareelan's believe they need at least 40 to be able to create an instant epidemic. The farm is running out of funds, the last shipment ended up wrecked on the coast of the Swamp of Night Secrets, and the next shipment is days away yet. Paithas is preparing to have one pig brought to Sanctuary as proof for Arion Swan that the plot can proceed, but even that must wait a day or two for a wagon to be brought. In the meantime, Paithas can do little but wait and, if he has Engela, ensure Duncaen helps keep people away.

Although Paithas is the senior Dyareelan present, he's not the only one with some ability. When Paithas isn't here, the grim and tall Yurlund is in charge. Yurlund is unusually dedicated, even for a Dyareelan, and has lived in this farm since he took it from a few petty bandits who used it as a hideaway. Yurlund thinks of Paithas as a weakling, and only obeys him because Sorbeth commanded him to. Yurlund would be perfectly happy to see Paithas dead. He believes just a few pigs would be enough, because he believes his goddess wants the Dyareelans to be back in control of the city. Anyone who feels otherwise (like Paithas) is insufficiently faithful.

Normally, there are eight people here—Yurlund, Paithas, and six cultists in the guise of Apostles of Nature. Another six cultists also live here, but normally are on patrol. At least three cultists are awake and on guard at all times. PCs who observe the farm from the woods can quickly determine that Yurlund

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never leaves, the cultists cycle through their numbers regularly, and Paithas investigates any serious disturbance. If the PCs wish, they can attack when everyone is asleep except three cultists, (with Paithas in the barn, sleeping), which gives them a round or two before an outcry rouses everyone. However, as Yurlund does not need sleep, he is always awake, armored, and ready for trouble. Alternatively, the PCs could lure Paithas and a few cultists into the woods and ambush them, or even go deal with Yurlund and the remaining cultists while Paithas stomps around the woods.

If the PCs manage to examine a pig, a DC 10 Handle Animal check reveals them to be infested with fat brown fleas that seem sluggish, as though intoxicated. This can be attributed to the cold winter weather, which means the fleas will become much more active in a few weeks when Spring arrives. The pigs themselves require constant care to prevent them from falling ill. There's a 10% chance that anyone interacting with the pigs gets a fleabite, exposing them to the Dyareelan plague (chaos plague, contact, DC 13, incubation 1d3 days, 1d3 Wis and 1d3 Con). Because it is a magic disease, it's impossible to be cured by any normal means once a target is infected. If treatment or successful Fortitude saves after getting sick would normally indicate a cure, the disease is instead dormant for one week. After that week, the victim must make a new save to see if he gets sick again. Even when not showing symptoms, an infected target can infect others. However, if the PCs obtain the documents that Paithas Meed has, they discover a recipe to cure the plague. Details for obtaining the special ingredients necessary can be found in **Act 3, Scene One: Making Change**, on page 53.

Anyone who makes a Handle Animal check of 5 or less while dealing with a pig enrages it, causing an attack. Use the statistics for boars from the *MM*.

CULTISTS (9)

hp 11 each; see statistics on page 56.

PAITHAS MEED

Male Ilsigi apprentice, mage 4; CR 4; Medium humanoid (human); HD 4d4+8; hp 19; Mdt 15; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +2; Grap +3; Atk +4 melee (1d4+1/19–20, masterwork dagger); Full Atk +4 melee (1d4+1/19–20, masterwork dagger); SQ apprentice trait, skilled, technique (metamagic expert); Rep +1; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 11, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 13.

Background Skills: Concentration, Spellcraft

Skills and Feats: Concentration +10, Diplomacy +11, Gather Information +4, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (history) +8, Knowledge (local) +8, Listen +1, Spellcraft +11, Spot +1; Alertness, Endurance, Skill Focus (Diplomacy)^B, Still Spell^B.

Languages: Ilsig (S/W), Rankene (S/W), Wrigglie (S), Yenized (W).

Spells: safe level 2nd; spellcasting +9; ritualcasting +6; save DC 12 + spell level.

Known Spells (7): *color spray* (1st, MT 20, price 1), *grease* (1st, MT 20, price 1), *gust of wind* (2nd, MT 30, price 2), *levitate* (2nd, MT 30, price 2), *message* (0-level, MT 10, price 0/1), *prestidigitation* (0-level, MT 10, price 0/1), *sleep* (1st, MT 20, price 1).

Familiar Spells (7): *blink* (3rd, MT 40, price 6 lethal), *hold portal* (1st, MT 20, price 1), *pyrotechnics* (2nd, MT 30, price 2), *read magic* (0-level, MT 10, price 0/1), *shatter* (2nd, MT 30, price 2), *shield* (1st, MT 20, price 1), *ventriloquism* (1st, MT 20, price 1).

Possessions: Masterwork dagger, lesser rod of silent spell.

YURLUND

Male Mrsevedan acolyte, godsworn 4; CR 4; Medium humanoid (human); HD 4d10+15; hp 37; Mdt 21; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +4; Grap +6; Atk +7 melee (2d4+3/×3, masterwork Enlibar steel ranseur) or +7 ranged (1d4+2/19–20, masterwork dagger); Full Atk +7 melee (2d4+3/×3, masterwork Enlibar steel ranseur) or +7 ranged (1d4+2/19–20, masterwork dagger); SQ acolyte trait, brash, divine health ×2 (need not sleep, +1 hp/hr); Rep +1; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 11.

Background Skills: Heal, Knowledge (religion).

Skills and Feats: Diplomacy +2, Handle Animal +6, Heal +3, Knowledge (religion) +8, Ride +6, Sense Motive +8; Combat Reflexes^B, Power Attack, Toughness^B.

Languages: Mrsevedan (S), Wrigglie (S).

Spells: safe level 2nd; ritualcasting +3; save DC 11 + spell level.

Known Spells (3+2d): *convert light wounds* (1st, MT 20, price 1), *convert minor wounds* (0-level, MT 10, price 0/1), *doom* (1st, MT 20, price 1), *shatter* (2nd, MT 30, price 2), *zone of truth* (2nd, MT 30, price 2).

D: Domain spell. *Domain:* Catastrophe (limited evasion).

Familiar Spells (2): *detect curse* (1st, MT 20, price 1), *detect magic* (0-level, MT 10, price 0/1).

Possessions: Mithral breastplate, masterwork Enlibar steel ranseur, masterwork dagger, 5 *sh*.

TACTICS

Paithas and any cultists with him use the same tactics described in **Scene Six**. Paithas considers himself to be important, but isn't willing to go back to Sanctuary if the pig farm has been

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destroyed. He flees against foes that seem to be attacking him, but fights to the death against foes trying to damage the farm or free the pigs.

Yurlund is a different matter. Though infused with the power of his deity, Yurlund tries rituals only outside of combat (often to heal himself or allies). During a fight, he depends on his Enlibar steel “boar spear” (ranseur) and armor. Yurlund doesn’t believe in negotiations—anyone who seems hostile is attacked and killed. Someone who might not be hostile is warned off, and then attacked if they refuse to leave. Yurlund never sleeps, and is always armed and armored. As long as he’s up, no cultist who sees him surrenders or flees except Paithas.

DEVELOPMENTS

If the PCs get the documents Paithas has on him, they don’t have to deal with the rest of this situation if they don’t want to. Yurlund makes only a token effort to chase them, considering the pigs far more important. If the PCs tell the Sharda about the pig farm, Yurlund and the Brothers are taken out by a group of guards, Sharda, militia, and Irrune who think a fight sounds like fun. If the PCs don’t mention them, Yurlund brings 24 pigs into Sanctuary in a few weeks, and begins spreading disease. However, there aren’t enough pigs, and normal measures of quarantine prevent the sickness from becoming a major outbreak.

If captured, Paithas refuses to cooperate unless forced. Of course, the papers he has from Erilessi’s body and the message from Arion Swan are pretty damning evidence that he’s behind some plot, if not specifically what. He also has tattoos across his back marking him as a Dyareelan, as do most of the cultists present.

Further, the cultists other than Paithas and Yurlund are less dedicated, and willing to talk to spare their own lives. They know only that the cult hoped to use a plague to bring itself back to power, and Paithas made arrangements for that with Erilessi. Recently Paithas was angry with Erilessi and has called him a traitor in the past few days. They also know another shipment of pigs is due soon, but not where or on what ship.

By the end of this encounter, the PCs should know the following. Erilessi was a contact of both Paithas and Arion Swan. Paithas had Erilessi killed by Master Whoever, likely because Erilessi refused to provide more money. Paithas is part of the Dyareelan cult, who wishes to bring infected pigs into Sanctuary. The cult has a cure, but it appears Erilessi was working for another master as well, and planned to die in the plague while making the cure public. Arion has a meeting planned with Paithas “beneath the Black Temple” to discuss the matter. Even if the PCs aren’t clear on all these details, they’ll soon be explaining them to the Sharda, which gives you an opportunity to bring things together for them.

Now, it’s time to head back to Sanctuary.



ACT III: FINAL CONFRONTATIONS

By now, the PCs should have the basic elements of the plot clear in their head, even if a detail or two is missing, and know that the missing linchpin is Arion Swan. If they aren't sure of that last point, they likely will be soon (see Scene One). In fact, presenting the information they have gathered so far to the Sharda is enough to win them a reward of 100 *sh* each (assuming they've dealt with the pig farm—it's only 25 *sh* each if they just report on the farm) and most of their freedom. While the Sharda warn the PCs that Judge Nevermind isn't completely satisfied and would like the PCs to investigate further, the official restrictions on their travel are lifted. If they wish, the PCs can just walk away.

However, walking away means leaving some powerful enemies behind them. If the players don't seem to realize just how dangerous people like Arion Swan and the Dyareelans can be, a side trip can drive the point home (see **Interludes**). During any of their interactions over the next few days, the PCs overhear people muttering whenever they pass. Any investigation reveals word is out that there may be a contract out for the death of the PCs. Most people assume whoever had Erilessi killed wants the PCs eliminated before they can expose every detail of the plot.

As it happens this isn't true yet, but it easily could be. If Arion Swan and Sorbeth aren't dealt with by the PCs, they escape any trap the Irrune set under the Black Temple. The spy and the cultist become a thorn in the PCs' sides, sending killers and rumors after the PCs wherever they go. The PCs can ignore this—or they can finally decide to hunt their enemies down and finish what they started.

The final combats in this adventure are significantly more difficult than anything the PCs have tried so far. They need to be at least 3rd level to handle these challenges, and it would be better if they were 4th before the final fight on the *Blackguard*. If the PCs are a bit from reaching that goal, this is a good time to go through any remaining side trips outlined in the Interludes section (above).

SCENE ONE: MAKING CHANGE

If the PCs want to brew a dose or three of the plague's cure (using instructions found in the note of Erilessi's, which they found on Paithas Meed), they soon discover the ingredients listed are very rare. While they are medicinal, they are all from distant lands and not particularly effective. No apothecary or poisoner in town carries them and, if asked, they all suggest the PCs check with Bezul the Changer in the Shambles, who often has such rare odds and ends.

Read or paraphrase the following information when the PCs first enter Bezul's shop.

As you pass through the shop's doorway, you instantly feel crowded. The inside is tightly packed with shelves set into rows, all crammed from floor to ceiling with stuff. Though every object is placed neatly on its shelf, there seems to be no rhyme or reason to its organization. Buckets, belts, boots, bottles, and badger claws sit next to clumps of wax,

ACT III: FINAL CONFRONTATIONS



fishhooks, glass beads, rope, paper envelopes and pruning shears. The shop (which is really the front end of a block-square warehouse) looks like someone mixed a trash heap with a rummage sale, and organized the whole affair alphabetically by last name.

As your eyes adjust to the darkness and take in the fact that yet more shelves are packed together in the back of the shop, a goose wanders up. It considers you solemnly, before tilting its head and letting loose an indignant honk.

This is the shop of Bezul the Changer, the only man in Sanctuary likely to have the odd laundry list of ingredients required for the plague's cure. Normally, Bezul runs the shop with the help of his wife and a friend or two, but today most everyone is busy, leaving Bezul to hold the place down by himself (with the help of his two hired guards Ammen and Jopze). There are regular customers present, but no one Bezul would trust alone in the shop.

When asked for the ingredients to the plague's cure, Bezul doesn't bat an eyelash. He gathers things from various shelves quickly, but warns that he doesn't have much of these particular items. Normally, Bezul would be able to provide enough of these materials for 9–12 doses of the cure, but not at the moment. Oddly, someone just came through a few days ago and asked for all the same items. As a result, Bezul only has enough for 2 doses (and only that much because he made an effort to replenish his supply). A DC 20 Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, or Intimidate check allows a PC to wheedle, bully or trick Bezul into telling who the previous client was (Bezul normally doesn't pass out such information—it's bad for business).

If the PCs can't get the info out of Bezul, another of his customers, Mashat Tane, offers to sell, for 20 *sb*, the identity of the previous customer (having seen the transaction go down 2 days ago). Mashat carefully makes this offer out of casual hearing range of Bezul, but close enough to be heard if screaming. If the PCs pressure Mashat rather than pay him, he yells for Bezul, who comes and calls for the guard. (If you need statistics for Mashat, use the typical thug).

The man who bought out Bezul's supplies a few days ago is none other than Arion Swan, a name the PCs have heard before. Arion was agitated and paid well in coin for the items he requested. He left instructions that if any more could be found, it should be brought immediately to the Vulgar Unicorn, where Arion expected to be staying. Bezul sent a runner to take the new shipment of items to Arion yesterday, but the man wasn't staying at the tavern and hadn't been seen in a day.

A character armed with the ingredients for the plague's cure can treat an infected character with a DC 10 Heal check. Brewing a dose of the cure in advance takes a DC 15 Craft (herbalism) check, but once done the curative is potent for 3 weeks. Anyone infected is cured within an hour of drinking the cure, though ability points lost to the ravages of the disease must be healed normally.

BEZUL THE CHANGER

Male Wrigglie merchant, savant 6; CR 6; Medium humanoid (human); HD 6d6+3; hp 26; Mdt 11; Init +0; Spd 30ft.; AC 11, touch 10, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +4; Grap +5; Atk +6 melee (1d4+1/19–20, masterwork dagger); Full Atk +6 melee (1d4+1/19–20, masterwork dagger); SA master merchant, merchant trait, supportive; SQ jaded, merchant trait; Rep +1; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +8; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 13.

Background Skills: Appraise, Knowledge (local).

Skills and Feats: Appraise +14, Bluff +7, Diplomacy +16, Disguise +1 (+3 acting), Gather Information +14, Handle Animal +7, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (local) +13, Listen +9, Profession (merchant) +14, Ride +2, Search +10, Sense Motive +9, Spot +8, Survival +2 (+4 following tracks); Combat Expertise, Investigator^B, Manhunter*, Negotiator^B, Skill Focus (Profession: merchant)^B, Toughness.

*New feat, see *Thieves' World Player's Manual* for details.

Languages: Ilsig (S/W), Wrigglie (S).

Contacts: Information (2).

Possessions: Padded, masterwork dagger, *potion of convert moderate wounds*. At any time there are approximately 5000 shaboozh worth of items and equipment in the Changing House, possibly including weapons and magical items; the inventory changes constantly, but Bezul can usually lay his hands on something useful.

AMMEN AND JOPZE

Male Wrigglie mercenary, fighter 2; CR 2; Medium humanoid (human); HD 2d10+2; hp 17; Mdt 16; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grap +3; Atk +4 melee (1d8+1/19–20, longsword); Full Atk +4 melee (1d8+1/19–20, longsword); SQ jaded, mercenary trait; Rep +0; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 9.

Background Skills: Intimidate, Knowledge (geography).

Skills and Feats: Climb +0, Disguise +0, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (geography) +2; Alertness^B, Improved Bull Rush^B, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword)^B.

Languages: Wrigglie (S).

Contacts: Skill (1).

Possessions: Scale mail, longsword.

MASHAT TANE

hp 3; noncombatant.

SCENE TWO: FINDING THE BLACK TEMPLE

The next step in the adventure is for the player characters to track down Arion Swan. Their best chance is to intercept him at the mysterious “Black Temple”, a ruin located on the Avenue of Temples. Getting the characters to reach this conclusion, however, can be a bit tricky. If the PCs haven’t come across or have an idea how to locate the Black Temple, you can use the Sharda to move the events forward. These investigators will eventually locate this profane place and mount a raid to clear out the tunnels. Assuming the player characters have been working closely with the Sharda, they are likely to be asked along for added support.

Alternatively, the characters can do some probing of their own. Allow the players to guide the investigation, letting them determine the proper NPCs to query, the right locations to stake-out, and so on. This is also a good time to make use of any information contacts or revisit any of the characters already met in the adventure thus far. In short, any reasonable plan for investigation that the PCs come up with can work, with a Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, or Intimidate check (as appropriate) made by a PC or contact acting as an “investigation check” to determine how much information is turned up.

INVESTIGATION

Check	Information learned
10	The Black Temple is an old building abandoned since the banishment of worship within the walls of Sanctuary. It has a single entrance, and is sometimes used as a meeting place for criminals. (The location of one of the two entrances is given, so the PCs can lead a raid there with this information.)
15	The space beneath the Black Temple is an old catacomb, where the bodies of the wealthy were once buried. It has long since been raided for valuables, but criminals no longer go there after several disappeared.
20	There are two entrances to the barrows under the Black Temple, set on opposite sides of the building. (With this information the PCs can come in from both ends if they wish, or send allies to the far entrance to ensure no one escapes).
25	A cult of Dyareelans has moved into the Black Temple.

SCENE THREE: BELOW THE BLACK TEMPLE

The set up for this encounter is looser than most, because there are so many ways the PCs could decide to handle this. If they decide to go it alone, this proves to be their most difficult fight yet. If they go for help or are part of a raid planned by the Irrune or Sharda, the stakes are much lower. If the PCs flatly refuse to get involved, you can even have NPCs from this fight come find them after the catacomb is raided, looking for revenge.

The Black Temple itself is little more than a few wooden walls, the stone all having been raided months ago. At each end of the temple's old grounds are simple trap doors (DC 15 Search check, or obvious if the temple is watched until a cultist sneaks in or out of the barrows). There are two guards at each end of the barrow at all times. The number of cultists varies depending on who is busy with their other lives—all these cultists maintain a secret identity within the community of Sanctuary. As few as six cultists may be present, or as many as thirty. If the PCs intend to raid the barrow themselves, they should be able to time it for a minimal number of cultists. If they have help from the guard or Irrune, the number should be higher. Sorbeth is always inside, as is Arion Swan. Swan and Sorbeth don't trust each other, but both are waiting to hear from Paithas before taking any drastic action.

Swan has his last *fenniath* with him and is depending on it to keep him safe from the cultists. He raised the creatures from pups and is actually quite attached to them. However, he does his best to seem to be in, at best, rough control of the creature. This allows him to surrender if things go poorly, but claim he can't force the *fenniath* to give up. If the creature manages to

NEW BACKGROUND: MERCENARY

You're a sellsword. It never mattered who you served; good or bad don't mean a difference so long as the soldats flow. You go where there's a need for muscle, and Sanctuary is just as good as any place else.

Age Modifier: +1.

BONUS SKILLS

Select two from the following: Intimidate, Knowledge (geography), Ride, or Sense Motive.

MERCENARY TRAIT

You've grown accustomed to the rigors of a mercenary life. You gain a +2 bonus to the following checks and saves: Constitution checks made to continue running, Constitution checks to avoid nonlethal damage from a forced march, Constitution checks made to avoid nonlethal damage from starvation or thirst, and Fortitude saves made to avoid nonlethal damage from hot or cold environments.

win, or even create a likely escape route, Arion takes it even if he's already surrendered.

If the PCs try this by themselves, allow them to plan their tactics, timing, and approach. Randomly determine which NPC is in what part of the barrow, and who is awake or asleep. If the PCs have significant help, describe the early parts of the raid as a confused maze of twisting corridors and running fights, with the PCs getting separated from most of the other attackers. You may describe them seeing a man dressed better than any of the cultists running down a side corridor with a *fenniath* alongside him to goad the PCs into separating themselves from the main raiding group. Then, use the catacomb map as only part of the underground complex, with just Arion, Sorbeth, a single cultist, and the *fenniath* present. This allows the PCs to be in the thick of the most important fighting, without penalizing them for getting help. Feel free to add setting details such as altars to unknown deities, prisoners, sleeping quarters, and miscellaneous loot for window dressing. The barrows are intentionally loose to allow you the ability to customize this critical section of the adventure for your group.

TYPICAL CULTIST (6–30)

Male or female Wrigglie Dyareelan cultist, survivor 2; CR 2; Medium humanoid (human); HD 2d10+2; hp 13; Mdt 18; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +1; Grap +2; Atk +3 melee (1d6+1, masterwork club) or +2 melee (1d6+1, unarmed strike) or +2 ranged (1d4+1/19–20, masterwork dagger); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+1, masterwork club) or +2 melee (1d6+1, unarmed strike) or +2 ranged (1d4+1/19–20, masterwork dagger); SA bruiser trait, fight or flight (aggressive); SQ Dyareelan cultist trait, jaded; Rep +0; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Background Skills: Intimidate, Knowledge (religion).

Skills and Feats: Climb +6, Intimidate +9, Jump +6, Knowledge (religion) +1, Listen +5, Spot +5, Survival +5; Endurance^B, Improved Damage Threshold^B, Improved Unarmed Strike^B, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Intimidate)^B.

Languages: Wrigglie (S).

Contacts: Information (1).

Possessions: Masterwork studded leather, masterwork club, masterwork dagger, *cloak of resistance* +1.

ARION SWAN

Male Rankan courtier, Noble 6; CR 6; Medium humanoid (human); HD 6d8–6; hp 24; Mdt 9; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 11, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +4; Grap +4; Atk +5 melee (1d4/19–20, masterwork dagger); Full Atk +5 melee (1d4/19–20, masterwork dagger); SQ courtier trait, diplomat, inspire 8/day (competence, complacency, courage), literate, organize +4; Rep +2; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +7; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 8, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 16.

ACT III: FINAL CONFRONTATIONS





Background Skills: Bluff, Sense Motive.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +16, Diplomacy +22, Disguise +5 (+7 acting), Forgery +6, Gather Information +8, Handle Animal +8, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (geography) +5, Knowledge (nobility & royalty) +7, Ride +7, Sense Motive +16, Sleight of Hand +5; Combat Expertise, Deceitful^B, Dodge, Leadership^B, Lightning Reflexes^B, Mobility, Negotiator^B.

Languages: Ilsi (S), Irrune (S), Rankene (S/W), Wrigglie (S), Yenized (S/W).

Contacts: Information (1), Skill (1).

Possessions: Masterwork dagger, bracers of armor +1, gloves of arrow snaring, 200 sh.

FENNIATH (1)

30 hp. See **Appendix II** for statistics.

SORBETH

Male Wriggle merchant, Initiate 4; CR 4; Medium humanoid; HD 4d6; hp 16; Mdt 15; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3; Grap +3; Atk +3 melee (1d8, heavy mace) or +4 ranged (1d4/19–20, dagger); Full Atk +3 melee (1d8, heavy mace) or +4 ranged (1d4/19–20, dagger); SQ eclectic sorcery (Int), jaded, merchant trait; Rep +1; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +6; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Background Skills: Diplomacy, Knowledge (local).

Skills and Feats: Appraise +3 (+5 alchemical items or herbalism items), Bluff +2 (+3 buying and selling), Concentration +5, Craft (alchemy) +7, Craft (herbalism) +9, Diplomacy +12 (+13 buying and selling), Gather Information +9, Heal +4, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (local) +9, Knowledge (nature) +7, Listen +3, Profession (innkeeper) +8, Sense Motive +6, Spellcraft +9, Spot +3, Survival +1 (+3 aboveground natural environments); Alertness^B, Combat Expertise^B, Silent Spell, Still Spell.

Languages: Rankene (S/W), Wrigglie (S).

Contacts: Influence (1), Information (1).

Spells: safe level 2nd; spellcasting +6; save DC 12 + spell level.

Known Spells (4): *cat's grace* (2nd, MT 30, price 2), *convert light wounds* (1st, MT 20, price 1), *detect thoughts* (2nd, MT 30, price 2), *mending* (0-level, MT 10, price 0/1).

Familiar Spells (2): *detect magic* (0-level, MT 10, price 0/1), *locate object* (2nd, MT 30, price 2).

Possessions: Heavy mace, dagger, chain shirt, four potions of *convert light wounds*, +1 *ring of protection*, 20 sh.

TACTICS

Arion is not much of a fighter by himself. He directs his *fenniath* as best he can, and stays behind it if at all possible. Arion's main concern is melee combatants, especially those with big weapons or wearing heavy armor. However, anyone who seriously damages Arion becomes his target of choice. Arion flees if he can, but doesn't risk running past foes who might cut him down as he runs by.

Sorbeth fights to the death. He doesn't depend on his magic during a fight (it's mostly useful for managing and controlling his cultists during the long, slow months of hiding). If he notices an opposing spellcaster, that character becomes his primary target, especially if he's a priest or witch. Sorbeth is willing to take big risks to kill or wound even one of his foes. He has great faith in his deity, and expects a miracle to save him at the last second as long as he fights to the best of his ability.

Cultists work to protect Sorbeth first and foremost, and Arion secondarily. None surrender, even if Sorbeth is captured. The *fenniath* fights to the death, ignoring Arion even if he is somehow convinced to tell it to surrender.

DEVELOPMENTS

If he can't escape, and it's clear his remaining *fenniath* can't save him, Arion surrenders. He's a pragmatic, and would much rather survive than die for any cause. Besides, he knows when the last shipment of infected pigs (the *Blackguard*) is due, and that it's going to dock directly in the city. Even if the PCs have the cure to the plague, if the pigs are released into the city, a few people

are bound to be infected and die before they can be found. Even better, the ship has an actual Rankan noble on board, with papers authorizing him to offer the people of Sanctuary protection from the Irrune and Ilsigi. Not quite proof that the Rankan are behind the whole plague plot, but certainly evidence enough to interest the Irrune. Arion doesn't trust the PCs to keep him safe, so he insists he be taken to someone with authority (Judge Nevermind of Ariak himself) in order to trade his information for his life.

Sorbeth and the cultists, on the other hand, don't have much of anything left to live for. Even if they survive or escape for some reason, they simply plan suicide attacks against the PCs for the next few days. This plot was their last hope to be lords of Sanctuary again. Even if other Dyareelans continue to work toward regaining power, this group gives up after this raid.

SCENE FOUR: BATTLE OF THE BLACKGUARD

The ship is a single sail vessel with sparse cargo space for a merchant ship, but lacking the deck weapons or ram plates common to military ships. Its sails and flags are dull white, but trimmed in black on all sides. The prow is high, allowing one or more deckhands to remain hidden when the ship is viewed from the front. A black wooden figurehead shows a bare-chested man snarling at the sea, making the whole ship seem angry at the world.

The final showdown with the *Blackguard* can go several ways. The PCs can go out on their own to find the ship at sea and try to board it, requiring them to get a captain and crew willing to try such a thing. They can set up an ambush for the ship when it comes into port. Or, they can take either of those options with the help of the Irrune and/or the city militia and guard. If the PCs already worked with the Sharda for the raid on the barrows, having the Irrune involved is very likely. Even if the PCs handled Arion Swan by themselves, they're likely to need help this time.

The upshot is that the more help the PCs get, the easier the fight should be, but also the less their final take of the treasure should be (less challenge means less reward, see **Scene Five**). It's also important to consider how complicated a fight you, as GM, are ready and willing to run. There are three dozen sailors on the *Blackguard* in addition to a dozen infected pigs, a Rankan envoy, and a Nisibisi witch. Running a fight against 38 foes could get so bogged down as to not be fun.

If the PCs don't know the *Blackguard* is coming, they can simply be on the docks when it comes in and begins to unload the pigs. A few guards realize what's going on and attack, and the PCs are free to fight or flee as they prefer. The main difference with this scenario is that Fersun is almost sure to escape into the crowd, and Demara has plenty of time for rituals before she allows any pigs off the ship, making her a much more formidable foe.

Again, like the fight under the Black Temple, set the stage for the fight carefully, and let the players know that however their section of the fight turns out is how the whole conflict goes. Allow the PCs to set their plans, then make sure wherever they intend to attack is where Demara and Fersun happen to be. If the PCs attack the ship on their own, don't have more than nine sailors on board at any one time (assume others are dealing with rigging and cargo and such), but have a new sailor arrive on the scene the round after one of the 9 is killed. (If the PCs really want to take on a whole ship by themselves, they'll have to deal with 36 sailors.) If the PCs have help, have a single mid-level typical Irrune fighting with them, and assume all other assistance is taking care of the other 36 sailors.

Demara's only real concern is her own well-being. She's gone to considerable trouble to get herself on a ship headed to Sanctuary, and doesn't intend to be killed or captured now (though captured is preferable to killed). She's convinced there are Nisibisi artifacts hidden in Sanctuary that could give her people the edge they need to rebuild their culture and topple (or at least wound) the Rankan empire. She only agreed to be part of Torril's ridiculous plan because it got her money, a possible edge over a potential Rankan emperor, and a free trip to Sanctuary. She cares nothing for the safety or success of her employer or the well-being of anyone else on the ship.

Fersun does care about the crew, but assumes they're better off dead than captured. If it looks like he might be able to cut a deal with a PC in combat, he'll do that, but a PC would have to bring up the possibility first. Otherwise, Fersun assumes an attack on the *Blackguard* is proof the whole plot has already failed, and that his life is already over.

SAILORS (36)

Male or female Wrigglie pirate, thief 1, warrior 1; CR 1; Medium humanoid (human); HD 1d6 plus 1d8; hp 8 each; Mdt 14; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +1; Grap +2; Atk +3 melee (1d6+1/18–20, masterwork cold iron scimitar) or +3 melee (1d6+1, masterwork sap) or +3 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+1/18–20, masterwork cold iron scimitar) or +3 melee (1d6+1, masterwork sap) or +3 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow); SA sneak attack +1d6; SQ jaded, pirate trait, trapfinding; Rep +0; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 10.

Background Skills: Intimidate, Swim.

Skills and Feats: Balance +7, Bluff +4, Climb +6 (+8 rigging), Intimidate +6, Jump +5, Listen +1, Spot +1, Swim +8, Tumble +5, Use Rope +5; Alertness^B, Dodge.

Languages: Wrigglie (S).

Contacts: Information (1).

Possessions: Masterwork studded leather, masterwork scimitar, masterwork sap, masterwork light crossbow with 10 bolts, large sack.

DEMARA

Female Nisibisi apprentice, witch 6; CR 6; Medium humanoid (human); HD 6d4+15; hp 30; Mdt 14; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +3; Grap +2; Atk +3 melee (1d8-1/×3, masterwork longspear) or +6 ranged (1d4-1/19-20, masterwork dagger); Full Atk +3 melee (1d8-1/×3, masterwork longspear) or +6 ranged (1d4-1/19-20, masterwork dagger); SA witchcraft (force of personality, unnatural vitality); SQ apprentice trait, cruel; Rep +1; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +5; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 16.

Background Skills: Speak Language, Spellcraft.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +6, Concentration +10, Diplomacy +18, Disguise +6, Gather Information +6, Intimidate +9 (+12 when recognized), Knowledge (arcana) +6, Knowledge (local) +4, Spellcraft +12; Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Still Spell, Toughness, Witchblooded ^{*B}.

*New feat, see *Thieves' World Player's Manual* for details.

Languages: Rankne (S/W), Nisibi (S/W), Wrigglie (S), Yenized (S).

Contacts: Information (Arion, Fersun)

Spells: safe level 3rd; spellcasting +12; ritualcasting +10; save DC 13 + spell level

Known Spells (10): *call lightning* (3rd, MT 40, price 3), *cause fear* (2nd, MT 30, price 2), *charm animal* (1st, MT 20, price 1), *convert minor wounds* (0-level, MT 10, price 0/1), *faerie fire* (1st, MT 20, price 1), *produce flame* (1st, MT 20, price 1), *remove fear* (2nd, MT 30, price 2), *sleep* (2nd, MT 30, price 2), *summon nature's ally I* (1st, MT 20, price 1), *water breathing* (3rd, MT 40, price 3).

Familiar Spells (10): *cat's grace* (2nd, MT 30, price 2), *darkness* (3rd, MT 40, price 3), *detect secret doors* (2nd, MT 30, price 2), *disguise self* (2nd, MT 30, price 2), *endure elements* (1st, MT 20, price 1), *hideous laughter* (2nd, MT 30, price 2), *identify* (2nd, MT 30, price 2), *mage hand* (1st, MT 20, price 1), *resistance* (0-level, MT 10, price 0/1), *sound burst* (3rd, MT 40, price 3).

Possessions: Masterwork longspear, masterwork dagger, *potion of convert moderate wounds*, *bracers of armor* +2, *spell focus* +2 (iron dagger), *ritual focus* +1 (jade incense holder), 125 *sh*.

ENVOY FERSUN

Male Rankan merchant, expert 4; CR 3; Medium humanoid (human); HD 4d6; hp 17; Mdt 10; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +3; Grap +3; Atk +3 melee (1d4/19-20, dagger) or +4 ranged (1d4/19-20, dagger); Full Atk +3 melee (1d4/19-20, dagger) or +4 ranged (1d4/19-20, dagger); SQ merchant trait; Rep +1; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Background Skills: Diplomacy, Sense Motive.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +9, Diplomacy +12, Gather Information +3, Heal +6, Knowledge (history) +6, Knowledge (local) +6, Listen +8, Profession (merchant) +6, Search +6, Sense Motive +10, Spot +6, Survival +1 (+3 follow tracks); Endurance, Point Blank Shot, Skill Focus (Sense Motive) ^B.

Languages: Rankene (S/W), Wrigglie (S).

Possessions: 2 daggers, 300 *sh*.

FERSUN'S BODYGUARDS (2)

Male Wrigglie thug, thief 1, warrior 1; CR 1; Medium humanoid (human); HD 1d6+1 plus 1d8+1; hp 10; Mdt 15; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +1; Grap +2; Atk +3 melee (1d6+1, masterwork club) or +1 melee (1d6+1 nonlethal, sap) or +1 ranged (1d4+1/19-20, throwing dagger); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+1, masterwork club) or +1 melee (1d6+1 nonlethal, sap) or +1 ranged (1d4+1/19-20, throwing dagger); SA sneak attack +1d6, thug trait; SQ jaded, trapfinding; Rep +0; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 10.

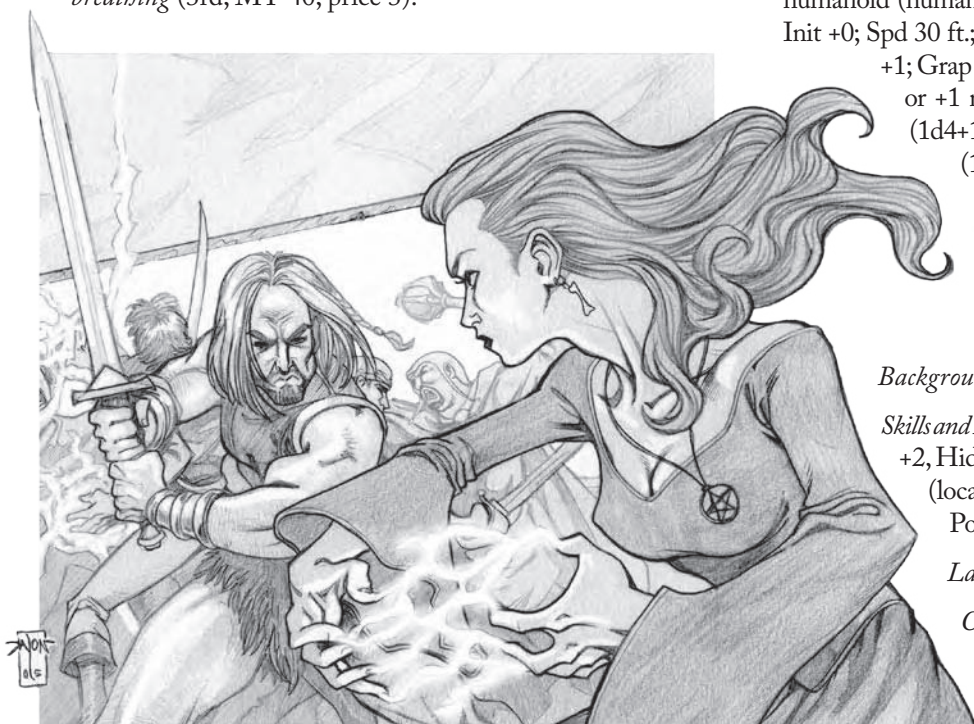
Background Skills: Intimidate, Knowledge (local).

Skills and Feats: Bluff +4, Climb +4, Gather Information +2, Hide +3, Intimidate +10, Jump +4, Knowledge (local) +6, Listen +1, Move Silently +3, Spot +1; Power Attack, Skill Focus (Intimidate) ^B.

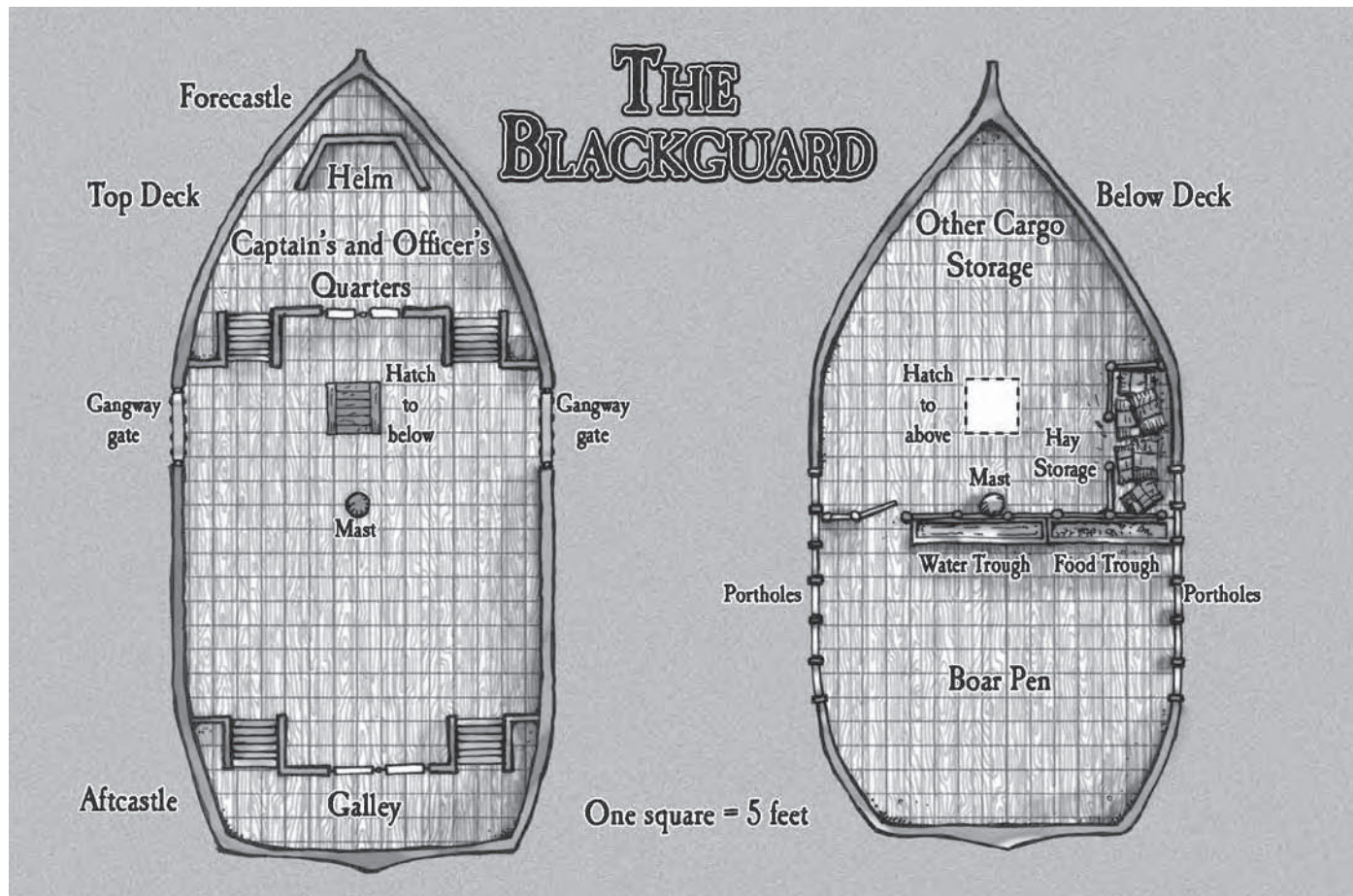
Languages: Wrigglie (S)

Contacts: Information (1).

Possessions: Studded leather, masterwork club, sap, 3 throwing daggers, 1d10 *pd*.



Act III: FINAL CONFRONTATIONS



TACTICS

Different forces on the ship have differing tactics. The sailors just want to survive. They'll fight to the death as long as it seems possible they might win—there's little worse than surrendering and then having your side be victorious. If the *Blackguard* is in dock, the sailors' main efforts will be to return to it and begin sailing away. However, once it's clear they can't possibly win, any sailor down to 50% or less of his hit points surrenders. The exception to this are four sailors around Demara—she's used Diplomacy (and not a little physical pleasure) to make them loyal allies, and they keep fighting as long as she does.

Demara's tactics depend somewhat on the situation. Demara will have 3 spells prepared in advance (the most she's allowed). Exactly what spells she prepares is up to you, but likely options include *call lightning*, *cat's grace*, and *produce flame*. If she knows a fight is coming (for example, if the PCs take a ship out to intercept the *Blackguard*) she's very likely to cast *cat's grace*, and seek to quickly perform a ritual or two before battle begins (she obviously won't have time for rituals once fighting is going on around her). She likely begins with *disguise self*, following it with *summon nature's ally* if she has time. Even if she has extra time, she's unlikely to try much more than that; Demara doesn't want to exhaust herself before she gets into battle. She also doesn't want to use her Witchblooded feat early in a fight, but will do so whenever pressed (likely boosting her Dexterity to make her

harder to hit, though she'll boost Strength if forced into melee or needing to swim). If one of the pigs gets free, Demara may well use *charm animal* to gain its assistance (her ability to control the beasts is the main reason she's here).

Nor is she dependent on magic to survive a fight. Demara carries a heavy longspear, which means she has reach. Any character

NEW BACKGROUND: PIRATE

You make a living preying on passing ships and stealing their cargo. You may hail from Scavenger Isle or from some other pirate cove. You're not much different than a bandit or a thief, but you have a pretty high self-esteem, embracing the life of a reckless swashbuckler.

Age Modifier: +0.

BONUS SKILLS

Select two from the following: Balance, Climb, Intimidate, Jump, Spot, Swim, or Use Rope.

PIRATE TRAIT

Pirates are accustomed to a life at sea. You gain a +2 competence bonus to all Balance checks and a +2 competence bonus to Climb checks made to climb rigging.

ACT III: FINAL CONFRONTATIONS

trying to rush her must either stop for a round when first entering her threatened area, or suffer an attack of opportunity as they rush past the point of her spear. Further, two of the four sailors she keeps as guards are next to her at all times; even if an attacker manages to get within striking range of Demara, the guards present a credible threat to cover her retreat.

Even in failure, Demara has plans. If within sight of land and clearly losing, she tries to cast *water breathing*, then dives into the sea to swim to freedom. If captured, she immediately begins working on convincing one or more of her captors to assist her. (Given her Diplomacy check, Demara has a decent chance to turn an unfriendly captor into a helpful ally given time. Give PCs a DC 15 Listen check to notice her efforts.)

Envoy Fersun fights to the death, as do his two bodyguards. Fersun knows if he is captured with documents suggesting he's prepared to make an offer of a friendly coup to the rich and powerful families of Sanctuary, the Irrune are unlikely to treat him kindly. Much better a noble death in battle than execution at Irrune hands. Any sailors near him keep fighting as long as he does, but surrender as soon as he falls or is captured.

DEVELOPMENTS

This is essentially the end of the adventure, though there are places it could go from here. If Demara survives, she makes every effort to maintain her freedom and search Sanctuary for the Nisibisi artifacts she's convinced remain. If Fersun survives, Arizak actually keeps him as a guest in the palace. Fersun is a known enemy, and Arizak feels better keeping him nearby.

This leaves Fersun able to plan further plots, possibly including revenge on the PCs. And of course the *Blackguard* is suddenly available if the PCs want to go for a boat ride...

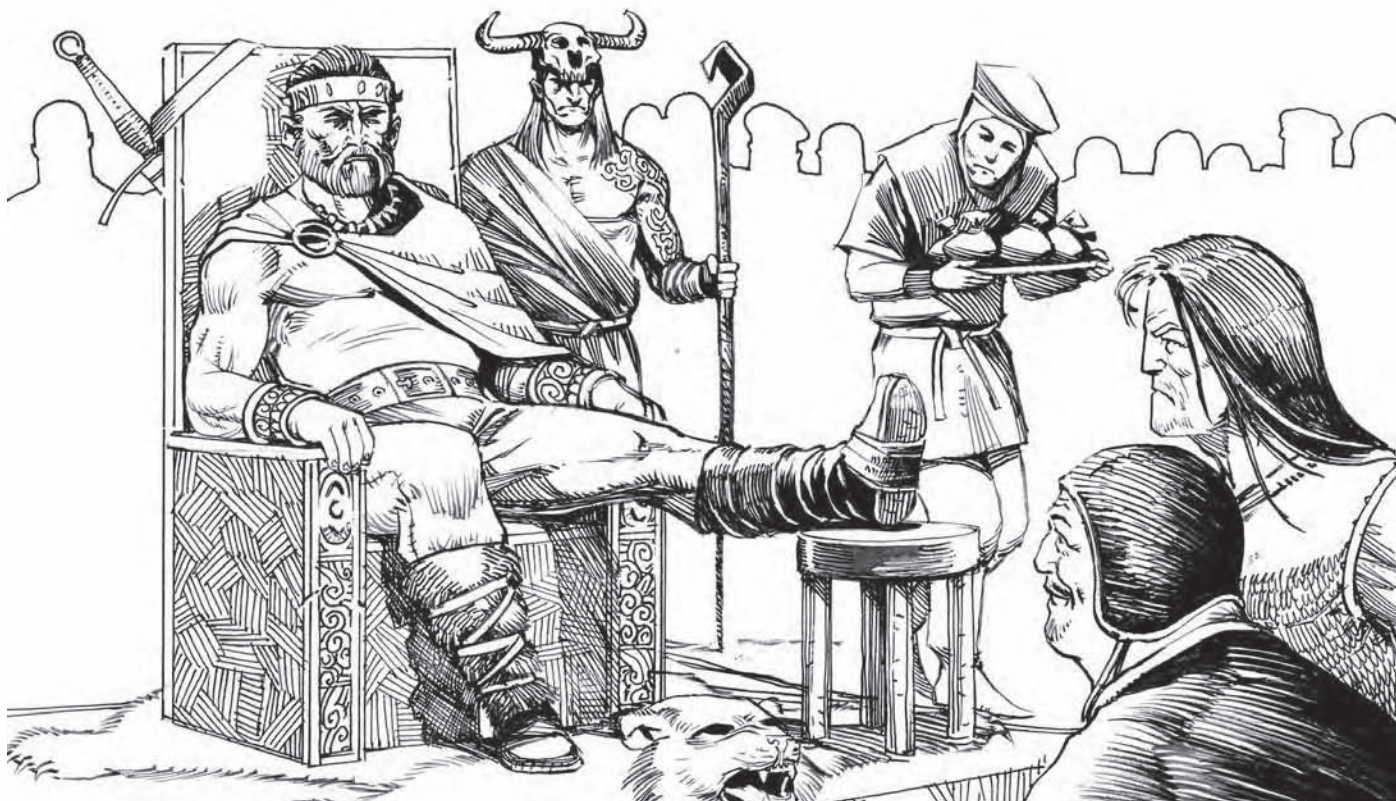
There are dozens of directions the PCs can go from here, and likely the players are already considering their next move. If possible, have an NPC ask what they plan next so you can find out their plans. Then write your own adventure based around that to continue your adventures in *Thieves' World*.

SCENE FIVE: REWARDS

Whenever the PCs have done all they're going to with this adventure, they receive a summons to see Arizak, lord of the city. Though the summons is polite, it's not optional, and a group of guards and mid-level Irrune arrive to escort the PCs to the palace.

You are shown into a large hall, with dramatic stone architecture but little ornamentation. A single throne of stone sits in the middle of the room, on which sits an older Irrune with one leg wrapped in thick leather straps and propped up on a stool. Though you've not seen him before, you recognize the description as that of Arizak, lord of the Irrune and Tyrant of Sanctuary. Behind him stand several other people. A few are Irrune, but most wear the fine robes and worried expressions of wealthy citizens and administrators.

Standing beside Arizak is a young man in fine robes. The man holds a platter of silver, on which sit a number of small pouches, each bulging with hidden contents.



Arizak isn't an emotional man, but he believes anyone who unravels a major plot against his city is worth the time for an audience. He commends the PCs for their service to the city, and makes it clear they have been found innocent of any guilt regarding the death of EriIssi the spy. If the players seem to be interested in talking to Arizak, give them the opportunity. He spends most of his days dealing with problems and dull issues of city administration. The old raider appreciates an opportunity to hear tales of bravery and battle once more.

The pouches contain silver for the PCs. Arizak explains that these are not rewards—they're the PCs' shares of monies taken in battle with forces the PCs exposed. If the PCs dealt with the pig farm, barrows and the *Blackguard*, the pouches contain 1000 *sb* each. If the PCs dealt with only two of those threats the pouches have 600 *sb* each, and if the PCs dealt with only one of them the pouches have only 300 *sb* each. There is one pouch for each PC still alive at the end of the adventure.

CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

Once the dust settles and the PCs have the good graces of Arizak, the adventure is effectively over, but it need not be. Murder at the Vulgar Unicorn can serve as a springboard for a larger campaign. Perhaps Master Whoever was also hired by another shadowy figure, and by the PCs involvement in eliminating the 'Nighter assassin, the PCs have inadvertently gained a new enemy. Or, maybe hidden in the Blackguard's hold was a cursed artifact. What would happen if a thief who crept on board when no one was looking found it? Use the following special encounter as a transition to move the plot forward to an adventure of your own design.

Shortly after the PCs receive their rewards and have a chance to spend their newfound wealth, they should eventually head back to the Vulgar Unicorn. Along the way, an assassin picks up their trail. Torril Fel, a Rankan lord with a vested interest in the pig plot, caught wind of the PCs role in foiling his plot to restore Ranke's sovereignty over Sanctuary. So, the noble hired a skilled Caronnese killer to track them down and snuff out their lives.

As the party heads back to the Vulgar Unicorn for a night of drinking and backslapping, have everyone make DC 22 (the assassin's Move Silently check) Listen checks. If they succeed, they hear a boot scrape against stone. They can make Spot checks against a DC 22 (the assassin's Hide check), but if they look around as if they think they're being followed, the assassin attacks using his poisoned bolts from his crossbow. Otherwise, the assassin bides his time until the most opportune moment when the PCs are least prepared.

When the assassin attacks, he pulls no punches, using poisoned bolts and *oil of magic weapon*. If possible, he uses *elixir of hiding* before attacking to make the most of his sniping attacks. If forced into melee, the assassin fights until reduced to 8 or fewer hit points at which point he flees.

TACTICS

If the PCs attack Arizak, they're killed. Doing so would be mind-numbingly stupid at this level, so make sure the players know that if they begin to sound trigger-happy. There's no need to run through such a fight—the PCs just lose.

DEVELOPMENTS

In addition to the gratitude of Arizak and a sum of silver to spend, the PCs have earned another reward. Each character that played through at least half the encounters of this adventure has earned a free contact of whatever type the player prefers. Such contacts are most likely to be NPCs the PCs dealt with during the course of the adventure. Additionally, each PC's reputation bonus increases by 1, representing the increased exposure the PCs have earned.

TRAINED ASSASSIN

Male Caronnese hunter, assassin 3; CR 3; Medium humanoid (human); HD 3d8+3; hp 16; Mdt 16; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +2; Grap +4; Atk +5 melee (1d8+2/19–20, masterwork longsword) or +5 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow); Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+2/19–20, masterwork longsword) or +5 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow); SA poison use, sneak attack +1d6; SQ hunter trait; Rep +0; SV Fort +4 (+6 against poison), Ref +5, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Background Skills: Hide, Move Silently.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +2 (+4 buying or selling), Craft (poison) +6, Diplomacy –1 (+1 buying and selling), Disguise +3, Escape Artist +5, Gather Information +3, Hide +10 (+12 urban), Intimidate +1, Listen +4, Move Silently +10 (+12 urban), Spot +4, Use Rope +3; Dodge, Mobility, Persuasive^B, Stealthy^B.

Languages: Caronnese (S), Trade Tongue (S), Wrigglie (S).

Contacts: Information (1).

Possessions: Masterwork studded leather, masterwork longsword, masterwork light crossbow with 20 bolts, *oil of magic weapon*, 2 *potion of convert light wounds*, *potion of hide from animals*, *elixir of hiding*, 2 doses of black adder venom, 1 dose of kastor recinus, 1 dose of sassone leaf residue, 10 *sb*.

On the assassin's body is a single, neatly folded, sheet of parchment. Give the PCs Handout Six. The PCs have come to the attention of Torril Fel. He may be far away and lack the full power of the Empire, but he knows who the PCs are now and for him, things are just beginning.

APPENDIX I: THE VULGAR UNICORN

In some ways, the Vulgar Unicorn is the heart of Sanctuary, twisted and black as it is. This tavern is the center of nearly every insidious plot, every angle, and every plan to do mischief. It attracts the toughest and deadliest folks in the city. It is no wonder that this place is said to be the center of the Maze, Sanctuary's most dangerous part of town. Still, despite its sinister character and the legends that swirl about it, it is really nothing more than a bar in a seedy backwater city, far from the pomp and majesty of the cultural centers of civilization. Or is it?

No one knows when exactly the first Vulgar Unicorn opened its doors for business. It seems Sanctuary, for as long there has been people here, has always had one. Like the character of the Maze, buildings tend to be slipshod and often collapse, only to be rebuilt a block or two down another street. Even the most famous tavern in the city is subject to the capricious whims of the Maze. It's unlikely the Vulgar Unicorn preceded the Black Tower of Heqt that once stood in the heart of the Maze, but may have opened in response to the imposing spire, offering drinks to thirsty and nervous god-fearing Wrigglies. But then, again, no one knows for sure.

The most famous Vulgar Unicorn was described in the *Thieves' World* anthologies. Owned and operated by Lastel, a wriggly noble who liked to supplement his modest fortune by slumming in the Maze, surrounded by *krrf* and whores. As an importer of drugs, Lastel was the go-to guy for illicit substances. He also had many enemies, but thanks to a wizard's curse that condemned any who harmed him to an eternity of immolation, Lastel was safe from attacks.

Sneaking through the sewers from his estate just beyond the Avenue of Temples, Lastel transformed into the unsavory

character named One-Thumb that ran the infamous bar. Eventually, Lastel found himself embroiled in a wicked plot and was condemned to a hell of sorts as he and his simulacra battled in the tunnels under the Maze, both wreathed in the flames of the mage's curse. Lastel did return, but he was never the same. He drifted in the circles of the most powerful and corrupt people in the city until eventually, he found himself in the wrong place at the wrong time.

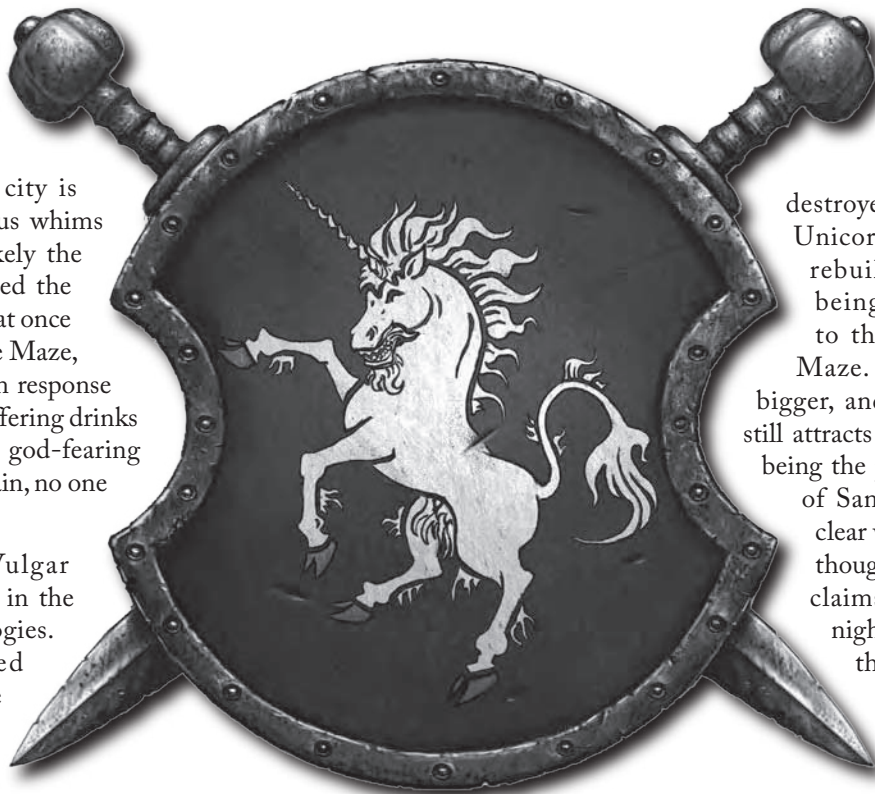
Ownership of the bar then went to Strick, the spellmaster from Firaqa, who left it to Abohor, the new One-Thumb, to run and manage. Abohor was nothing like the old One-Thumb and was a decent and kind man. What was a haven for cutthroats, thieves and prostitutes gradually transformed into an almost

respectable joint. But with all things in the Maze, nothing lasts for long.

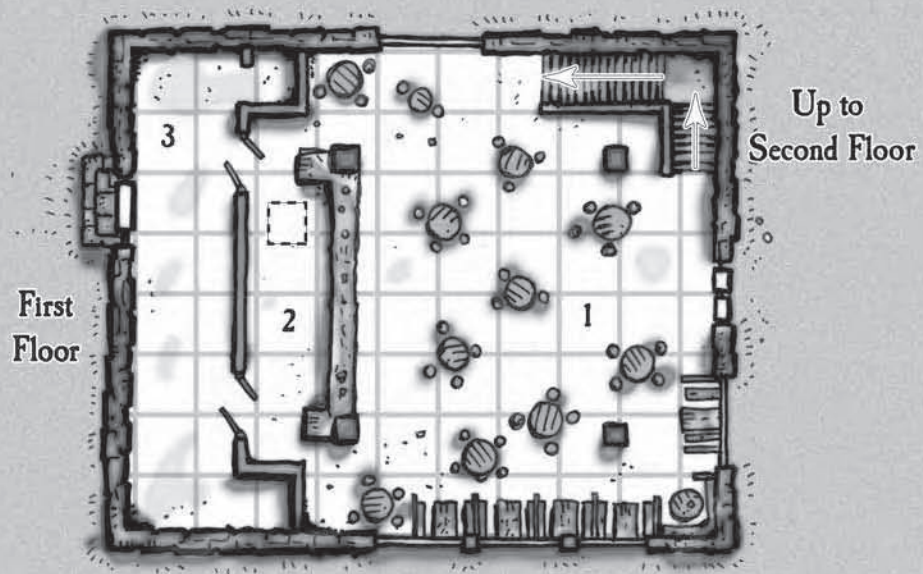
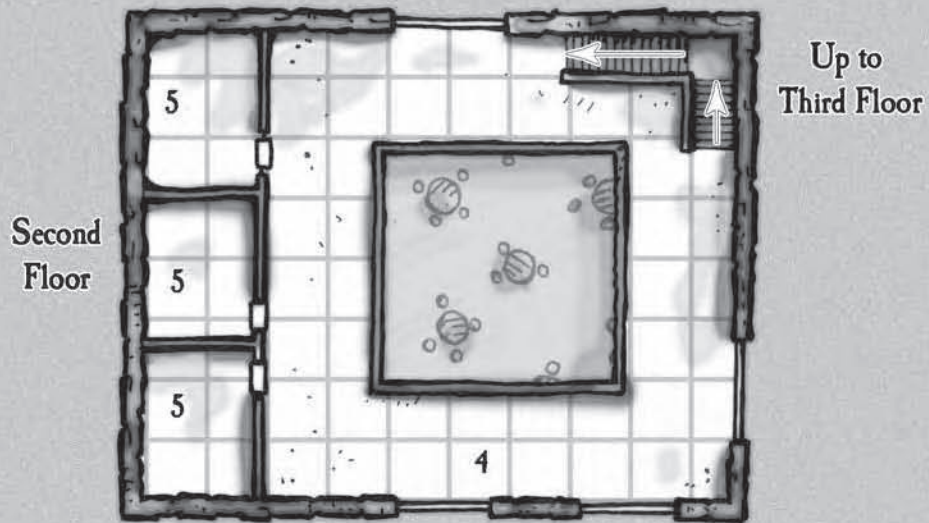
The Convulsions and the rampant fires destroyed the original Vulgar Unicorn, and it was quickly rebuilt a few blocks over, being more or less closer to the eastern edge of the Maze. This tavern is newer, bigger, and a little improved. It still attracts the worst of humanity, being the preferred watering hole of Sanctuary's scum. It's not clear who runs the place now, though Stick, a brutal pimp, claims to be the owner. At night, Pegrin the Ugly tends the bar and he's friendly enough and knows not to ask too many questions. Prostitutes are always available

to those with a few padpols and the

sounds of merriment echo over the quiet hum of conversation at the bar. The Vulgar Unicorn is just as dangerous as it ever was and those who would drink its wine or sample its delights had better watch their step lest they find themselves clutching a stab wound and dying painfully in a dark and lonely corner. When trouble breaks out, Pegrin and the harlots take cover until the storm passes.

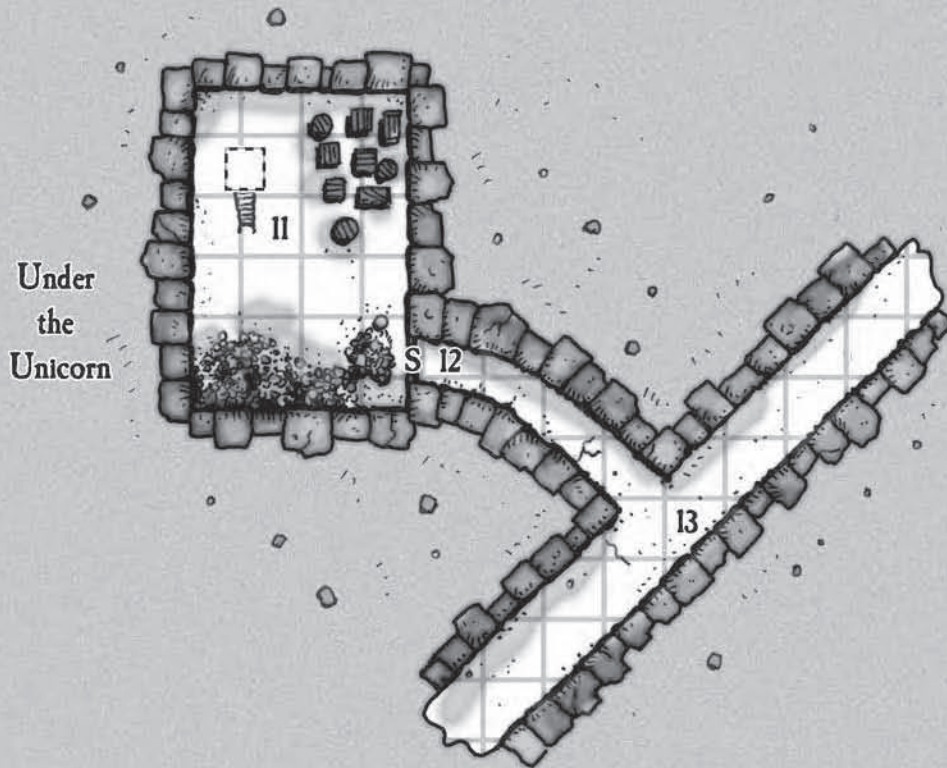
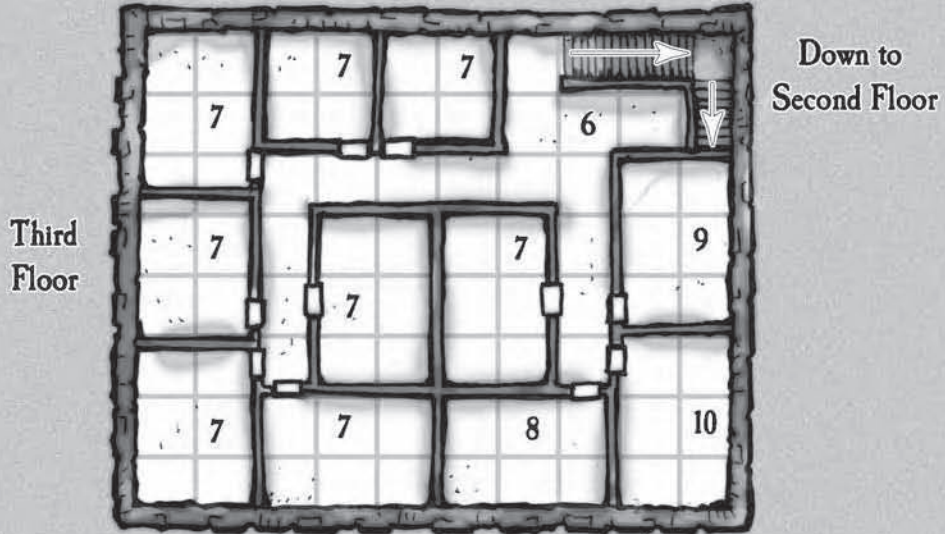


THE VULGAR UNICORN



One square = 5 feet

THE VULGAR UNICORN



One square = 5 feet

LOCATION DESCRIPTIONS

You can use this Vulgar Unicorn for either era. If you run a campaign during the Rankan Era, the Unicorn is only two-stories tall. Remove the current second story and replace it with the current third story. Lastel's apartments include locations 9 and 10.

The outside of the tavern looks like it ever did. A plain, gray stone building with a thatched or shingled roof, its walls are stained dark from old blood and piss. Shuttered windows allow a little light to leak out from the inside. The front door is a single sturdy door, fitted with one of Sanctuary's rare actual locks.

GENERAL FEATURES

The common room, bar, kitchen, and occupied rooms are light with candles or lamps. All unoccupied locations are dark. Doors in this place, unless otherwise mentioned, are fitted with poor locks (DC 15 Open Lock to pick), and made of wood (1-in.-thick; hardness 5; hp 10; break DC 15). The interior walls are wood (6-in.-thick; hardness 5; hp 60; break DC 20), while the exterior walls are masonry (1-ft.-thick; hardness 8; hp 90; break DC 35; Climb DC 15). The windows are all covered with wooden shutters (2-in.-thick; hardness 2; hp 5; break DC 12). Specific interior locations are as follows. The details are intentionally light, allowing you the room to add clues, adventure hooks, and other items to serve your campaigns.

1. COMMON ROOM

Read or paraphrase the following text.

Stepping through the front door, you are struck by the stench of people, wood smoke, and desperation. Crowded here are a number of tables packed with people of all shapes and sizes, mostly of sinister mien. Four heavy wooden columns support a balcony that looks down on the common floor from the second story. Seven booths line the wall to the left, while a set of stairs climbs to the second floor on the right. Ahead, a long wooden bar bisects the place, where an ugly man tends the few men and none-too-few prostitutes lean on the old scored wood.

This is the common area of the Vulgar Unicorn. Here is where the deals are made, information passed, and mercenaries are hired. Thieves rub shoulders with sellswords at the bars, while prostitutes wend their ways through the gathered crowd to advertise their wares to those with a mind toward carnal pleasure. The few barmaids working here also double as whores, so the eager patron can get a special level of personalized service.

A hearth stands against far wall and above it is the idol of Rander Rehabilitus, the god of drinking and debauchery. The rest of the décor features banners depicting unicorns in vary states of self-violation. Tables and booths can accommodate

TABLE A1-1: UNICORN PRICES

Food or Service	Cost
Ale, Pitcher (4 mugs)	4 <i>pd</i>
Ale, Mug	1 <i>pd</i>
Beer, Pitcher	3 <i>sb</i>
Beer, Mug	1 <i>pd</i>
Bread	1 <i>pd</i>
Cheese	1 <i>pd</i>
Meal, Good	5 <i>pd</i>
Meal, Common	3 <i>pd</i>
Meal, Poor	2 <i>pd</i>
Meat (varies)	3 <i>pd</i>
Wine, Good/Bottle	10 <i>sb</i>
Wine, Common	2 <i>pd</i>
Wine, Poor	1 <i>pd</i>
Room (two beds/night)	8 <i>pd</i>
Room (four beds/night)	8 <i>pd</i>
Prostitute, Good	10 <i>sb</i>
Prostitute, Common	1 <i>sb</i>
Prostitute, Poor (per night)	2 <i>pd</i>

four to eight patrons, but they are first come first serve, so during peak times, the tavern has standing room only. If playing in the Rankan Era, PCs who succeed on a DC 15 Spot check notice a strange discoloration on the wall of one of the booths. It has roughly the shape of a twisted unicorn. Lalo once used his magical talent to create a horrific beast by channeling all the fear, violence, and death of the bar into the painting. This creature came to life and rampaged through the city until it was finally destroyed.

2. BAR

Read or paraphrase the following text.

The bar has a wooden surface, heavy scored by cuts and stained by food, drink, and worse. There are no stools; patrons are expected to stand. Wooden tankards and drinking bowls as well as a few trenchers are all scattered about. A few bunged casks sit on frames across from the bar, each bearing the stamp of their maker.

The bar itself was the only thing rescued from the original Vulgar Unicorn. The salvaged piece is affixed firmly to the top of a sturdy wooden framework—one deliberately built to take considerable punishment. Most patrons do their drinking here, leaning against the rail and drowning their sorrows. Behind the bar, two doors lead to the kitchens where the cook prepares the

tavern's meager fare. A successful DC 15 Search check allows a character to locate a trap door set in the floor (see **Location 11**). This door leads to the basement, where they once kept extra supplies. Normally, a crate sits over top the door to keep it hidden and closed.

3. KITCHEN

Read or paraphrase the following text.

Two doors lead into these kitchens from the common room. The place is an appalling mess with food rotting on the floor, blood splattering the ceiling, and a couple of cages holding nervous looking food animals. A few bags of flour, infested with weevils and rats sit on the floor, their contents spilled onto the filthy stone tiles. A large wood burning hearth stands in the corner and a table stands in the center. A washbasin with a skin of scum over disgusting water sits unused by the door.

This is where the so-called “meals” that the Vulgar Unicorn offers are prepared. Not famous for its cuisine, patrons know to avoid eating here for the most part, as the bread has unsettling crunchy parts in the partly cooked dough, and the meat is always greasy and more than a little suspect in origin. A locked back door (Open Lock DC 25) leads to an alley, where the cook disposes of scraps. There, the most desperate men and beasts fight over tripe and filth to fill their empty gullets.

If you play in the Rankan Era, One-Thumb kept his dogs back here as well. He'd chop up his victims into pieces and feed their body parts to his vicious animals.

4. BALCONY

Read or paraphrase the following text.

The second story of the Vulgar Unicorn consists of a wide balcony that rings an open area looking down on the common room below. The stairs continue up to the top floor. Three doors occupy the far wall, leading to the pleasure rooms of the tavern's working girls. A few tables are arranged about the place, offering patrons a place to conduct their business in relative privacy and to wait their turn with the ladies.

This area is much as it seems, with a filthy wooden floor and the stench of sweat and filth hanging in the air like a fetid shroud. The tables are neglected here and so rats are common sights. A few old tapestries on the walls are faded and stained to an extent that their original depiction is no longer legible.

5. ROOMS OF THE WORKING GIRLS

Read or paraphrase the following text.

These rooms are well maintained compared to the rest of the place. They hold a large feather mattress bed on a wooden frame, a night stand with washbasin, a rug on the floor and a rickety chair. A window overlooks the back alley.

The Unicorn's prostitutes use these locations to service their patrons. After hours, the women sleep here as well. Aside from the scant personal belongings, the women keep a few coins under loose floorboards (no more than 1d6 × 10 *pd*).

6. THIRD-STORY HALL

Read or paraphrase the following text.

The stairs end at a gloomy hall. The sounds of revelry are somewhat muted, but the smell is worse, stinking as if someone recently died here. Several doors line either side of the hall, in either direction.

The hall is just as it seems. The reason for the smell is that Stick killed a prostitute and hid her body in the floor. Though he makes an effort to sprinkle lye in the cracks when no one's looking, the stink is powerful.

7. ROOMS FOR RENT

Read or paraphrase the following text.

This room is small, dingy, and dark. A fat tallow candle sits on a rickety table next to a filthy ceramic bowl for washing. The beds are nothing more than stained mattresses on the floor. The room reeks of vomit and urine.

These rooms are vile and unsavory. However, they are secure, with locks (Open Lock DC 20) on the doors. There is nothing of interest here.

8. ROOM FOR RENT

Read or paraphrase the following text.

This room is of a moderate size, but is filthy covered in cobwebs and trash. A fat tallow candle sits on a rickety table next to a filthy ceramic bowl for washing. The four beds are little more than stained mattresses on the floor. The room reeks of vomit and urine. An overflowing chamber pot completes the scene of squalor.

This room is especially foul. For some reason, people who sleep here tend to die soon after, though no one mentions this fact. If you have Green Ronin's *Shadowspawn's Guide to Sanctuary*,

feel free to infest the beds with a random contact disease. Also, the lock on this door is broken.

9. ROOM FOR RENT

Read or paraphrase the following text.

This room is surprisingly clean with four beds, a dresser, wardrobe and a sturdy table. A lamp hangs on a hook near the door. Though it has an acrid smell, the room seems clean, and there's even a working lock on the door.

This is the best room in the house. The sheets are relatively clean, and the beds comfortable. Stick and Pegrin reserve this room for their most important guests. The lock is a good one requiring a DC 25 Open Lock test to pick.

10. STICK'S ROOM

This door is always locked (Open Lock DC 25 to open). Read or paraphrase the following text if the PCs get inside.

This large room is clean with a large bed, chest, wardrobe, and table. A lamp sits on the table along with a few scattered papers and a ledger.

This is Stick's room. Though terrible and depraved things often take place behind his door, he's careful to hide any evidence of his misbehavior, keeping the room spotless. A search of the room, DC 15 Search check, reveals 1d6 blank pages of parchment, a ledger with small block-like notations (inventory), and a pouch with 1d10 *sb*.

11. CELLAR

Read or paraphrase the following text.

The trap door leads down to a large cellar. Aside from a few large rats, the only other items in this place is the ladder leading back up to the bar and a few rotting crates and burlap bags. The moist stink of mildew is especially strong, just masking the smell of something worse.

The Unicorn's staff uses the cellar for storage, but they rarely do. Instead, the boxes and sacks were left down here a few years ago and nobody has bothered to retrieve them. The reason is that strange sounds sometime occur down here, like a scratching on the walls. Last year, a tavern boy descended down the ladder and was never seen or heard from since. As far as the Unicorn is concerned, there is no cellar.

The truth is that the cellar is connected to the subterranean passages beneath Sanctuary, now controlled, almost absolutely, by the Dyareelans. When the tavern boy went down the stairs, he accidentally found the secret door (DC 20 Search check) and started to explore. He met a bad end when his heart was torn from his chest in a terrible sacrifice to the Mother of Chaos.

There is nothing else of interest down here.

12. TUNNEL

Read or paraphrase the following text.

This tunnel curves slightly to the south. From ahead, you hear sounds of water. The stink is profound and the walls are slime-covered old bricks. Dark water oozes from the ceiling to splatter on the slippery bricks below.

This tunnel leads to an old sewer line that was eventually closed off during the Ilsig occupation.

13. SUBTERRANEAN TUNNEL

Read or paraphrase the following text.

The tunnel ends in a wider passage that runs roughly northeast to southwest. The construction is very old and is now decaying. Tendrils of slime drip from the ceiling and roots have broken through the masonry. Water covers the floor, running down a channel cut in the center of the passage. The air is very bad.

This tunnel connects to a Dyareelan lair somewhere in the city. It may link with the secret routes used during Kadakithis' reign or they may be previously undiscovered tunnels. Undoubtedly, there are dangerous things here, things craving fresh meat.



APPENDIX II: TYPICAL SANCTANS

There are a number of typical types of characters very likely to be found in the shops, alleys, taverns, prisons, and lands around Sanctuary. It's not practical to list every NPC that might get involved in the adventure at some point, and there is no way to predict who the PCs might decide to interact with more extensively than this adventure intends. To help the GM deal with all kinds of unexpected encounters, a number of archetypical NPC types are presented here. Anytime you need stats for a character that lacks any details of its own, just select the closest stat block from the below list, add a personality, and wing it. For more potential encounters, be sure to check out *Shadowspaw'n's Guide to Sanctuary*.

COMMON BEGGAR

Male or female Wrigglie beggar, commoner 1; CR 1/2; Size type (subtype); HD 1d4; hp 2; Mdt 10; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grap +0; Atk +0 melee (1d3 nonlethal, unarmed strike); Full Atk +0 melee (1d3, unarmed strike); SQ beggar trait, jaded; Rep +0; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Background Skills: Bluff, Knowledge (local).

Skills and Feats: Bluff +4, Knowledge (local) +4, Listen +4, Profession (beggar) +4, Spot +4; Alertness^B, Endurance.

Authentic Beggar: Common beggars typically have some kind of ailment or affliction that prevents them from earning

an income like everyone else, though luck is often as not a cause. To determine the cause of their beggary, roll 1d100 and consult the following results:

Languages: Wrigglie (S)

Contacts: Information (1).

Possessions: Rags, wooden cup.

TYPICAL WATCHMAN

Male or female Wrigglie constable, warrior 1; CR 1/2; Medium humanoid (human); HD 1d8; hp 4; Mdt 14; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grap +1; Atk +1 melee (1d6/19–20, short sword) or +2 ranged (1d6, shortspear); Full Atk +1 melee (1d6/19–20, short sword) or +2 ranged (1d6, shortspear); SQ constable trait, jaded; Rep +0; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 11, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Background Skills: Knowledge (local), Spot.

Skills and Feats: Intimidate +6, Knowledge (local) +4, Listen +2, Sense Motive +2 (+4 lies), Spot +6; Alertness^B, Weapon Focus (shortspear).

Languages: Wrigglie (S).

Contacts: Information (1).

Possessions: Studded leather, light wooden shield, short sword, shortspear.

BEGGARY CAUSE

Roll	Result
01–20	<i>Maimed.</i> The beggar is missing a hand, foot, leg, is blind, mute, deaf, or suffers from some other physical limitation.
21–40	<i>Diseased.</i> The beggar carries some kind of disease.
41–60	<i>Mad.</i> The beggar is raving mad. Unless you use special sanity rules (such as those presented in Green Ronin's <i>Black Company Campaign Setting</i>), treat mad characters as being under the effects of the <i>insanity</i> spell.
61–80	Roll twice more ignoring all results of 61 or higher.
81–100	<i>Bad luck or fate.</i> The beggar is fully capable of working or pursuing some other livelihood.

TYPICAL WATCHMAN SERGEANT

Male or female Wrigglie constable, warrior 4; CR 3; Medium humanoid (human); HD 4d8; hp 18; Mdt 15; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +4; Grap +5; Atk +6 melee (1d8+1/19–20, masterwork longsword) or +6 ranged (1d6+1, shortspear); Full Atk +6 melee (1d8+1/19–20, masterwork longsword) or +6 ranged (1d6+1, shortspear); SQ constable trait, jaded; Rep +1; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Background Skills: Knowledge (local), Spot.

Skills and Feats: Intimidate +12, Gather Information +2, Knowledge (local) +7, Listen +4, Sense Motive +2 (+4 lies), Spot +7; Alertness^B, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (shortspear).

Languages: Wrigglie (S).

APPENDIX II: TYPICAL SANCTANS

Contacts: Information (1), Influence (1).

Possessions: Masterwork chain shirt, light steel shield, masterwork longsword, masterwork shortspear.

TYPICAL GUARD

Male or female Rankan soldier, fighter 1; CR 1; Medium humanoid (human); HD 1d10+1; hp 6; Mdt 18; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +1; Grap +2; Atk +4 melee (1d8+1/19–20, masterwork longsword) or +2 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow); Full Atk +4 melee (1d8+1/19–20, masterwork longsword) or +2 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow); SQ literate, soldier trait; Rep +0; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Background Skills: Intimidate, Knowledge (nobility and royalty).

Skills and Feats: Diplomacy +1, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +3, Listen +1, Sense Motive +2, Spot +1; Power Attack, Negotiator^B, Weapon Focus (longsword)^B.

Languages: Rankan (S/W).

Contacts: Skill (1).

Possessions: Splint mail, heavy steel shield, masterwork longsword, masterwork light crossbow with 10 bolts, *potion of convert light wounds*.

TYPICAL GUARD OFFICER

Male or female Rankan soldier, fighter 6; CR 6; Medium humanoid (human); HD 6d10+12; hp 45; Mdt 23; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; AC 21, touch 9, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +6; Grap +9; Atk +11 melee (1d8+5/19–20, masterwork longsword) or +6 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d8+5/19–20, masterwork longsword) or +6 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow); SQ literate, soldier trait; Rep +1; SV Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 8, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Background Skills: Intimidate, Knowledge (nobility and royalty).

Skills and Feats: Diplomacy +4, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +12, Listen +6, Sense Motive +6, Spot +6; Alertness, Cleave^B, Great Cleave^B, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Negotiator^B, Weapon Focus (longsword)^B, Weapon Specialization (longsword)^B.

Languages: Rankan (S/W).

Contacts: Influence (1), Skill (1).

Possessions: +1 full plate, +1 heavy steel shield, masterwork longsword, masterwork light crossbow with 10 bolts, *potion of convert moderate wounds*, *cloak of resistance +1*.

TYPICAL IRRUNE WARRIOR (LOW LEVEL)

Male or female Irrune adventurer, barbarian 1; CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 1d12+4; hp 10; Mdt 15; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +1; Grap +2; Atk +2 melee (1d12+1/×3, greataxe) or +1 ranged (1d6+1/×3, composite [+1] shortbow); Full Atk +2 melee (1d12+1/×3, greataxe) or +1 ranged (1d6+1/×3, composite [+1] shortbow); SA rage 1/day; SQ adventurer trait, fast movement, illiteracy, saddleborn; Rep +0; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 9.

Background Skills: Jump, Survival.

Skills and Feats: Handle Animal +3, Jump +4, Ride +6, Survival +6; Power Attack, Toughness^B.

Languages: Irrune (S).

Contacts: Influence (1).

Rage (Ex): When an Irrune warrior rages, it uses the following statistics.

HD 1d12+6; hp 12; Mdt 19; AC 11, touch 8, flat-footed 11; Grap +4; Atk +4 melee (1d12+4/×3, greataxe); Full Atk +4 melee (1d12+4/×3, greataxe); SV Fort +5, Will +2; Str 17, Con 16.

Skills: Jump +6.

Possessions: Masterwork hide, greataxe, composite (+1) shortbow with 10 arrows.

TYPICAL NIGHTER SCUM (LOW LEVEL)

Male or female Nighter beggar, ranger 1, survivor 1; CR 2; Medium humanoid (human); HD 1d8 plus 1d10; hp 10; Mdt 14; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 10, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1; Grap +2; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1, club); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+1, club); SQ beggar trait, favored environment (marsh +2), swamp-wise; Rep +0; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Background Skills: Hide, Move Silently.

Skills and Feats: Handle Animal +0, Heal +6, Hide +7 (+9 swamps), Knowledge (nature) +8, Listen +6, Move Silently +7 (+9 swamps), Ride +2, Spot +9, Survival +7 (+9 aboveground natural environments) (+11 swamps), Use Rope +4; Alertness, Improved Damage Threshold^B, Improved Unarmed Strike^B, Self-Sufficient^B, Track^B.

Languages: Wrigglie (S), Trade Tongue (S).

Contacts: Skill (1).

Possessions: Padded armor, club, 12 *pd*.

TYPICAL MERCHANT

Male or female Caronnese merchant, thief 3, savant 1; CR 4; Medium humanoid (human); HD 3d6 plus 1d6; hp 14; Mdt 12; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grap +1; Atk +2 melee (1d4/19–20, +1 dagger); Full Atk +2 melee (1d4/19–20, +1 dagger); SA sneak attack +2d6; SQ evasion, merchant trait, trap sense +1, trapfinding; Rep +0; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 16.

Background Skills: Appraise, Diplomacy.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +12, Bluff +12 (+15 buying or selling), Decipher Script +6, Diplomacy +14 (+17 buying or selling), Disguise +5 (+7 acting), Forgery +11, Gamble +9, Gather Information +10, Intimidate +7, Listen +7, Profession (merchant) +11 (+13 buying or selling), Sense Motive +5, Sleight of Hand +9, Spot +8; Deceitful ^B, Persuasive ^B, Run, Skill Focus (Profession: merchant).

Languages: Caronnese (S), Rankene (S), Trade Tongue (S), Wriggle (S)

Contacts: Information (1), Influence (1).

Possessions: +1 padded armor, +1 dagger, case full of assorted goods.

TYPICAL THUG

Male or female Wrigglie thug, thief 1, warrior 1; CR 1; Medium humanoid (human); HD 1d6+1 plus 1d8+1; hp 10; Mdt 15; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +1; Grap +2; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1, masterwork club) or +1 melee (1d6+1 nonlethal, sap) or +1 ranged (1d4+1/19–20, throwing dagger); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+1, masterwork club) or +1 melee (1d6+1 nonlethal, sap) or +1 ranged (1d4+1/19–20, throwing dagger); SA sneak attack +1d6, thug trait; SQ jaded, trapfinding; Rep +0; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 10.

Background Skills: Intimidate, Knowledge (local).

Skills and Feats: Bluff +4, Climb +4, Gather Information +2, Hide +3, Intimidate +10, Jump +4, Knowledge (local) +6, Listen +1, Move Silently +3, Spot +1; Power Attack, Skill Focus (Intimidate) ^B.

Languages: Wrigglie (S).

Contacts: Information (1).

Possessions: Studded leather, masterwork club, sap, 3 throwing daggers, 1d10 *pd*.

MONSTERS

Obviously, monsters are a great deal less common than human denizens, but a few inhuman threats can be found in and around Sanctuary. You can find most monsters in the *MM* if you need them, but the two new monsters used in this adventure, the Bengil Crab and the *fenniath*, are detailed here.

BENGIL CRAB

Small Magical Beast (Aquatic)

Hit Dice: 3d10+9 (25 hp)

Massive Damage Threshold: 24

Initiative: +1

Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares), swim 20 ft.

Armor Class: 21 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +9 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 20

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+0

Attack: Claw +5 melee (1d4+1)

Full Attack: 2 claws +5 melee (1d4+1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Constrict 1d4+1, improved grab

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, tremorsense

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +1

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 1, Wis 10, Cha 1

Skills: Hide +7, Listen +3, Move Silently +3, Spot +3, Swim +9

Feats: Stealthy, Toughness

Environment: Aquatic and warm marshes

Organization: Solitary, group (2–6) or school (15–30)

Challenge Rating: 2

Treasure: None

Advancement: 4–6 HD (Small), 7–9 HD (Medium)

Level Adjustment: —

GREATER BENGIL CRAB

Medium Magical Beast (Aquatic)

Hit Dice: 7d10+24 (62 hp)

Massive Damage Threshold: 26

Initiative: +0

Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares), swim 20 ft.

Armor Class: 20 (+9 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 19

Base Attack/Grapple: +7/+10

Attack: Claw +11 melee (1d6+3)

Full Attack: 2 claws +11 melee (1d6+3)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Constrict 1d6+3, improved grab

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, tremorsense 60 ft.

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +2

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 11, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 1

Skills: Hide +6, Listen +3, Move Silently +2, Spot +3, Swim +12

Feats: Stealthy, Toughness, Weapon Focus (claw)

Environment: Aquatic and warm marshes

Organization: Solitary, group (2–6) or school (15–30)

Challenge Rating: 4

Treasure: None

Advancement: 8–9 HD (Medium)

Level Adjustment: —

This crab is the size of a dog, its shell a dark reddish-brown. It scuttles angrily across the rocks, pincers snapping, moving towards sounds and vibrations.

Common around the islands near Sherranpip, these large crabs are the result of long-ago magical meddling. Strong and aggressive, they can survive in both salt and fresh water. The Purple Mage populated the Isle of Shugthee with bengil crabs, which then spread into the White Foal River and the Swamp of Night's Secrets; schools of crabs can be found in many other places in the Known World.

FENNIATH

Medium Outsider (Demon, Evil, Native)

Hit Dice: 4d8+12 (30 hp)

Massive Damage Threshold: 23

Initiative: +3

Speed: 50 ft. (10 squares), climb 30 ft.

Armor Class: 19 (+3 Dex, +6 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 16

Base Attack/Grapple: +4/+8

Attack: Claw +8 melee (1d4+4)

Full Attack: 2 claws +8 melee (1d4+4) and bite +3 melee (1d6+2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft. (10 ft. with claws)

Special Attacks: —

Special Qualities: Damage reduction 3/piercing, darkvision 60 ft., immune to electricity and poison, resistance to acid 10, cold 10, and fire 10, scent

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +6

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 16, Con 17, Int 9, Wis 14, Cha 15

Skills: Balance +13, Climb +19, Hide +10, Jump +6, Listen +11, Move Silently +10, Spot +11, Survival +9, Tumble +10

Feats: Alertness, Track

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary or group (2–8)

Challenge Rating: 4

Advancement: 6–10 HD (Large)

Level Adjustment: —

You see a terrifying man-shaped creature, with long arms and a mouth full of brown fangs. It shrieks wildly and springs forward to attack.

The *fenniath* are bright red, human-sized, orangutan-like demons with extremely long arms. They are normally relentless, animalistic killing machines, but are intelligent enough to be bargained with. If raised from young pups, they can even be made into loyal servants, though they only obey a master that allows them to indulge their bloodlust and violent natures regularly. They are normally only found in distant lands in the east, across the ocean from Sanctuary, though trader captains occasionally bring a few to western ports.

Stealthy and sly, *fenniath* make excellent trackers, messengers and assassins. They are not particularly bright, however, and can be easily confused by sudden changes. Additionally, while they can learn to understand normal languages, and can communicate among their own kind with a simple glance, they cannot learn to speak or write any other language. As a result, they are poor spies, often misunderstanding what they see and unable to report findings back to a master.

COMBAT

Bengil crabs are territorial, aggressive, and hungry predators that attack much larger creatures without fear. Entire schools may swarm onto a single intruder or swimmer, bringing him down and ripping him to pieces.

Constrict (Ex): A bengil crab deals automatic claw damage on a successful grapple check.

Improved Grab (Ex): If a bengil crab hits with a claw attack it can attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.



COMBAT

Fenniath rarely fight with weapons, though they are capable of doing so. Instead, they depend on their long arms, allowing them to claw foes that can't attack them in return, and their sharp teeth. A *fenniath* normally moves around a great deal in combat, finding a place where it can get above foes or at least prevent them from surrounding it. *Fenniath* fear and hate spellcasters of all types, and attack them first whenever possible. Their extremely thick, wire-like hair is hard to cut and cushions heavy blows, leaving them vulnerable only to piercing attacks.

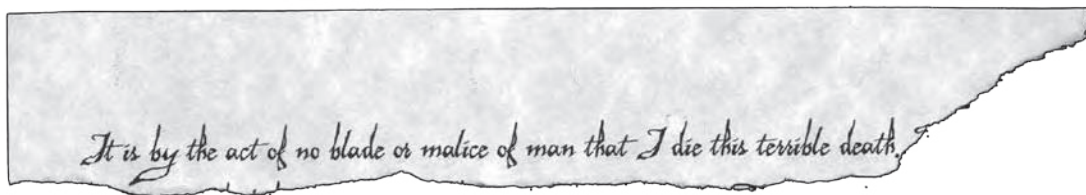
Skills: *Fenniath* have a +8 racial bonus on Balance and Climb checks. They can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

APPENDIX III: ADVENTURE HANDOUTS

The following are designed to be photocopied and handed out to the players at the appropriate times. Permission is granted to photocopy anything in **Appendix III** for personal use only.

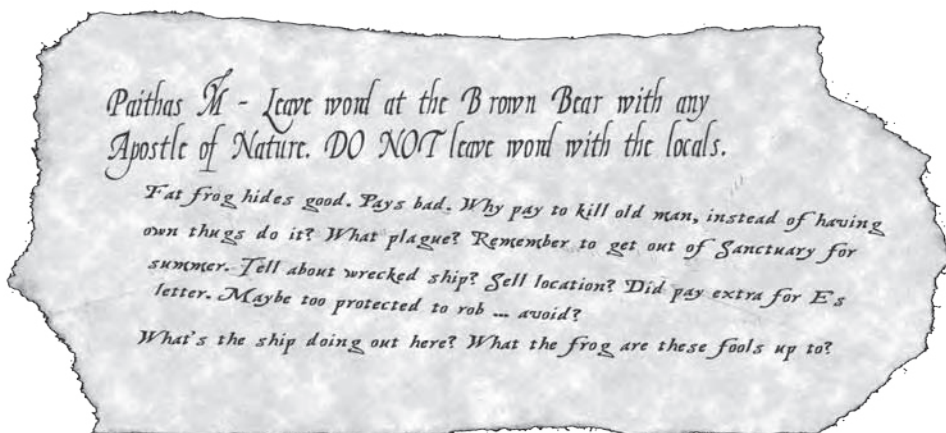
HANDOUT ONE: ACT ONE, SCENE TWO

This is what's left of the confession Erilessi carried with him. Only the corner remains, the rest having been torn free by Master Whoever.



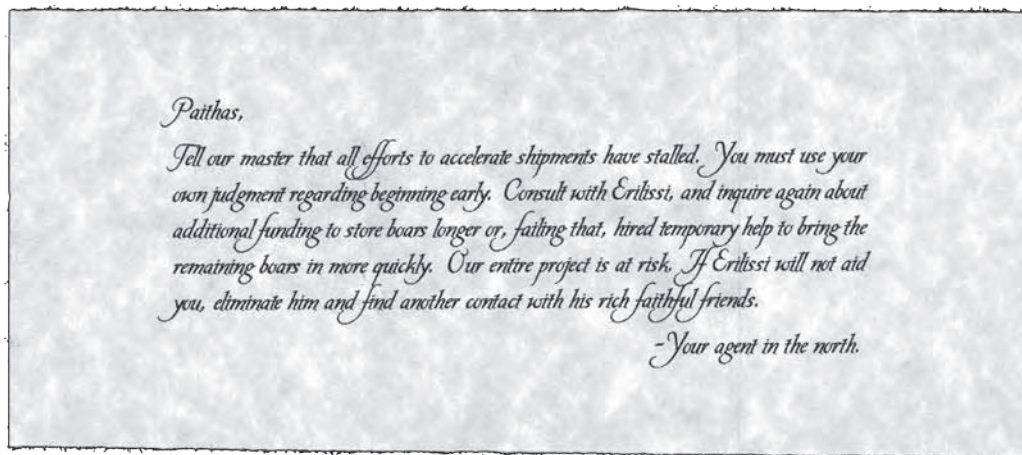
HANDOUT TWO: ACT TWO, SCENE THREE

This is the scrap of paper Master Whoever has on him, with contact information he got for Paithas Meed.



HANDOUT THREE: ACT TWO, SCENE FOUR

This is a letter found in a waterproof satchel at the wreckage of the Weeping Maiden.



HANDOUT FOUR: ACT TWO, SCENE SIX, SEVEN OR EIGHT

Paithas keeps this with him always on his person. He sees it as proof Erilissi was a traitor to the Dyareelan cult, and plans to provide it to Arion Swan as evidence Erilissi needed to die.

My fate has been brought on by my own foolishness, and that of my masters in *Isigi*. For days now I have seen the signs, though I had hoped I was wrong. I have contracted the plague, and my elderly body cannot resist its ravages. Had I known sooner I might have cured myself, but now it is too late. I write these last notes in the hopes they offset much of the evil I have done. I cannot face the gods with these burdens still heavy on my heart.

Know that this plague is no natural occurrence, nor is it the punishment of angered gods. It is the product of a foul plot, brought about by collusion between my *Isigi* masters and the *Jrume* invaders of Sanctuary. The *Isigi* have promised to allow the *Jrume* to live as they once did, running free and raiding upon the innocent. The *Jrume* agreed to allow *Isigi* agents free reign within the city if the *Isigi* aid the *Jrume* in securing lands within the Rankan Empire.

With this unholy alliance, the *Isigi* lords have managed to bring infected livestock into the city to spread a terrible plague. Such a broad plot could not have been accomplished without the aid of the *Jrume*, and its very presence is proof of my words. The *Isigi* plan to wait until the plague is widespread, then have their priests appear with a cure. In gratitude, the *Jrume* would step down, and the *Isigi* take control.

People of Sanctuary, you can not trust *Jrume* or *Isigi*. You must seek powerful allies elsewhere, and do so quickly. With what I fear may be my last morning breath, I give you a gift that may buy you time to make such alliances as will keep you safe. Here are the sovereign ingredients from which can be brewed an infusion which, given early, can overcome the plague that sweeps the city. Brew it by the tin, and prepare for whatever retribution the *Isigi* and *Jrume* bring down for the failure of their plot.

Equal parts weeproot, peat willow, red kelp, and ground shell of the great crab of the Night Swamp. Brew until dark, and take liberally until symptoms ease.

Act with haste, Sanctans. You're time grows short.

By my hand, and signed with my oath,

Erilissi Feyr
agent of *Isigi*

APPENDIX III: ADVENTURE HANDOUTS

HANDOUT FIVE: ACT TWO, SCENE FIVE, SIX, SEVEN OR EIGHT

This is the message the *fenniath* brings Paithas Meed from Arion Swan. The PCs can potentially get it off the *fenniath* when they encounter it in the woods, but it's much more likely to be found on Paithas if they kill or capture him.

Paithas,

The time for veiled communications is over, and with the death of Erilissi I no longer trust any human agent to act as our go-between. My masters are not pleased with the loss of one of our faithful, and fear the entire operation may be too far gone to be recovered. We're not prepared to give you any more money unless and until you can provide proof the boars are to be ready when we need them. Meet me in the conclave beneath the black temple at dusk three days hence with such proof. If you and our brethren there can convince me the plan can go forward, and that additional funds are truly required for this, I shall see to it they are provided. But make no mistake, if you can not convince me, or if I disappear or die as Erilissi did, there shall be no more funds from my masters.

Unless you are prepared to truly seek coins from an Ilsgi source I recommend you bring me proof I can write back to Ranke about.

Arion

HANDOUT SIX: CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

This is the forboding message from Torril Fel found on the body of the assassin from the denouement of the adventure.

I ask that all friends and allies of the Empire consider the appropriate fate for pig thieves and know I will reward anyone who can bring to justice those that have wronged me.

Torril Fel
Lord of Ranke

APPENDIX IV: PRE-GENERATED CHARACTERS

The following pregenerated characters are appropriate for Murder at the Vulgar Unicorn. Permission is granted to photocopy these characters for personal use.

AERIK

A young man when the Irrune liberated Sanctuary from the cruel Dyareelan cultists, Aerik has since come into his own. Though part of him misses the freedom of following the herds, the tales of his people raiding settlements and the glory of the conquest, he doesn't miss the exploitation, the sickness, and the fear that had slowly crept into the hearts of his people. And so, Aerik has come to see Sanctuary as his home. He's been drinking with the rest of these scoundrels for a few months and has come to trust them with his life. Aerik's not a planner or a leader, and so often defers to others when it comes to the question of what to do.



Equipment: Studded leather, greatsword, shortbow, dagger, backpack with waterskin, one day's trail rations, bedroll, sack, flint and steel, and a quiver with 20 arrows.

Money: 5 *sb*.

Contacts: Influence (1)

Special Attacks and Qualities:

- **Adventurer Trait:** 1/day, Aerik can reroll any one Climb, Jump, Swim or Survival check.
- **Rage (Ex):** 1/day, Aerik may enter a rage. He uses the following statistics.

HD 1d12+4; hp 19; AC 12, touch 9, flatfooted 11; Grap +5; Atk +5 melee (2d6+6/19–20, greatsword) or +5 melee (1d4+4/19–20, dagger); Full Atk +5 melee (2d6+6/19–20, greatsword) or +5 melee (1d4+4/19–20, dagger); SV Fort +6, Will +3; Str 19, Con 18

NEESHA VARRA

Neesha claims she's the daughter of the famous Cappen Varra, and she's quick to fleece anyone gullible enough to believe her. A child of the streets, Fat Molly, a local down-on-her-luck prostitute recognized the girl's talent for singing. And so, Fat Molly took little Neesha to the various bars to let her sing for the locals, while Fat Molly worked the crowds pinching a few purses, and spreading the rumor that she is in fact Cappen Varra's illegitimate daughter. Neesha learned enough about thievery from her mentor, and soon struck out on her own. She ran into her companions at the Vulgar Unicorn a few weeks ago, finding that they shared her outlook on larceny.



DESCRIPTION

Tall, muscled, and fierce, Aerik is the picture of the Irrune warrior. His armor is patched and stained, a hand-me-down from his elder brother, but his prized possession is his sword, which was his father's. He has long brown hair which he wears loose and a thin patchy beard.

AERIK

Gender: Male **Height:** 6 ft. **Weight:** 210 lb. **Age:** 17
Culture: Irrune **Background:** Adventurer
Class: Barbarian **Level:** 1
Strength: 15 (+2) **Dexterity:** 13 (+1)
Constitution: 14 (+2) **Intelligence:** 8 (–1)
Wisdom: 12 (+1) **Charisma:** 10 (+0)
Hit Dice: 1d12+2 **Hit Points:** 17 **Massive Damage Threshold:** 17
Armor Class: 14 (+1 Dex, +3 studded leather), touch 11, flatfooted 13
Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares)
Initiative: +1
Reputation: +0
Saving Throws: Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +1
Attack Bonus: Base +1, Melee +3, Ranged +2, Grapple +3
Attack: Greatsword +3 melee (2d6+3/19–20) or dagger +3 melee (1d4+2/19–20) or shortbow +2 ranged (1d6/×3)
Full Attack: Greatsword +3 melee (2d6+3/19–20) or dagger +3 melee (1d4+2/19–20) or shortbow +2 ranged (1d6/×3)
Skills: Jump +7, Ride +7, Search +5, Speak Language (Sanctan), Survival +3
Feats: Power Attack, Toughness^B
Languages: Irrune (S), Sanctan (S)

DESCRIPTION

A thin pretty girl, Neesha wears her brown hair pulled back in a ponytail. The smudges of dirt enhance her already well-formed features, and when she sings, she positively glows. She wears a hodgepodge combination of leather stolen from corpses in allies, something she's not really proud of, but saw as a necessity.

NEESHA VARRA

Gender: Female **Height:** 5 ft. 4 in. **Weight:** 115 lb. **Age:** 17
Culture: Wriggile **Background:** Entertainer
Class: Thief **Level:** 1
Strength: 10 (+0) **Dexterity:** 15 (+2)
Constitution: 13 (+1) **Intelligence:** 12 (+1)
Wisdom: 8 (–1) **Charisma:** 14 (+2)

Hit Dice: 1d6+1 **Hit Points:** 7 **Massive Damage Threshold:** 15
Armor Class: 14 (+2 Dex, +2 leather), touch 12, flatfooted 12
Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)
Initiative: +2
Reputation: +0
Saving Throws: Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +0
Attack Bonus: Base +0, Melee +0, Ranged +2, Grapple +0
Attack: Short sword +0 melee (1d6/19–20) or light crossbow +2 ranged (1d8/19–20) or dagger +2 ranged (1d4/19–20)
Full Attack: Short sword +0 melee (1d6/19–20) or light crossbow +2 ranged (1d8/19–20) or dagger +2 ranged (1d4/19–20)
Skills: Bluff +10, Disable Device +5, Gamble +1, Hide +6, Listen +3, Move Silently +6, Open Lock +6, Perform (sing) +4, Search +5, Sleight of Hand +6, Spot +3, Tumble +6
Feats: Dodge, Skill Focus (Bluff)^B
Languages: Sanctan (S), Trade Tongue (S)
Equipment: Leather armor, short sword, light crossbow, dagger, backpack with waterskin, one day's trail rations, bedroll, sack, flint and steel, thieves' tools, hooded lantern, three pints of oil, case with 10 bolts, 50 feet of silk rope.
Money: 5 *sb*.
Contacts: Information (1)
Special Attacks and Qualities:

- While performing in front of an audience, Neesha gains a +2 bonus to Gather Information and Listen checks.
- *Sneak Attack:* Neesha deals +1d6 points of damage on a successful attack against an opponent she flanks or catches flat-footed.
- *Trappfinding:* Neesha can use Search to locate mundane and magical with DCs higher than 20.

ETALEA

Fresh in from Ilsig City, Etelea found herself in a crumbling violent and generally inhospitable city. She came here to seek her fortunes, escaping an arranged marriage to a man with terrible, warty feet. She has no intention of returning to her homeland, but suspects there may be people looking for her. The only thing that's kept Etelea alive is the fact that she secretly learned magic from her lover back home. She misses him terribly, but knows that if her father discovered her affair, her lover would be killed. Thus, she's content as she can be, but grows nervous as her funds start to run dry.



DESCRIPTION

Etelea can best be described as small and mousy. She has a mop of black hair that she keeps short to help keep away dangerous men, disguising herself as a boy. She wears a baggy shirt, loose pants, and carries a number of small sharp knives to dissuade anyone from looking to closely.

ETALEA

Gender: Female **Height:** 5 ft. 2 in. **Weight:** 110 lb. **Age:** 24
Culture: Ilsigi **Background:** Apprentice
Class: Mage **Level:** 1
Strength: 8 (–1) **Dexterity:** 14 (+2)

Constitution: 12 (+1) **Intelligence:** 15 (+2)
Wisdom: 13 (+1) **Charisma:** 10 (+0)
Hit Dice: 1d4+1 **Hit Points:** 5 **Massive Damage Threshold:** 12
Armor Class: 12 (+2 Dex), touch 12, flatfooted 10
Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)
Initiative: +2
Reputation: +0
Saving Throws: Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +5
Attack Bonus: Base +0, Melee –1, Ranged +2, Grapple –1
Attack: Dagger –1 melee (1d4–1/19–20) or dagger +2 ranged (1d4–1/19–20)
Full Attack: Dagger –1 melee (1d4–1/19–20) or dagger +2 ranged (1d4–1/19–20)
Skills: Concentration +5, Craft (alchemy) +5, Disguise +1, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (history) +7, Spellcraft +8, Use Magic Device +6
Feats: Iron Will^B, Spell Focus (evocation)
Languages: Ilsigi (S/W), Sanctan (S)
Equipment: Three daggers, backpack with waterskin, one day's trail rations, bedroll, sack, flint and steel, four candles, map case, four pages of parchment, ink, inkpen, spellbook, spell component pouch.
Money: 12 *sb*.
Contacts: Skill (1)
Spellcasting: +4 (+6 evocation; CL 2nd)
Ritualcasting: +2 (+4 evocation; CL 2nd)
Safe Level: 1st **Familiar Level:** 3rd
Save DC: 12 + spell level; evocation spells (noted by an ^E) 13 + spell level **Free Cantrips:** 2/day
Known Spells (4): *charm person* (1st, MT 20, price 1), *daze* (0, MT 10, price 0/1), *disguise self* (1st, MT 20, price 1), *magic missile* (1st, MT 20, price 1)^E
Familiar Spells (3): *detect magic* (0, MT 10, price 0/1), *fireball* (3rd, MT 40, price 3 lethal)^E, *read magic* (0, MT 10, price 0/1)

LUCRETIOUS

Poor Lucretius, the fourth son of a successful merchant family formerly of Lirt, his father sent him to the temple of Savankala to learn to become a priest, a vocation Lucretius had up until then had no interest in. Always more concerned with composing bad poetry and trying his hand at painting, he was never particularly pious. However, once installed in the priesthood, he discovered he had a knack for the politics. While a passable priest in the cult, Lucretius has his eyes trained elsewhere, and he sees Sanctuary as a ripe fruit, ready to be plucked by the man with the right amount of ambition. Until that happens, he's content slumming in the Vulgar Unicorn, swapping lies with lesser men, while lusting after the women.



DESCRIPTION

Portly bordering on fat, Lucretius makes up for his soft body with a winning smile and an infectious laugh. He quickly befriends any he meets, making him popular in even the seediest dives. He wears fine robes, though stained a bit from food and drink. Though still a priest, he hides his holy symbol to prevent others from getting the wrong idea. One day, maybe, he'll grow up.

LUCRETIUS

Gender: Male **Height:** 5 ft. 9 in. **Weight:** 175 lb. **Age:** 22
Culture: Rankan **Background:** Aristocrat
Class: Priest of Savankala **Level:** 1
Strength: 10 (+0) **Dexterity:** 8 (-1)
Constitution: 12 (+1) **Intelligence:** 13 (+1)
Wisdom: 15 (+2) **Charisma:** 14 (+2)
Hit Dice: 1d6+1 **Hit Points:** 7 **Massive Damage Threshold:** 12
Armor Class: 9 (-1 Dex), touch 9, flatfooted 9
Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)
Initiative: -1
Reputation: +0
Saving Throws: Fort +1, Ref -1, Will +4
Attack Bonus: Base +0, Melee +0, Ranged -1, Grapple +0
Attack: Quarterstaff +0 melee (1d6) or dagger +0 melee (1d4/19-20)
Full Attack: Quarterstaff +0 melee (1d6) or dagger +0 melee (1d4/19-20)
Skills: Concentration +5, Diplomacy +10, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +7, Knowledge (religion) +5, Sense Motive +8, Spellcraft +5
Feats: Negotiator^B, Ritual Focus
Languages: Rankene (S/W), Sanctan (S)
Equipment: Quarterstaff, dagger, fine robes, backpack with waterskin, one day's trail rations, silver holy symbol of Savankala, vial of antitoxin.
Money: 50 *sh*.
Contacts: Influence (1)
Spellcasting: +2 **Ritualcasting:** +4
Safe Level: 1st **Familiar Level:** 3rd
Save DC: 12 + spell level **Free Cantrips:** 2/day
Domains: Justice, Sun
Known Spells (3+1): *bless* (1st, MT 20, price 1), *command* (1st, MT 20, price 1)^P, *convert minor wounds* (0, MT 10, price 0/1), *sanctuary* (1st, MT 20, price 1)
Familiar Spells (4): *detect poison* (0, MT 10, price 0/1), *convert light wounds* (1st, MT 20, price 1), *read magic* (0, MT 10, price 0/1), *sound burst* (2nd, MT 30, price 2)
Special Attacks and Qualities

- *Holy Vitality:* 3/day, Lucretius gains fast healing 1, +2 natural armor bonus to AC for 1 round.
- *Justice Domain:* If Lucretius successfully detects a lie, he gains a +2 bonus to his next attack roll against the liar.
- *Sun Domain:* 1/day, Lucretius can expend a use of holy vitality to create a burst of bright light, illuminating an area as per the *daylight* spell and dealing 1 point of damage to all undead in the area. This effect lasts for one round.

ELYNA

To most, Elyna is just another prostitute in a city full of whores. And while she does indeed practice this trade, she has another purpose. She wants revenge. See, Elyna is S'danzo. While the rest of the people in the city pulled up stakes and left, Elyna's mother stayed behind. Having escaped the first round of purgings Elyna and her mother tried to survive, but one day, she was captured and brutally killed by the cultists. Since then, Elyna has done whatever it takes to survive. She wants one thing only: to kill her



mother's murderers and put her demons to rest. For now, she watches, pries information from her clients, cutting their throats when it suits her. She works occasionally at the Vulgar Unicorn, but less and less does she take on new customers, tiring of the wandering hands and the disgusting filth that frequent the place. As of late, she's had strange visions, flashing portents, and she suspects she might have the Sight.

DESCRIPTION

Elyna would be beautiful if it weren't for the naked derision on her face. Still most men don't care and pay her fee anyway. She has long curly black hair and swarthy features. When not working, she wears tight fitting leather armor and her hand always stays near her knife, ready to fling it in the face of the next person who offends her.

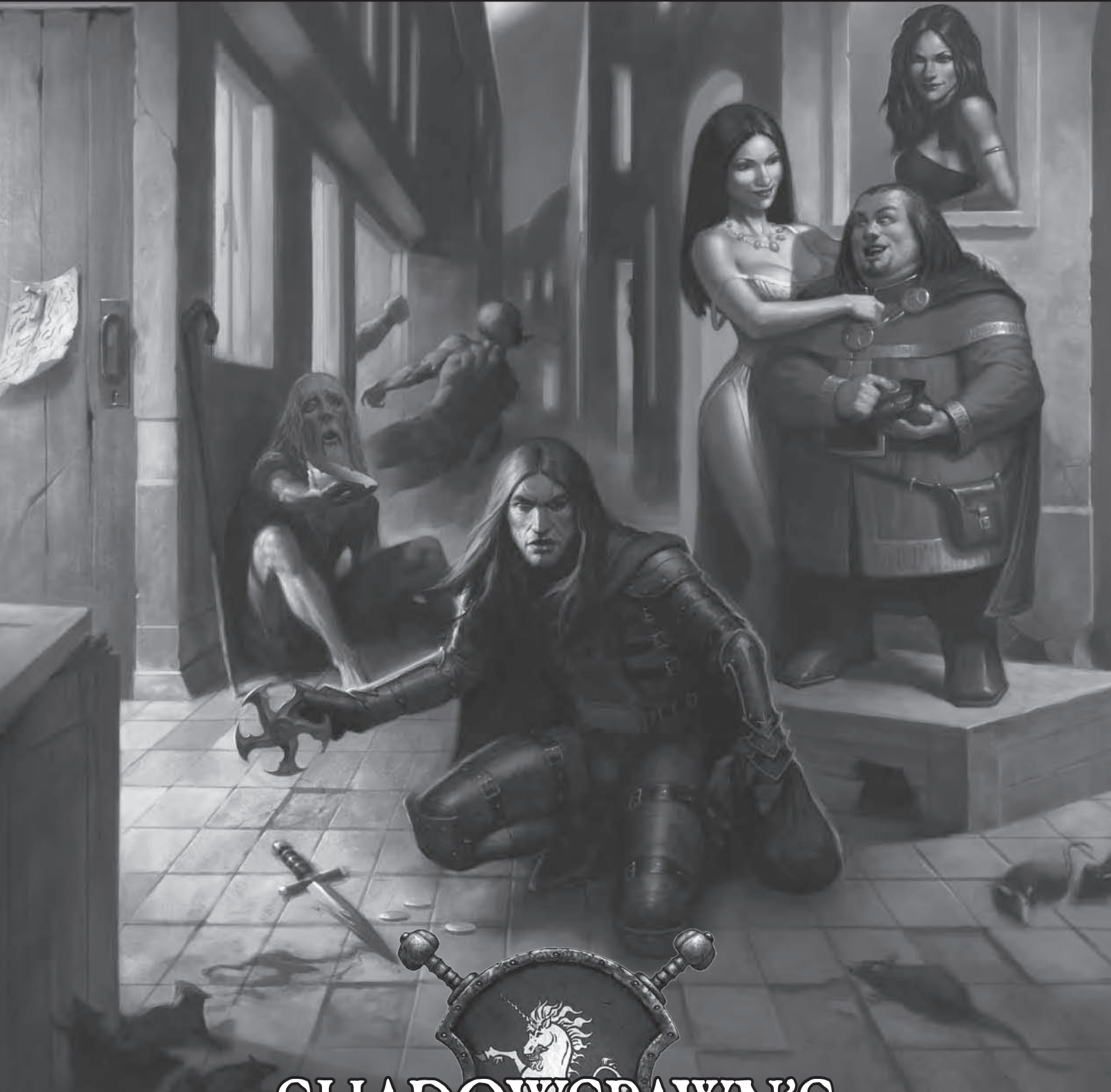
ELYNA

Gender: Female **Height:** 5 ft. 6 in. **Weight:** 125 lb. **Age:** 17
Culture: S'danzo **Background:** Prostitute
Class: Assassin **Level:** 1
Strength: 8 (-1) **Dexterity:** 14 (+2)
Constitution: 12 (+1) **Intelligence:** 10 (+0)
Wisdom: 15 (+2) **Charisma:** 13 (+1)
Hit Dice: 1d8+1 **Hit Points:** 9 **Massive Damage Threshold:** 15
Armor Class: 15 (+2 Dex, +3 studded leather), touch 12, flatfooted 13
Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)
Initiative: +2
Reputation: +0
Saving Throws: Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +2
Attack Bonus: Base +0, Melee -1, Ranged +2, Grapple -1
Attack: Short sword +2 melee (1d6-1/19-20) or light crossbow +2 ranged (1d8/19-20)
Full Attack: Short sword +2 melee (1d6-1/19-20) or light crossbow +2 ranged (1d8/19-20)
Skills: Bluff +6, Gather Information +5, Hide +6, Listen +3, Move Silently +6, Sleight of Hand +4, Spot +3
Feats: Quick Draw^B, Sighted^B, Weapon Finesse
Languages: S'danzo (S), Sanctan (S)
Equipment: Studded leather, short sword, light crossbow, backpack with waterskin, one day's trail rations, bedroll, sack, flint and steel, three torches, case with 10 bolts.
Money: 5 *sh*.
Contacts: Information (1)
Special Qualities

- *Mistrusted:* Elyna takes a -2 penalty to Diplomacy checks when recognized as a S'danzo
- *Prostitute Trait:* When interacting with a target ordinarily attracted to Elyna's gender, she gains a +2 bonus to Bluff and Diplomacy checks against attracted target, and +2 bonus to glean information from that target.



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