



EN5IDER Presents ZEITGEIST:

The Dying Skyseer

Adventure Two, Part One

A 5E-Compatible Adventure for 4th-Level Characters



Introduction

IN THE FIRST ZEITGEIST ADVENTURE, THE PCs thwarted a coup attempt and helped prevent a war, but did so by aiding their homeland's traditional enemy. Such are the duties required by agents of the Risuri Homeland Constabulary, for protecting the nation is often at odds with simple black-and-white concepts of friend and foe.

In *The Dying Skyseer*, as the party investigates a murder they will cross paths with enemies they can recruit as temporary allies, and work with supposed friends who seek to mislead and betray them. This is a complex world, and it will take canny and dogged investigators to sift truth from amid layers of deception.

Of course, this is a heroic adventure game, and while different groups might adjust the "grim-dark" dial up or down a few notches for their own individual campaigns, what players generally want to do is find bad guys, take them down, and be rewarded for it. There are plenty of villains lurking under the smoggy skies of Flint, and

Adapting the Adventure.

All the beginning ZEITGEIST adventures assume the PCs are agents of the Royal Homeland Constabulary. If your players are free agents, they might be brought in as specialist investigators due to the tricky political nature of a murder at the Danoran consulate. Alternately, a PC with the Docker or Vekeshi Mystic theme might have known Nilasa and so have a personal reason to solve the mystery.

If you're using this adventure in a different setting and want to strip out the technological elements, you just need to keep a similar element of simmering social unrest. You might replace factories with more old-fashioned sweatshops making goods for a group of distrusted foreigners, and perhaps have the workers blame some mysterious disease on those foreigners.

The mystery generally remains the same, with the emphasis on tracking down people who have clues to secrets hidden in the Bleak Gate (or the Shadowfell in a more traditional Fifth Edition game), while another group tries to stop your investigation. You'll need to the reason Reed Macbannin is refining witchoil, particularly if you're not planning to run the later adventures.

it doesn't take a prophet to know the PCs are eventually going to thwart their foul plans.

This adventure is broken into several parts: introduction, prologue, four possible investigation threads, climax, and conclusion.

FROM THE PEN OF

Ryan Nock

EVOCATIVE COVER ILLUSTRATION BY

Shen Fei

STUNNING CARTOGRAPHIC DISPLAYS BY

Brian Patterson and Jonathan Roberts

MASTERFUL INTERIOR ILLUSTRATIONS BY

Brian Lindahl, Claudio Pozas, and ShenFei

Includes art in the public domain

WITH UNPARALLELED LAYOUT AND GRAPHIC DESIGN BY

Eric Life-Putnam

PLAYTESTED FOR MAXIMUM ENJOYMENT BY

Jason Boss, David Braught, Josh Brzinski, Ted Brzinski, Sam Coman, Neil D'Cruze, Francis Dickinson, Robert M. Everson, Michael Gallogly, Matthew J. Hanson, Michael Hart, Michael Iachini, Tom Jones, Laura Kertz, Gene McDonald, James Robert Parks IV, Cathy Perez, Romana Perez, Hamid Raof, Bryan Rennekamp, Tyrone Shekelberg, Judson Stowe, and Eugene Zaretskiy



SEAMLESSLY UPDATED TO FIFTH EDITION BY

James J. Haeck

ABLY PRODUCED AND FACILITATED BY

Russell Morrissey

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OPEN GAME CONTENT

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This first installment of *The Dying Skyseer* includes the introduction that you are reading now, the prologue, and the first investigation thread. The next installment includes the second and third investigation threads, and the final installment will comprise the fourth investigation thread, the climax, and the conclusion of this adventure.

Background

For the past few months, tiny tremors have shaken the city of Flint, which has no history of earthquakes. Docker poets take it as a manifested metaphor of the rifts opening up between the different districts and cultures. Angry protests march through Bosum Strand and Parity Lake to denounce cruel treatment of factory workers, and the police thrash those who make too big a name for themselves.

While these divisions concern the common people of Flint, three more powerful forces are at work in the city during this adventure.

Gale and the Fey Terrorists.

The rise of industry in Flint has faced opposition from many sources, most prominent among them being **Hana Soliogn**, dubbed “Gale” by the newspapers for her singular ability to fly away from the scenes of her crimes, despite most scholars saying such flight magic is impossible.

Gale’s attacks usually take the form of sneaking into factories at night and sabotaging machines so work must stop, or unmooring ships so they drift into the harbor and sink, and for these she has won the sympathies of those who view industry as Danoran meddling. But many common workers see her as a threat to their livelihood, and the government has labeled her a foreign provocateur with ties to the Vekeshi Mystics. She is also blamed for thefts from the homes of wealthy factory owners, for the killings of a company of surveyors who wandered into the Cloudwood to site a potential railroad, and for a botched assassination attempt against **Kane Westman**, a tax collector with strong political friends.

Gale wants to garner more support with the common people. She recognizes that blindly attacking factories makes her look like a villain. In the weeks leading up to this adventure, one of Gale’s loyalists, a half-elf woman named **Nilasa Hume**, gained the trust of a security guard at the Danoran consulate in Flint. Gale had tasked Nilasa with retrieving financial documents and political letters from the consulate in order to get a better sense of whom to target for future attacks. Nilasa’s mission gets her killed just as the adventure begins.

The Family.

The Family criminal organization is based in Crisillyir, and sees the growth of Flint as a great opportunity to expand into a new market. For the past year they’ve been competing with the various local gangs, with many daring battles led by veteran bravura **Morgan Cippiano**, the face of the organization in Flint.

The Family tries to focus its violence only against other criminals, and targets its crimes against wealthy factory owners and

Kane Westman.

If the PCs check out Mr. Westman, he’s clean. Gale attacked him because she detected energies from the Bleak Gate around his home, but he wasn’t the source. In truth, Cillian Creed, Macbanin’s aide, had been coordinating with Westman to ensure certain smuggled items disappeared from tax logs, but Westman assumed it was everyday bribery, and he has no idea about the operations on Cauldron Hill.

Gale and the Vekeshi.

The secretive cult of the Vekeshi Mystics has been trying to recruit Gale, since she and the Vekeshi have common enemies, and her flight would make her an ideal assassin.

Before the adventure starts, inform any PC with the Vekeshi Mystic theme that she has been given a mission. The latest gathering of adherents occurred on the last full moon before the solstice, when a representative of the Unseen Court opened a path into the Dreaming and offered everyone drink, dance, and love-making with beautiful fey.

The Old Stag, one of the most respected members of the Flint cell—he always wears a mask, but has distinctive hands, marked with scars and calluses—took the PC aside and said it would be her task to protect Gale. While the RHC is tasked with capturing the fey terrorist, the Vekeshi want the PC to deliver a gift, and a message.

The gift is a bizarre mirror. It resembles a wreath of gnarled wood, and instead of a pane of glass, a sheet of water hangs within, no matter what angle you hold it at. It is magical, but its purpose is unclear. Normally it is just a beautiful mirror.

That message is: “The Unseen Court is watching. Take this mirror, and when you see the face of our enemies within it, bring them down and we shall reward you.”

The party will have a chance to meet Gale, and this delivery can be the first step of many throughout the campaign that draws the PCs toward the Unseen Court.

merchants, rather than everyday people. They seek to convince townsfolk from relaxed Stray River to the gritty streets of Parity Lake that the Family will protect them better than the police can. Of course, they’re working to get the police in their pockets too.

While most native criminals handle petty theft or crude protection rackets, the Family pursues high-end burglary, smuggling, and blackmail. Facing bloody opposition, Morgan has cleverly tricked gangs into turf wars that weaken them so the Family can move in. They’re having trouble unseating one power player, though: **Lorcan Kell**, who has become a fixture in the industrial smuggling scene.

Nilasa Hume has connections with both Gale and the Family, and she has arranged for Gale and her allies to purchase a huge cache of smuggled magic items that Family thieves stole from Crisillyir.

The Obscurati

As detailed in the *Campaign Guide*, the Colossus Cell of the Obscurati are constructing a massive golem inside Cauldron Hill, or rather the analog to Cauldron Hill that exists in the shadowy plane called the Bleak Gate.



CILLIAN CREED, THE KILLER BUT NOT THE VILLAIN

This massive undertaking is secretly overseen by the city governor, **Roland Stanfield**, with the construction in the Bleak Gate directed by a steelshaper named **Leone Qital**. This adventure, however, focuses mostly on the involvement of **Reed Macbannin**, mayor of The Nettles, the city district where Cauldron Hill lies.

Macbannin spent years studying how to defend against dark magic, and he sincerely wants to protect Flint from whatever curses and evil energies were left behind by the witches of Cauldron Hill. He does not know about the existence of the Obscurati. Rather, he believes that Governor Stanfield is running a secret and morally gray weapons research program for King Aodhan.

Macbannin has been told that the king expects an eventual war with the fey of the Dreaming – possibly even the awakening of the fey titans – as retaliation for his planned treaty with the Danorans. Hoping to cow the fey with technology, high-level officials in Risur and Danor are cooperating to construct a colossal golem. Of course common people would balk, and discovery by the fey would be disastrous, so secrecy is critical.



REED MACBANNIN, THE VILLAIN BUT NOT THE KILLER

Macbannin coordinates the myriad elements that must work in the normal world to let Qital do his construction in the Bleak Gate. This includes working with crime boss Lorcan Kell to smuggle the necessary components into the Bleak Gate without raising any red flags, intimidating uncooperative factory owners to change their minds, and making sure investigations into mysterious happenings yield no results.

Macbannin carefully insulates himself from direct involvement, typically sending messages through his butler **Cillian Creed**, a retired spy whose mastery of disguise conceals horrid physical corruption from a failed experiment involving Bleak Gate energies.

Of late, Creed has hired the services of a pair of red dragonborn arsonists from Ber, **Eberardo and Valando**. When a factory produces something Qital needs for his colossus but which the owner is unwilling to part with, he is likely to find his house aflame, or his business ignited. An outsider will offer to buy the factory while it burns, after which firefighters rush to put out the blaze. These new owners – proxies of Lorcan Kell – are of course cooperative to Macbannin's interests.

While Qital constructs the metal titan, Macbannin is researching his own way to aid the defense of Risur. Since fey magic is not trusted, Macbannin is repurposing the dark magic of the Cauldron Hill witches to fuel the mighty golem. He has found a way to mass produce a liquid manifestation of the Bleak Gate, called witchoil. When people die, normally their souls linger in the Bleak Gate for a time before passing on, but if a person dies near a vial of witchoil, their soul is trapped in the fluid instead of passing into the plane of the dead. When the oil is burned, the soul is consumed, making it a potent power source. Macbannin has arranged to stash witchoil vials throughout many factories, which are naturally prone to industrial accidents. Meanwhile he refines an ever larger supply of the substance in a secret facility hidden beneath his manor on Cauldron Hill. Macbannin doesn't believe a soul has much worth after death, and so has no qualms trapping and annihilating souls of the deceased to help the living.

Adventure Overview

The PCs get called in to investigate the death of Nilasa Hume, who perished while trying to steal from the Danoran consulate. Her manner of death suggests a connection to the fey terrorist Gale, but the Danoran security Chief **Julian LeBrix** is under orders to cover up what actually happened, and tries to make it look like just a normal botched robbery.

In truth, Nilasa accidentally stumbled upon a cache of documents that could reveal Macbannin's criminal activities, and she was killed by Mayor Macbannin's aid, Cillian Creed, who was at the consulate for other business. Unfortunately for Macbannin and Creed, just before Nilasa died she handed off the stolen documents to a man who fled the scene.

This man, **Dr. Wolfgang von Recklinghausen**, has no connection to any of the major players in the adventure, and was just an innocent bystander who panicked and ran. Once he discovered what he'd been handed he hid in The Nettles, hoping to shake pursuit and arrange for passage out of the country.

The PCs set out to find the doctor and figure out what Nilasa was up to. By tracing Nilasa's connections they learn of a smuggling operation bringing in magic items to arm Gale's allies. Clues from various sources lead to a confrontation with wand smugglers in Flint's harbor. After a battle that fields barely-controlled magic wand blasts, the party captures a few Family toughs. Soon thereafter they are contacted by Morgan Cippiano, who offers to help the party out with their larger investigation in exchange for letting off his people.

Another thread of Nilasa's activities leads them to **Heward Sechim**, a man who runs a factory producing alchemical acid, and who was friends with Nilasa. Sechim, who despite owning a factory is opposed to Danoran presence in Risur, defends Nilasa as a good young woman.

Heward can get the party in touch with **Nevard Sechim**, Heward's sickly old uncle and a once-renowned skyseer. Nevard is highly respected by Gale, and if the party is willing to help him, he can get them a meeting with her. Nevard wants to climb above the smog cloaking the city to see the stars again; he hopes a vision will help soothe the unrest in the streets. But the only place to get a clear view within the city is the top of Cauldron Hill, said to be haunted and thus prohibited, except by permission of the mayor of The Nettles, Reed Macbannin.

When the party goes to Macbannin, he agrees to let Nevard up the mountain, and encourages them to go with the old man as defense against the evil spirits. In truth he hopes to arrange for their deaths and thus end their investigation; simultaneously he sends his red dragonborn arsonists to destroy Heward Sechim's factory so he won't be able to point any other constables this way. When the party survives Macbannin's ploy, Nevard receives several visions, one of which guides them to thwart the arson just in time. Macbannin, of course, pretends to be pleased they survived the dangers of the mountain, while secretly planning another way to thwart them.

Nevard arranges for Gale to meet with the PCs on safe ground. She claims they have a common enemy, and shares her hunches and limited knowledge of a secret group operating in the Bleak Gate, which she thinks has ties to the Danorans. If the party doesn't try to arrest her, she gives them a spell that will let them track the trace "scent" of a person who has traveled into the Bleak Gate. She says she used the spell at the Danoran consulate the night after Nilasa's death, and sensed traces of dark energy. Though the range is limited, it can point the party toward possible suspects.

The final thread is Dr. von Recklinghausen. Various avenues give the party a chance to track down the good doctor, who has hired some of Lorcan Kell's own thugs as protection. The party can find von Recklinghausen in an abandoned Clergy church in The Nettles, where he has hidden the documents Nilasa gave him. The doctor says that he read the documents and found references to a substance he recognized as "witchoil." The documents, he says, were written by the Danoran security chief Julian LeBrix.

Before the party can bring the doctor in, however, Cillian Creed tries to ambush the party and steal the documents. If that fails, Leone Quital traps them inside and threatens to blow them up unless they hand over the doctor and the documents. The party has to find a way to escape.

Combat-Hungry Players?

The first ZEITGEIST adventure started with a bang (possibly which annihilated the party in an explosion of steamship parts). This adventure takes a slower pace, and players who are eager for combat might get impatient.

You might try adding a bit of random action early on, perhaps moving the Fog of War encounter (Part 2, Thread 2: Gale) to the start of the adventure, as part of an unrelated case. When the party comes back to the RHC office they get news of the murder, and so the mystery begins.

You know best what your players will enjoy, but give them a chance to get involved in the mystery. They might discover that they like challenging their investigative skills as much as challenging their combat build.



LeBrix reveals that months ago he was investigating strange goings-on in Danoran-funded factories. He thought they might have been caused by sabotage by Gale, but instead he stumbled upon strange vials of witchoil, stashed in dozens of factories. He wanted to find out what they were, but was told by his superiors to end his investigation. The party realizes that someone is using the deaths of factory workers as a way to gather energy for some nefarious purpose. With the information from the document Nilasa stole as a starting point, it might be possible to figure out who's behind it.

With evidence of larger goings-on, but no clear idea of who is responsible, the party gets guidance from Nevard the skyseer, who says he will present his visions and interpretations of what they mean at a large rally. Dockers, factory workers, and thousands of townsfolk attend, making security nearly impossible, but the party gets clues in advance that the same group who killed Nilasa and tried to recover the documents will target Nevard. Magically-altered great cats, infused with shadow energy, attack and create a panic, and it's up to the PCs to save the skyseer, or to listen to the revelations on his dying breaths.

Ultimately, with a combination of evidence and aid from Nevard, Gale, Morgan Cippiano, the documents Nilasa stole, and interrogating the arson brothers, the party is able to link Reed Macbannin to the whole plot. When they go to take him into custody, however, the strange tremors that have been shaking the city for weeks finally erupt into a massive earthquake, releasing huge torrents of witchoil that Macbannin was collecting and refining. As the mountain starts to break apart around them, the witchoil flood threatens the slums of The Nettles, forcing the PCs to decide what's more important – saving thousands of innocent lives, or capturing Macbannin.



Running an Investigation

A mystery is more complicated to run than a dungeon crawl, but after you've read through the adventure you should have a clear sense of which groups and individuals want what, and how their goals are interconnected. The PCs' initial mission should be to use Nilasa as a lead to track down Gale, but as they follow the clues it becomes clear that her death is connected to something more dangerous than the fey terrorist.

RHC Protocol.

To help structure the PCs' investigations, you might suggest the following pattern. Since there are no phones (and magical communication is rare and expensive), Royal Homeland Constabulary protocol for these sorts of cases encourages constables to start each day at headquarters in Central district. Their personal office will probably have some sort of slate board marked with names of key figures, locations, and events, with arrows tracing their connections.

Each morning the group gets together at the office, files reports about the previous day, and makes plans for which leads they want to follow. If that entails splitting up, they can either meet up at the office the next morning, or set a meeting place and time, typically a district police station but possibly the home or business of one of the PCs' contacts.

Elements of the investigation are time-sensitive, while other events happen in response to the PCs finding the right clue or catching the attention of the wrong person. The adventure starts on the 1st day of summer, and you'll want to keep track of what day it is. If you want to keep close track of time, consider that it typically takes an hour to travel from the center of one district to the center of an adjacent one if going by foot, or half an hour by carriage.

It's not a hard and fast rule that the party must return to the office each day, but bringing them back here gives them a clear sense of the passage of days, and reminds them that they have resources at their disposal. It also provides you a convenient time to hand out new information or messages; witnesses or requisitioned items can be waiting for the PCs at the RHC offices at the end of each working day.

Investigator's Best Friend.

Remember that the players don't know what's in this adventure. Your job is to keep them engaged, to provide useful cues as to when they're on the right track, and to ensure the adventure doesn't become unsatisfying because the players decide to follow a few bad hunches.

When a PC goes looking for clues, if you call for a skill check, generally a success should mean they easily get useful information (i.e., an informant knows what they want), and a failure means they have to deal with a challenge (i.e., an informant points them to a shady meeting where they can get what they need). Don't let a failed check dead-end the investigation.

Likewise, if a PC goes looking for clues in the wrong place, if possible try to find a way to nudge them in the right direction. If he goes looking for Dr. von Recklinghausen in local hospitals, rather than just saying he finds nothing, perhaps another doctor mentions that sick people in The Nettles aren't going to charity clinics as often.

Plus, their boss Assistant Chief Inspector Stover Delft reads their daily reports, so he has a record and can tell *his* higher ups what's going on. This can give you an excuse as the GM to have an NPC remind the PCs to follow up on a clue they may have neglected.

Finally, in Adventure Three, *Digging for Lies*, action occurs in the office, and it will have greater impact if the party is familiar with the place.

What If?

It's fine for the PCs to take a different route to tracking down Macbannin than we assume, but if your players come up with a way that might solve the mystery early – like by breaking into the Danoran consulate and seeking documents like the ones Nilasa stole, or by catching and mind-controlling Cillian Creed during a combat encounter – you might need to tweak things if you want to still make use of the rest of the adventure.

Don't make their efforts pointless, but try adjusting what information they yield so that the party gets some clues, instead of getting all the answers. Perhaps the consular kept documents in his safe that list various factories that are cooperating in "the project" and how much they're being paid, but they make no mention of Reed Macbannin. They might even reference Cillian Creed as "that old disfigured spy," but if the PCs try to find out who fits that description, you can justifiably say it takes a few days to track down the answer. Then, when the party is already in the thick of Thread Four: Conspiracy, their research bears fruit and they realize, gasp, that old disfigured spy is Macbannin's butler!

Of course, if you want a game where verisimilitude is more important than "adventure," let the players solve the case, commend them on their daring and clever plans, and move on to actually stopping the bad guys. Evidence might get stolen, witnesses might be killed in their cell, and the PCs will have to find more solid proof before they accuse a respected politician of being a mad scientist.

Contacts and Informants.

As detailed in the *ZEITGEIST Player's Guide*, before the start of this adventure, you should ask each of the players to pick two districts and come up with a contact their character has in those districts.

This contact could be a friend or family member, a criminal informant, an ex-lover, a merchant whose shop the PC frequents, a minor noble who owes the PC a favor, a religious figure, or many other options. These NPCs help connect the PCs to the city, and provide you an easy way to set the scene whenever the party first goes to a particular district to investigate, or at any time when they need to call in a favor (see Prestige in Part Two of the *ZEITGEIST Player's Guide*).

Throughout the adventure, the PCs will seek clues in four different threads of a mystery. Often their search will require skill checks. At your discretion, if a particular PC has a contact that could be useful in finding information about a particular thread, you could grant the PC advantage on appropriate skill checks or perhaps even provide the occasional automatic success.

This gives slight benefit to PCs who have contacts of the unsavory, criminal sort, so look for creative opportunities to make use of more mainstream contacts.

Adventure Layout

The Dying Skyseer's plot has a precise beginning and climax, but the middle of the adventure can take many different paths. We roughly divide events into an introduction, four threads of investigation, and a climax. Each investigation thread has several prominent scenes, but the precise order the PCs reach them depends on their choices.

An easy way for you as GM to keep track of the plot is to think of the different threads as smaller individual adventures that occasionally link together. Completing each of the three initial threads (involving Smugglers, Gale, and The Doctor) provides key clues to the fourth thread (Conspiracy). Once the PCs complete that thread, they'll be able to identify Reed Macbannin as the main villain, and the Climax details how they can take him out.

You should encourage the players to keep notes of their PCs' investigations. This is almost critically necessary if you don't meet weekly.

Scene Layout.

Each scene is presented in a format of Title, keywords, and tag-line. Keywords include:

Scene Type: Action, Exploration, Exposition, Puzzle, Social, or Hybrid.

Duration: Montage (a few hours or days), Real-time (a few minutes), or Tactical (round-by-round).

NPC Roster

More detailed entries are included throughout the adventure close to the characters' first appearances.

NPC ROSTER

NPC Entry	Part
Assistant Chief Inspector Stover Delft	Part 1
Nilasa Hume	Part 1
Consulate Security Chief Julian LeBrix	Part 1
Thames Grimsley	Part 1
Morgan Cippiano	Part 1
Heward Sechim	Part 2
Skyseer Nevard Sechim	Part 2
Cillian Creed	Part 2
Hana "Gale" Soliogn	Part 2
Lorcan Kell	Part 2
Dr. Wolfgang von Recklinghausen	Part 2
Leone Quital	Part 3
Eberardo and Valando	Part 3
Mayor Reed Macbannin	Part 3

Recurring Characters.

Stover Delft, Morgan Cippiano, Lorcan Kell, Leone Quital, and Gale all play prominent roles in later adventures. All other NPCs that appear in this adventure might recur in minor roles, but feel free to do with them as you wish. If anyone important dies, you can replace them with someone thematically similar.

Other Constables.

If you need the PCs to interact with their coworkers, remember that most constables are busy with their own cases, and are fairly low level anyway. But if you want to set up friendships or rivalries, here's a sample group of other RHC Constables. See the Character Themes in Part One of the *ZEITGEIST Player's Guide* for information on these NPCs' themes.

- Carlao, human Yerasol veteran knight.
- Serena, human technologist assassin (spy).
- Kaea, high elf skyseer evoker (mage).
- Dima, dwarf eschatologist priest.
- Josiah, human gunslinger (scout with two pistols).
- Gaethan, half-elf spirit medium ranger (**scout**).

Carlao is the nominal head of the group, but Serena is the brains and face. She and Kaea get along like sisters, but both have their eyes on Carlao. Dima has a bizarre joy for filing paperwork, while Josiah fills the stock role of "quiet loner sniper." Gaethan styles himself a cunning investigator, and he keeps a small book full of names of just about every person, place, or thing that has come up in a case.

Currently the group is assigned to investigate a group of Drakran eschatologists who have recently gained the ears of several politicians. The RHC suspects they are trying to recover relics from the old demonocracy. If you wish to foreshadow future adventures, these radicals play a prominent role in Adventure Five, and their founder, philosopher Grandis Komanov, eventually becomes a major threat in Adventure Eleven.

Pacing and Leveling.

The adventure can take many routes, and we discourage precise XP tracking, so when should you level the party? The party starts this adventure at 4th level, and should rise to 5th level when they have completed the adventure.

Rewards

At the end of this adventure, their Prestige with Flint should increase, though if they act unheroically it might stay flat, or even drop if they dramatically screw up. As long as they solve the case, their Prestige with Risur and with the Obscurati increases one step.

If the party proves to be useful allies or staunch enemies for the fey terrorist Gale, their Prestige with the Unseen Court could increase one step. Likewise, involvement with Family representative Morgan Cippiano can increase their Prestige with the Clergy. See Part Two of the *ZEITGEIST Player's Guide* for details of the Prestige system and how the PCs can use it to request items and call in favors.

At the start of the adventure, the PCs each receive 1,500 gp. They should get another 2,500 gp shortly after they reach 5th level. This represents a mixture of salary and stipend for their investigation.

If the PCs are free agents instead of members of the RHC, you'll need to make sure they receive appropriate treasure. One possible mix would be:

Start of Adventure. Payment of 200 gp total as payment (from dockers or Heward Sechim who want to know about Nilasa's death), up to three magic items possessed by NPCs, and 200 gp apiece of incidental loot (from the smugglers or other criminals). Most of



the magic items being smuggled in would be seized by authorities unless the party is very clever at hiding them.

At 5th Level. Four magic items possessed by NPCs, 250 gp total in thanks from Heward Sechim for saving his factory (or as a bounty on the arsonists), and 250 gp apiece in loot from the Bosum Strand warehouse fight.

Handouts

The following pages are dedicated to handouts that the GM and players can use. GM handouts are simply useful “cheat sheets,” like the *dramatis personae*, whereas the player handouts are record sheets and in-universe documents. Use these as you see fit.

Final Word Before We Start

This is a detail-rich, multi-layered adventure. Your players will inevitably outwit you and find some way to short-circuit the expected path of the investigation, but that’s fine. Just make sure that the key players don’t reveal the existence of the colossus and that Governor Stanfield’s role in the plot remains hidden; anything else is fair game. After all, the PCs are supposed to win. We’re just trying to make the chase challenging enough to be fun.



Character Themes.

Each ZEITGEIST adventure includes one or more scenes that bring the PCs’ character themes (detailed in Part One of the ZEITGEIST *Player’s Guide*) to the forefront.

Dockers should be welcomed in the Thinking Man’s Tavern (page 21) and the various riots and protests throughout the city. Thames Grimsley might invite a docker constable to speak at the rally (see Thread Four: The Conspiracy in Part Three of this adventure).

Eschatologists have a chance to talk philosophy at the Thinking Man’s Tavern (page 21). The Proper Ending theme feat can help immensely in battling the lizardfolk arsonists (see Thread Four: The Conspiracy in Part Three of this adventure).

Gunsmiths who befriend security chief Julian LeBrix can learn how to create magical firearm ammunition called *vendetta bullets* (page 10). Also, the ship-to-ship wand battle (page 33) provides a great opportunity for prolonged ranged combat.

Martial Scientists can learn the *surgical precision* attack from Dr. von Recklinghausen (page 10), and can meet a fellow scientist, Lieutenant Dale (see Thread Two: Gale in Part Two of this adventure).

Skyseers give the party an easier path to contact the skyseer Nevard, and they receive prominent visions atop Cauldron Hill (see Thread Two: Gale in Part Two of this adventure).

Spirit Mediums can learn a great deal from the spirit of Nilasa Hume (page 20), and they might sense from afar the shrieking souls trapped inside vials of witchoil, particularly during the creation of the flayed jaguars (see Thread Four: The Conspiracy in Part Three of this adventure).

Technologists can find like-minded souls in the Thinking Man’s Tavern (page 21), and have the best chance to stop the witchoil avalanche in the climax (see Climax: Macbannin’s Manor in Part Three of this adventure).

Vekeshi Mystics start the adventure with a special mission to protect Gale, and to recruit her for a mission of assassination (see Thread Two: Gale in Part Two of this adventure).

Yerasol Veterans will naturally receive the focus of attention from journalists after various high-profile deeds, and will receive a special visit from Cillian Creed (see Thread Three: The Doctor in Part Two of this adventure).

Player Handout: Notable Locations in Adventure Two.





Player Handout: New Items.

Aeriad Bracers

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

Made from the shafts and fletching of arrows, *aeriad bracers* give you slight control over objects in flight. When you fall while wearing these bracers, you descend 60 feet per round and take no damage from falling. While falling, you can also glide 5 feet horizontally for every 10 feet you descend.

Additionally, you gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls with a short-bow or longbow.

Canary in a Coal Mine

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

From a gold chain dangles a tiny pendant in the shape of a canary, but it turns black as coal in the presence of danger. If you are surprised, attacks against you during the first round of combat are made with disadvantage.

You can cast *fly* on yourself with a duration of 1 round. Once used, you cannot cast it in this way again until next dawn.

Malice-Wrought Weapon

Weapon, rare

Deadly sharp, this weapon has no adornments, radiates no magic, and appears tarnished and lifeless. A *Malice-wrought weapon* does not radiate magic and its enhancement bonus does not fade in anti-magic zones or in specialized areas of null magic, such as Danor.

If you score a critical hit against an Unnatural creature (creatures with the aberration, celestial, fiend, or undead type), the creature cannot see you, as though they were under the affects of an *invisibility* spell, until you attack again or 10 minutes pass.

Vendetta Bullet

Weapon, rare

When a man escapes murder or suffers the death of those he cares for, he can etch the name of the ones responsible onto ammunition, giving physical form to his vengeful desires.

These bullets can only be created if you owe fierce vengeance to an enemy, and even then you can only create one *vendetta bullet* per enemy, and only if you know the enemy's name. You can never create a second *vendetta bullet* against the same person, and if you pass the bullet to someone else, a given shooter can only ever benefit from one such bullet per target. These bullets can be created by people with no magical training; their creation only requires an intense will for revenge. Any bullet can be made into a *vendetta bullet*.

When you fire this bullet and are targeting the creature whose name is etched on the bullet, if you hit, the attack is a critical hit. If you miss, you instead get a normal hit. If a *vendetta bullet* has been used against a given target in an encounter, no other *vendetta bullets* will be effective against the target for the rest of that encounter, even if they're fired by other people.

New Training.

Surgical Precision

Martial training, rare

Requirement: Dr. von Recklinghausen can only teach this technique to a character with the Martial Scientist theme.

Once per encounter, you may gain advantage on all attacks for one turn. During this round, your attacks deal an additional 1d6 points of damage. If you are a rogue, this damage counts as sneak attack damage.

New Spell.

Detect Planar Energy

The energy drifts to you like a fragrance on a breeze. You spin and locate the strongest source of the smell, then set out.

1st-level divination (ritual)

Casting Time 1 action

Range: 1 mile

Components: V,S

Duration: 1 hour

Choose a plane you have visited, or otherwise have had contact with. For the spell's duration you can sense the direction to and intensity of energies from that plane, to a maximum range of one mile. These energies tend to fade after a few hours or days, but it is possible to track creatures native to other planes by following their trails.

The spell can be foiled by strong sources of energy from the same or other planes. For instance, Cauldron Hill in Flint is a powerful beacon of shadow energy, so you would be unable to pinpoint any sort of foreign energy there, not even fey or elemental energy.



Player Handout: Nilasa's Criminal File.

PERSON OF INTEREST INFORMATION REQUEST

Request Number: 3217

Customer: Royal Homeland Constabulary

Name: Nilasa Hume

Birthdate: 26 Spring, 471

Criminal ID Number: 24680

Jurisdiction: Flint Division of Peace and Order

Race: Mularbora (human/elf)

Sex: Female

Height: 68 inches

Accent: Flinter

Hair: Black

Eyes: Green

Known Spellcaster: No

Known Aliases: No

Present Place of Residence: 47 Magazine Street. Parity Lake. Flint. Sechim's Alkahest & Etchings. Factory--workplace and home.

Other Places of Residence: (1) (Alleged) 3.6 miles east on Batata Road. 0.4 miles south on Flogging Lagoon trail. Cloudwood. Greater Flint County. Flogging Lagoon musician commune--transient lodging (departed Spring 499).
(2) 82K Fogwall Street. Parity Lake. Flint. Shared building--mother's home (demolished Winter 495).

Arrest Record: (Juvenile) Juvenile records forgiven in accordance with Stanfield's Matriculation Act of 328. Record notes "various petty thefts, confidence capers, details lost during Parity Lake central office relocation." Supporting Criminal Activities. (Misdemeanor.) Case no. 8176. (85 Spring, 500.) Released on bail, sponsored by Heward Sechim (47 Magazine Street, Parity Lake). Court date set for 4 Summer, 500. Suspect was picked up in a raid of a known den of criminals, located 12 Oxen Street, Parity Lake. Suspect in presence of two men whom the arresting officer recognized as former accomplices--Ford Sorghum and Travis Starter. Lack of official records detailing affiliation prevented holding of suspect. Alleged accomplices pled guilty to various warrants and were remanded to Goodson's Estuarial Reformatory.



Attached Continuation Sheets: -0-



Player Handout: People of Interest.

Hana “Gale” Soliogn. According to an interview she gave when she first arrived in Flint a year ago, Hana is an eladrin woman just over 100 years old. She spent most of her life as the property of House Soliogn, a family of Danoran mine owners. Having always felt an affinity to the fey history of Risur, she fled and found her way to Flint, where she was sheltered by druids in the Cloudwood. Soon she manifested the ability to fly, a power latent in the dead magic zone of Danor.

She professed a hatred toward Danor, and shortly thereafter witnesses began to place her at scenes of factory and ship sabotages, a massacre of railroad surveyors, and a botched assassination attempt against tax collector Kane Westman. After Duchess Ethelyn’s treason against the king three months ago, Gale sent a letter to several papers supporting the duchess, and condemning Danor, but also denying her responsibility in the surveyor massacre. Since then her acts of sabotage have increased in frequency.



Thames Grimsley. A grizzled sailor, still with a full head of hair in his early 50s, Grimsley acts as head of a new dock workers union in Flint. Though he only worked the docks in his youth, Grimsley spent decades sailing – primarily as captain of a ferry service in Flint’s harbor, but with a stint in the navy during the last Yerasol War. He took a gash from a policeman’s knife on the side of his face in the last big docker riot. He has a very stylized public speaking voice, one full of unnecessary, melodramatic pauses.

Recently he tried to speak with Governor Stanfield about improving dockers’ conditions. Grimsley is alleged to be negotiating with Parity Lake factory workers to develop a union for them.



Lorcan Kell. Alleged head of a thieves’ guild based somewhere in eastern Parity Lake. Once a simple enforcer, he recruited allies and established himself as a power player. The Kell guild is said to be responsible for great amounts of industrial smuggling, petty theft and extortion, burglary, and murder for hire. His guild has no reported history of arson, so the current best suspect of the recent spate of fires is Gale.



Assistant Chief Inspector Stover Delft. A local Flinter in his early 40s, Delft is your direct superior. He chews tobacco, and thinks he looks charming if he grins while sucking on tobacco juices. He walks with a cane because a mimic tore a chunk out of his leg fifteen years ago. He has a habit of poking inanimate objects with the cane before he gets too close to them, and spitting on them when he wants to be extra sure.



NPC Quick Reference for the GM.

- ✦ **Assistant Chief Inspector Stover Delft.** Party's boss. Chews tobacco. Cane. Spits. Good-natured.
- ✦ **Nilasa Hume.** Dead, but formerly upbeat, spirited, pretty. People wanted to impress her.
- ✦ **Consular Security Chief Julian LeBrix.** War veteran. Squinty and cautious. Wears a pistol. Too curious for own good. Investigated Danoran factories, but was told to stop by superiors.
- ✦ **Thames Grimsley.** Grizzled sailor. Leads docker union. Dislikes police. Oratorical, theatrical speech patterns. Pause for dramatic effect a lot.
- ✦ **Morgan Cippiano.** Leads Flint branch of Family. Bald. Gravelly voice. Wears hook pendant of the Clergy. Talks fashion. Very reasonable and friendly. Wants to "trade favors."
- ✦ **Heward Sechim.** Alchemist and tinkerer. Heavy gloves with acid burns. Owns factory where Nilasa lived. Quirky and charmingly reckless, but generous to his workers. Harassed by criminals.
- ✦ **Skyseer Nevard Sechim.** Days away from dying of old age. Too old to waste time sparing people's feelings. A bit rascally. Blind in bright light. Chest-length beard. Remembers a century of history, but prefers to talk about the future. Asks people what they look forward to.
- ✦ **Mayor Reed Macbannin.** Politician. Phenomenal liar. Likes to feign anger or shock, then switch to a winning smile to defuse situations with a laugh. Wears defensive necklace relic. Master of defense against the dark arts. Knows curses from Cauldron Hill witches. Under *geas* so he cannot talk about colossus plot.
- ✦ **Cillian Creed.** Former spy. Experiment-gone-awry infused him with Bleak Gate energy, melted his face. Hides behind magical disguises, but can attack through shadows. Usually incorporeal. Flees early in an encounter. Patriot who'd kill his own mother to protect Risur.
- ✦ **Hana "Gale" Soliogn.** Eladrin with wind magic. Flies constantly; supposedly impossible by most theories of magic. Was owned by a Danoran family with mining wealth. Uses terror and sabotage to hinder influence of Danor in Risur. Seeks approval of the Unseen Court.
- ✦ **Lorcan Kell.** Leader of thieves' guild. Ugly face. Fancy clothes and top hat. Lots of hidden knives. Torments "good" people by threatening to harm them if they try to stop innocents being tortured. Not too clever. Relies on minions to run his guild.
- ✦ **Dr. Wolfgang von Recklinghausen.** Surgeon-mage from malice state of Arrovia. On the run from a monster he created. Deadly precise with a sword. Goattee. Well-dressed. Apologetic and distrustful.
- ✦ **Leone Qital.** Crisillyiri aristocrat. Head of colossus construction. Telekinetic control of metal. Clothing woven with metal strands. Savors fine cheese, particularly bromago. Arrogant. No sense of honor.
- ✦ **Eberardo.** Red dragonborn arsonist warrior. Deep voice. Red scales. Huge sword. Not too proud to run. Loyal to brother Valando.
- ✦ **Valando.** Red dragonborn arsonist pyromancer. Raspy voice. Red scales. Muscular for a wizard. Always keeps an eye out for an escape route. Loyal to brother Eberardo.



Investigation Guide for the GM.

- ◆ **Timeline.** The adventure begins on the 1st day of summer. Keep track of how much time the PCs spend because some events occur on set days. The wand smuggler meeting, for instance, occurs the night of the 4th, and the villains find Wolfgang on the 7th if the party hasn't yet. If the party dallies, the earthquake atop Cauldron Hill strikes on the 10th.
- ◆ **Main Villains.** Reed Macbannin refines witchoil as fuel for the colossus. Witchoil is liquid essence of the Bleak Gate, and it captures souls of those who die nearby, then releases them when burnt. Macbannin's butler Cillian Creed is former spy, master of disguise, and does Macbannin's dirty work.
- ◆ **Minor Villains.** Lorcan Kell runs thieves' guild, smuggles to aid Macbannin. Leone Quital handles construction of colossus in Bleak Gate. Both get come-uppance in later adventures.
- ◆ **Danoran Consulate (page 15).** Nilasa killed by Creed while trying to fly out fourth-floor window, suggesting connection to Gale. Dr. von Recklinghausen fled with documents Nilasa stole, but Danorans pretend no such documents exist. Alchemical examination of Nilasa's effects points to Waryeye's Alchemicals. Nilasa's boyfriend knew she frequented Thinking Man's Tavern. Her criminal history lists her residence as Sechim's Alkahest & Etchings, and mentions accomplices in Goodson's Estuarial Reformatory.
- ◆ **Thinking Man's Tavern (page 21).** Jered Lawman, halfling bard, visited Cloudwood brigands with Nilasa. Hennet Rinus, philosophy/archaeology student, wrote letters for Nilasa to Morgan Cippiano about arranging business meetings.
- ◆ **Goodson's Estuarial Reformatory (page 24).** Nilasa's accomplices know about "House Elf" smuggling contact, and that Nilasa was acquiring weapons for Gale.
- ◆ **Waryeye's Alchemicals/House Elf (page 25).** Married gnome couple provided magic for Nilasa's activities. They know location of wharf smugglers will set out from, and when.
- ◆ **Smuggler's Night (page 30).** Ship sets out from Pine Island to meet in Ayres with Crisillyiri merchant ship. Picks up cache of stolen wands, which would be split with Family and Gale.
- ◆ **Sechim's Alkahest & Etchings (Part 2, Thread 2: Gale).** Heward Sechim knew Nilasa was getting into trouble. He wants the party to talk with his uncle, skyseer Nevard in the Cloudwood, since the old man might be able to talk down Gale. Sechim also has been harassed lately by criminals offering "protection."
- ◆ **Cloudwood Brigands (Part 2, Thread 2: Gale).** Involved in turf war with Lorcan Kell's gang. Hostile to outsiders.
- ◆ **Skyseer Nevard (Part 2, Thread 2: Gale).** Sick and dying. Knows Gale, but won't betray her. Wants to spend night on cursed Cauldron Hill to seek vision. If party helps, he'll arrange meeting with Gale.
- ◆ **Cauldron Hill — Take One (Part 2, Thread 2: Gale).** Nettles district mayor Reed Macbannin lets PCs up, but plots their demise. Seemingly-innocuous smoking courier at his manor when PCs visit; this is secretly Nicodemus, the campaign's main villain. Macbannin doesn't notify military of PCs' ascent.
- ◆ **Arson (Part 3, Thread 4: The Conspiracy).** Creed hired arsonists to endanger factories so Lorcan Kell's proxies could buy them and help smuggle materials. The night the party goes up Cauldron Hill, Creed sends the arsonists to burn down Sechim's factory. Arsonists have letters that can be traced back to Macbannin's manor.
- ◆ **Chasing the Doctor (Part 2, Thread 3: The Doctor).** Creed, disguised as police officer, gets to people before the PCs. Hostel staff saw doctor flee in a hurry. Dr. Barnaby Camp, old mentor to Wolfgang, got a letter saying he was in trouble with Lorcan Kell's guild. Professor Lynn Kindleton, old love interest of Wolfgang, knows he's hiding out in The Nettles. Messages passed by Nettles children. Lorcan Kell wants to sell PCs location of doctor, then tells Creed to take them all out.
- ◆ **Nettles Church (Part 2, Thread 3: The Doctor).** Wolfgang hid documents in hole in ceiling. Creed tries to abduct him and get documents. If he fails at either, Leone Quital barricades PCs in and tries to pressure them into handing over what they want. At the end of negotiations, Leone uses explosives to collapse church entrance, but secret exits give PCs chance to survive and escape.
- ◆ **Stolen Documents (Part 2, Thread 3: The Doctor).** Dense financial information that implicates Macbannin in plot to smuggle Danoran industrial material. Also details discovery of witchoil flasks in factories; this was an original test of the substance to see how well it captured souls of workers who died.
- ◆ **Nevard's Vision (Part 3, Thread 4: The Conspiracy).** Nevard calls rally to share visions of danger centered around Cauldron Hill. Macbannin creates monsters to attack Nevard during event. Temporary lab in Bosum Strand, from which psychic screams emanate, has documents and technicians who can finger Macbannin.
- ◆ **Cauldron Hill — Take Two (Part 3, Climax: Macbannin's Manor).** Macbannin has witchoil laboratory under his manor. During his arrest, an accident triggers an earthquake. Even if captured, Macbannin tries to fix damage to lab before a flood of witchoil pours out. If PCs mess up efforts to fix the problem, it can cause an explosion that tears off part of the mountain's north face. Creed tries to ambush party to finish them off during the chaos.
- ◆ **Abortive Trial (Part 3, Climax: Macbannin's Manor).** Nicodemus comes in spirit form, possesses Macbannin, offers to let him join Obscurati ghost council. Then he shatters Macbannin's skull and absconds with his soul, so there is no evidence of the plot.

Prologue: Danoran Consulate

THIS ACT DETAILS THE CHARACTERS, EVENTS, AND clues surrounding the Danoran consulate where Nilasa Hume was murdered. These provide hooks to the four threads of investigation that make up the rest of the adventure.

On the Fence

Puzzle/Social. Real-Time.

The PCs investigate a murder scene.

If you want to give your players a brief feel for the city of Flint, read or paraphrase the following.

Forty years ago the city of Flint was a second-tier port, mostly a haven for fishermen and loggers. Still struggling to overcome the stigma of having once been the domain of a perilous coven of witches, Flint was prosperous, but played little role in Risuri affairs.

Then the Third Yerasol War ended and the new king declared Flint would be his nation's seat of industry. Mines in the Anthras Mountains poured iron and coal downriver to Flint's harbor. Old forests within the city limits were clear-cut and factories erected in their place to build guns, refine alchemicals, and forge steel rails and train cars.

Thousands of immigrants and gold-seeking villagers crowded into shabby flophouses and tenements around the factories; when those were filled, they built new slums on the sides of the city's steep hills. Smoke and soot poured forth from factories, and criminal elements took root beneath the clouds, growing strong and feeding on the desperation of a new population of workers, prostitutes, and orphans.

In places, Flint's historical beauty still endures—in the governor's island mansion fortress, high atop haunted Cauldron Hill, deep in the breeze-swaying branches of the Cloudwood, and on the bayou plantations west of Pine Island. And the confluence of people from so many stations has inspired great art and technological innovation. But cracks between competing groups are straining the peace, and all it would take are a few disasters to drive the city apart.

It's just before 11 AM on the 1st day of Summer, and the PCs are at the main office of the Risuri Homeland Constabulary going over leads in the Gale investigation when their superior, **Assistant Chief Inspector Stover Delft**, interrupts them.

"Time for some field work, constables. We just received a delightful report about the perfect lead for you. Young woman, identity unknown, jumps out of the fourth floor window at the Danoran consulate, impales herself on the spires of the compound fence, and perishes. Technically

Timeline.

The adventure begins on the 1st day of summer. Keep track of how much time the PCs spend because some events occur on set days. The wand smuggler meeting encounter "Smuggler's Night," for instance, occurs the night of the 4th, and the villains find Wolfgang on the 7th if the party hasn't yet. If the party dallies, the earthquake atop Cauldron Hill strikes on the 10th.

Getting Around in a Hurry.

In general it takes half an hour to get from the heart of one district to the heart of an adjacent district (not counting The Nettles, which always takes at least an hour or two to pass through). To get to North Shore, the PCs leave the RHC Headquarters in Central and pass through Bosum Strand, meaning the trip takes an hour by carriage.

However, when the party is about to leave the RHC Headquarters, Delft suggests that they take their boat. Yes, the party has access to a boat—either an excise cutter or a steam cutter, as detailed in Part Two of the *ZEITGEIST Player's Guide*.

The trip from HQ to the RHC dock and to a police dock on North Shore only takes half an hour total. That is unless the party angered Thames Grimsley in the previous adventure, in which case they find their ship blocked in by a smug ferryman.

Bellastair and the Police.

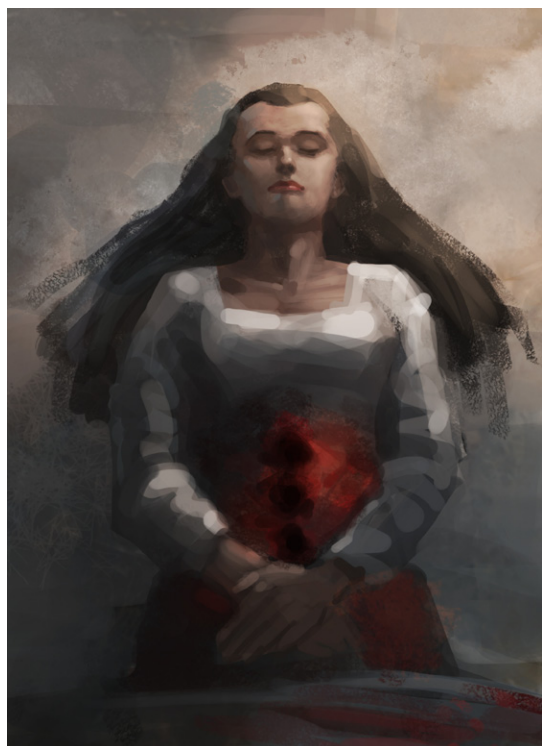
Bellastair and his three squadmates are willing to help the party for half an hour, but if the party wants them to assist for a few hours or more, such as to help track down leads after their investigation, one PC needs to call in a rank 1 favor with Risur Prestige. To get this help in a timely fashion, the party either needs to start with Risur Prestige 2, or have Prestige 1 and make a successful DC 18 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check.

Aside from providing a personal face to the PCs interactions with the police, Officer Bellastair plays no special role in the campaign.

half of her is in our jurisdiction, which is good for you because the fence she landed on was forty feet from the window. Seems like our young victim thought she could fly."

The early summer morning is warm and muggy, and a foul breeze blows a cloak of smog over the normally clear-skied North Shore district. The street that runs past the consulate has no buildings on its opposite side, just beach, but four Flint police officers are trying to block off access to gawkers. A black coroner's carriage waits outside the consulate gate; the back door is open, and its driver sits on the slab where a dead body should go, looking bored.

By the time the party arrives, nearly two hours have passed since the woman's death. **Alfred Bellastair**, the officer in charge, looks at his cheap pocket watch as the PCs approach, then impatiently comes forward.



Assistant Chief Inspector Stover Delft.

A local Flinter in his early 40s, Delft gets squinty and condescending when his authority is questioned, but he can recognize talent and good work. Delft chews tobacco, and thinks he looks charming if he grins while sucking on tobacco juices. He walks with a cane because a mimic tore a chunk out of his leg fifteen years ago. He has a habit of poking inanimate objects with the cane before he gets too close to them, and spitting on them when he wants to be extra sure.



Consulate Security Chief Julian LeBrix.

Old, balding, and rheumy-eyed, LeBrix served Danor in the Third Yerasol War, then spent decades as seneschal to various minor nobles. Soft-spoken and forward thinking, LeBrix is still handy with a pistol, but he prefers to anticipate trouble and avoid it. The consulate usually appreciates how smoothly he manages things, but a few months ago his diligence got him in trouble when he found clues to a conspiracy his superiors wanted to keep secret. He locked up the report and now is afraid of losing his job.



"We responded to some panicked witnesses, and by the time the first of our men got here the Danorans had taken the victim off the fence and carried her inside. But everyone had pretty much the same story. They heard gunshots, saw the woman jump out the window, and saw her land on the fence. One scoundrel apparently stole stuff off her body and ran away as she was bleeding out. The Danorans wouldn't let us inside, but I told them you'd be showing up, and they said they wouldn't get rid of the body. The guy you want to talk to is the security chief, Julian LeBrix.

"You can handle the investigation from here without my men, right? We've got better things to do than sit around for another hour while the 'special constables' drink up the hospitality of the Danorans."

The ground trembles beneath your feet, and the crowd grumbles at yet another of the odd tremors that have been going on the past few weeks. Out of the corner of your eye you see a ceiling tile tumble from the roof of the consulate and shatter on the ground.

The Body.

The Danoran security chief Julian LeBrix meets the party at the gate to the consulate, while cleaning staff work to scrub blood and viscera off the fence just beside the gate. LeBrix introduces himself, then walks the party in through the courtyard gardens into the entry hall of the consulate. Along the way he says:

"This is a mess. I took a diplomatic post to avoid having to see blood and death anymore. It has our people shaken up—none of them ever saw war—and so I hope you can take the woman's body and go quickly. Better for everyone I think if the consular doesn't have to be bothered. He has more important things on his mind than a burglary. We have treaty negotiations, trade contracts, and you don't want powerful men thinking about death when they're deciding our fates, you know?

"The woman went by the name Nilasa Hume. She's been in a few times these past few months. Seemed nice enough. She brought us breakfast this morning. One of our security personnel, Braden, was dating her. She used him to case the building, and must have overheard someone talking about upstairs.

"I noticed she slipped out while everyone else was eating the food she'd brought. A hunch led me upstairs, and I found her slipping gold forks and spoons into her pockets."

LeBrix pulls out a small padded bag, then pulls from that a tiny ceramic egg, beautifully decorated with gems and gold.

"She also had this. It's worth thousands, and we had it sitting out on display. I saw her, drew my pistol. She ran. I realized she was about to jump out the window. I thought she was trying to kill herself, so I fired and hit her in the leg. Then she jumped. Flew straight through the glass. Now I'm thinking she's about to escape, so I reload and shoot her in the back. That's when she fell.

"That all happened within the consulate grounds. I'm within my rights to have taken these actions, though I wish I hadn't had to."

Consulate secretary **Tia Jedeau** watches the party as they come in, but she gets back to work when LeBrix tosses a sidelong look at her. LeBrix takes them down a hall and stops outside a storage room.

"We're all professionals here," LeBrix says. "It would help me if you can take the body and leave quickly."

Examination and Investigation.

Inside the storage room, a bloodied white tablecloth covers Nilasa's body. Braden sits in a chair beside it, stunned and grieving.

LeBrix lets the party examine the corpse or ask questions of Braden or other staff, but he stays with them unless they make an effort to distract him. While he's watching, the consulate staff cooperates, but they omit or change certain key details in order to corroborate LeBrix's story above. (In particular, LeBrix claims he discovered Nilasa during the theft, but in actuality no one knew what was going on until they started to hear gunshots from upstairs.) The security chief also tries to rein them in if they start snooping around the consulate or asking to go upstairs to see where the woman jumped from the window.

You'll want to read *The Mission and Its Aftermath* below so you know what happened and what information the various witnesses have. Then, since this is the party's first investigation in the campaign, you might need to guide the players a bit to make sure they check the body, talk to witnesses both in the consulate and on the street, and then follow up on where clues take them.

The Mission and Its Aftermath

Three Months Ago.

Gale asked Nilasa to go undercover. Deploying her natural charm and her cover as an established factory worker, Nilasa convinced a thick-jawed guard at the consulate – **Braden Sarkin** – to be her boyfriend. After a few weeks of earning the trust of the staff and learning their patterns, she began to opportunistically steal documents for Gale. Usually she'd sneak in at night, but she knew the consular's office was closely watched in the evening, but not as much during the day, so she devised a plan to sneak in during normal business hours.

One Week Ago.

Nilasa narrowly avoided being arrested when police raided the seedy home of two of her old burglar buddies – **Ford Sorghum** and **Travis Starter**. She had bragged to them about an imminent deal with smugglers to bring in some expensive wands, but so far they haven't sold her out.

This Morning.

9:00 AM. While a light drizzle dappled the city, Nilasa breezed into the consulate carrying a box of brigadeiro chocolates she'd picked up at Thinking Man's Tavern (in Bosum Strand). In the lobby, she briefly chatted with Dr. Wolfgang von Recklinghausen, who was waiting for his visa appointment.

Nilasa's boyfriend Braden came to meet her, and she told him she'd brought breakfast for the staff. She made coffee and set out the chocolates for the staff, which drew away the attentions of most of the consulate's security. After distracting security's attention with the free food, she used a *potion of invisibility* to sneak up to the fourth floor office of the consular.

Brigadeiros.

Named after the brigadier general who invented them, this confection consists of a gooey ball of chocolate covered in granulated chocolate, castor sugar, or grated coconut.

Travel, Visas, Bureaucracy.

Dr. von Recklinghausen, from the minor Malice state of Arrovia, travels under the protection of a Danoran passport. The burgeoning nation of Ber has enthusiastically embraced bureaucracy, so the doctor has had to make three separate trips between the Beran and Danoran consulates to get a travel visa to Ber.

Meanwhile, Dr. von Recklinghausen spoke with a low-level bureaucrat, who signed paperwork to get him a travel visa to Ber.

Simultaneously, Cillian Creed was meeting with the consul – **Methan duNadria** – in a basement chamber. Creed wanted to check on the status of a few factories that produce materiel needed for the construction of the colossus. When his discussion with the consular came to an end, Creed – an experienced spy – immediately noticed how the consulate's security had been drawn away from their posts.

10:00 AM. Nilasa picked the lock to a drawer, grabbed a bundle of files that looked promising, and tucked them into her shoulder bag.

Creed hurried to the fourth floor, knowing that's where the consular kept documents that needed to remain secret. He spotted Nilasa and tried to talk her into surrendering. When she bolted for a window, he slipped through shadows and slashed at her face with talons, blinding her. She jumped anyway, smashing through the window and invoking magic to fly, but it didn't carry her far enough.

At the same moment, Dr. von Recklinghausen was emerging from the consulate and just passing through the gate when Nilasa plummeted and was impaled on the spiked fence beside him. People nearby panicked, but Wolfgang tried to help the dying woman. She forced into Wolfgang's arms a bundle of documents she had stolen, then grabbed her *canary in a coal mine* necklace and told him, "Take this to Nevard."

In the fourth floor window, Creed spotted the hand-off, and he fired a pistol at Wolfgang. At the relatively long range, he missed and struck Nilasa in the leg. Wolfgang yanked the necklace from Nilasa's neck and fled. Wanting to make sure the thief did not survive, Creed reloaded, aimed carefully, and landed a second shot, this one in Nilasa's back.

The consulate was chaotic in confusion, but Creed immediately set off in a chase after Wolfgang, leaping through shadows to pursue him. He confronted the doctor in an alley, but to his surprise the doctor fought back. Wolfgang carries a *malice-wrought rapier*, a sword forged in the Malice Lands, which has an innate power to harm unnatural creatures. A single strike stunned Creed, and the doctor followed up with a shocking touch and a cut to Creed's hamstring. Creed's unnatural physiology allowed him to heal quickly, but by then the doctor had made good his escape.

Wolfgang, in no state to think straight, ran to the nearest carriage and demanded the driver take him to his hotel, explaining



away his bloody hands by saying he was a doctor in the middle of a surgery. At the hotel he told the driver to wait for him, then hurriedly packed his belongings and fled out another exit without paying. Knowing of the stories of criminals hiding in the Nettles, Wolfgang headed there on foot. In a bar in eastern Parity Lake he asked for advice on hiring a bodyguard, and enlisted two toughs who are part of the Kell Guild, who said they could find him a hiding spot. He arrived in the Nettles shortly thereafter.

Cover-Up.

Less than five minutes after Nilasa died, Creed staggered back to the consulate. Knowing that the wounds to Nilasa's face would arouse suspicion, he told Consular duNadria to have the woman's body dragged inside and healed by the consulate's house cleric, **Bar-tide Jannis**, so it would look like she was killed by gunshots and the impact with the fence. Creed then had the consular personally dismiss Jannis and send him home, figuring the RHC would arrive soon and not wanting the cleric around to answer questions.

Creed checked the consular's desk to see what documents had been stolen, then intimidated Security Chief LeBrix into going along with the story. It was LeBrix's suggestion to use the expensive ceramic egg as cover for what the thief was really after.

With matters at the consulate settled as best as possible on short notice, Creed set out to track down the doctor and recover the stolen documents.

Clues.

The following clues are divided into Obvious and Hidden. Any PC who makes an effort to search the right thing or talk to the right people can make a DC 11 ability check to find Obvious clues, or a DC 17 check to find Hidden clues. Characters trained in the appropriate skill automatically pick up Obvious clues with no need to roll. You might also grant bonuses to checks or outright successes for good roleplaying or clever thinking.

The idea here is to ensure the players get the clues they *need* to keep investigating, and to reward good ideas with more clues to help crack the case faster. Even once they get clues, though, they still have to put them together themselves.

Nilasa's Body.

- **DC 11 Wisdom (Perception) check** – Physical scrutiny of Nilasa's body reveals glass wounds on her arms, two fence punctures to her abdomen, gunshot to her back left thigh and shoulder, and an unusual wound on her scalp.

Examination of her clothes reveals in a hip pocket a bail certificate. The document, from the Parity Lake police station, reveals that she was picked up in a contraband raid recently but released on bail, paid by one "Heward Sechim." Law requires her to carry the certificate until her trial. A trip to the Parity Lake police station can pull up details of her arrest. See Nilasa's Criminal File (page 11).

Also in that pocket is a receipt for a purchase of a dozen items, their names abbreviated, with notes of "16 drams" or "48 drams" for each, valued at a total of "2,450 gp," signed "D.W." On the back of the receipt, scrawled in a different

handwriting, it reads "Silvo, Deorn Feldman, family wharf." A PC with the appropriate background recognizes drams as an apothecary's measurement of volume.

- **DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check** – Hidden in a pocket in her bodice is an empty elixir vial. A character that succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check can tell it contained an elixir of invisibility, and a strong one. Any constable knows that magic that makes you invisible for more than a few seconds is illegal. (Constables and the military are allowed to use it, of course.)
- **DC 11 Intelligence (Arcana) check** – Nilasa did not have any magical skills of her own, but she has several different lingering magical auras on her.
- **DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana) check** – Nilasa has recently used magic that allowed her to fly, but there's no sign of the source. She also has some illusion magic in her blood, implying she consumed an elixir or potion. Healing and necromantic energy was used on her face and head, but it's not possible to tell what they did.
- **DC 11 Wisdom (Medicine)** – The wound on Nilasa's scalp was caused by necromantic energy. The bullets from the two gunshot wounds have been extracted. One shot to her leg was non-life-threatening. The other shot entered her back and pierced her lung.
- **DC 17 Wisdom (Medicine)** – The depth of the gunshot wounds indicate they came from over 30 feet away. Her face shows signs of post-mortem regeneration, creating healthy flesh along the path of four parallel slashes.

Spirit Communication.

A PC spirit medium, or one requested through either Risur or Flint Prestige (Favor Rating 3), can ask three questions of Nilasa's spirit within a day of her death. A PC proficient in the Religion skill can intuit that she's probably an adherent of Seedism. By speaking to her in terms she relates to, that PC has advantage on Charisma checks to communicate with her.

- **DC 11 Intelligence (Arcana), Wisdom (Insight), or Charisma (Persuasion) check** – She'll readily share details of her death, and ask that they help protect Heward, her adopted father.
- **DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana), Wisdom (Insight), or Charisma (Persuasion) check** – She will answer questions about her mission, admit her criminal involvement with the Family's upcoming smuggling operation, and/or talk about her association with Gale.

Consulate Staff.

The PCs automatically learn that Nilasa's boyfriend Braden shares Nilasa's connection to Thinking Man's Tavern and Sechim's Alkahest and Alchemicals, asking that they let people know what happened to her.

- **DC 11 Charisma (Persuasion) check** – The secretary Tia recalls Nilasa was speaking with a foreign doctor in the lobby. She's willing to share Wolfgang's case file, which lists his temporary hostel address and Flint contacts.

- **DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion) check** – Tia or another staffer reveals that Consular duNadria had a guest in the basement meeting room. He had a Risuri accent, but was otherwise pretty nondescript.
- **DC 11 Wisdom (Insight) check** – Most of the consulate staff seem oddly upbeat. If talked to, they say they liked Nilasa. All of them lick their lips slightly, and might break off mid-sentence to wonder if there are any more brigadeiros left.
- **DC 17 Wisdom (Insight) check** – Julian LeBrix is following orders he doesn't agree with.
- **DC 11 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisom (Medicine) check** – Examining the brigadeiros reveals that they were laced with fey pepper. Its effects are similar to the real-world drug ecstasy.
- **DC 11 Wisdom (Perception) check** – If the box the brigadeiros came in is examined, it has an inkstamp on the side saying it is from the Thinking Man's Tavern.

Upstairs.

If the PCs want to search the fourth floor offices, LeBrix stays with them at all times, trying to hurry them up. He insists the consular's office is off-limits, and that nothing happened there.

- **DC 11 Wisdom (Insight) check** – LeBrix seems worried of what the party would find in the consular's office.
- **DC 11 Wisdom (Perception) check** – In the gallery where Nilasa jumped out the window, a rug was moved. Underneath it are bloodstains.
- **DC 11 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check or DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check** – Looking at the consular's door reveals that it was picked. It's a very fine lock, requiring a DC 21 Dexterity check made with thieves' tools to open, so Nilasa must have had time. If any of the PCs open the room, they're liable to cause an international incident and be suspended from the RHC for a month (though Delft will encourage him to keep working on the case).
- **DC 11 Wisdom (Medicine) check** – The bloodstain under the carpet is consistent with a slashing attack that flicked blood sideways from the victim, not a gunshot that would have caused a puncture and spurt.

Alleyway Scuffle.

If a witness points them the right direction, or if they search themselves for half an hour by making a DC 11 Wisdom (Insight or Perception) check, they find signs of a brief scuffle, and a fallen piece of paper in the mud, which looks like a copy of a deed of ownership for a canal barge, marked with the seal of the Danoran consulate. This fell from the bundle of documents as Wolfgang fled.

- **DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana) check** – Electrical magic was recently used here.
- **DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check** – A tiny spurt of oddly coagulated blood sits in a smear of mud. A PC that makes a successful DC 11 Intelligence (Arcana) check can tell the blood is infused with necromantic energy.

Where Wolfgang Went.

If the PCs make it to the alley, a carriage driver named Jack Byron spots them and comes to talk. Otherwise, this information reaches them through a police report, which gets delivered to the RHC office later that day, marked for their attention. The carriage driver who picked up Dr. von Recklinghausen never got paid, and after a few hours he returned to the street where he picked the man up, hoping to maybe collect money from someone who knew him. When he saw the criminal investigation, he came looking for the PCs.

The driver tells the PCs that he picked up a man with bloody hands who was carrying some kind of bundle – the driver opines that the bundle contained surgical tools. The man with the bundle spoke with an accent the driver found unfamiliar, but the driver placed the accent as originating north of the Avery Sea. The man asked to be driven to a hostel – the House of Blue Birds – two miles away on the western edge of the North Shore district, and he eventually explained away the blood, claiming that he was a doctor in the middle of a procedure and that he needed specialized surgical equipment that he knew could be found at the House of Blue Birds. The driver took the man to the hostel, then waited for half an hour before realizing he'd been ditched.

Searching for the Alchemist.

Once the party finds out Nilasa has receipts, and that she used a potion and drugs to pull off her mission, they might want to track down the seller of the alchemicals, Dansica Waryeye. Once the party finds her, see pages 25–26.

- **DC 11 Intelligence (Arcana) check** – If the party finds the *potion of invisibility*, an hour in an alchemical laboratory can determine the composition of its ingredients, which includes brackish water, suggesting the PCs start their search for the alchemist who made it in Pine Island.
- **DC 11 Intelligence (Investigation) check** – If the party tries to track down the shop where Nilasa's receipt came from (with or without the elixir as a clue), a PC can devote four hours to searching a district. Multiple PCs shorten the time needed. A failed search isn't a dead end; after another four hours he can attempt the check again, slowly eliminating districts from the list to search. A successful search of Pine Island locates Waryeye's shop.

Surgery?

While the wealthy and fortunate do have access to magical healing, some ailments are more complex than mere gashes and bruises, making them beyond the skills of novice clerics and other healers. Additionally, the current academic belief is that healing magic can be made more effective if the practitioner possesses a thorough understanding of the human body, so surgery and vivisection is popularly seen as a progressive form of research even for characters who can use magic to heal.

Doctor von Recklinghausen, for instance, understands both advanced surgery and magical healing, allowing him to more precisely repair wounds that normally require high-level magic to fix.



- **DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check** – Another apothecary points the PCs to Waryeye, and mentions her husband “The House Elf.”
- **DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check** – Similarly, a search for the source of the fey pepper Nilasa used in the brigadeiros requires four hours hitting up criminal contacts in any given district. A successful search in Pine Island finds Danisca; and a success in Stray River reveals that most of the fey pepper west of the river is picked up from Pine Island. A success elsewhere reveals that new cheaper fey pepper is coming out of Pine Island, and it has the dealers *east* of the river in a panic.

Pursuing Leads.

At this point there’s not much else the PCs can do here. They’ll need to decide which threads of the investigation they want to pursue, and whether they’d rather all work together on one lead at a time, or split up and pursue different leads in small groups. These paths are detailed in the following chapters.

Nilasa’s Criminal Background. If the PCs contact or swing by the Parity Lake police station, after about three hours they finally receive a thin hand-copied file of what information the police have on Nilasa Hume, reproduced on page 11. Details are sparse, but they include her last few known residences, a list of accomplices and their whereabouts, and details of her various arrests.

Of particular interest is her latest arrest, when she was picked up in a raid on a known den of criminals just a week ago. She was charged with Supporting Criminal Activities and told to appear in court a few days from now. Her bail was paid by Heward Sechim, whose address is listed (he lives at his factory). The document notes that she was picked up with two men – Ford Sorghum and Travis Starter, both of whom are currently serving a term for parole violation, locked up in a floating prison in Flint Bay called the Goodson Estuarial Reformatory. See page 24.

Returning to the Consulate.

In the course of their investigations, the PCs might come back to the consulate, but they won’t get any new answers unless they’ve found the proper clues and know to ask the right questions.

Breaking In.

If the PCs want to sneak in and find more documents of the sort Nilasa stole, make sure they understand that getting caught will cause a diplomatic disaster and probably land them in prison. Security is tighter, with experienced guards stationed on the fourth floor at all times, and magical alarm wards placed in the consular’s room. The consular clears out any incriminating documents, and he places them in a wall safe.

Getting LeBrix’s Trust.

If the party recovers the documents Nilasa stole from Dr. von Recklinghausen, they find reports signed by Security Chief LeBrix. If they mention these reports to LeBrix, and share some of what they’ve seen, they might get him to open up about his investigation and how it was shut down.

If the party captures the red dragonborn arsonists or any of their accomplices, they can learn about a canceled hit job, where the arsonists were hired to burn LeBrix to death in his home, but called off a few hours before they did the deed. This also helps earn LeBrix’s thanks, and if the PCs have not yet taken down the arsonists, LeBrix can give them something to help out. If any PC uses firearms, LeBrix provides two *vendetta bullets* (see page 10), one etched with the name Eberardo, the other Valando.

If a PC has the Gunsmith theme, LeBrix instructs the character in how to harness one’s ire to create such bullets in the future.

The Crowd Outside.

If your players prefer to roleplay their interactions with witnesses, they find an assortment of wealthy businessmen who were headed out to gamble, household servants who were heading home after their night shifts, fleet messengers delivering trading news from the stock market in Central district, carriage drivers delivering Danorans who had appointments at the consulate, beggar children (but of the well-dressed, respectable sort), and a trio of glaziers who were fortunate enough to walk by just as a fancy window was shattered.

If your players are more into mechanical dice-rolling, they can just make ability checks.

- **DC 11 Charisma (Persuasion) check** – Most of the people who saw the event have already left, but any number of PCs can spend a half hour chasing down witnesses. Those who do so can make a Charisma (Persuasion) check to get information. A PC can also try making a Charisma (Intimidation) check, but the crowd is generally willing to talk, so the PC makes the check with disadvantage for coming across as belligerent. Each success nets the party one of the pieces of information below. If the characters succeed on a DC 17 check, they are also able to find an additional piece of information in that time. The party can spend more time and make additional checks if they want.
 - The woman crashed out the window, hit the fence, and then there were two gunshots, a few seconds apart. When she jumped, she had her arms covering her face, as if to shield herself.
 - Someone was up in the window, but he looked like he was completely black, except for something shiny, perhaps a gun. A moment later he had vanished.
 - A man with a goatee went up to the dying woman, and she handed him a bundle of papers and folders, then whispered something before she died. The man yanked a yellow pendant and necklace off the woman’s neck, before running away.
 - A man sprinted down the street then turned down an alley, carrying an armful of something. (The witness can point out the alley.)
 - When the Danorans took the woman’s body off the fence, her face was covered in blood. People matching the description of LeBrix, Consular duNadria, and a third nondescript man got into a brief shouting match as the body was being carried inside.

Thread One: Smugglers

THIS ACT DETAILS WHAT THE PCs CAN DISCOVER as they investigate Nilasa's criminal background and her connection to the Thinking Man's Tavern. If the PCs do poorly at this thread, for the rest of the campaign the criminal element in Flint will have ready access to cheap and dangerous magic wands. Even if they fail, though, they'll catch the eye of Morgan Cippiano, head of The Family in Flint, who can be of use later in the adventure.

Thinking Man's Tavern

Social. Real-Time.

Clues to the activities of the murdered woman wait at a watering hole for scholars, artists, and revolutionaries.

The Thinking Man's Tavern lies a few streets off from the main docks of Bosum Strand, memorable for the cobbled-together statue that stands by its entrance, an assortment of flotsam and jetsam assembled into the shape of a sitting man deep in thought.

If the PCs come by early in the day, they'll be unlikely to find anyone who knew Nilasa. Waiters might encourage them to come back in the evening, when a larger crowd has assembled.

The tavern has seven main sections.

- Patio in front of the building with seating for ten and the titular "thinking man" statue.
- The entrance, with a bar that seats ten and tables for an additional thirty.
- The common room with tables to seat sixty on the ground floor, and another forty on an upstairs balcony. Each floor has a lavatory with plumbing.
- The game room on the ground, which seats thirty and has a pool table and a storage closet that holds various game supplies. A secret panel in the storage closet reveals a locked trap door down to the basement tunnel. Spotting the secret panel requires a PC to make a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check and unlocking the trap door requires a PC to make a successful DC 18 Dexterity check with thieves' tools.
- The riot room on the second floor, behind the balcony. It has limited dining space, but its chairs are usually claimed by crowds of writers, artists, and philosophers who just want to drink and share their latest thoughts.

Meanwhile, in the News.

The adventure already has a lot going on, but if you want to give a little extra life to the city of Flint, you can occasionally drop mentions of the following current events. People murmur about these in cafes, gossip on the streets, or read about them in papers. Only a few have even a tangential connection to this adventure's plot. You might spin some of these into side quests, but be careful that your players don't latch onto the wrong ones and run off chasing red herrings.

- **Murder.** The Ragman has grown more active, and is believed responsible for four deaths over the course of two weeks. Flint police investigate, and an impoverished Yerasol Veteran claims he saw the same pattern of wounds on fellow soldiers in the last war.
- **Music.** Randall Pell, a renowned composer from Slate, will be conducting the Navras Opera House and plans to hold auditions for performers. This has led to a boom in sales of "respectable" attire for amateur Docker musicians, who want to make a good impression.
- **Mayhem.** A rash of eighteen small fires in Parity Lake is believed to be arson. So far the burns have killed over forty, but fire responders have managed to keep them from spreading. The fires seem to target properties of by factory owners, even the occasional factory out-building, and so are believed to be the work of Gale.
- **Monsters.** Citizens are warned to avoid the western bayous around the Battalion school in Pine Island. The martial university has imported exotic wild beasts from a Risuri colony in Elfaivar, and will be conducting exercises in beast tracking and monster slaying.
- **Marriage.** Wealthy industrialist and renowned son of Flint Guy Goodson is getting married to a Crisillyyiri noblewoman: Faith Unitas. The ceremony will be closed to the public, but reporters are eagerly sharing every detail of the arrangements. The intense interest has journalists excited about all the papers they'll sell when King Aodhan has his marriage early next year.

- The kitchen in back, with the many necessary pantries and supplies.
- The basement, seldom used to begin with because it gets moldy, has flooded to ankle-deep since the city-wide tremors started. Mostly just used as a joke at the expense of new employees who ask where to find something, since nothing's down there. A side tunnel hidden behind a cracked statue leads to similarly flooded basements of other establishments in the area. Courtesy and several padlocks deter criminal entry, but the owner has keys handy for those he wants to sneak out. Spotting the side tunnel requires a PC to make a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check.



RHC Hierarchy.

The party reports to Assistant Chief Inspector Stover Delft. He reports to Lady Inspectress Margaret Saxby. Saxby doesn't play a prominent role until next adventure, but make her at least a small presence during this one. Mention her talking with Delft when the party shows up at the headquarters, or have her call in a different PC each day to get their thoughts on the investigation.

Saxby doesn't realize yet that the party's investigations will lead them to Macbannin, but when she finds out at the end of the adventure, she'll try to stall them a bit, asking for time to prepare for the public relations fall-out. Paint her as ambitious and political, though, not hostile.

Nilasa Hume. By the time the party encounters Nilasa she's already dead, but details of her life can come out through investigation or magic.

The illegitimate daughter of a blacksmith's wife who was seduced by an elf, Nilasa left home as early as she could and spent her teenage years living off petty crime, with occasional stints of incarceration. Several years ago she tried to reform, and found work in Heward Sechim's alkahest factory. Her bold personality earned her many admirers in the streets near the factory, as well as at the Thinking Man's Tavern in Bosum Strand, where Heward would occasionally bring his workers after a shift.

But she was drawn to the rebellious rhetoric of Gale, and so she joined up with the so-called "terrorist," performing reconnaissance in advance of acts of sabotage and using her old criminal connections to acquire illicit magic weapons and defenses. Shortly after Duchess Ethelyn's failed attempt to kill King Aodhan (see Adventure One, *The Island at the Axis of the World*), Gale decided to take a different approach, and she recruited Nilasa to infiltrate the Danoran consulate. To aid her missions, Gale gave Nilasa various potions and elixirs, as well as a pendant – the *canary in a coal mine* – which allows brief bursts of flight.



Thames Grimsley. A grizzled sailor, still with a full head of hair in his early 50s, Grimsley acts as head of the dock workers guild in Flint. He took a gash from a policeman's knife on the side of his face in the last big docker riot. A couple of months working at a theater as a child gave him a very stylized public speaking voice, one full of unnecessary, melodramatic pauses.



Owner and Staff.

Tall like a ship's mast and twice as well-traveled, **Tad Hilly** bought the tavern after he retired from a twenty year career as a merchant marine, though often when the night's drinking runs long he prefers to recount his history as one of piracy and adventure. He brags about outwitting the king of the mer-fey and outwrestling his pet kraken, and occasionally offers to let drunkards "search for his buried treasure" (*i.e.*, bail out the flooded basement) to cover their tab.

The rest of the staff mostly consist of women scholars studying at Pardwight University, or occasionally the wives or daughters of professors. Eschewing the typical brand of wait and cook staff hired for their looks, Hilly knows his customers derive more enjoyment from exchanging repartee with women who are cleverer than them.

The tavern's most famous hand is **Barb**, now going on sixty and starting to show the physical wear and tear from her other job at a factory that makes bores and drills. At first impression she seems little more than wrinkles, a toothy smirk, and two handfuls of silver rings, but she effortlessly makes visitors feel at home and shriekingly silences any regular who gets too full of himself.

Tad knew Nilasa only by appearance, but Barb formed an early bond with the woman before she realized the gorgeous young Nilasa could fend for herself against the attentions of the other patrons. Few people have a higher opinion of Nilasa, but like in most mother-daughter relationships Barb had no idea just what trouble the young woman was getting into.

Patrons.

While the tavern has a generous mix of performers, revolutionaries, intellectuals, and poseurs to the same, two main groups can provide useful information about Nilasa.

First, the Band is a group of a dozen musicians with connections to the Cloudwood brigands (Part 2, Thread 2: Gale), but who prefer to work in the city. Led by a long-haired halfling ocarina-player named **Jered Lawman**, the Band writes and performs songs that support Gale, the duchess, and other fey-friendly figures. They then have further connections to other rebellious groups throughout the city. They crack jokes in bad pidgin Elven, pass around the latest screeds that mock the king and insinuate that he's a puppet of Danor, and in general think haughtily that they're part of the vanguard of an imminent revolution against the industrial powers.

Nilasa was one of their main connections to the Cloudwood brigands, and in the past few months she had managed to steer these musicians toward actually causing trouble rather than talking about it. Jered was planning on the 5th of Summer to have his band dress up as eladrin warriors, sneak aboard a ship carrying huge casks of firegems, and throw the fuel into the harbor.

Second, the Professors consist of eight "professional students" who have been attending Pardwight University for a decade or more, plus their various less-experienced colleagues. Dominated by a dual philosophy/archaeology student in his late forties named **Henmet Rinus**, the group have weekly meetings and nightly drinking, often collaborating on and sharing papers and books on eclectically cross-disciplined topics. The august body likes to round out its weekly meetings with a shared pipe of fey pepper, and the wild thoughts they have during these often prompt next week's discussion topics.



Nilasa had only recently made friends with this group, after she learned that Hennet had spent a year in Crisillyir, studying the fossils of dragons and demons near Alais Primos. She had recently begun negotiations with the Family smugglers (page 33) to bring in a cache of stolen wands, and after determining she could trust Hennet she had him help her write correspondence in fancy Crisillyiri style to make a good impression with the criminals' boss, Morgan Cippiano. Hennet knew that Nilasa was working with some Crisillyiri group to acquire something illegal, and that she was writing to someone named Monsigneur Morgan Cippiano, but no specifics.

Finally, the PCs can spot a familiar face, **Thames Grimsley**, whom they met in the first adventure. Now head of a slowly-growing docker union, Grimsley is organizing large protests outside of factories that abuse their workers. His presence and how the PCs treated him in the first adventure can sway the crowd here.

Trembler.

When the party first enters the tavern, the place shakes a little bit. Patrons freak out as glasses topple off tables and crack. An orc sailor from Ber cries out, "Earthquake!" but the tremor stops almost immediately.

People are momentarily nervous until Hennet Rinus speaks up from a table by the bar, loud enough for the whole place to hear. "Don't listen to the porcine panic. Flint has been geologically stable since it was founded. We could no sooner have an earthquake than a blizzard! It was probably just the ground settling."

Soon, the clientele return to their drinks and food.

Asking Questions.

As is usual in Bosum Strand, initial reaction to government authority figures is suspicion. If the PCs were police they wouldn't get anywhere, but the RHC is slightly more respected. Still, the party should sense a palpable disapproval once it spreads that they're law enforcement agents.

If the PCs mention that Nilasa is dead, Barb in particular cries out in despair and, sobbing, demands to know what happened. Word ripples through the tavern, and those who associated with her clam up, not wanting to talk until they figure out if trouble might spill over to them.

Barb can tell the party whom they should talk with, but if the PCs bring up Nilasa's criminal connections, Barb turns against them, convinced that they're dishonoring the name of a wonderful girl who would never hurt anyone. The more the party upsets Barb, the harder they find their inquiries in the rest of the tavern. If they step on enough toes, make the mistake of bringing up gruesome details of Nilasa's death, or threaten anyone in the tavern, Tad Hilly has his bouncers throw the party out. Resisting leads to an all-out brawl, with the party outnumbered at least ten to one.

Existential Investigation.

If the PCs comport themselves well, they'll have to convince either the Band or the Professors that it's in their interest to talk. Regardless of whichever group they approach first, Hennet Rinus shows up and poses an assignment.

(Do not be surprised if the PCs interrupt him during his lecture.)



"In any society there are rituals of interaction to establish authority and mark the passage of one stage of life to another. You, as law officers, must be familiar with these rituals, particularly the one where you ask questions, the suspect claims he knows nothing, and you by turn explain how you will punish those who do not cooperate.

"But this is an old tradition, and we live in modern times. We live in what some call an age of reason. A few of the ladies and gentlemen in this fine establishment would prefer if it were an age of revolution. And like a revolution, reason requires us to turn our thoughts. Always approach a problem the same way, with the same ritual, and you miss other possible paths to satisfaction.

"So I pose to you, constables, an assignment. Rather than convincing us that your authority is mighty and that we should quail at the thought of disobeying it, can you give us reason why your authority is legitimate? We can leave for another day the discussion of whether it serves our interest to let watchmen hold us to account for actions when we are arguably individuals of free will. Today, though, just tell us why you think you have the right to enforce the law."

Arguments and Abuse. As long as the PCs are good sports, Hennet just throws up a few questions to their rationale ("If you're part of a governmental structure endorsed by society as a whole, what size society is necessary for a group to claim it is separate from that whole?" or "If you're protecting us from harm, what makes you better arbiters of what is harmful than any of us?" or "If outnumbering us gives you the right to tell us what to do, why do you allow us to do anything you dislike? Have you heard *their* music? Don't they deserve to get arrested for *that*?").

Jered and his band might heckle and jeer anything that involves prying into their secrets, but Hennet encourages them to "follow the forms of the ritual" and answer the constables' questions. He'll even do the same, admitting to his Crisillyiri correspondence while maintaining ignorance of any criminal wrong-doing. Jered will in turn admit to knowing Nilasa worked with a band of brigands in the Cloudwood, and he can provide general directions to find them.

If the PCs balk, or argue with might rather than logic, Hennet tells everyone to just lie to the constables, since it's more fun than playing along. It's still possible to intimidate people into talking, but news will quickly hit the streets, and the PCs will become infamous as mindless government goons.



Returning to the Tavern.

Once the PCs learn of Nilasa's links to the brigands and the smugglers, Thinking Man's Tavern holds little extra of use in this investigation, but depending on your party it might become a familiar stomping ground, or a nest of rivals.

If the party needs to get word spread across the city in a flash, this is one of the best places to start a rumor or make a proclamation. Different groups of specialists can also help with niche problems. A gang of amateur geologists might assemble makeshift seismographs and set them up around the city, finding evidence that further tremors are emanating from Cauldron Hill. Talking with sailors might provide clues at least of where smugglers *wouldn't* arrange a delivery. Simply meeting with would-be rioters who come here for marching orders might help quell some of the violence later in the adventure.

In later adventures, Henet can be a resource on matters archaeological, and despite his initial foppish appearance, Jered can be shaped into a useful agent when foreign elements disrupt the city.

Goodson Estuarial Reformatory

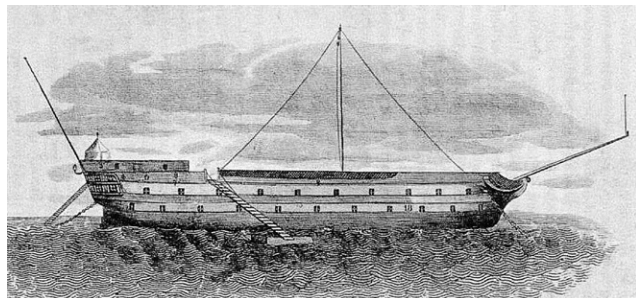
Social. Real-Time.

Nilasa's associates are incarcerated on a barge off the coast of Pine Island, and with the right deal they'll share what she bragged to them about.

Guy Goodson is a wealthy factory magnate who owns a private island in the Ayres. He portrays himself as a philanthropist, and a few months ago he convinced the city legislature to approve his reformatory program. Taking old sailing ships that would normally just be scuttled or dismantled and replaced by newer steamships, the program hastily refitted the vessels to have cells and guard quarters, with the intention of "moderating the criminal impulses of recidivists."

A dozen such vessels sit off the coast of Pine Island, loosely moored together and anchored in place, with no rigging to tempt prisoners into wild escape attempts. A thirteenth ship sank in a tragic fire a few weeks ago, allegedly after one of the prisoners agreed to testify against his old accomplices.

Inmates spend most of the day in their cells, equipped with hammocks and plenty of books (never mind the fact that most of them can't read). They get fed breakfast in their cells, then are let out to clean the deck in the afternoon, which they must do if they want to get dinner. Their legs are always lightly manacled, so the distance



to shore usually deters escape attempts. A musketeer sits in every ship's crow's nest, just in case distance and drowning isn't enough of a deterrent.

Staff, prisoners, and visitors have to be ferried over by rowboat. To help "socialize and acclimate" the prisoners, each day different activities are arranged, usually musical performances, classes on Risuri history and geography, or calisthenics. All the boats have fresh coats of paint that are smeared dark at the waterline with all the human excrement that floats around the stationary barges.

The director of the reformatory is **Derek Goodson**, son of Guy Goodson. He'll want to meet with the PCs if they come to interrogate any of his inmates, and will hastily shuffle around some men so his best-behaved prisoners will be around to show how "well" things are going.

Nilasa's Accomplices.

Ford Sorghum and **Travis Starter** used to work with Nilasa in petty burglary and cons, but they haven't had any jobs with her for two years. She was hanging out with them, reminiscing about old times, sharing the bounty of her recent successes, and bragging about a big smuggling deal she was arranging, when a police raid picked them all up. Ford and Travis were wanted for various acts of larceny, and so they were put away. But they cared for Nilasa enough that neither incriminated her, despite being offered a plea deal.

Each man knows that Nilasa was working with a group of newcomers to the city to acquire a large cache of wands stolen from a Crisillyir eldritch repository. The newcomers call themselves The Family, and they're edging in on the other smuggling operations in the city. Nilasa said they could provide dozens of magic wands to her allies in the Cloudwood, which would make future acts of sabotage all the easier, and which would help protect them against law enforcement.

Nilasa told them the delivery was going to be on the 4th of Summer, and implied she and an ally she called "**The House Elf**," would link up with members of The Family and sail out to the meet-up from some place in Pine Island. She said she was going to be paying tens of thousands of gold pieces for the haul. When they asked how she got that much money, she waved casually and said Gale had friends among the merfey, and that seventeen centuries of shipwrecks pays for a lot of contraband.

The PCs just have to break one of the two men to get this information, but both Ford and Travis know the rumors of snitches getting killed out here, so the PCs have to provide a sweet deal for them to talk. Honestly, the men are petty thieves and RHC constables have authority to get them a pardon in exchange for their assistance, but this scene is largely to see how comfortable your players are with making deals with shady characters.

Turning a Witness.

When speaking to the prisoners, use the rules for "Interrogating a Suspect" in Part Three of the *ZEITGEIST Player's Guide*.

Establishing Rapport.

Use a base of DC 13 for skill checks made to establish Rapport, and grant advantage or impose disadvantage on the check based



on how the party approaches them. Consider how they approach the prisoners: do they come when they're locked up (which makes the men nervous that their cell mates will overhear), or chat on the forecastle while a visiting string quartet plays nearby, or bring them to shore and treat them to a fine meal and some wine to loosen their tongues?

Extracting Information.

If the party can establish rapport, the men are interested in cutting a deal, but are reticent to talk because of rumors of snitches dying out here, resulting in a base of DC 17 on skill checks for Extraction. The party can sweeten the deal, though, making extraction easier.

Sweetening the Deal.

If given the chance, both Travis and Ford's first desire is to get both of them out of prison. Doing so counts as calling in a Rank One favor (see Prestige in Part Two of the *ZEITGEIST Player's Guide*). If the party isn't willing or able to do that, Travis wants the party to arrange weekly visits by his son, who is currently living in an orphanage. Meanwhile Ford wants to be allowed conjugal visits; he says there's a good space in the ship's aftcastle, where the guards usually take their breaks. He says he'd be willing to cooperate if the party can get both of his girlfriends to come by – but on different nights, of course.

Finally, either man could begrudgingly agree to help in exchange for a few extra amenities – weekly laundering of their bedsheets and clothes instead of monthly, and getting the ship turned just a bit so direct sunlight isn't heating up their cell in the afternoon so much. This can be done with a quick talk to Derek Goodson.

If the party accedes fully to the men's demands, reduce the Extraction DC to 9. Just giving them a little of what they want reduces the DC to 13.

The House Elf

Action/Social. Tactical/Real-Time.

The party tracks down a skilled liar and illusionist.

Nilasa had allies all throughout the city. In the Pine Island district, she bought her drugs and elixirs from **Danisca Waryeye**, a gnome mage to whom she was introduced after she made contact with the Family. Danisca is the Family's main producer of fey pepper, taking smuggled plants and extracting the powder from its pods.

Though the Family pays Danisca well, she was inspired by Duchess Ethelyn of Shale's stand against the king's industry, and she recently started crafting alchemical weapons to arm Gale's allies. Together Nilasa and Danisca convinced the Family to sell them stolen wands, and the deal is set to go down on the night of the 4th.

Nilasa planned to attend the deal and bring along Danisca's husband, **Blander Waryeye**, an absent-minded stage magician who performs under the name **The House Elf**. He's handy in a fight, despite his quirks. A unique marriage ritual grants the couple an empathic link, so Danisca would have been able to notify Gale if she sensed her husband in enough peril.



After word reaches her that Nilasa is dead, Danisca will decide to go to the meet-up too. If the party interrogates Danisca and gets her to break, they can learn the precise launch point and time of the wand deal. By taking her and her husband out of the picture early, they'll have a much easier time with the smugglers.

Two Fronts.

The Waryeyes own a pair of buildings that sit back to back on a strand of shops in the Pine Island district. Streets run past the front face of each building, one her shop **Waryeye's Apothecary**, and the other a small illusionist's studio with just a painted sign of a clichéd magician in a gentleman's coat pulling a badger out of a top-hat. While Danisca makes most of their money through sales of minor magic in her shop, her husband **Blander** operates a side business as a performing magician.

Blander mostly just spends his days fiddling with possible illusion tricks, devising creative combinations of actual spells and impressive sleight of hand. On occasion he'll put on acts for festivals or parties.

Most of the time, the two keep to their own buildings, but they can easily cross via a fenced-in bridge on the second floor. Due to their wedding ritual empathic connection, if either gets into trouble, the other won't be long. Also, because of the valuables in her shop, during business hours Danisca keeps three guards, and at night she has paid to ward the place with typical security spells. The two share a bedroom upstairs of the apothecary shop.

Danisca comes across as ebullient and methodical, working through complex situations with an enthusiastic smile. She buys eclectic and colorful fashions, and has magically turned her hair bright purple. Blander, for his part, stands even shorter than his wife and has an impishly curled moustache. He uses magic to switch hats multiple times throughout a conversation, and is prone to bizarre non sequiturs on technical topics, ranging from the proper way to store goat's milk for travel, to the different types of undead that are capable of turning those they kill into more undead. He longs one day to build a trebuchet.

Meet the Apothecary.

Danisca has two guards at her apothecary shop. It's possible the PCs will track down Danisca by tracing the fey pepper or potion at the consulate. If so, they can question her, but she tries to deceive them. Danisca is an adept liar, and the PC speaking with her must make a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Insight) check to determine something strange is afoot. If Danisca realizes the PCs are law enforcement, she'll offer them fresh water or sweetened lime juice, then discreetly



imbibe a *potion of glibness* from her kitchen-laboratory to enhance her skill at prevarication. For the next 1 hour after drinking the potion, whenever Danisca rolls a Charisma check, she can never roll lower than a 15. Additionally, no matter what she says, magic that would determine if she's telling the truth indicates that she is being truthful.

She'll claim that Nilasa was a regular customer, and that she sold her the fey pepper and a *potion of invisibility*, but that Nilasa presented the proper permit (since normally magic that can make you invisible for more than a few seconds is illegal). She feigns ignorance of Nilasa having any criminal connection.

If the PCs take the time to snoop around, they might notice a secret gnome-sized door that leads from behind her shop counter to her laboratory with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. Searching around in the upstairs office can reveal her a wall safe behind a painting with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check, but it's locked and can only be opened with a DC 15 Dexterity check made with thieves' tools. In any case, she won't let them open it without a warrant, which takes a day unless the party calls in a Rank 1 Risur favor, which speeds that up to about an hour. Spell casters might detect a faint illusion concealing the magical auras of the items within the safe should they use a *detect magic* spell. More cavalier PCs might just open it anyway and get a warrant later. The safe contains contraband like one more *potion of glibness* and three more *potions of invisibility*, plus dried leaves, which a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Nature) check identifies as as coming from the fey pepper plant. She doesn't have any actual pepper here at the moment, though. (Remember that the RHS will collect these items from the PCs at the end of the adventure if they take them.)

If the PCs want to arrest her, her reaction depends on how much trouble she thinks she's in. As a legitimate businesswoman she doesn't want to attack or flee if she'll just get hit with a fine, but if she thinks she might go to jail or have her business license revoked, she'll try to lure the party into her *dreaming dust* trap (see below).

Meet the Magician.

Alternately, the PCs might never know about Danisca, and instead try to track down The House Elf. Two hours of asking around followed by making a successful DC 11 Charisma (Persuasion) check can inform the party to The House Elf's reputation and the address of his studio, as well as dozens of conflicting stories of his appearance and powers.

Blander assumes the PCs want him to perform for them, and he'll start eagerly showing off his pet honey badgers even before the party gets a chance to start asking him questions.

Blander isn't as good a liar as Danisca, only requiring the PCs make a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check to realize something is fishy, and he's not as cool a thinker, so at the first sign that the PCs know he's involved in criminal activities he'll bolt. He calls for Danisca's help mentally and then scampers upstairs to the bridge that leads to Danisca's shop. When he links up with Danisca she chides him and again tries to lure the PCs into her *dreaming dust* trap. If that fails, they'll try to escape.

- ✦ Danisca Waryeye
- ✦ Blander Waryeye
- ✦ 2 Apothecary Guards
- ✦ 3 Honey Badgers
- ✦ Dreaming Dust Trap
- ✦ Drowning Tank Trap
- ✦ Razzle Dazzle Trap

Blander Waryeye

Small humanoid (forest gnome), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 14 (leather, *ring of protection*)

Hit Points 27 (5d6 + 10)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)	15 (+2)

Skills Performance +4

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages Common, Draconic, Elven, Gnomish, Sylvan

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Gnome Cunning. Blander has advantage on all Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against magic.

The Married Life. Blander and Danisca are the recipients of a specialized wedding ritual that has bound them together in a way greater than any legal binding could. The two can communicate telepathically as long as they are within 10 miles of one another. This trait only allows them to express basic emotions such as anger, fear, or joy.

Natural Illusionist. Blander can cast *minor illusion* at will (spell save DC 11).

Spellcasting. Blander is a 2nd-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12). He has the following bard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *mage hand*, *vicious mockery*

1st level (3 slots): *charm person*, *healing word*, *sleep*

ACTIONS

Cane. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 (1d4-1) bludgeoning damage.

Blander possesses one *potion of healing*.

Apothecary Guard

Medium humanoid (human), lawful neutral

Armor Class 16 (studded leather, shield)

Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Intimidation +2, Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The apothecary guard makes two club attacks.

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

**Danisca Waryeye**

Small humanoid (forest gnome), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 14 (padded)**Hit Points** 22 (4d6 + 8)**Speed** 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +4**Skills** Deception +6, History +4**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10**Languages** Common, Draconic, Elven, Gnome, Sylvan**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)**Gnome Cunning.** Danisca has advantage on all Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against magic.**The Married Life.** Blander and Danisca are the recipients of a specialized wedding ritual that has bound them together in a way greater than any legal binding could. The two can communicate telepathically as long as they are within 10 miles of one another. This trait only allows them to express basic emotions such as anger, fear, or joy.**Innate Spellcasting.** Danisca can cast *minor illusion* and *prestidigitation* at will (spell save DC 12).**ACTIONS****Alchemical Assault.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 30/60 ft., one target. Danisca grabs a random alchemical vial from her satchel. Roll 1d6 to determine the effect on a hit.

- 1. Alchemist's Fire** - The target takes 5 (1d6 + 2) fire damage, and every creature within 5 feet of the target must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 3 points of fire damage on a failed save. The target also catches on fire, taking 3 (1d6) fire damage at the start of each of its turns until it uses an action to put out the fire.
- 2. Thunderstone** - Each creature within a 10-foot-radius of the target spread must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, that creature is deafened for 1 hour.
- 3. Jinx Juice** — The target takes 9 (2d6 + 2) necrotic damage and has disadvantage on its next saving throw.
- 4. Alkahest** — The target takes 9 (2d6 + 2) points of acid damage, and every creature within 5 feet of the target must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 3 point of acid damage on a failed save.
- 5. Tanglefoot Bag** — The target falls prone and cannot stand up until it uses an action to make a successful DC 13 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to escape the tanglefoot bag.
- 6. Potion of Healing** - The target regains 7 (2d4 + 2) hit points, then takes 3 (1d6) slashing damage as the glass shards of the potion vial digs into its skin.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.**Gear** Danisca possesses two potions of healing, two potions of invisibility, and one potion of glibness.**Honey Badger**

Small beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12**Hit Points** 5 (1d6 + 2)**Speed** 30 ft., burrow 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +3**Senses** passive Perception 13**Languages** -**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)**ACTIONS****Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.**Tactics.**

If the PCs try to arrest Danisca, she pretends to go along with them, but mentally alerts Blander of danger, who'll sneak in to the upstairs balcony and follow her lead. Then she tells the PCs that she needs to take a few minutes to safely put away some alchemicals in her lab, or else the place might burn down. She lets the PCs accompany her to the entrance of her lab, but warns them to stay at the doorway. She heads to the far corner of the room, then uses *prestidigitation* to release a burst of *dreaming dust* from the ceiling (see below). Her hope is to confuse the PCs and wipe their recent memory.

If that doesn't work, she'll try to quaff a *potion of invisibility*. If she's attacked, Danisca also attempts to quaff a potion to turn invisible and then proceeds to flee to the second floor, then across to Blander's magician studio, hoping the traps will slow pursuit down so the two gnomes can escape into the street. Meanwhile Blander tries to cause a distraction by unleashing his penned honey badgers (he uses them in magic tricks like humans would use doves, and they're very fond of him).

The guards, for their part, know not to go near the *dreaming dust* trap. Though they're wary of getting charged with attempted murder, they figure that Danisca can muddle the memories of the PCs as long as they can knock them out.

Alternately, the PCs might approach Blander first, in which case he'll try to reach the second floor bridge over to Danisca's shop. Danisca, empathically alerted, will have already unlocked the doors for the bridge, and will be waiting to slam the door shut and lock it once Blander gets through.

Though focused on making their escape, when Danisca and Blander do attack, they try to strike from opposite directions, drawing enemies apart so neither of them gets surrounded. Danisca uses her alchemicals to stymie pursuit, while Blander throws enemies into piles of volatile magic or the various traps set up in his studio.





Two Fronts

1st Floor



2nd Floor



One square equals 5ft.

Trap: Dreaming Dust

Magical trap

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

With a quick magical nudge, Danisca causes a metal plate to fall on and shatter several vials of dreaming dust hidden in the ceiling. Yellow powder bursts downward through tiny holes, filling the entrance to her laboratory.

When activated, a burst of dreaming dust affects creatures in a 10-foot radius. Each creature in that area must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, it is stunned. Creatures stunned by the dust become highly susceptible to suggestion, to the point that even its short-term memories can be changed by simply telling it something else happened. The susceptibility wears off after 2 (1d4) hours, but the memory alteration is permanent.

On the next round, each creature still in the radius must make another DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, it falls unconscious for 5 (2d4) hours.

Trap: Drowning Tanks

Mechanical trap

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

The floor drops out beneath you and you plunge into a cramped glass-walled tank filled with water. A trap door snaps shut above you, promising a horrible drowning death if you can't find a way out. Criss-crossing threads of gold wrap around the outside of the glass, and gold blocks teleportation, so you're in trouble.

A creature on a 5-square-foot trapdoor must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, it falls into a tank of water. If the creature fails by 5 or more, it has no time to hold its breath and immediately begins suffocating. The glass of the tank has AC 12 and 20 hit points. Do not forget that melee attacks made underwater are made with disadvantage unless the attacker has a swim speed. A character can spot this trap door with a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Trap: Razzle Dazzle

Mechanical trap

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

This place is a real fire hazard. Dozens of buckets filled with quick-flash fire dust and other theatrical alchemicals lie stacked about, some of them having fallen on their sides. Worse, the floor is riddled with strings and tiny pressure plates, and you think you might have just lit a fuse by stepping on one of them.

A character that steps on a pressure plate activates a slew of minor alchemical explosives. After 1 round, all creatures within 10 feet of the pressure plate must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 5 (1d6 + 2) fire damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one. A character can spot this pressure plate with a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Terrain.

Many spaces in Danisca's shop are display tables covered with volatile chemicals. These spaces count as difficult terrain, and they require making a successful DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to enter safely. If a creature fails its check, or if forced movement moves it into the space, the creature takes 1 point each of acid, cold, electricity, fire, and necrotic damage. A creature can take at most 5 damage in this way in a single turn, no matter how many spaces it moves through at once.

What if There's No Fight?

If the party never comes here, or if they resolve the situation without a fight, you can still make use of this location later in the adventure. If the PCs try to lure Dr. von Recklinghausen to talk with his friend Lynn Kindleton, he might arrange to meet at an abandoned apothecary's shop that's identical to this one. Or if the PCs get Morgan Cippiano's help to take out the lizardfolk arsonists, he might hire the brothers to burn down Danisca's recently-abandoned shop, and the PCs can lay a trap here.

Blander's magician studio has several props that can act as traps (see above), and Danisca has set up a *dreaming dust* trap in her lab.

The second floor doors between the buildings are locked, requiring a successful DC 18 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to open, but Danisca and Blander both have keys, and most likely the doors will be unlocked before a fight begins.

Aftermath.

If either of the gnomes are knocked out or captured, the other will stop fleeing and will fight to free them. Remember that the PCs should be trying to take prisoners, not kill the pair. Likewise, neither of them wants a murder charge, so they won't go for killing blows.

Once captured, Danisca tries to make a plea deal, getting her sentence reduced so she and her husband avoid jail in exchange for her telling the party where and when they can find the smugglers. She knows the man who's captaining the ship that Nilasa was going to ride is named **Deorn Feldman**, and that the ship is to set out at high tide, two hours after sunset on the 4th, leaving from a particular dock she can provide directions to. She doesn't know exactly where the meet-up is, but it's going to be somewhere near an uninhabited rock in The Ayres islands.

If the Waryeyes knock out the PCs, Danisca will drug them with a heavy dose of *dreaming dust*. Likewise if she gets lucky and her trap succeeds, she'll talk to the susceptible PCs and tell them a cover story. If they came to her shop, she'll say they talked to her, and that everything was in order. If they were looking for The House Elf, she'll instead say they found a stage magician who talked to them and seemed completely unsuspecting.

She'll then encourage them to go to a nearby pub and drink the rest of the day away. By the time the powder wears off, the PCs won't remember what happened except for a general sense that it was a dead end. If they decide to come back, Danisca will have cleared out anything incriminating, and Blander will just hide and not talk to the PCs. Danisca will then start making plans to close up shop and move to another city, but not before warning Gale and the family that the PCs are onto them.

Treasure.

In addition to a variety of potions and alchemicals the party could loot (worth roughly 1,000 gp), the party can also retrieve Danisca's potions and Blander's *ring of protection*.



Smugglers' Night

Action. Montage/Tactical.

Smugglers working for a group called the Family have a ship docked in Pine Island. The party can follow them to their rendezvous, or ambush them before they get out to sea.

By interrogating Danisca, or perhaps by following other leads, the PCs can learn the location of the dock where Family smugglers are prepared to set out on the night of the 4th, sailing a small cutter called *Silvo*. They intend to rendezvous with a Crisillyiri merchant ship, *Li Grifoni Grinyande* (The Grinning Griffin), off an uninhabited island in The Ayres.

The Crisillyiri will hand over three crates of magic wands, and the local smugglers will pay them with a case of gold ingots worth 10,000 gp, plus a stack of bills of mark worth a total of 150,000 gp. These bills are popular currency for massive transactions, but the bank that backs them with actual coinage is based in Nalaam, a small neutral city in the mountain states between Drakr and Crisillyir. The party will have the opportunity to visit Nalaam in Adventure Four.

The party has a few choices of how to go after the smugglers.

- **Caught in the Act.** First, they might requisition a ship of their own (detailed in Part Two of the *ZEITGEIST Player's Guide*), wait for the smugglers to depart, and shadow them to the rendezvous. There's enough traffic in the harbor near dusk that they probably can watch from afar without attracting attention. Then once the two ships link up they can close and apprehend them.

The benefit of this plan is that the party can catch both groups at once. The drawback is that if there's a fight, they'll have a lot more enemies to contend with. If they're clever the PCs might sneak up, make a note via spyglass or swimming scout of the name of the Crisillyiri vessel, then wait for them to separate. The party can chase down the local smugglers and seize the wands, then alert the port police to seize the Crisillyiri vessel when it docks.

- **The Boss Has a Cold. He Sent Us.** Alternately, the party might attack the wharf in Parity Lake before the local smugglers can set out. Prisoners can give them directions to the rendezvous, and the PCs can board the smugglers' ship, letting them get close to the Crisillyiri ship and catch the crew off guard.
- **I Sure Hope They Come Back Soon.** The party might decide to let the local smugglers go to the rendezvous, while the PCs lie in wait at the Parity Lake wharf. The smugglers plan to stop briefly back at their dock to hand over one crate of wands to some local allies, but then they'll sail up to Stray River, where they'll offload the other two crates of wands. Family operatives will deliver one crate to Gale's allies in the Cloudwood the next day, and they'll distribute the rest to their people throughout the city.



Ships of the RHC.

One goal of this scene is to establish that the PCs, as constables of the RHC, have access to ships for their missions. All the later adventures will include scenes that involve ships. Though at first they just have access to simple coast guard style cutters, as they increase in Prestige they'll either be able to trade up for superior vessels, or outfit their ship with weapons and magical enhancements.

Part Two of the *ZEITGEIST Player's Guide* contains options for ships the PCs can requisition. Though the mission will take a few hours, their Prestige should be low enough that they can only request small cutters with minimal shipboard weapons. In the coming pages and in later adventures you'll find stats for other ships. Luckily on this mission their foes' ships are also barely armed.

If you use battle maps and miniatures, we recommend you print the ship layouts on thick paper, or hand draw them, then cut out the ships so it's easier to move them through the battle.

If your PCs are not members of the RHC, you might have one character—preferably a Yerasol Veteran—own his own ship, or the party might borrow a ship from the Constabulary.

Multiple Encounters.

The can get caught in an overwhelming encounter if they plan poorly, whereas if they are clever and already dealt with the Waryeyes, they might just have to face two less challenging encounters.

Some groups prefer challenging set-piece action scenes, and would want a tough fight even if they are clever. If that describes your group, you might need to add some foes to some of the encounters.

If the PCs confront the two ships together, it's a higher level encounter (even higher if the Waryeyes are present) – an appropriately challenging capstone of this thread of the investigation.

Alternately, the PCs might go after the Parity Lake wharf, which is a challenging encounter (or hard if the Waryeyes are there). That leaves *Li Grifoni Grinyande*, normally an easy encounter. To kick up the challenge, you might decide to have the whole crew join any fight, though that could get tedious.

If the PCs decide to confront the two ships separately and they go after the *Grifoni* first, you might just increase it to an average encounter by adding some random guard (treat as Apothecary Guards from the Waryeyes encounter), and then increase the *Silvo* from an easy encounter to a challenging. For that, make the crew consist of Deorn and nine Family bravuras. If the Waryeyes are tagging along, they provide enough of a challenge that you can get away with just converting two sailors into bravuras, for a total of Deorn, five unscrupulous sailors, four Family bravuras, and a pair of married gnomes.

Either way, one of the biggest excitement factors of this scene is the chaotic blasts from the smuggled wands, so if you're shooting for drama, try to steer the party to go after whoever has the wands only after they've dealt with the other group.





Family Wharf

This small bayou house can only be reached by a narrow boardwalk which the Family keeps watch on, or by swimming or taking a boat. The party might completely bypass this area, but if they do want to strike here, they'll have a hard time making good use of their ship in the tight quarters. Rowboats would be more useful, or perhaps simply swimming. Of course, there are piranha in these waters.

Because the ships can move, the map for this encounter doesn't include either the *Silvo* or the two rowboats. The *Silvo* is moored to the east of the house. One rowboat sits outside to the north, the other on the south by the boardwalk.

Under the direction of **Deorn Feldman**, a local Flinter whom the Family recruited for his excellent riverboating skills, seven unscrupulous sailors prep the *Silvo*, a short cutter, single-masted, 30 ft. long, little more than a hull with a sail. Two Family bravuras stand lookout on the boardwalk, separated by 20 ft., just within sight of each other. The other two bravuras are busy cleaning up after dinner. If the party hasn't apprehended them or scared them off, **Danisca** and **Blander Waryeye** are also present, full after a fine *Crisillyiri* meal of pesto chicken and pasta.

Technically only Deorn and the bravuras are members of the Family, but it's tradition in the criminal syndicate to share a meal with team-mates to help build trust and get a sense of who might be a liability.

A piranha swarm lurks by the cypress trees east of the house. Normally schools of piranha don't attack large creatures, but the smugglers have made a habit of dunking their leftovers and the leavings of butchered fish and fowl, to let the piranha clean dishes and leave stripped bones that local fishermen buy as jewelry. Busy with prepping the *Silvo*, the smugglers haven't fed the fishies yet tonight, and they are hungry. They attack indiscriminately.

The stats for this location are included at the end of this encounter, to consolidate the crews of the two ships. If the Waryeyes are present, their stats are on page 27.

- ◆ **Deorn Feldman**
- ◆ **4 Family Bravuras**
- ◆ **7 Unscrupulous Sailors**
- ◆ **Piranha Throng**
- ◆ **Danisca Waryeye**
- ◆ **Blander Waryeye**

Tactics.

If the party approaches by boardwalk, the two lookout bravuras try to hold the boardwalk and bottleneck the party while the rest of the criminals rush to launch the *Silvo*. Two of the sailors act as crew, and at the end of the round the ship pulls away from the house and flees into the night. The remaining bravuras then dive into the marsh and try to swim away.

If the party approaches by boat, Deorn figures he can't just run, so he tries to lure the PCs in. The bravuras on the boardwalk take a rowboat and try to stop the party from making landfall. Deorn and his sailor allies fan out and fire from cover behind fences and buildings – go prone, then stand, shoot, and go prone again. Meanwhile the bravuras in the house sneak to the second boat and stay out of the light as they try to flank.

If the Waryeyes are present, they try to stay out of combat until the party actually gets to the house. Neither has good long-ranged options, but once the party closes in they can disrupt attempts to take out Deorn and the sailors. If anyone is wounded while in the water, the piranha throng swarms the unfortunate victim.

If the party has their ship and the smugglers manage to slip past them, see the *Silvo* Chase skill challenge, below.

Terrain.

A chest-high fence conceals parts of the boardwalk and house, and gives defenders cover, but it wouldn't be hard to smash through the old, bayou-rotted wood.

Light water near the cypress trees can be waded through as difficult terrain. The rest of the water is at least 10 feet deep and must be swum through by making a successful DC 11 Strength (Athletics) check. Though the water to the north is fairly open, surrounding trees make navigating ships through here difficult.

Aftermath.

If defeated, the smugglers can be convinced to tell the party where the meet-up is through clever interrogation or an offer to let one of them go in exchange for squealing. (If that happens, one of the unscrupulous sailors takes the offer, and ends up dead within a week.) They have little here at the wharf of value aside from the money they were planning to use to pay for the wands.

If the smugglers take out the party, they know better than to kill law enforcement officers. Instead Deorn has the party disarmed, tied up, and taken to the house of a nearby friend who can keep his mouth shut. Then after finishing the wand exchange, Deorn loads the party in his ship and delivers them to Family allies in Stray River. The next morning the party will wake up to a meeting with **Morgan Cippiano**.



Morgan Cippiano. Morgan Cippiano, going on forty and stylishly bald, conducts Family business from the nondescript coffee shop in an immigrant-heavy neighborhood, occasionally going outside to encourage the kids playing street sports. Morgan came over from *Crisillyiri* a few years ago with instructions to foster Family interests by recruiting *Crisillyiri* immigrants and any local *Risuri* followers of the Clergy who had a similar ideology.

A devout Clericist (follower of the Clergy), Morgan strives to keep a moral code while running a branch of a powerful criminal organization. He hopes someday to be seen as a father figure to his community, but for now he's willing to smash a few heads and order a few throats slit in order to clear out the competition.

Though gruff-voiced and cocky, Morgan has an unusual fascination with fashion. He rejects trends, but has a good eye for classical styles that people of any culture can appreciate. He considers coffee quite fashionable, and is trying to convince more of his family back in *Crisillyiri* to start drinking it so he can be a business contact.



Bayou Wharf





The Meet-Up

The local Family smugglers have a pre-arranged plan to meet south of an uninhabited rocky island in The Ayres. On the *Silvo*, Deorn will play a set of five horn notes every few minutes and then the captain of *Li Grifoni Grinyande* will respond with another set of notes. This, combined with lantern signals, will let the two ships find each other in the night.

If either captain blows a single long horn note, however, it will warn the other ship that it's not safe, and the meet-up will be canceled. Afraid of being discovered by customs, the Crisillyiri smugglers will send a longboat out to a nearby island and quickly bury the cases of wands just off the beach. They'll hope to retry the exchange a few days later, and with luck the rich owner of the island won't happen to dig up their treasure in the interim.

If it comes to a fight, the opposition includes:

ABOARD THE SILVO

- ◆ Deorn Feldman
- ◆ 2 Family Bravuras
- ◆ 7 Unscrupulous Sailors
- ◆ Danisca Waryeye (possibly)
- ◆ Blander Waryeye (possibly)

ABOARD LI GRIFONI GRINYANDE

- ◆ Captain Amba Bandia
- ◆ 15 Unscrupulous Sailors

The Exchange.

When the two ships are together, they tie ropes to keep themselves close, and they adjust their sails so they're relatively stationary. The actual hand-off takes about 10 minutes, and involves friendly greetings, a few shared drinks, and then the transaction of money for wands. If anything interrupts them, it takes five rounds for the crews of the two ships to ready their vessels for departure, so if the PCs approach stealthily they can strike while their enemies are vulnerable.

Stealthy Approach.

In the dark of night, the PCs can spot the lights of the two smuggler ships from nearly a thousand feet out. If the PCs snuff their light sources they can easily come within five hundred feet without being spotted. Even if they have a steamship, the sound of wind and surf covers their engine noises.

To approach any closer, the party can attempt three DC 17 skill checks: one Wisdom (Perception), to determine what angle best hides them from the enemy lookouts; one Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Survival), to best take advantage of the waves and wind; and one Dexterity (Stealth) to pick the proper angle that hides them in the shadow of an island. If the party succeeds at least two of these checks, they can get within 50 feet before being noticed.

Fight or Flight.

If the party confronts both ships at the same time, the criminals figure they outnumber the party and will try to pincer the PCs' ship, then attempt to board them.

If the party approaches the *Grifoni* while it's on its own, Captain Bandia orders her crew to discreetly arm themselves, but acts casual when the PCs arrive. If they ask to inspect the ship, she invites them on board, hoping to swarm them with her crew. Though she

Silvo Chase.

To determine the winner of a sailing contest like a chase, make opposed Dexterity or Intelligence checks, adding proficiency bonus if the pilot is proficient in vehicles (water). Each round the *Grifoni* is able to line up a shot, one PC at random must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw, taking 10 piercing damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one. After 10 hits, the party's ship starts taking on water, can no longer sail effectively, and sinks if not tended to.

Ship-to-Ship Combat

The party does have forward-facing guns on their ships, which can be useful in a chase against the *Silvo* if they can get close enough. Since the *Silvo* has no cannons of its own, its crew will try to stay to the side or aft of the party, and then board.

The *Grifoni*, by contrast, easily outguns the party's ship, which should be readily obvious by just counting their gunports. The party is likely more maneuverable, but be prepared in case they pick a fight they can't win. They might be left adrift in a crippled ship, waiting for rescue.

has cannons and outguns them, she prefers to remain discreet, and won't start firing unless the party fires on her ship first.

If they go after the *Silvo* when it's alone, Deorn orders the crew to turn about and run back to the *Grifoni*, where they'll have reinforcements for a fight. If the party makes a point of waiting until the *Silvo* is far from the *Grifoni*, then Deorn's goal is to flee back to the Parity Lake wharf. It's a similar result, just with different reinforcements.

Tactics.

When Deorn realizes the jig is up, he has whichever men aren't busy crewing the ship take defensive positions. He hopes to strafe the PCs, ordering his men to fire crossbows, or use the wands if they've received them. If the two ships hit each other, he takes his bravuras and tries to board while the sailors provide cover fire.

Terrain.

There's not much in the way of terrain here, except for the ships. If the fight occurs back at the wharf there are cypress trees and a boardwalk to deal with, and during a chase the PCs might force the *Silvo* near shoals or some rocky islands.

The deck of the *Grifoni* is covered in barrels and crates that provide cover and mobility options. On the *Silvo*, the hull of the ship is deep enough that a prone character gets cover from attacks originating off the ship. The unscrupulous sailors will try to stay prone except for when they pop up to shoot, or when Deorn orders one of them to jump between the two ships and get in the party's face.

Wands of Wonder.

If you were a desperate criminal about to get arrested while sitting on a cache of magic weapons, what would you do?

The Crisillyiri wands belonged to a military collection and have been enchanted so they could be easily shown off to visiting nobles and religious hierarchs. Each is unique, from any of a dozen



Random Wands.

1d12: Wand Procured

1. **Magic Missile.** A wand of magic missiles.
2. **Grease.** A wand of grease is an uncommon magic item with 7 charges. You can expend 1 charge to cast *grease*. The wand regains 1d6 + 1 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the wand's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the wand crumbles into ashes and is destroyed.
3. **Burning Hands.** A wand of burning hands is an uncommon magic item with 5 charges. You can expend 1 charge to cast burning hands. The wand regains 1d4 + 1 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the wand's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the wand crumbles into ashes and is destroyed.
4. **Ray of Enfeeblement.** A wand of enfeeblement is an uncommon magic item with 5 charges. You can expend 1 charge to cast ray of enfeeblement. The wand regains 1d4 + 1 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the wand's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the wand crumbles into ashes and is destroyed.
5. **Secrets.** A wand of secrets.
6. **Golden Wand of Egal the Shimmering.** This golden wand is eerily warm to the touch, and has a carving of an aged man on its handle, his identity unknown. The shaft of the wand is inscribed with text that can copied into a spellbook, which provides the spell *dominate person*. You can use this wand to perform the somatic components of an arcane spell as if you had a free hand. While holding this wand, you cannot teleport or be teleported. Once per day as a bonus action, you can point the wand at a creature, and until the end of your next turn that creature cannot teleport or be teleported.
7. **Minor Lightning Bolt.** As a wand of lightning bolts, but the lightning bolt deals 4d6 lightning damage on a failed save, instead of 8d6 and the line is 50 feet long instead of 100. This is an uncommon magic item.
8. **Invisibility.** A wand of invisibility is an uncommon magic item with 5 charges. You can expend 1 charge to cast *invisibility*. The wand regains 1d4 + 1 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the wand's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the wand crumbles into ashes and is destroyed.
9. **Guiding Bolt.** A wand of guiding bolts is an uncommon magic item with 7 charges. You can expend 1 charge to cast *guiding bolt*. The wand regains 1d6 + 1 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the wand's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the wand crumbles into ashes and is destroyed.
10. **Expelliarmus.** One target within 100 feet of you must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be disarmed. Whatever the target was holding flies to your hand. This wand is an uncommon magic item with 5 charges. Each use expends 1 charge, and the wand regains 1d4 + 1 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the wand's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the wand crumbles into ashes and is destroyed.
11. **Web.** A wand of web.
12. **Magic Detection.** A wand of magic detection.

different centuries, and an archaeologist or arcane scholar could keep herself delighted for years discovering the secret iconography and histories of these weapons. But for rich Crisillyiri patrons, it's important to be able to pick it up and shoot it without worrying about command words or magical training.

All of the wands have been enchanted so that they can each be fired once per month by whoever is holding them, requiring only a simple act of will. No training or command word is needed. However, the power of the spell cast through the wand is minimal, so some flashy effects will miss wildly or do inconsequential damage.

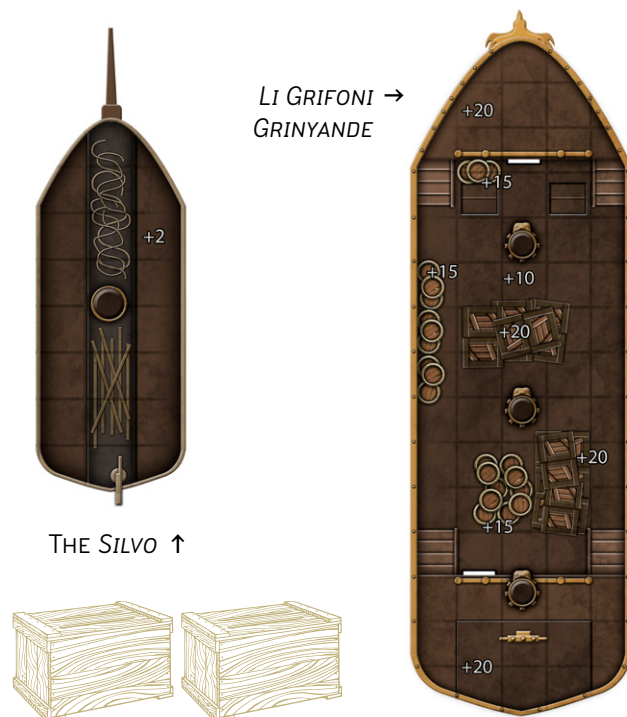
When a fight breaks out between the PCs and the smugglers, Deorn or Amba quickly orders the sailors to take cover behind the crates, crack them open, and start shooting with whatever they can get their hands on. A character adjacent to a crate of wands can spend a move action to retrieve a wand, and a standard action to use it. As he activates it, the wielder innately learns the power the wand possesses so he can properly choose its target, but he can't choose not to use it. After the wand is used once, it can't be used again until the wielder studies it and learns the proper commands.

Each crate contains about fifty wands, carefully wrapped in fine fabrics to keep their energies from intermingling catastrophically. When a character draws a wand from a crate, roll 1d12 and consult the sidebar at left to see what he gets.

Aftermath.

Much as in the Family Wharf encounter, if the PCs are defeated, they're handed over to Morgan Cippiano for a polite conversation the next morning.

Defeated smugglers clam up, except for Deorn, who brags that he'll be free in a week. None of them know how to get in touch with Gale or the fey, but members of the Family will say that someone who does know will be contacting the PCs shortly.



Deorn Feldman

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (studded leather)**Hit Points** 39 (6d8 + 12)**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws STR +5, DEX +6, CON +3, INT +2, WIS +3, CHA +3**Skills** Athletics +4, Deception +4**Senses** passive Perception 10**Languages** Common**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)**ACTIONS****Multiattack.** Deorn makes three scimitar attacks.**Scimitar.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.*Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.**Hand Cannon.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d10 + 3) piercing damage.**Gear** two *potions of healing* and a *cloak of resistance*.**Family Bravura**

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 11 (leather armor)**Hit Points** 32 (5d8 + 10)**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Skills Intimidation +2**Senses** passive Perception 10**Languages** Common**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)**Pack Tactics.** The family bravura has advantage on an attack roll if at least one of the bravura's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and its ally isn't incapacitated.**ACTIONS****Multiattack.** The bravura makes three dagger attacks.**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.**Unscrupulous Sailor**

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 12 (padded armor)**Hit Points** 11 (2d8 + 2)**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Senses passive Perception 10**Languages** Common, Elven**Challenge** 1/8 (10 XP)**ACTIONS****Scimitar.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.**Light Crossbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.**Swarm of Piranhas**

Medium swarm of Tiny beasts, unaligned

Armor Class 13**Hit Points** 28 (8d8—8)**Speed** 0 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	16 (+3)	9 (-1)	1 (-5)	7 (-2)	2 (-4)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8**Languages** –**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)**Blood Frenzy.** The swarm has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.**Swarm.** The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny piranha. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.**Water Breathing.** The swarm can only breathe underwater.**ACTIONS****Bites.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 0 ft., one creature in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 14 (4d6) piercing damage, or 7 (2d6) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.**Captain Amba Bandia**

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 14 (leather)**Hit Points** 39 (6d8 + 12)**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws STR +4, DEX +5, WIS +2**Skills** Acrobatics +5, Perception +2**Senses** passive Perception 12**Languages** Common, Elven**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)**Cunning Action.** On each of her turns, Captain Amba Bandia can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.**Sneak Attack (1/Turn).** Captain Amba Bandia deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the spy that isn't incapacitated and the spy doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.**ACTIONS****Multiattack.** Captain Amba Bandia makes two rapier attacks.**+1 Rapier.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage.**Hand Crossbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.**Gear** two *potions of healing* and a +1 rapier.



Make Them an Offer

Social. Real-Time.

Morgan Cippiano, head of the Family's operations in Flint, wants to have coffee with the party.

The party can get to this encounter in several ways. If they lose a fight to Family allies, they might wake up in an unfamiliar room, windowless but pleasantly appointed with a bed for each PC, its door locked. Their wounds have been dressed, and fashionable clothes in their sizes will have been laid out by each of their beds. A young boy with a Crisillyiri accent comes by shortly and invites them to breakfast.

Or if the party's successful, a day after thwarting the smuggling, finely-handwritten letters arrive for them at the RHC headquarters, each with a variant *arcane lock* spell cast on its wax seal, the result of which is that only the named person can open the letter. The missive invites them to come to a coffee shop in Stray River on the corner of Yearling Street and Healers Street, near where a subrail station is being built.

The writer, who signs "Morgan Cippiano," says he takes breakfast and lunch there, and he'll wait at their convenience for the next three days. He says he wishes to discuss the legal case against his "family members," and says he might be able to help them in their greater investigation.

If the party doesn't come for three days, Morgan finds a way to arrange that they share a route with him for a few minutes, perhaps a stroll, a carriage, or a ferry. He has plenty of Family members along the way as a precaution.

Coffee and Cakes.

When the party arrives, Morgan casually gestures to the proprietor, who tells his daughters in Crisillyiri to bring out comestibles. Sitting at a table, already partway into a cup of black but intensely sweetened coffee, Morgan cranes his head to get a view of the PCs' shoes. He makes a sincere effort to niceties, with a particular emphasis on fashion and clothing, then moves to business after some light fare is brought out.

Morgan mentions that he has friends all over the city, and when the party managed to get involved in that smuggling business, he got interested. He had his friends ask around, and he learned just how busy the party is. He says he admires their diligence – it's a trait that's very handy for both government and private entrepreneurs like himself. Now he wants to know if they might have more in common, and he'd like to begin their relationship by offering them some help.

Ooh, Temptation!

If the PCs decide to keep some of the smuggled wands from the previous encounter, feel free to remind them that not only is it against protocol, but it is also highly illegal, as they're technically stealing from the Clergy, which happens to be one of the most powerful organizations in the world.

In Adventure Three, the PCs will undergo an audit that will probably uncover anything illicit they've been up to, but until then a little rationalization might make them feel better about having ill-gotten firepower when going up against dangerous criminals.

Inform the party that they have gained a Prestige rating of 2 with The Family. (It's actually a Prestige rating with The Clergy, since these criminals are just a distant arm of their interests, but that will be revealed later.)

Morgan wants to make a deal to get his men out of trouble – the bravuras in particular. Deorn isn't family, not really, and Morgan couldn't care less about any unscrupulous sailors, though he might make an effort for the Waryeyes because he has a soft spot for married couples. What he offers depends on where the PCs stand.

You as GM can use this situation as a way to nudge the party if they're lost – perhaps Morgan's men can point the party to Wolfgang's lair, or arrange passage through the Cloudwood to Nevard's henge. More likely, though, the party will meet Morgan late in the adventure, in which case he can offer to lure the red dragonborn arsonists to a trap so the party can arrest them, or his men can "encourage" Cillian Creed's carriage driver to come forward to the PCs.

While it's perfectly possible for the party to solve this entire adventure without Morgan's help, you want them to feel like they got a massive break by compromising just a little.

Aftermath.

The party might rebuff Morgan, but he's a hard man to upset. If the party or any individual PC is interested in forging a stronger relationship with the criminal elite of Flint, Morgan is too busy to spend much time personally with the party, but he can get them in touch with an underling – a talented cobbler named **Dozy Miccini**. With Family help the party will have an easier time fencing illicit goods and hiding their ill-gotten wealth from investigations.

You can also deploy Morgan and the Family later in the adventure if you want to make an impression of how civic-minded these guys are. If the party loses track of any key bad guys, from one of the red dragonborn to Macbannin himself, in the wrap-up of the adventure the person in question is delivered to the RHC headquarters along with a fancy coffee press and finely ground coffee beans. 