



Conversations With... Faction Contacts in the Moonsea

“Conversations With” is a regular column written by Delwyn Ilar of the Podal Prophet broadsheet of Phlan, bringing you Out-Of-Character knowledge of important NPCs in the Moonsea region from the Adventurers League campaign, so that you might better portray them and their organizations in your games. This volume contains interviews with Olisara Lightsong (Harpers), Zern Xerkstil (Order of the Gauntlet), Seranolla the Whisperer (Emerald Enclave), Dornal Whitebeard (Lords' Alliance), and Chaab (Zhentarim), along with descriptions and statistics of these notable NPCs (including Delwyn himself) and a few suggestions on how you might use them in your game.



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Introduction

Delwyn Ilar is a reporter for the Podal Prophet, the broadsheet with the largest market share in the town of Phlan. As such he has taken it upon himself to track down and interview the five faction representatives in the Moonsea region.

In this product you will find edited and updated version of those previously released interviews in addition to stats for each representative and Delwyn himself, along with suggestions for using them in your game or how to role-play them when they come up in Adventurers League adventures you might be playing.

For Your Game: Delwyn Ilar

Delwyn Ilar is an unassuming human male of average height and a slight build. A pair of spectacles perch upon his hawkish nose and his brown hair is beginning to recede. He is rarely seen with a scroll and quill in hand as he dashes from one story to the next.

Delwyn has an overly developed expectation that others will respect the press and as such often gets himself into trouble in search of a story. He means well, but sometimes needs someone to protect him from his own poor decisions. He's also likely to hire adventurers, sometimes with money he doesn't yet have, to help him bring home a story, particularly if it involves travel into an obvious exotic or dangerous local. Delwyn makes a good comic motivator for your adventures.

Delwyn Ilar

Medium humanoid (human), neutral good

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 9 (2d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	13 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +2, Int +3, Cha +2

Skills Insight +2, Investigation +5, Perception +2, Persuasion +5

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Draconic, Elvish, Goblin

Challenge 1/8 (25 xp)

Charmed Life. When Delwyn fails a saving throw or ability check, he may roll the check again. He must keep the result of the second roll regardless of whether he succeeds or fails.

Keen Ear. Delwyn has advantage on Wisdom (Insight) checks to determine if he is being lied to.

Actions

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft. or 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) piercing damage.

Conversations with Olisara Lightsong

I began my efforts to bring enlightenment to you, dear reader, by delving into the seedy underworld of the factions that seek to manipulate the citizens of Phlan. And who better to investigate than the original meddlers themselves, the Harpers. Through contacts developed during my misspent youth, I was able to get word to “Those Who Harp” that I was hoping to have a conversation. As luck would have it, I received a message to meet at the Laughing Goblin Inn. Upon arriving at this frequent stop of sailors and ne’er-do-wells, I was directed to a shadowy back room by an annoyingly talkative and grossly rotund waiter with a stained apron. As I passed through the rough looking crowd, hand on my purse, I couldn’t have expected an atmosphere any less disreputable from this secretive group of spies and busybodies.

In the back room, I met my contact, and she couldn’t have been further than what I expected. Olisara Lightsong is a pale-skinned moon elven woman with white hair and piercing, blue eyes. Clad in a fetching dress cut in the Cormyrian style, she invited me to sit at an ample feast that including the Goblin’s famous cabbage soup among other delicacies. I was instantly at ease.

Delwyn Ilar: I want to thank you for agreeing to speak with me Lady Lightsong. I imagine it can’t be easy for a spymaster such as yourself to speak freely with the press.

Olisara Lightsong: I take offense to the title spymaster; I simply collect interesting stories. Please, call me Olisara. I can call you Delwyn, can I not? Delwyn Ilar of the Podal Prophet who lives in the red two-story on Lilly Way, a scant two blocks from Scholar’s Square. I’m sure you only seek to archive this meeting for the preservation of knowledge and wouldn’t risk anyone’s identity for fame or fortune.

DL: Umm... quite. Yes. *cough*

OL: Do please ask your questions Delwyn. The soup is getting cold.

DL: Would you like to start by introducing yourself to my readers and giving us a little about your background?

OL: Well, as you already know, my name is Olisara Lightsong, and I represent the Harper’s interests in

the northern Moonsea. I was born in Waymoot in Cormyr where my parents owned a bakery for a time that supplied bread to The Moon and Stars. I suppose it was at that inn that where I developed a love of listening to stories. Travelers from distant lands were always stopping by and telling tales of their travels. I could sit for hours, listening to their exciting stories and marveling at their strange appearances.

DL: So it was at The Moon and Stars that you decided to become a member of the Harpers? Can you tell my readers a little bit about that and what the Harpers stand for?

OL: Well, I’m sure you’ve heard of The Moon and Stars. Ever since it appeared in a Volo’s Guide, it has only become busier. It’s always been a center for clandestine meetings and for all manner of strange folk to rest and mingle. In the end, though, it always seemed like good things were being done, and done by those having exciting adventures. Without going into details, I wanted to be a part of that. As for whom the Harpers are and what we are about... I suppose you would say that we simply wish to gather and preserve knowledge in all its forms, and free people from tyrants in-so-doing.

DL: The Harpers have been accused of being meddlers. What do you say to that?

OL: We believe strongly in gathering information, preserving knowledge, and protecting art. For those that love a good story, myself included, it’s perfect. But to answer your question, yes; we watch those with power and should they succumb to corruption, we act. We prefer to do so subtly, however. I wouldn’t say we are meddlers so much as we try to watch out for those who are unable to watch out for themselves. It is a great wrong to wield too much power, just as it is a great wrong to force others to wield too little.

DL: As the representative of your faction in Phlan and the northern Moonsea, what do you hope to do in the region?

OL: That’s a big question and it’s not something I’m certain it would be safe for you to know.

DL: If not the whole story, how about a nugget of your plans then?

OL: The Moonsea region provides two particular opportunities for the Harpers, both due in part to the region’s wild and dangerous past. There are ruins, lost items of power and historical significance, and some unusual sources of magical power. As the

faction contact in this region it is my hope that my agents explore, catalogue and gather as many of these secrets as is possible. We need to rediscover and understand these many mysteries so that we can decide how to best use them to aid the people and not to be used against them. Second, the area is rife with unstable governments and oppression. The common folk need heroes, and my agents are just that. We stand up for those that need us, and stand against those that would force their will upon others. Unlike some of the other factions, we are less likely to use direct force, and more likely to listen and watch so that we might apply just the right amount pressure to direct events.

DL: You mention the other factions. Why have the Harpers agreed to ally with the other factions, in particular, the Zhentarim who have traditionally been seen as your enemies in the past?

OL: We have natural connections to many of the other factions. For example, though their methods may differ from our own, the Order of the Gauntlet is concerned about protecting the weak and the Emerald Enclave seeks balance in the world. We have many connections with the Lords' Alliance in the North and have worked together in the past. However, you can imagine how difficult it is for me, coming from Cormyr, to work with the Zhentarim. I wouldn't go so far as to say we are allies, but the current threats in this region have forced us together. It's an uneasy truce but one that benefits us both, so far. We are learning a great deal about our friends that may have cost us many lives in the past. Rest assured that if they attempt to regain their former domination of the region, the relationship will end.

DL: Well, thank you again for agreeing to speak with me.

OL: My pleasure. Oh, and please do take some of this trout for your cat, the white one that frequently sits on the reading chair in your bedroom. There's simply too much for me to finish.

DL: Umm... quite. Yes.

For Your Game

Olisara Lightsong is the leader of the Harpers in the Moonsea region and she has no shortage of rumors or potential adventures. She makes a good patron for good aligned parties that want to take an active role in guiding the development of the region. Olisara prefers those that work subtly and often dispatches adventures on information gathering missions.

Olisara Lightsong

Medium humanoid (moon elf), chaotic good

Armor Class 15 (studded leather)

Hit Points 41 (5d8 + 5)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Cha +5

Skills Arcana +3, Deception +5, Diplomacy +5, Insight +3, Investigation +5, Nature +3, Perception +5, Stealth +5, Survival +3

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Elvish, Orcish

Challenge 1 (200 xp)

Favored Enemy (humans and orcs). Olisara has advantage on Wisdom (Survival) and Intelligence checks related to humans and orcs.

Fey Ancestry. Olisara has advantage on saving throws against being charmed and magic cannot put her to sleep.

Keen Hearing and Sight. Olisara has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.

Spellcasting. Olisara is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with its spell attacks). Olisara knows the bard following spells:

Cantrips (at will): *friends, vicious mockery*

1st level (4 slots): *comprehend languages, cure wounds, detect magic, sleep*

2nd level (2 slots): *detect thoughts, invisibility*

Actions

Multiattack. Olisara makes three melee attacks or three ranged attacks.

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Inspiration (recharges after a long or short rest).

Olisara chooses a creature within 60 feet of her isn't already affected by Inspiration. Until the end of Olisara's next turn, the target, provided it is able to hear and understand Olisara, adds a d6 to its attack rolls and saving throws.

Conversations with Zern Xerkstil

My attempts to contact the Order of the Gauntlet representative were much more straightforward than my previous efforts with the Harpers. The Order makes no secret about who they are, and so I was quickly directed to the town streets near Kuto's Well. As usual, this busy area put on a diverse showing of Phlan's citizenry, but one of them clearly stood apart. To one side was a rough looking man with the taint of orcish blood on his face. His white enameled plate mail scarred with the signs of frequent battle and a silver bladed battle axe strapped to his back, he stared intently at each of the passersby, as if searching for something in their faces. The crowd parted around him like boulder in the Stojanow. For a moment, I questioned whether I really wanted to approach this formidable warrior, but fear not gentle reader, I braved his terrible countenance to bring you this interview!

Delwyn Ilar: Excuse me, are you Zern Xerkstil?

Zern Xerkstil: I am he. You are the reporter. Stand aside and ask your questions.

DL: Umm... before we begin, might I ask what you are doing?

ZX: Hunting. Many evils hide in plain sight and must be sought out. Be ever watchful and never stop less an innocent pay the price for your lack of vigilance.

DL: Is there evil here? I see some children at play, a man selling apples and a woman drawing water.

ZX: Evil is everywhere. Any of them could be a fiend in disguise.

DL: Maybe if you could tell me more about yourself I would better understand. Can you introduce yourself and tell my readers about where you hail from?

ZX: I am Zern Xerkstil, called by some the Hammer of Impiltur. I follow Helm, the Vigilant One.

DL: How did you come by that appellation, the Hammer of Impiltur?

ZX: Honestly.

DL: I see... could you expound upon that?

ZX: I am from Impiltur and it was there where that I fought the devils that infest my home.

DL: I thought that since the Sundering, Impiltur had trouble with demons, not devils?

ZX: Devils twist words, spread lies and further mischief. That is what they want you to believe. The demons, we have those too, but they are easy to find. They rage across the landscape and any good hearted soul knows their approach. The fiends from the Hells are a different breed.

DL: So how did this lead to being called the Hammer of Impiltur?

ZX: I had just taken my paladin vows when I heard tale of demons rampaging nearby. I rode out and indeed found the monsters, slaying them in Helm's name. But the misery in the area did not end. In fact it seemed to spread: disease, malaise, and despair. Along with two other newly minted warriors of Helm, I tracked it to its source and found them; a band from the infernal Hells. They had attracted the demons and used them to terrify the common folk, so that the simple farmers might be tempted to entreating the devils for aid at the cost of the farmers' souls. I rode into their hideaway and crushed them; thus ending their power in the region. . It is from those deeds that my brothers chose to call me the Hammer of Impiltur.

DL: Does this have something to do with joining the Order, or was this before that.

ZX: Standing in their lair, covered in their hot blood, reeking of brimstone, I choose to dedicate myself to hunting the fiends of Hell and right after joined the Order of the Gauntlet to bring retribution to those who perform evil deeds.

DL: That's quite a tale. Can you tell us about your faction? Are the other members like you?

ZX: We are faithful followers of the gods of light that have chosen to watch for those that practice evil, that we might intervene and protect those in need of our aid. Evil must be met in the field and smashed, or it will swiftly overcome all.

DL: So you kill those who are evil?

ZX: We watch those who might harbor vile thoughts or inclinations, but we are not murderers. We visit justice only upon those who commit evil acts, be they

fiend or man. We are brothers in faith and arms, who work together to make Faerûn a better place.

DL: A noble goal. Who is in charge of your faction?

ZX: After Helm, I serve the Order of the Gauntlet. The Order was founded by Kleef Kenric of Marsember, who has stepped back from leading us but is still one of our most honored members. Now the honor of providing our vision is for Ontharr Frume, who watches from rebuilt Elturel.

DL: You say provides a vision. How do you decide on your missions? Are you given orders?

ZX: No, Helm guides my heart and my sword. The Order and those who lead it give us direction... goals... Sometimes our leaders, the most esteemed of our brothers and sisters, will hear of an evil that needs to be brought to justice and they will send word to us, but it is our choice to proceed and how.

DL: Can you be more specific about what you and your brothers in arms hope to do in the northern Moonsea?

ZX: The Moonsea is rife with unchecked corruption! All evil doers must be punished; starting with Infernals!

DL: So you are here to kill devils?

ZX: I shall punish all those who prey upon the innocent; devil or not. Though I am sure the Infernals are close, there are other dangers. The people of Phlan suffer under the depredations of bandits just as much as they twist under the corrupt Banites who run this town. The Order will seek out all injustice and set things right! We will make the roads safe. We will see that the common folk are treated with justice and we will stop those who traffic with evil from encroaching on the peace.

DL: That's not very focused, are there any specific foes or dangers you see now?

ZX: At the moment the Cult of the Dragon rears its head, bolstered by the Dragon Queens legions from Hell, but we still watch Red Wizards and followers of other evil gods who prowl at the edges of the Moonsea. If they cross the line to wicked action, the Order will be there to meet them as well.

DL: Your faction is dedicated to concepts like justice, honor and protecting the innocent from evil. It seems like you and your fellows are also very direct, and concerned with spreading the "good" faiths. Why did

you decide ally with the other factions, many of whom do not share your ideas or methods?

ZX: Many swords make for a stronger defense, and it is even better to have many eyes so that harm may never fall to test that defense. The Harpers are natural watchers and obvious allies. They help us watch those who might fall to corruption and we give them a stiffer spine that they might act when action is called for. The corruption of the lizardfolk, the rise of hags and other evils of the forest are all natural concerns for both the Emerald Enclave and the Order. In addition the corruption of men harms the land as much as it harms other men, so it is no surprise that we might find common cause. The Lords' Alliance was once a strong force for good in the North, though they may have fallen some in their zeal to civilize those lands. We still share many efforts to protect those beacons of light in seas of chaotic darkness.

DL: That's only three of the other factions. What of the Zhentarim?

ZX: We watch everyone that might fall to corruption and vice.

DL: Does that mean you do not approve of working with the Zhentarim?

ZX: You have an infernal way of twisting words to cause mischief little man.

DL: I'll take that as a no for my readers. Thank you for your time.

For Your Game

Zern Xerkstil is the leader of the Order of the Gauntlet in the Moonsea region. His is straightforward and honest to the point of blunt and he is always on the lookout for additional muscle to bring justice to the region. In particular, he is always looking for the involvement of devils and dislikes working with tieflings.

Zern Xerkstil

Medium humanoid (half-orc), lawful good

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Wis +3, Wis +2

Skills Athletics +6, Insight +3, Intimidation +3, Perception +3, Religion +2

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Orcish

Challenge 4 (1,100 xp)

Brave. Zern has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

Relentless Endurance (recharges on a long rest). If Zern is dropped to 0 hit points, he is instead dropped to 1 hit point.

Blessed Weapons. Zern's weapon attacks are magical and silver.

Smite. As a bonus action, Zern can expend a spell slot to cause his melee weapon attacks to magically deal an extra 9 (2d8) radiant damage to a target on a hit. This benefit lasts until the end of the turn. If Zern expends a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the extra damage increases by 1d8 for each level above 1st.

Spellcasting. Zern is an 8th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 11, +3 to hit with its spell attacks). Zern has prepared the following paladin spells:

1st level (4 slots): *bless, cure wounds, detect evil and good, protection from evil and good, sanctuary, thunderous smite*

2nd level (3 slots): *lesser restoration, magic weapon, zone of truth*

Actions

Multiattack. Zern makes two melee attacks.

Battleaxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) slashing damage or 14 (2d8 + 5) on a critical.

Heavy crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d10 + 1) piercing damage.

Divine Sense. Zern detects the presence of celestials, fiends, or fey within 60 feet.

Conversations with Seranolla the Whisperer

As unsettling to my nerves as my last two interviews were, I was looking forward to a nice stroll in the woods outside of Phlan for my third. Notoriously shy, the contact for the Emerald Enclave was unwilling to enter the town, so I had to go to her. Strolling through lonely sun dappled forest paths just past the fields that surround Phlan, a faint breeze lent its comfort to an already pleasant day. If not for my keen reporter's eye, I might have walked right past her without even knowing it.

A forest gnome, she was hiding behind a leafy bush, her green dress and dark brown skin blended into the foliage with only her bright smile and attentive gaze giving her away. Seeing that I had spotted her, she noiselessly slipped onto the path, the branches parting for her passage. Smiling up at me, still silent, she bowed low in greeting.

Delwyn Ilar: Hello, are you Seranolla the Whisperer?

Seranolla: *bows

DL: Can you introduce yourself for my readers?

S: *nods

DL: I'll need you to speak if we're to have an interview.

S (whispering): I am Seranolla. Sorry, I rarely speak with people, so it takes some getting used to.

DL: It is a pleasure to meet you Seranolla. If you please, could you tell my readers a little about yourself? Where are you from? How did you come to be part of the Emerald Enclave?

S (whispering): I was born before the Sundering in the forest of Cormanthor, near the River Lis. By your standards I might be quiet, but among my people I am thought of as extroverted and outgoing, so it was only natural that I would be the one to speak with the elves. It was with them that I first considered that there might be those that would abuse the gifts of nature.

DL: How so? I sense a story here.

S (whispering): The people of Elmwood were clearing trees to expand their fields with indiscriminate use of fire, disrupting the land and driving the wildlife deeper into the forest. I accompanied some of the elves who went to treat with the farmers who had grown concerned about the danger of the villagers' actions. My friends explained why the village's actions posed a danger to the rest of the forest and eventually we were able to help the people of Elmwood strike a balance between the needs of the wood and their fields. As we left Elmwood, my elven friends told me that they were members of a group called the Emerald Enclave and it was their duty to preserve the natural order, preventing civilization and the wilderness from destroying each other. I decided to leave my home and join them.

DL: So the Emerald Enclave is about protecting nature?

S (whispering): Yes, to a point, though really we are more about maintaining equilibrium. Sentient life is part of nature and has a place in it. We strive to balance the needs of humanoids to civilize the lands around them with the needs of the wild to be kept in its natural state.

DL: Are not they in direct opposition to each other?

S (whispering): Not always, and when they are we seek a middle ground.

DL: So you are all about a balance between man and nature? Do you do anything else?

S (whispering): Of course. We prevent the unnatural from spreading, close elemental rifts that might disrupt the natural order, hunt undead or planar creatures that taint the land, protect travelers from the dangers of the wilderness, and watch over those who might try to pillage the land for their own gain.

DL: You have been around for a long time compared to some of the other faction representatives. Do you still have any goals for the Moonsea region?

S (whispering): Gnomes live for quite a while. I'm barely middle aged.

DL: My apologies. What I meant to say was that most of the other faction representatives are members of the shorter lived races and they struggle to make some progress with their faction's goals in the short

time they have. What goals do you have for the Emerald Enclave that you haven't already completed?

S (whispering): Well, a particular hobby of mine is charting the stars and watching weather patterns. I've noticed a number of strange occurrences at work in the region and I wonder if there are any connections. I am always on the lookout for more on this subject and I hope my operatives will also watch for strange occurrences in the natural world and share them with me.

However, a more pressing subject is the influx of draconic activity. As unnatural apex predators, dragons are inherently disruptive to the region and in addition they often seek to alter the land: building lairs, conquering cities, and burning forests. At the moment I am hoping that we will be able to understand their goals and blunt any damage the dragons might cause to the region's natural order. One of the ways we might approach this problem is to treat with the fey folk of the region. In the past the faeries have been powerful allies and if convinced that it is in their interest, they may be of aid.

DL: So your forces are marshaling together to fight this threat?

S (whispering): The Emerald Enclave does not really work that way. We tend to work alone towards a common goal. Sometimes we might come together against a dire threat, but normally we pass information on to each other and seek our own solutions based upon the teachings of the Emerald Enclave.

DL: Your faction is dedicated to balance and protecting nature but yet you have allied yourself with the other factions, some of whom, such as the Lords' Alliance or the Zhentarim, have been known to be covetous of natural resources, or the Harpers who frequently meddle and rarely respect a balance if it doesn't suit their purposes. How do you rationalize this?

S (whispering): Our numbers are not great and while we can bring great power to bear in the natural world, our ability to function in urban locales is impaired. The Cult of the Dragon frequently hides amongst the masses of humanity and the Harpers, Lords' Alliance and Zhentarim all excel in this arena. The Order of the Gauntlet and the Harper's, while maybe not seeking the same balance the Emerald Enclave does, have worked among the warriors of nature in the past and have the best of intentions. I know some of my allies have concerns about the Lords' Alliance and the Zhentarim, but I believe we will make more progress with those concerns by bringing them to those who

believe themselves our allies rather than those we are at war with.

DL: That about wraps up my questions. Is there anything else you would like to say?

S (whispering): *shakes her head

DL: Thank you so much for meeting with me.

For Your Game

Seranolla the Whisperer is the leader of the Emerald Enclave in the Moonsea region. As a druid in service to the Forest Queen Mielikki, she is devoted to protecting the natural world and employs adventurers on related missions. Seranolla is quiet and generally prefers to observe from hiding. She has an interest in charting the stars and weather patterns and might be befriended by offering rare information concerning these areas of interest.

Seranolla the Whisperer

Small humanoid (forest gnome), neutral good

Armor Class 11 (16 with *barkskin*)

Hit Points 39 (7d8 + 7)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +3, Wis +5

Skills Nature +3, Perception +5, Stealth +3, Survival +3

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Gnomish

Challenge 3 (700 xp)

Gnomish Cunning. Seranolla has advantage on all Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against magic.

Land's Stride. Seranolla moves through difficult terrain expended additional movement and does not take damage from moving through hazardous nonmagical plants.

Spellcasting. Seranolla is a 6th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with its spell attacks). Seranolla has prepared the following druid spells:

Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft, mending, produce flame, shillelagh*

1st level (4 slots): *beast sense, cure wounds, entangle, longstrider, speak with animals*

2nd level (3 slots): *animal messenger, barkskin, moonbeam, spider climb*

3rd level (3 slots): *call lightning, dispel magic, plant growth, speak with plants*

Actions

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit (+4 with *shillelagh*), reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage or 4 (1d8) with *shillelagh* or is wielded with two hands.

Conversations with Dornal Whitebeard

Before I could set out on my next interview, a courier, dressed in fine livery, appeared at the offices of the Podal Prophet with an invitation to the Velvet Doublet:

To my dearest friend Delwyn Ilar, please do me the pleasure of being my guest at eight bells this evening at a banquet to celebrate your superb literary accomplishments. A carriage will appear at your residence in time to deliver you in the style you so richly deserve.

–Dornal Whitebeard

The faction contact for the Lords' Alliance clearly knew how to make an impression. The Velvet Doublet is the most luxurious feasthall in Phlan and not something a humble reporter often has the coin to visit. I prepared myself accordingly and met the carriage at the appointed time only to be delivered on the Doublet's doorstep as eight bells tolled. Once inside, I was directed to the largest ballroom in the hall. Inside, a dais was erected in the center of the vast room with a well-appointed appointed table and two chairs upon it. No one else beyond my dwarven host was present, though the table was certainly set for a banquet.

Dornal Whitebeard: Welcome Delwyn, welcome. Can I call you Delwyn? Please join me. I have arranged this small meal so that we might have a moment to chat.

Delwyn Ilar: Thank you very much Mr. Whitebeard. This is very different from my usual interviews.

DW: Of course it is my boy, because the others don't know what I know.

DL: What's that sir?

DW: That you are an important, no, key, member of civilized Phlan society and you deserve to be treated appropriately.

DL: Why thank you, but I might almost be inclined to think you are trying to bribe me for a favorable article on you and your faction.

DW: Is it a bribe if you give a coin to a poor orphan in need? Is it a bribe if you donate to a temple that does good works? Is it a bribe if you acknowledge the successes of others? No, Delwyn, this isn't a bribe.

You'll know it when I bribe you. This is just a simple dinner.

DL: Well, I suppose a glass of wine couldn't hurt.

DW: And perhaps try one of the Bouqthi pastries. They are dreadfully hard to import ever since Luiren submerged into the gulf. Still halflings are a hardy folk and I know a gentleman who knows an incredibly talented baker who's family survived the catastrophe and has passed the recipe down ever since. You've never tasted its equal.

DL: Mmmm... you're right! It's amazing. While I finish this, perhaps you could introduce yourself to my readers and tell us a little about yourself.

DW: Well, as you have already surmised, my name is Dornal Whitebeard and I am in the Moonsea region as a representative of the Lords' Alliance. I am originally from Waterdeep where my family has been successfully involved in the import/export business for four generations. Have you ever been to Waterdeep? You should definitely go if you get the chance. There is a restaurant in the Sea Ward, Brill's, with streetside seating. They have the best selection of ale's to be found in the city and it's only a few blocks from the Field of Triumph. There are those that will tell you to go straight to the arena and see the games, but I prefer to sit on the street outside Brill's with a tankard of the local Black Grog and wait for the opening. When the crowd cheers, the sound reverberates down the street and washes over you. There's nothing like it.

DL: That's quite an image you've painted. As I understand the Lords' Alliance, it's about protecting the civilizations of the North. Did you join up because of places like Brill's? What do you most empathize with in the Lords' Alliance?

DW: Another glass of wine? I suppose in a way I did. The Lords' Alliance is about joining together, protecting what's yours, and helping your allies succeed. I have always been proud of my city and I am devoted to her, just as my allies in the Alliance are to theirs. Everyone has enemies, but together we can be strong enough to defend each other, and prosperous enough for all of us to flourish. Those that join with us will be protected, cared for, and enjoy the fruits of our collective labors.

DL: Lord Neverember and some of your other leaders do not have the best reputations. What would you say

to those that have suggested that the Lords' Alliance is a bit aggressive in securing its peaceful existence?

DW: I remember when I was a boy and every Ninth-Day my father would give me a silver piece to buy rock candy from the Aurora's Emporium down the street from our house. It's not the original one where the Whole Realms Catalogue started. That's in Westgate, but to a young lad with money to burn, it might have well been a temple filled with wonder and joy. In my first attempt to spend my father's coin, a group of young street ruffians poured from an alley to accost me. They made a habit of pushing me to the ground and taking the coin every tenday when I tried to acquire that sweet treat. I didn't want to tell my father for fear he would deem me unfit for his future generosity, so instead I looked for an alternative solution.

Jako Velderbrunt was a monster of a boy; well over five feet tall at the age of ten with legs like tree trunks and arms of steel. Sadly what Jako had in build, his family lacked in good fortune. His parents could not afford sweets, or even shoes for him, and where I went to school, he was forced to work as a smith's apprentice so that his family might make ends meet. One day I offered to buy Jako a candy and so when the hoodlums came out of the alley that last time, I was not alone. Jako beat those boys bloody and they never bothered me again. I bought Jako candy every tenday for the rest of my childhood. That's the Lords' Alliance. We protect our allies, reward our friends and bloody those that would force themselves on those that can't protect themselves.

DL: Are you more like a business, a government, or a family?

DW: Yes. All of those things are a part of the Lords' Alliance. The various cities of the North: Neverwinter, Waterdeep, Mithral Hall, Silverymoon, among several others, have banded together for mutual benefit, so there are governments involved. They do not always agree on everything but in general all of them seek to make the world a safer, more comfortable place. This means a solid infrastructure, free and open trade, and public safety. Just like you would protect your sibling from the bully on the block, we do the same whether its highwaymen, rampaging monsters, or rogue city-states. What's good for civilization is good for all and nothing will stop us from ensuring that that civilization will be brought to everyone that needs it.

DL: Can you speak about what you hope to do specifically in the Moonsea?

DW: As you know, the Moonsea, especially the Northern Moonsea, has seen a lot of turmoil. As the

representative of the Lords' Alliance I hope to offer a stabilizing voice through trade. The region has rare woods, furs, gems and an abundance of metals and the forges that go with it, but it lacks in sufficient food to feed its peoples and the textiles to cloth them. This drives the different cities into conflict as they fight for resources. By opening up lines of diplomacy and trade we can bring everyone together.

There are also a wide assortment of criminals, thugs, and dictators in the region. Fortunately, the Lords' Alliance has ample resources and can afford to train and equip our operatives like no one else. Where necessary, we can take direct action to pacify these divisive elements. Right now one of the largest threats to security and civilization are these Cult of the Dragon fellows, but fear not, we'll wrap this up and be home in time for a pint.

DL: Who decides who needs pacification? If I didn't know better I might think that sounds a bit tyrannical.

DW: Come now Delwyn, the Lords' Alliance is not some all-powerful boogeyman. We are not judge, jury, or executioner. We are simply helping the local populace by eliminating any threats to their safety and bringing them prosperity. A lack of security does no one any good. If a family can't be safe in their own home, how can they be productive? And if they do succeed because of the safety and civilization we bring them, they will be fruitful enough to help their neighbors and then everyone wins.

DL: What do you say to those "*highwaymen, rampaging monsters, or rogue city-states*" of the Moonsea that stand opposed to the Lords' Alliance and threaten your views of civilization?

DW: I'm sure there are very few individuals that might fall into that category, but to those that do, I would try to convince them of the manifest rightness of our view and of all the benefits we can offer them if they join us. However if they persist in opposing us, I would say to them: we will come for you. And we will come with the best agents, armies, and equipment; anything and everything to complete what needs to be done to protect and expand civilization. Superiority is our security.

DL: Speaking of potential conflicts, can you speak as to why the Lords' Alliance has agreed to ally with the other four factions?

DW: We are natural allies of everyone who sees the rightness in our world view. As you know the Harpers have always been an active force for good in the North, and many of our longer-lived members have been Harpers in the past. The Order of the Gauntlet

also is strongly motivated to bring good and order to the world, making them natural partners as well. The Zhentarim is less of stretch than you might think. They are simply the Lords' Alliance without the moderating guidance we had in our infancy. They want to civilize the Moonsea and surrounding area. They want to protect their own. And they want to prosper. They want all the same things we do, and like us, once they commit to a course of action, they will spare nothing to see to their success. Some of our other allies might balk at what needs doing, but not the Zhentarim. We are not so different.

DL: What about the others, the Emerald Enclave?

DW: We have had our disagreements with the Emerald Enclave, it's true, but I would point out that they are not against the spread of civilization; they simply wish to temper it. We appreciate the caution of our green brethren. After all if you clear-cut the forest, it will not regrow, and then where will you get your lumber? There is a place at our side for the temperance of the Emerald Enclave, just as there is for all the other factions.

DL: Is there anything you'd like to add?

DW: Only that if any of your readers are interested in success, safety, or prosperity, come to the Lords' Alliance. We have everything they need or want and we would be happy to share it with our friends, and we are always hiring.

DL: That's quite a nice sentiment. Thank you for the interview.

DW: And of course it applies to you as well, my dear Delwyn. Indeed please continue to eat and enjoy. The fifth course has only just arrived and the entertainment hasn't even begun. You need not be in any hurry. I have retained a carriage for your return home. In the Lords' Alliance, we know how to reward our friends.

For Your Game

Dornal Whitebeard is the leader of the Lords' Alliance in the Moonsea region. He seeks to bring safety, stability, and trade to the Moonsea. Dornal makes a good patron for adventurers who are more mercenary in nature, particularly if they prize wealth over pesky morals. He frequently rewards his operatives with the best food, fine clothing, or ornate jewelry. For himself, he is never found without several potions and other consumable magic items that compliment his plan.

Dornal Whitebeard

Medium humanoid (shield dwarf), lawful neutral

Armor Class 15 (breastplate)

Hit Points 17 (3d8 + 3)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +3, Con +5

Skills Deception +7, Insight +4, Persuasion +7

Damage Resistances Poison

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Dwarvish

Challenge 1 (200 xp)

Action Surge (recharge on a long or short rest). Dornal takes an additional action.

Dwarven Resilience. Dornal has advantage on all saving throws against poison.

Magic Weapons. Dornal's weapon attacks are magical.

Actions

Multiattack. Dornal makes two attacks.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage plus 3 (1d6) cold damage.

Hand crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Cunning Leader (recharge 5-6). Dornal chooses an ally within 30 feet of him. That ally makes a single attack adding 1d8 to it's to hit and damage rolls.

Conversations with Chaab

Finding my final interviewee in order to complete my series on the Faction representatives in the Moonsea region proved harder than I expected. Exhausting all my contacts and spreading some gold among the common rumormongers, I eventually learned that the Zhentarim representative wasn't in Phlan anymore, but had relocated to Mulmaster. Convincing my editor of the importance of this interview, I booked passage across the Moonsea to the City of Danger.

Arriving in Mulmaster, a place that I have never been, I was struck by how large and how different it was from my native Phlan. Nestled in the northernmost edge of the Earthspur Mountains, Mulmaster is a cold, windswept city surrounded by grim walls that rise up before the fury of the Moonsea. Where Phlan is surrounded by farms and greenery, Mulmaster is walled away from the sea, penned in by mountains. Much is grey with the occasional red highlights and while some parts of the city are in good repair, such as those near the centers of power and wealth, others suffer from neglect. It was in these worst parts of Mulmaster where I found my quarry.

What the locals affectionately refer to as the Zhent Ghettos is a dangerous near-ruin on the southern end of the city populated by those residents of Zhentil Keep who fled here when it was destroyed by Netheril so long ago. Having lived here for three generations, they are denied citizenship in both Mulmaster and the city of their ancestry. They are heavily taxed and persecuted by the Mulmaster's government and city services in this ward are few and far between. It is rather like the ruined neighborhoods on the edge of Phlan, but with more taxes and less hope of renewal. In this cesspit I found Chaab, standing up for an elderly man surrounded four young toughs. Chaab might not look like much, but there is a menace in his stare and carefully chosen words that led the toughs to tuck tail and run before he helped the old man to his feet and pressed a coin into his palm. Truly not at all what I expected for the representative of the feared Zhentarim.

Delwyn Ilar: Excuse me, are you Chaab, the representative of the Zhentarim?

Chaab: Who wants to know?

DL: I'm Delwyn Ilar, of the Podal Prophet?

C: Never heard of you. What do you want? I don't have a lot of time for chin-wagging. I've got lots to do before everyone gets here.

DL: Could I walk with you while you continue on to your next appointment and ask a few questions for my readers back in Phlan?

C: You can ask, don't mean I'll answer.

DL: Fair enough. Could you introduce yourself?

DL (raising a balled fist): Is this a trick? 'Cause I will throw you a beatin' if you keep askin' for it!

C (shaken): Uh, no... sir. I was just hoping you could tell my readers who you are.

C: You already know my name. You called me by it.

DL: I mean to say, could you tell my readers a little about yourself, your background, who you are and how you got here?

C: Why didn't you just say that then? Wait, are you a Hawk? You don't look like Watch; too bright for that. But those Hawks are always sticking their nose in and asking questions of honest business men such as myself.

DL: No sir, I'm a reporter. From Phlan. Definitely not a Hawk or member of the Watch.

C: Alright then, I suppose no harm then. Folks call me Chaab on account that's my name. I was born in Zhentil Keep, or at least what has been rebuilt of it. Where I grew up there aren't a lot of options for a boy. If your family is rich, you might learn a trade. My mom wasn't rich and I never knew my dad. If you are religious or political, you might join the church of the Black Lord. I ain't never been all that religious. You could become a merc. I thought about that, but I have trouble fighting for somebody else when I don't care nothing 'bout their cause. You could always just let others take what you got and not join anything, but I never been no sucker either. So that leaves me one choice. Find an in with the Zhentarim. I done that and turns out, I'm pretty good at it.

DL: Can you tell my readers a bit more about what the Zhentarim believes and how they work?

C: You keep saying I should talk to your readers. There someone here besides you?

DL: Er... not really no, but I mean tell them in spirit. I am transcribing your words and will be using them for my story in the Prophet.

C: You sure talk funny. You bes' be careful or folks will think you're an easy mark and that's trouble you don't need. Course if you were part of the family you wouldn't have to worry.

DL: How so?

C: See lots of folks think of the Zhentarim as the secret agents of Zhentil Keep or the Church of Bane. While we have some connections, that really hasn't been true for over a century. Other folks think we market the best mercenaries that money can buy. That is true. We are the best, cheapest, fastest, and most secure source of sword arms you gonna find. But that's not all there is to us. See if you are one of us, you are part of a family and family helps each other. With us you get resources, you get protection, and you get the chance to advance yourself. You can pursue your own interests as long as they don't come before the Network. If you find a good or service that needs providing, we are happy to help you see that it gets to the buyer as long as you remember to send a taste back to the bosses that help you get it there. See members of the Zhentarim believe that people should have whatever they want, and we don't believe others: governments, city watch, temples and the like, should be able to tell a man what he can and can't have. So says a crumb wants a particular herbal remedy for his sick grandmother that some despot says his people can't have. You wouldn't deny a sick old lady, would ya? I didn't think so. So being stand-up guys, we Zhentarim would help the crumb get what he needs. But those kind of favors could cost us a lot in effort and manpower, so it's only right that we be should get the proper gratitude. And if you were shown that gratitude by the guy wit the sick grandmother, it would only be right that you remember to pass a small gratuity along to your bosses.

DL: Is that what you were doing with the old man when I walked up? Was he one of your bosses?

C: Him? No way. But like I said, we're a family. We don't prey on our own. That's something a lot of these Mulman kids around here have forgotten being as they haven't had the right kinds of influence. The Zhentarim looks after their own. We protect our family and our family's families. You respect those that deserve it and you earn coin off those that don't. That fella has been helpful to me in the past, so he is one of mine. I help him out. I protect his streets. I feed

his family when they can't find enough to eat. Those kids didn't know that. Now they do. If they make that mistake again it will not go well for them.

DL: They were kids though, shouldn't you let them off easy if they make a mistake.

C: They's old enough push a geezer to the ground, they's old enough to take a cobblestone to the head if they don't listen when they's told to knock it off. See, that's another thing you need to know about the Zhentarim. We don't needs to fight you if you pay attention to our reputation, but if you question our reputation and we don't respond, well that's the end of that hard earned reputation and that means a whole lot more fight and blood. Trust me, if you cross us, we will come for you and our response will not be like anything you could imagine. It will be swift, it will be bloody, and it will end any question as to which one of us shoulda listened to the other. You get a reputation by defending your reputation.

DL: Alright, I think I understand the Zhentarim now. Since you are the representative of your faction in Phlan, can you tell my readers, er tell me, what you hope to do in the region? What are your goals?

C: Well see, it's not too good an idea to just go blabbing all over about you plan to do, but let's say that Phlan is pretty hot right now and I don't think much of anyone is gonna wanna stay there much longer. I think most folks is moving to Mulmaster for the time being and so I am here making ready. See those from Phlan that don't got lots of coin, they ain't gonna be welcome here and they ain't gonna have no place to stay when they get here. That's okay see, 'cause the Zhentarim knew to expect that and we look out for folks. I'm here now getting the place ready: finding beds, arranging food, making it safe so that others know the people coming from Phlan are with me. And if those refugees wanna show the Zhentarim some gratitude? Who am I to refuse? And if they don't have any coin, well, they can always sign up and become one of us. We always need more folks. We like a big family; real big.

DL: Speaking of a big family, the Zhentarim has agreed to work with the other factions, many of whom have been your enemies in the past. Why?

C: Well, that's simple. They owe us now, and that makes things profitable. You advance yourself by being an earner. If you earn for the Zhentarim, the Zhentarim looks out for you. So if I got to help some dirty Harper find out some secret about the Cult of the Dragon, now he owes me a favor. He's gotta help me when I need it. Not only that, but I bet he's not the

only one that wants to know that secret. I bet somebody else is gonna pay for that. Then you got those Order of the Gauntlet guys. Bunch o' stiff, but they like protecting people. You wanna protect someone. I know a guy who needs some help. Apparently someone's threatening to burn down his business. You go keep that from happening and he'll be real grateful to me; one way or the other. The Emerald Enclave, well we don't cross paths much. But those guys can get a lot of green food. You ever been to the Moonsea? It's mostly cold, wet rocks. We could sure use that food. Then there's the Lords Alliance. These guys I can understand. They want the best and they will pay for it, especially if they don't have to dirty their hands. They don't care how it gets done as long as it's done right and nobody splashes any blood on their nice robes. They pay extra if you are fast and quiet. I like extra and I know when to keep my mouth shut. Now a lot of my brothers will complain about working with these factions, but it don't matter, the Pereghost, that's our boss, he says we do. So you do. Or you don't work with anybody no more.

DL: I see.

C: No you don't, but you will.

DL: Well, thank you anyway. I think my readers are really going to enjoy your explanations once I get back to Phlan.

C: Hey, you need a ride back across the Moonsea? I know a guy who knows a guy. His ship is leaving the docks tonight after dark. See he's got some paperwork issues so he's gotta go tonight. If you need a spot, I can get you one. Cheap, if you got coins right now.

DL: I think I should be okay.

C: Suit yourself.

For Your Game

Chaab is the leader of the Zhentarim in the Moonsea region. He's not especially cultured, but he's got street smarts and he's loyal. Chaab is rarely alone, and if you side with him, you won't be either. If your character is willing to do just about anything to make a name and earn some coin, Chaab has a job for you. It won't be pretty and you won't be moving in high society but it will pay well. Just don't ask any questions.

Chaab

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

Armor Class 13 (studded leather)

Hit Points 39 (6d8 + 12)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +4, Dex +3

Skills Athletics +6, Acrobatics +3, Deception +2, Intimidation +4, Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Thieves' Cant

Challenge 2 (450 xp)

Pack Tactics. Chaab has advantage on attack rolls against a creature if at least one of Chaab's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). Chaab deals an extra 9 (3d6) damage when he 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 assassin that isn't incapacitated and Chaab doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Actions

Multiattack. Chaab makes two attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) poison damage.

Heavy crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d10 + 1) piercing damage.

Reactions

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker hits Chaab with an attack, he can use his reaction to halve the damage.