



a Dozen SHOCKING BETRAYALS

BY PHILIP REED

The life of an adventurer is difficult and filled with many expected, unavoidable challenges. Unfortunately, there are also a near-infinite number of unexpected, surprising challenges that plague the player characters throughout their journeys.

A Dozen Shocking Betrayals describes twelve acts of betrayal that the party must respond to at the worst moment . . . or possibly lose their lives. These are terrible, wicked actions taken by those that the PCs have trusted that add unexpected complexities to their fictitious lives.

Part collection of characters and part encounter ideas, the pages that follow are presented as single-page items that may be easily printed and used one at a time. None of the entries are fully detailed adventures; as with all entries in the ***A Dozen . . .*** series of PDFs, these are designed to inspire you when preparing a session.

As with the other works in this series, the characters that follow are missing their game statistics. It is up to you, the gamemaster, to provide necessary stats for your chosen game system. As a systemless work, the twelve betrayals are descriptive rather than prescriptive. (This means, of course, that these are ideas intended to trigger your own imagination and not detailed scenarios that you should blindly follow. Make each your own!)

Before using any of the encounter ideas that follow, I suggest reading each and then printing those that most interest you. Once printed, attack each page with a pen, scratching out the concepts you plan to ignore and noting changes/expansions that you think of as you read the printed page.

Those of you who take a more technical approach to preparing for a session may wish to copy this text from the PDF and then rewrite to suit your tastes.

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anatomy of an encounter

1. A title, to help set the mood.
2. An opening block of text that may be used as read aloud text when using the encounter during your game session. Or, if you prefer, text that you will rework to better suit your personal style.
3. The encounter description, which is freeform and very open to interpretation. My goal with each and every encounter described within these pages is to provide you, the GM, with a fanciful and unusual encounter to toss at the party when you wish to shake up their world. Most of these encounters are useful only a single time and should not be repeated.
4. Each encounter includes a single illustration to help set the mood.

1 The Ranger, The Spell, and Unspeakable Doom

Elven ranger and adventurer Melandrach Genwraek is looking for heroes to help him locate the Book of Anathoth, an ancient book of spells that he says will aid him in freeing his imprisoned friends. If the party chooses to assist the man in his efforts to retrieve the book of magic, they will soon find that things are not exactly as the elven ranger has described.

In truth, Melandrach Genwraek is searching for the Book of Anathoth in the hopes of acquiring the map to the Tower of Eyes that is rumored to be hidden within the book's many pages.

So far, the best that Genwraek has been able to determine is that the Book of Anathoth is somewhere within one of the "Castle of Ghouls" (see *Fantasy City Sites and Scenes II*, pp. 14-15). He isn't certain where inside the castle, though, so he seeks out adventurers to join him in the hunt. The PCs might answer the call.

Taking the Lead

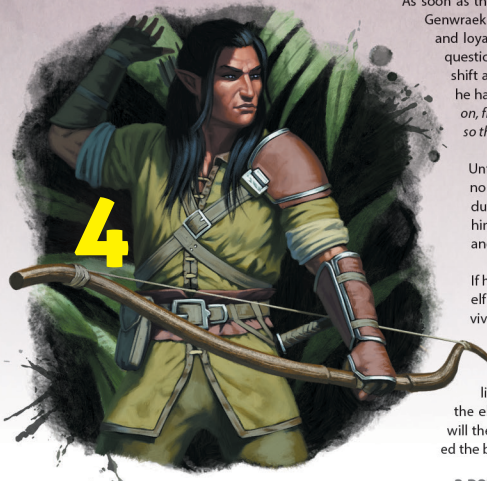
At first, Genwraek does everything he can to demonstrate that the PCs that he is someone they can trust. There's no door that he doesn't volunteer to open, chest he is unwilling to check, or monster that he will not attack in order to protect his "companions." Up until they discover the book, Genwraek is always at the front of any battle, engaging the enemy with bow and sword as appropriate to the encounter.

A Sudden Change

As soon as the party discovers the Book of Anathoth, Genwraek changes instantly. Where he was brave and loyal, he is now cowardly and his behaviour questionable. The party is certain to notice the shift and, if they ask, Genwraek tells them that he has been wounded and will be okay. "Press on, friends, and let us escape this cursed place so that we can study this foul tome in peace."

Unfortunately for the heroes, Genwraek has no intention of allowing them to escape the dungeon alive. If they turn their backs to him, the elf attacks them, trying to kill them and leave their bodies in the castle forever.

If he fails in his attempt to kill the heroes, the elf's objective changes to escape and survival. He'll do all he can to escape with the book, even going so far as to abandon any gear that may slow him down. If he does manage to escape, the party will likely want to chase him down and punish the elf for his betrayal. In the ensuing events, will the heroes learn why the ranger truly wanted the book?



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USING THE ENCOUNTERS

The important thing to remember about all of the encounters that follow is that they are not fleshed out, complete adventure locations and events. Every single encounter includes just enough information to trigger your own imagination; it is my wish that as you read through these encounters, you find yourself overwhelmed with ideas of your own. Each one is a snapshot stolen from my own imagination . . . and now we need for you to take these fragments and transform them into scenes that your players will never forget.

For additional inspiration when taking the encounter ideas that follow and making them your own, I highly recommend grabbing a scrap of paper or a journal and writing down every idea that comes to mind as you read the words I've provided.

Then, once you've got all of your thoughts in place, grab a 3 x 5 index card – or open a note file on your phone or tablet – and string concepts together one piece at a time to form a sequence of events that take my ideas and, with work, make them your own.

For example, in the encounter shown above, the PCs must face off against an elven ranger who is using them to locate a secret book. As described, the climax of the encounter comes when the heroes are within a dungeon complex, but there's no reason that the scene couldn't take place on the road back to town. Additionally, the encounter is actually a broader plot; rather than one event, you'll want to mix in several smaller scenes and build this encounter over several hours . . . or maybe even over multiple sessions!

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DEATH DRIVES a HERO TO ACTS OF VIOLENCE

The warrior Vacys Kuprys is a known, trusted man who has long worked with adventuring companies as paid muscle. Kuprys is a regular at the taverns in the city, and he is often hired when dungeoneers feel that another sword would spell the difference between life and death in their next undertaking.

Vacys Kuprys is an experienced warrior, skilled with sword and wearing a ring of flaming touch that allows him to – once per day – unleash a fire attack that inflicts damage on anyone he grabs or punches. The man is considered an asset by many adventuring companies who have worked with him in the past, and he is often waiting at an inn or tavern so that he can be ready the next time someone needs to hire help.

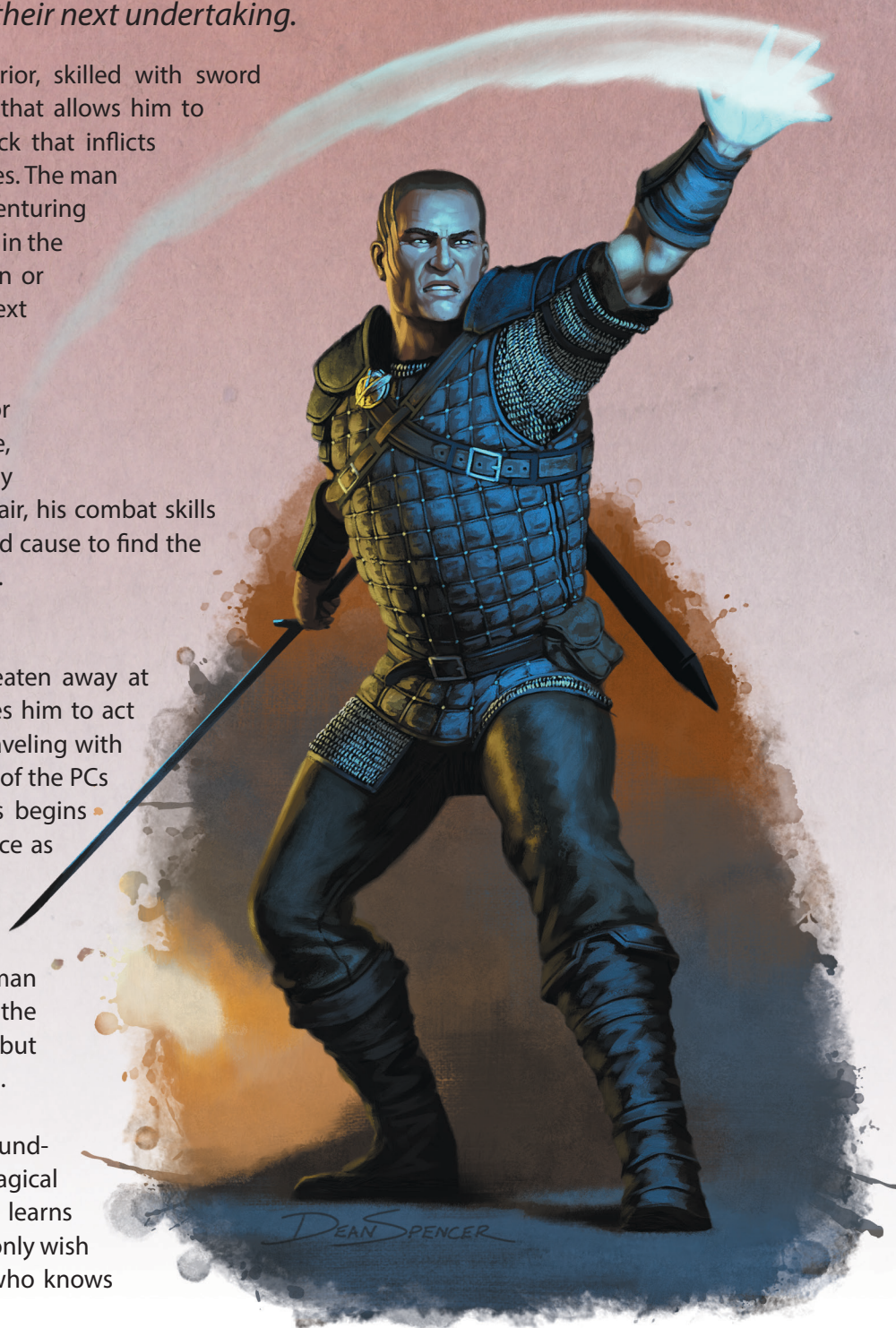
If the party goes in search of a sword or two to aid them in their next adventure, Kuprys comes highly recommended by several people in town. His rates are fair, his combat skills exceptional, and no one has ever found cause to find the man less than truthful and trustworthy.

Death Snaps His Sanity

Years of combat and violence have eaten away at the man's sanity until one death drives him to act in strange, unexpected ways. While traveling with the heroes, the death of anyone – one of the PCs or an NPC – is the last straw. Kuprys begins laughing, tears streaming down his face as his mental state is forever transformed.

Screaming that it is pointless and that nothing matters, the swordsman turns on his companions. Somehow, the incident has not only broken his brain, but it has also heightened his combat skills.

If the party can subdue him without wounding him, it is possible that rest and magical healing will restore his mind. Once he learns what he has done, Kuprys will flee, his only wish to hide in shame and avoid anyone who knows what he has done.



a TRAP TRIGGERED and a FRIEND NO MORE

Gerrit Roberg, only sixteen years of age, has served as a henchman and torchbearer during several dungeon expeditions. The young man carries a dagger to defend himself in rough times, but he often stays in the back of a party and is best-suited to carrying riches and supplies. Roberg has been lucky in his previous visits to the nearby dungeons, but his luck changes today.

When seeking out a henchman to aid them in their next dungeon expedition, the heroes meet Gerrit Roberg at one of the town's taverns or inns. The young man has a lot of experience under his belt and many of the town's adults say that he can be trusted to carry torches, supplies, and to help remove any treasure that may be unearthed during the journey.

Roberg knows not only his job as a torchbearer, but also has knowledge of the lands surrounding the town. "I've been in four different dungeons," the lad brags when interviewing for the position. "Two of them I've been in more times than I can count!" If asked, Roberg expresses confidence that he can help the PCs to navigate the first level of the dungeon and guide them around the worst of the traps.

Tripping the Trap

Unfortunately, Roberg is so intent on proving himself in the dungeon that he trips a trap and the heroes watch as an explosive burst of arcane energy surrounds the young man. Within seconds, Roberg's body is hideously changed, the trap's power transforming the torchbearer into a monster.

If the heroes try to save the youth from the trap's effect, they'll find that their attempts to speak with him prove useless. The monster attacks, regardless of what the PCs do, and their only course of action comes down to two options: Defeat the beast before it kills them, or knock it unconscious and then drag the body back to town and seek help for the changed torchbearer.



THE EVIL INSIDE IS UNLOCKED

When the threat of combat is high, it is not uncommon for adventurers to hire a healer or two to accompany them into the dungeon. For decades now, Aneta Vaskova has worked as a healer, using both magic and traditional medicines to aid those who have been wounded in battle.

When seeking out assistance for an upcoming adventure, the heroes are introduced to Aneta Vaskova, an arcane healer who is said to be well worth her rate of pay. The elderly woman seems a bit crazed, but those locals who introduce her to the PCs say that she's one of the best healers in the realm and has earned the trust of dozens of former adventuring companions.

For the first half of the adventure, Vaskova proves her worth several times. Not only does she use healing scrolls and potions – in a seemingly endless supply! – but the woman also knows some offensive mage spells and aids the party in combat.

A Foul Magic Unleashed

When the heroes are engaged in battle with monsters in the dungeon, something inside of Vaskova is triggered, unlocking a festering evil that has been waiting decades for this opportunity to escape. Many years ago, the woman was cursed and she has, until now, managed to suppress the necromantic being that has existed inside of her all of this time.

The first sign that something is wrong with their companion is when Vaskova launches offensive spells at one of the party's members. After that first attack, her face melts away to reveal a skeletal visage . . . and then barbed tendrils lash out from her body at the PCs.



Aneta Vaskova has fought this evil within her body for a long time, and now the creature has completely consumed her soul and claimed her body as its own. Within moments, the elderly woman is forever changed into a skeletal beast with eight legs, a skull-like head, and fleshy tendrils that flail and strike, the tip of each covered in poisonous spikes.

There is no rescuing the woman. All the PCs can do at this time is fight off the beast and hope to survive the encounter. They had best hope that Vaskova was not their only healer, or they will really be in trouble.

THE PROMISE OF RICHES MAKES A FRIEND A FOE

Soldier-knight Petre Dukov has long been a loyal friend of the warriors and adventurers who call the city home. The man has had many opportunities to join a company, but he prefers the excitement of never knowing who his fellow dungeoneers will be from week to week, and has thus chosen to serve as hired muscle rather than form permanent and lasting bonds with any one group of heroes.

To make the betrayal more shocking, I suggest you introduce a hireling to the group. The more time that passes

between meeting and betrayal, the more impactful the event will be on the players.

Taking Coins

Petre Dukov – an experienced warrior who spent several years as a soldier-knight in service to one of the land’s kings – has been approached by a villain who wishes only to cause the PCs suffering and pain. (See **A Dozen Malevolent Villains** if you’re in need of a suitable villain.) The promise of pay gets to Dukov and he accepts the assignment to turn on the heroes when the party is far from town.

Dukov is careful, though, and does not attack unless he thinks he has an advantage. Perhaps the man offers to take the first watch one night, using the cover of darkness to slaughter the heroes as they sleep. How will the PCs react if they awaken to a trusted companion turning his weapons on them in the dark of night?

Or, maybe, Dukov waits until the party is in the middle of a fight and then adds his attacks to those of the enemies that the PCs are facing. In the heat of battle, it would be quite easy to slip in one or two critical strikes and then claim that an opponent landed the fatal blow.



a PATIENT VILLAIN

Since first coming to the city nine years ago, the warrior Raimbalt de Hattes has worked with several different adventurers. He has proven himself in battle again and again, using his twin blades to earn a healthy living as a sword-for-hire. Little do the people of the city know, though, that Raimbalt possesses a villainous heart.

Raimbalt de Hattes is known throughout the city as a powerful swordsman, a man you do not want to offend. In addition to the stories of his time on the road, many who frequent the city's inns and taverns speak of the man's time spent in the gladiatorial arenas of the distant south; before becoming a citizen of the city, many say, he was a champion of the arena and slaughtered many of those he faced in one-on-one battle.

These days, Raimbalt doesn't join just any party of adventurers. The man is well-to-do, with gold saved and a home paid for and all his own. It takes something special to convince the warrior to join a group, so it seems a little odd to some of the city when he approaches the PCs and asks to join them in exploring one of the dungeons that connect to the city sewers.

An Old Enemy

Little do the heroes know, Raimbalt is a villain who has followed their exploits for many years. The GM must select one of the players' characters to be the connection between the past and the present; the chosen hero doesn't know it, but one of their ancestors was responsible for Raimbalt being thrown into the gladiatorial arena in the first place. The warrior was identified as a thief and sentenced to fight in the arena for six years; he is now seeking revenge on one of the relatives of his accuser.



The Attack

Raimbalt may be a villainous beast looking to inflict pain, but the man is no idiot. He will wait until the party has explored much of the dungeon – and collected valuable loot – before he strikes. He'll use the terrain to his advantage, looking to close doors, trigger traps, and release undefeated monsters to help him in his desire to kill his target . . . and as many other members of the party as he can manage without putting himself in danger.

If he fails to kill the heroes, Raimbalt will change his plan and instead try to trap them in the dungeon. At the very least, the man wants to delay the heroes' return to the city; his goal is to get there ahead of them and tell the citizens that his companions turned on him and that he barely escaped with his life. Raimbalt has deeper roots in the city than the PCs, so they may have a tough time proving their innocence to the people of the city.

THE RANGER, THE SPELL, AND UNSPEAKABLE DOOM

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Taking the Lead

At first, Genwraek does everything he can to demonstrate to the PCs that he is someone they can trust. There's no door that he doesn't volunteer to open, chest he is unwilling to check, or monster that he will not attack in order to protect his "companions." Up until they discover the book, Genwraek is always at the front of any battle, engaging the enemy with bow and sword as appropriate to the encounter.

A Sudden Change

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Unfortunately for the heroes, Genwraek has no intention of allowing them to escape the dungeon alive. If they turn their backs to him, the elf attacks them, trying to kill them and leave their bodies in the castle forever.

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THE DISGUISE FALLS

Tisha Zinsatra, elven mage and swordswoman, is known by many tavern owners and shopkeepers in the city, and she is soon introduced to the heroes when their need for assistance in exploring the dungeons of the region becomes known. Zinsatra is recommended and she presents herself as a kind woman as well as an experienced dungeoneer.



Unfortunately for the heroes, Zinsatra is anything but kind. Her cheery, friendly behavior is an act, a disguise she uses to mask the sour heart that beats beneath her false smile.

Tisha Zinsatra is an agent of Idoia Batesta, the leader of the secretive guild of assassins that operates in the shadows of the city (see **A Dozen Guild Leaders**). While Batesta insists that members follow the “no assassinations within the city” rule, the guild leader has decided that it is time for these “heroes” who have grown a little too powerful to suffer a setback.

The leader of the guild has instructed Zinsatra to join the PCs, seeking to become their friend and companion so that she can attack them when they least expect it. The betrayal will work best if you, the gamemaster, let the plot play out over a handful of different game sessions. Perhaps the heroes first tangle with Idoia Batesta and then, a few sessions later, are introduced to Zinsatra at one of the city’s many taverns. Then, after an adventure or two with the NPC at their side, the elven mage acts, turning against her “friends.”

To make things even more twisted and terrible for the heroes, Zinsatra times her betrayal perfectly and is joined by Idoia Batesta. Perhaps it is when the party takes rooms at an inn, when they feel safest, that the pair of villains choose to act; the PCs will no doubt be taken by surprise if the guild leader and their “loyal companion” attack at a time when the heroes feel that they are completely safe from danger.

Or, just maybe, Zinsatra is in communication with Batesta at all times (likely through magical trinkets of some kind) and the betrayal happens somewhere in the wilderness when the party has made camp for the night. How will the PCs respond when an attack by Idoia Batesta and several bandits suddenly takes a turn as Zinsatra, a woman they thought that they could trust, joins forces with the attackers?

DEEP BENEATH THE EARTH, THINGS CHANGE

The experienced hireling Marie Geffray, twenty-odd winters of age and knowledgeable in the art and skills of dungeoneering, sells her services as a guide to any adventurers who wish to explore the nearby dungeons. Geffray has personally visited almost a dozen of the dungeons that exist within a month's ride of the city, and she is willing to share her knowledge of the subterranean complexes . . . for a price.



Geffray has been a reliable guide for years, not once turning against her employers despite times in the past when she could have tried to grab some of the discovered riches and run. Things have changed recently, though, as Geffray has gained more experience and is starting to feel that she is worth more than she is paid. Even after raising her rates over the last year, the woman has watched as the dungeoneers she has guided have walked away with magic gear, valuable gems, and sacks of gold coins. Where, the woman asked herself, is her share of the riches?

After a successful fight against monsters in the dungeon, as the party is sorting through the loot, Geffray decides that enough is enough. She is tired of watching as others claim so many valuables and leave her with only the coins she is being paid for the task.

After the party has divided out the spoils, the woman tells them of a deeper level of the dungeon that – as far as she knows – hasn't been explored in decades. *"The others have been too afraid to see what is below this level,"* she tells the PCs if they ask why part of the dungeon remains unexplored.

She volunteers to remain at the rear of the group and carry the riches. *"So that the swords can make short work of whatever is awaiting us,"* she tells the heroes. Her true plan is to guide the group to a set of stairs and then, if she can manage it, slam shut a stone door and wedge it closed with iron spikes. Will she pull it off, or will the heroes notice that the woman is acting strangely and keep a close eye on their hireling?

a BLIND man in need IS a VILLAIN INDEED

When between adventures, while in the city, the heroes encounter Gamo Ekizian, a blind man who asks for their aid. Ekizian is far from defenseless, though, and he has plans for the party if they are foolish enough to follow him down the nearby alley where he says an ailing friend needs their help.

Gamo Ekizian is truly blind, yes, but the man is far from helpless. A talented spellcaster, Ekizian can “see” everything by reaching out with his mind and observing the arcane energies that course through the items, casters, and creatures that live within the world. So long as he is within one or two miles of a source of arcane energy, the man can absorb enough power to reveal everything near him as faint outlines that he can “see” in his mind.

Ekizian carries a magical staff that boosts his unnatural ability to see magic; without the staff, he would only be able to “see” if an arcane energy source was within a few hundred feet of his position.

The man has partnered with a few thugs and the group has been running a scam over the last week. Ekizian lures unsuspecting marks into an alley where the thugs attack, either knocking the victims unconscious or killing them; whatever it takes to claim the belongings that their victims may be carrying at the time.

Ekizian and his accomplices may have made a mistake this time, though, since the PCs are far less likely to go down than the usual townspeople who are targeted.

To make things a little more complicated, you can introduce Ekizian to the heroes in an earlier session, perhaps introducing him as a beggar who the adventurers take pity on. Each time they return to the city, they may encounter the man, who eventually starts to share rumors and information with the group. Such a build-up will make the betrayal all the more surprising for the heroes on the night the man leads them into the alley.



THE DEMON INSIDE CANNOT BE STOPPED

Torchbearer-for-hire and professional dungeon-geoneer's assistant Milan Hanus has much more living inside his soul than any would ever imagine. Several weeks ago, Hanus was possessed by an unnatural evil that has been waiting for its chance to strike. How very unfortunate it is for the party that the demon within Hanus has chosen now – when the heroes have entered the dungeon with the hireling – to make its move.

At some point during the adventure, after the heroes have fought a few monsters in the dungeon, the demon within their torchbearer shreds the man's body, instantly killing him and leaving behind nothing recognizable. The heroes are surprised, which gives the demon the first attack before the PCs may take action against this unexpected foe.

The demon's exact strength will depend on how challenging the GM wishes to make the encounter. A weaker demon will be little more than a distraction, a nuisance creature that causes more inconvenience than danger. Of course, that may be the GM's goal in using this encounter idea: to inconvenience the party at an inopportune time. After all, how much will it frustrate the heroes if they find that the loss of their faithful torchbearer means that they have to leave behind some of their acquired loot?

A powerful demon will make the event far more memorable, but making the demon too tough could lead to the loss of a character or two. Again, that may actually be the GM's intention when selecting this encounter idea. If it has been several sessions since the PCs were in danger, the loss of a companion should remind them that exploring the dungeons can be dangerous.



Making it Far More Terrifying

If you really want to stun the players, coordinate with one of them to make a PC the demon's carrier. If you have a player in the group who is having trouble making it to sessions regularly, it could be fun to take the player aside and explain that you want to remove the character from the game. Be sure to let the affected player take the role of the revealed demon if you choose this path. Can any player really resist the chance to play as a demon intent on slaughtering the rest of the party?

THE CULTISTS OF THE COSMIC DREAD AWAKEN

When visiting a small town far from the largest cities of the lands, the heroes stumble across an ancient evil that has entwined itself in the very blood of the unsuspecting people of the town. For centuries, the town's citizens have passed on a secret through their bloodlines, a terrible curse that has been unknown . . . until now.

Selecting a town that the heroes have visited several times will work best. Make it a place where they feel they are starting to make a name for themselves, somewhere that they have made contacts and a town where they have a favorite tavern. By using a town that has importance to the player characters as well as some history with the group, the transformation of the townsfolk into evil NPCs will have far more impact than if you were to use this week's random, new town.

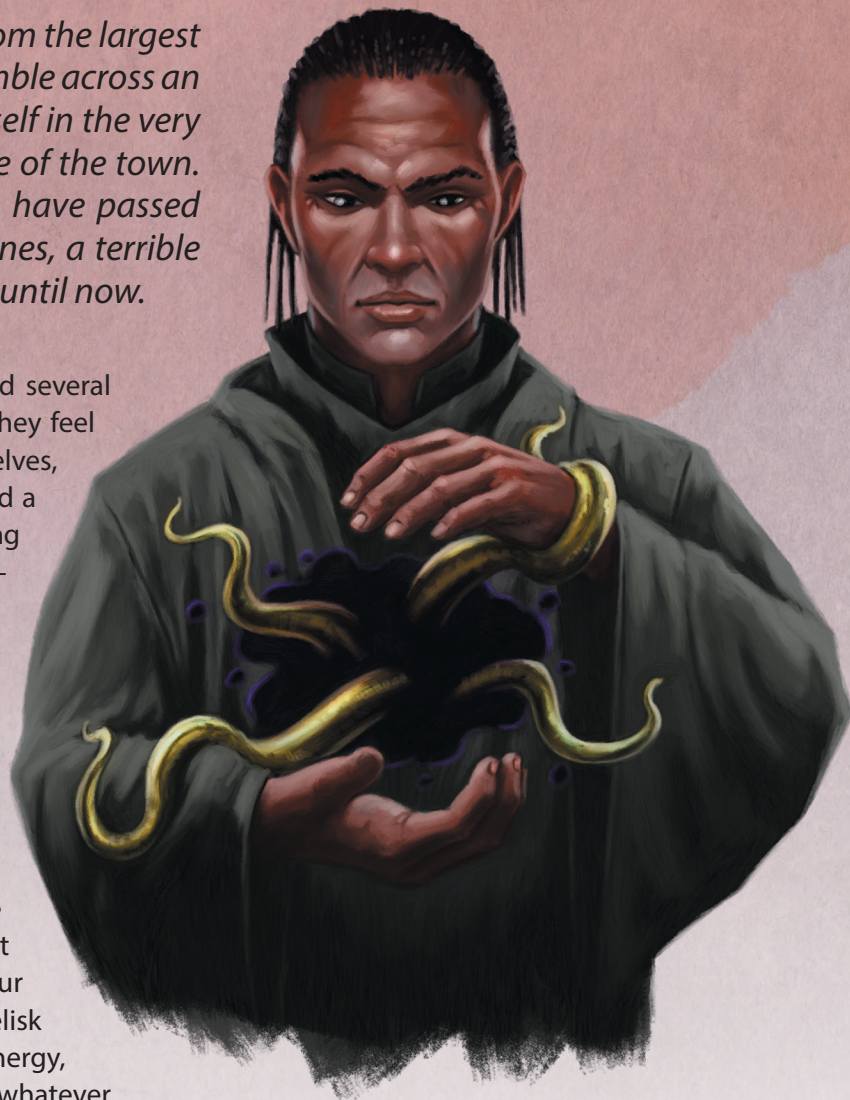
A Strange Object

One morning, after a powerful thunderstorm, the people of the town wake to find a towering obelisk made of marble standing in the town's center. The object stands twenty-feet tall and is smooth and featureless on all four sides. Any casting detect magic on the obelisk finds that the object is teeming with arcane energy, but no one can identify the object or unlock whatever magic is hidden inside the marble.

The People Are Changed

Weeks – perhaps months – later, the obelisk shows signs of wear, the marble cracking. Each time that it rains after that, bits of the marble are worn away by the weather until, maybe years later, the obelisk is eroded to reveal the statue of a tentacle-faced being.

The night after the people first see the statue, the power of the object ignites and floods the town with twisted, cosmic energy that brings the true nature of the town's inhabitants to life.



All citizens of the town look exactly as they did before, but now they are all followers of an ancient god that commands them to commit foul, evil acts. The first act? Murder any strangers who are not members of the town and who have not been affected by the transformation.

If the party can destroy the statue, they can break the curse that is the birthright of the people. Otherwise, for as long as the statue stands in the center of town, all who were born here will remain possessed by the power that races through their blood. The PCs may either shatter the statue and save the town, or they must never return to this town again.

a TRUSTED SHOPKEEPER IS AN AGENT OF DARKNESS

Selling everything from weapons to healing potions to rope, Elias Wouters has been running his small shop, All the Best Wares, for several years now. The heroes have visited the man's shop before and, each time, he has been fair and done his best to find the gear they need for their adventures. Now, though, it is time that the man answer the call of his secret masters. Everything is about to change.

Elias Wouters is an agent of evil, a servant of the Cult of Bloodscars. The cult has operated within the city limits for several years now, with many of the members in hiding and using the sewers to get about. The Cult of Bloodscars has a single purpose: to place members of the cult on the town council and quietly assume control of the city's finances and use the city to enrich themselves and the other members of the cult.

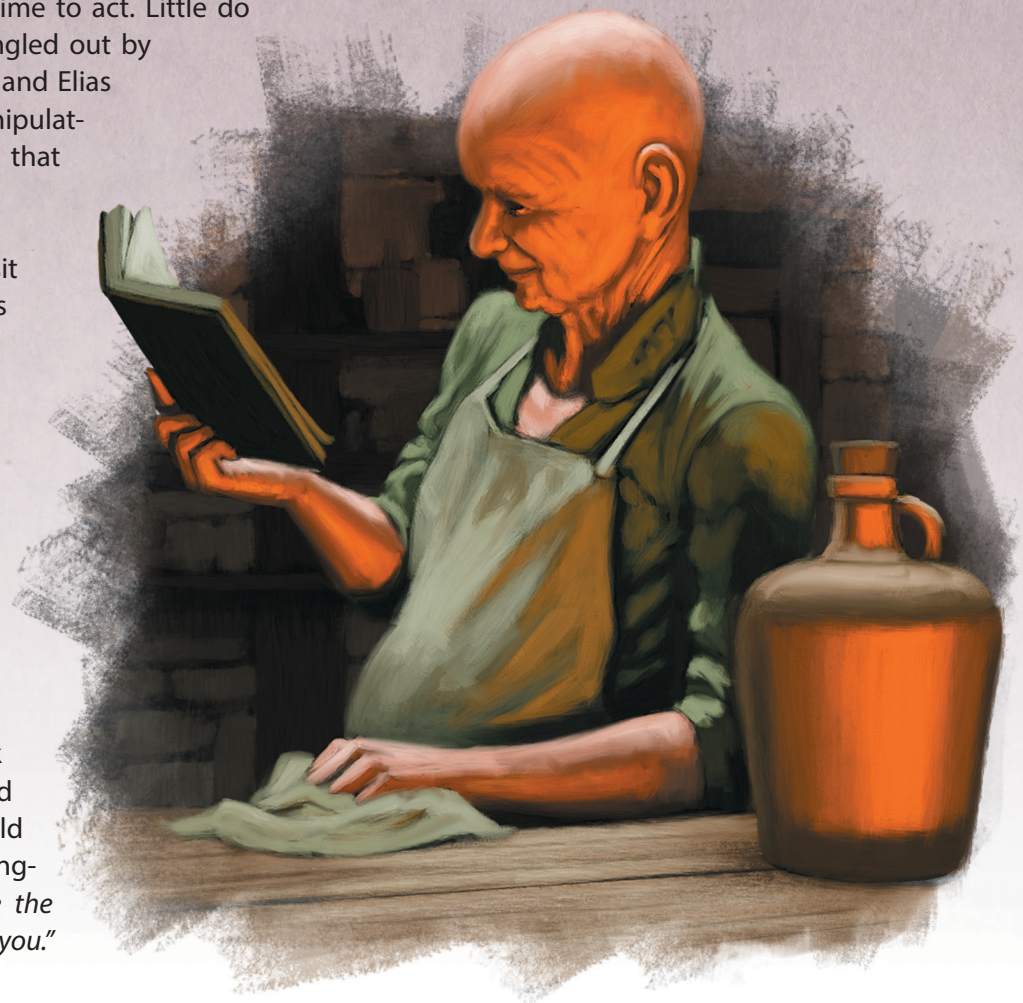
Now, half of the city council members are cultists, and the group has decided that it is time to act. Little do the PCs know, they have been singled out by the cult to act as a distraction . . . and Elias Wouters has been tasked with manipulating the heroes into taking action that will further the cult's cause.

The next time that the heroes visit Wouters and his shop, the man tells them that he was robbed recently and that he knows who committed the crime. *"I've tried the guard,"* he tells the party, *"but the criminal is in deep with the city watch and is immune. Can you help me, my friends, to right this terrible wrong?"*

Wouters promises to pay the PCs if they can help recover the stolen goods. He says that the thief took two scroll cases, a spellbook, and a handful of potions and he would very much like to get back his belongings. *"Be careful, though, because the thief is armed and may try to attack you."*

In truth, Wouters is trying to trick the party into killing a member of the city council. To make things worse, he has warned the councilman that thieves may attempt to break into his home late tonight; the councilman has a few guards with him and they're planning to confront and stop the "thieves."

If all goes well for Wouters and the cult, the party will kill the councilman, making room for another cultist to join the town council.



USEFUL REVIEW STAGE COMMENTS

As part of the creative process, the *A Dozen . . .* series PDFs go through a crowdsourced review stage where the Kickstarter backers are given a chance to read the files and provide me with info on any errors that they may spot. This makes the finished works far better than if I had handled the final reading alone, and I cannot thank the backers enough for spending their time reading these works at an early stage.

With this particular PDF, project supporter Colin Keizer included a few of his own ideas as comments to the review file. These are entertaining and may prove useful to GMs, so I am including those comments on this extra page. Thank you, Colin, for your continued support and for these excellent ideas that other GMs will no doubt benefit from!

General Note - "Shocking Betrayals" have great potential for total party kill if that is what the GM wants. On the other hand, there are all sorts of opportunities to make powerful allies out of deadly enemies, and deadly enemies out of powerful allies. If I were a GM using one or more of these encounters, I suspect I might find myself awarding experience points to some characters whose players were smart enough to run away and fight some other day!

General Note - I like and second the comment, "Most of these encounters are useful only a single time and should not be repeated." On the other hand, with a few subtle changes the devious GM might set a challenging trap for some adventurers who 'think' they recognize a current situation as similar to one from a previous quest.

Page 11 - Consider why Ekizian has partnered with thugs when he could probably earn more in honest work--or more significant skulduggery. Is he hiding from some enemy? Does he want something he believes he can only gain by stealing it? Does your party have what Ekizian seeks? Maybe it is 'who' Ekizian seeks?

Page 12 - Ha! Gotta love that Demon Surprise! Also have to agree that's a great way to ease a player out of a group when change of employment, vacation or other events will make attendance sketchy or non-existent.

Page 13 - For "Cultists Of The Cosmic Dread..." consider hiding the tentacle-faced idol and having the townspeople try to keep the adventurers from finding/destroying it. Clues for the adventurers might include detectable traces of arcane energy attached to long-time citizens. Maybe some sort of birthmark or tattoo would provide an image of the evil being these people worship. Can a cleric of the Light use prayer or divine magic to seek out the dark shrine? Can a sneaky adventurer follow or track worshippers to the dark shrine?

Page 14 - In "A Trusted Shopkeep..." consider whether the GM wants Wouters to be a follower of the cult or a reluctant pawn. If reluctant, will his behavior warn one or more adventurers that his task for them is a potential catastrophe for their future relationships in this city? If they are suspicious and successfully foil the Cult's plans, will Wouters be punished or even killed? Will the Cult become a powerful enemy of the adventurers? All sorts of possibilities for more adventures in this.