

RTKI-04

# THE SPARKLING GEM OF THE NORTH

A One-Round D&D LIVING GREYHAWK®

Ratik Regional Adventure

Version 1

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As winter closes in, tensions build over dissatisfaction with Lady Evaleigh's performance as Archbaroness. Dissidents seek to gain a recognized voice, creating a House of Guilds to share power with the Council of Lords. Third parties take advantage of the power struggle between defenders of the Archbaroness and her detractors. How will the adventurers act? This is the first of a two round adventure. An adventure for character levels 1-4.

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This is an RPGA® Network scenario for the Dungeons & Dragons® game. A four-hour time block has been allocated for each round of this scenario, but the actual playing time will be closer to three hours. The rest of the time is spent in preparation before game play, and scoring after the game. The following guidelines are here to help you with both the preparation and voting segment of the game. Read this page carefully so that you know and can communicate to your players the special aspects of playing an RPGA scenario.

## **PREPARATION**

First you should print this scenario. This scenario was created to support double-sided printing, but printing it single sided will work as well. There is enough room along the inside margin to bind the adventure, if you desire.

Read this entire adventure at least once before you run your game. Be sure to familiarize yourself with any special rules, spells, or equipment presented in the adventure. It may help to highlight particularly important passages.

When you run an RPGA D&D adventure we assume that you have access to the following books: the *Player's Handbook*, the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*. We also assume that you have a set of dice (at least one d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, and d20), some scrap paper, a pencil, an RPGA scoring packet, and your sense of fun. It is also a good idea to have a way to track movement during combat. This can be as simple as a pad of graph paper and a pencil, as handy as a vinyl grid map and chits, or as elaborate as resin dungeon walls and miniatures.

Instruct the players either to prepare their characters now, or wait until you read the introduction, depending on the requirements of the scenario as described in the introduction.

Keep in mind that you must have at least four players (not counting the DM), for the game session to be a sanctioned RPGA event. As well, you cannot have more than seven players participating in the game.

Once you are ready to play, it is handy to instruct each player to place a nametag in front of him or her. The tag should have the player's name at the bottom, and the character's name, race, and gender at the top. This makes it easier for the players (and the DM) to keep track of who is playing which character.

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying. That said, you as the DM can bar the use of even core rule books during certain times of play. For example, the players are not free to consult the *Dungeon Master's Guide* when confronted with a trap or hazard, or the *Monster Manual* when confronted with a monster.

Some of the text in this scenario is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the players will be in gray boxes. It's strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text instead of reading it aloud. Some of this text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters.

## **SCORING**

After the players have completed the scenario or the time allotted to run the scenario has run out, the players and DM score the game. The RPGA has three ways to score its games. Consult your convention coordinator to determine which method to use for this scenario:

1. No-vote scoring: The players write their names and RPGA numbers on the scoring packet grid. You fill in the top of the grid. That is all. No one is rated. This method is used for people who are just playing for fun.
2. Partial scoring: The players rate the game master and the scenario on their player voting sheet, and provide personal information, but don't vote for other players. The game master rates the scenario and completes personal and event information, but does not rate the players as a team or vote for players. This method is used when there is no competition, but the event coordinator wants information on how the game masters are performing, or the game master wants feedback on his or her own performance.
3. Voting: Players and game masters complete the entire packet, including voting for best player. If this method is used, be sure to allow about 15-20 minutes for the players to briefly describe their characters to the other players, and about 5-10 minutes for voting. This method is used when the players want to know who played the "best" amongst the group, or when the adventure is run in tournament format with winners and prizes.

When using voting, rank the players in order of your voting choice while they are completing their forms, so that you are not influenced by their comments on your abilities. It's a good idea to have the players vote while you determine treasure and experience awards for the scenario.

After voting, give the Scoring Packet to your event coordinator.

This is a LIVING GREYHAWK Adventure. As a Living™ adventure, it is expected that players will bring their own characters with them. If players do not have a LIVING GREYHAWK character generated, get a copy of the current LIVING GREYHAWK character generation guidelines, a character sheet, and a LIVING GREYHAWK log sheet from your convention coordinator or the RPGA Web site, and then have any players without a character create one. Once all players have a LIVING GREYHAWK character, play can begin.

Along with the other materials that you are assumed to have in order to run a D&D game, it is also recommended that you have a copy of the LIVING GREYHAWK Gazetteer.

## LIVING GREYHAWK TIER STRUCTURE

Because players bring their own characters to LIVING GREYHAWK campaigns, this adventure is tiered. Basically, the challenges in this adventure are proportioned to the average character level of the characters participating in the adventure. To determine the tier that you will use to run this adventure, add the character levels of all the characters. In addition, add the levels of any cohorts or animals according to the values on their certificates. Cross-reference the total and the number of players participating in the game using the chart below to determine the tier used for this adventure.

	<u>4 players</u>	<u>5 players</u>	<u>6 players</u>	<u>7 players</u>	<u>Lvl Cap</u>
T1:	4-12	5-13	6-14	7-15	4 <sup>th</sup>
T2:	13-22	14-24	15-26	16-28	6 <sup>th</sup>

The level cap indicated is the highest level of character allowed to play this adventure. Characters of levels higher than the highest level shown for the highest tier cannot be played.

## IS IT A FULL MOON?

Since the hazards of lycanthropy are a current part of the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign, it may be necessary to determine if this adventure takes place during a full moon. For game purposes, the full moon lasts three days of each month. For a given scenario that does not state the phase of the moon, roll 1d10 before play begins. On a result of 1, the first day of the scenario is a night of the full moon (roll 1d3 to determine where in the sequence of three nights it falls).

## LIFESTYLE

At the beginning of every scenario, each PC is required to pay upkeep costs matching the level of lifestyle they wish to maintain. The lifestyles, and the effects that each has on play, are:

**Destitute:** You have no living space, and must carry all your gear everywhere. You eat poor quality food. You wear a peasant outfit, your only change of clothes.

**Poor:** You sleep in poor accommodations, and eat poor quality food. You wear a peasant outfit, and have two sets of clothing.

**Common:** You have common lodgings, and eat common quality food. You have normal clothing for your profession (adventuring); nothing fancy. You probably have two or three sets of clothing.

**High:** You stay in good quality lodgings, and eat good quality food. You wear anything in value up to courtier's outfits, and generally buy a new set of clothing every two weeks.

**Luxury:** You have luxurious accommodations (twice the cost of good accommodations), and you eat excellent foods. You can throw a banquet for your friends every day, and frequently do. You wear clothing up to the value of noble's outfit, and buy a new set of clothes every week.

Lifestyles come with bonuses or penalties to Diplomacy, Intimidate, Disguise, and Bluff skill checks. These penalties, shown below, should be applied at the DM's discretion, and can sometimes backfire—for example, a PC with a poor lifestyle would not have a penalty when talking to a beggar, but would when talking to a city official. A PC with a high lifestyle should have a penalty when dealing with a group of street thugs, where a PC with a destitute lifestyle might not.

DMs are encouraged to role-play these reactions whenever possible.

Lifestyle Cost	Skill Modifier	
Destitute	14 sp	-2
Poor	43 sp	-1
Common	12 gp	0
High	250 gp	+1
Luxury	500 gp	+2

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND

Alain has been gone for years and Lady Evaleigh has vacillated as the new Arch baroness. Her father-in-law has become a recluse in the family's estates outside Marner. Faced with managing the family saw mills, dealing with the delicate negotiations with the Fruztii and the Schnai, handling the meddling of her own family from County Knurl and dealing with the Sea Barons, Lady Evaleigh has tended to do nothing. Many Ratikkans, once proud of their resistance to the humanoid invasions during the Greyhawk Wars, are fearful that the country will collapse into anarchy. The guilds dealing with the noble metals and with gems, timber and furs seek to export their valuable products and are demanding decisive action. Some have gone so far as to call for a voice equal to the Council of Nobles; indeed, a few even call for limiting the powers of the arch baron and seek to impose some limitation on the arch barony.

The current weakness in the arch barony has

attracted the notice of the Scarlet Brotherhood's leadership and they have sent emissaries who have played on Vionelle Glidden's desire for power to sow the seeds of destruction. She has worked toward this goal by subverting one of Lady Keth's household. In addition, she has caused incidents that will appear to be the fault of Sir Ardent Bentner, head of security for Lady Evaleigh's household, as a goad to the guilds and of various guilds as a goad to the royalists. She hopes that the strife will result in the use of the military to put down the Guild Faction. Of course, the Brotherhood hopes that the conflict will enable them take control of the political life of Ratik.

Adventure synopsis - The PCs, having finished some shopping, become entangled in the political conflict between the Guild Faction and Lady Evaleigh's household. As they take sides, they are present as a number of incidents occur. The PCs must use their resources to prevent people from dying and to get to the bottom of the violence.

## INTRODUCTION

As the story begins, evening has fallen and shops are closing. The PCs are among the last shoppers ushered from the shops in the heart of the market district.

## ENCOUNTER 1

There is a crashing of glass and a well-dressed gnome, Lymon Gemsplitter, tumbles into the street from one of the nearby shops and starts running for his life as a band of humans give chase a round or two later. If the PCs choose to chase after the humans, they will find themselves in a dead end alley with the humans obviously annoyed at having lost the gnome. (Gemsplitter ducked behind some boxes in the alley and cast *Invisibility* on himself. His *Slippers of Spider Climbing* enable him to hide up on the wall). The humans will be very aggressive and the PCs will have to use a lot of diplomacy to avoid a fight. If they do, or if any of the humans are left alive after the fight, the humans will tell them that Gemsplitter is behind a plot to overthrow Lady Evaleigh. Gemsplitter will become visible again only if his human pursuers are no longer a threat.

If the PCs side with the humans, they are directed to meet Sir Ardent Bentner for instructions on how they can help maintain the arch barony and the legal government of Ratik. If they decline gracefully, the humans will mumble a bit but leave, at which time Gemsplitter will thank the PCs for distracting his pursuers. Since he is still invisible and moving along the wall, the PCs will have to track him with *Listen* checks. If they react positively to him, he will become visible and give them tickets to the Songweaver show and tell them he will meet them afterward.

**The cool clear air is typical of late fall evenings in Marner. The days are becoming much shorter, and already Marner is in**

**nightfall. The street lamps are being lit at the corners of the market streets. They are infrequent, plebeian but brighter reflections of the myriad stars above. Having just finished some shopping, you are heading home through the busy market district when the sound of glass shattering shifts your attention to the action across the street. A well-dressed gnome evidently has just tumbled through a shop window and has taken off down the street at a full run. Moments later, a half dozen humans in livery come running out of the doorway, heading after the gnome. Wondering what's happening, you just catch a glimpse of the gnome dashing into an alley you know has a dead end.**

With a Knowledge (local or nobility) check at DC 15, the players will recognize the livery as belonging to the Arch Baron's household. A Spot check (DC 10) will give the PCs the knowledge that the store is Gemsplitter's Jewelry Shop.

At this point, the PCs must decide whether they are going to get involved or not. The gnome is Lymon Gemsplitter, the proprietor of the shop. He is being chased by 6 members of the Arch Baroness' household because they believe he has important information on the Guild Faction, the leaders of the movement to impose limitations on the Arch Baroness' power and create a second council (the Council of Guilds) which would have equal power with the existing Council of Lords. Due to Lady Evaleigh's ineffectual rule over the past years, some lords have joined with the guilds, hoping to shift power away from the Arch Barony; Lord Bredivan is chief among them. Thus, there is a real chance of the change coming about.

If the PCs enter the alley, the agitated humans will confront them. The gnome, who has cast *invisibility* upon himself and used his *slippers of spider climbing* to climb the wall, is nowhere to be seen. Annoyed at not finding the gnome in the dead end alley, the humans will be belligerent when they meet the PCs. A Diplomacy check at DC 15 will be necessary to calm them down enough to avoid conflict. If calmed down, the leader of the humans will explain that they have reason to believe that Gemsplitter is behind a plot to overthrow Lady Evaleigh. They ask the PCs if they are willing to help in the cause of defending the Arch Baroness. If the PCs agree, Sir Kringer will direct them to Sir Ardent's offices for an 8:00pm meeting: Gemsplitter escapes via the roof tops, go to Encounter 2A; if not, a Diplomacy check at DC 15 is necessary to avoid moving the humans back to confrontational. Once this happens, a further check at DC 13 is necessary to avoid a fight.

If a fight ensues, the Marner Constabulary (MC) will respond in 10 rounds if there were negotiations before hand or 20 rounds if the fight started right away. They were responding to reports of the incident at the jewelry shop and will hear the fighting. If the PCs fight, the MC will take them into custody. The MC will confiscate any items looted from Kringer or his men. The MC is a civilian force financed by the merchants. It is not connected with Lady Evaleigh. Their bail will be set at 20 gp per tier each unless one of Kringer's men was killed, in which case it will be 100 gp per tier each. The PCs will

not be allowed to leave the walled portion of the city. If the PCs cannot post the bail, Gemsplitter will. In either case, he will be waiting for them when they get out. (The bail will be deducted from the monetary rewards, up to the total of the monetary reward.) If the PCs don't decide to help Lady Evaleigh and Sir Kringer and his men leave, Gemsplitter will talk to the PCs while remaining invisible and walking along the wall. He will introduce himself and thank the PCs for not joining with Lady Evaleigh's men and for distracting them from finding him. If Gemsplitter is satisfied that the PCs are potential allies, he will come down to the ground and turn visible. He will offer the PCs tickets to the Bilsby Songweaver concert at the Pregnant Mule Inn and will agree to meet them afterwards. Go to Encounter 2B.

Gemsplitter will not allow himself to be captured. He will avoid combat and escape up the walls and over the roofs.

♣ **Lymon Gemsplitter**: Male gnome Exp4/Rog4.

♣ **Sir Ramold Kringer, male human Ftr3**: CR 3; Medium-size Humanoid (human); HD 3d10+3; hp 25; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (touch 12, flat-footed 14); Atk +6 melee (1d8+2/19-20, longsword) or +5 melee (1d4+2/19, dagger); AL LN; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 10. Height 5 ft. 8 in. tall.

*Skills and Feats*: Climb +2, Jump +6, Handle Animal +2, Listen +2, Ride +6, Swim +6, Spot +4; Alertness, Dodge, Power Attack, Cleave, Weapon Focus (Longsword).

*Possessions*: Longsword, chain shirt, tabard with Arch Baroness' heraldry, dagger.

♣ **Constables, male human, Warr1**: CR ½; Medium-size Humanoid (human); HD 1d10; hp 7; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (touch 11, flat-footed 14); Atk +3 melee (1d8+2/19-20, longsword) or +3 melee (1d4+2/19, dagger); AL LN; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10. Height 5 ft. 6 in. to 6 ft. tall.

*Skills and Feats*: Climb +2, Jump +4, Listen +2, Ride +6, Swim +6, Spot +3; Alertness, Power Attack.

*Possession*: Longsword, chain shirt, tabard with Arch Baroness' heraldry, dagger.

## PLOT 1 ENCOUNTER 2A

When the PCs show up at Sir Ardent Bentner's offices, they are greeted with warm welcome. Ardent has seen the report from the patrol and is happy to see the PCs. He tells them that the Scarlet Brotherhood has wormed its way into positions of power within several of the guilds and even has influence over a couple of the lords. He tells the PCs that Tormund Ukakane, the head of the goldsmiths' guild, is the head of the conspiracy and is expected to be having a meeting at a certain location outside the city. He asks the PCs to go to the meeting, identify the conspirators and report back to him. He tells

them that they should be able to gain admittance because they are not yet associated with the Arch Baroness' faction and he can provide the password.

*After securing your purchases and having some dinner, you head for your meeting. Sir Ardent Bentner's offices are on the second floor of a building, which houses some minor offices of the Arch Barony on the first floor. There is a small reception room with an entry door and a door in each of the side walls. A moderately worn rug is more or less in the middle of the room and a secretary, a moderately good-looking woman with a moderately severe expression on her face, behind a desk near the left wall. The far wall is adorned with a bookcase, a painting of Lady Evaleigh, and a chair. Near the chair is another chair that backs against the right wall. Two more chairs are in a similar configuration by the other corner of the right wall.*

*"Yes? Can I help you?" asks the secretary. Despite the severity of her expression, the words are moderately friendly.*

The PCs should explain that they were sent by Sir Ramold to meet Sir Ardent. The secretary will go through the door in the left wall, close the door behind her, and return in a moment to tell the PCs to enter. Ardent has seen the report from the patrol and is happy to see the PCs.

*"Ah! Good to see you. Sir Ramold thinks you may be welcome help in our mission to protect Lady Evaleigh and the Arch Barony from those who would strip her of her powers and turn the nobles, who were the backbone of our defense against the vile creatures that swarmed against us in the recent war, into commoners. It would be laughable if it were not for the fact that the Scarlet Brotherhood controls the Guild Faction and will use its success to gain control of this Sparkling Gem of the North. We know that Tormund Ukakane, that doddering old dwarf, is their chief pawn. His mind hasn't been what it used to be before Alain's expedition.*

*We know they're having a rally at one of the cranberry farms in the southwest sector of the city. Since you aren't known to be with us and we have the password, you could get into the rally and see who's there. Will you do that for us?"*

This encounter is strictly for role playing and moving the PCs on into the action with some background so that they can understand the legitimate side to the loyalists. Unfortunately, while it is true that the Scarlet Brotherhood has a hand in what is going on, it is not true that the guilds, and Tormund Ukakane, in particular, are connected with the Brotherhood. Rather, the Brotherhood has taken advantage of the passions of all the parties and is duping the less acute members of each faction into rash action. Also, remember that Ardent's men don't know that Gemsplitter was a "fly on the wall" while they were talking to the PCs.

The PCs are likely to have questions.

**Is there anything particular to which you want us to pay attention?**

Primarily, we are interested in who is there. The main meeting should not be terribly informative given what we know already. If you can get into the executive

meeting, which follows the general meeting, we would like to know what their current plans are.

### Where is the meeting?

We will give you comprehensive directions and the password. Knowing the specific location is not significant to the scenario. Go to Encounter 3A.

## ENCOUNTER 3A

At the meeting of the Guild Faction, the PCs find a broad spectrum of Marner personages and representatives of the lordly houses of Bredivan, Ukaloa, Ukakane and the gnomes. The meeting is held in two parts. The first part is a general meeting to inspire supporters and to report on progress so far. The second part is secret and the PCs will not be able to gain admittance unless they can do some sneaking around. If they do get to spy on the second half of the meeting, they witness an unsuccessful assassination attempt on Tormund Ukakane: an apprentice spots the assailant and steps in the way, taking the deadly blow. Or, perhaps, the PC(s) spot the assailant, realize his intent, and intervene, themselves.

If they don't get in, the PCs hear about the assassination attempt on their way back to report to Sir Ardent.

*You follow the directions which lead you across West Bridge into the southern portion of Marner. You have left behind the lighted streets of the market district but in the cloudless sky, the stars have been joined by a half moon and there is plenty of light to guide one's steps. You continue following the road that runs past the saw mill until you come to one of the farmsteads that have flourished in the marshy area south of the Marner River. The meeting is to be held in a cock fighting arena that is off the road about a quarter mile. As you approach, you see that many people already are there and more follow you. From the quality of their clothes, many clearly are among the wealthy merchants, but an equal or even greater number are simple craftsmen, possibly even laborers.*

*The arena is full and you have to scramble for a seat.*

*Tormund Ukakane is wrapping up his speech:*

*"In the years since Alain failed to return from the Bone March, Lady Evaleigh has vacillated when firm action was required. Our treaty with the Sea Barons, which would increase our trade manifold, languishes. And too frequently she has bowed to the wishes of her father, Count of Knurl, when Ratik's interests should have been foremost. If Ratik is to survive in this troubled world, the voice of the merchants and guilds must be given a permanent place in the government. A House of Guilds is a necessity if Ratik is to survive."*

Have the PCs make Knowledge (local) checks. For each 2 points over a DC of 15, each PC recognizes another person at the meeting. See the list below and pick the people each PC is most likely to recognize based on the PC's experience, race and class. A Gather Information check (DC 12) will discover that there was a fire at the Pregnant Mule Inn and several people died. Fortunately, Bilsby Songweaver, the bard, was unscathed, even

though he heroically went back several times to rescue people. The people in the stands are blaming Sir Ardent's "thugs" for the fire and are quite angry.

As noted by Ardent, this meeting is basically a political rally meant to keep the rank and file aware of the Guild Faction's latest accomplishments and recognizing good work done by specific faction workers. The meeting lasts until past midnight. After it adjourns, the Faction bigwigs head for the two-story farmhouse to hold their executive meeting in the library room. The PCs will not be allowed in the door. If they want to spy on the meeting, they will have to work out some way of getting into the house.

There is a second floor window: Climb (DC 20) for relative quietness during climbing, Disable Device (DC 20) to quietly open the window; if a Rogue makes it into the upper floor, he can lower a rope, which others can climb (DC 5). The point here is to work cooperatively and by stealth. If noise is made, the Executive Board of the Faction will be aware someone is in the house and the PCs will not get any useful information. In fact, they will be confronted and told to leave. Someone also may attempt to listen at the window of the room where the meeting is being held. The PC must make a Hide check (DC 15) to remain undetected and a Listen check (DC 20) to catch some phrases, or (DC 25) to hear pretty much everything.

If some PCs make it into the house undetected, have them make a Spot check (DC 20). Success means they see that they are not alone in having gotten into the house. They see an assassin ready to make an attack on Tormund Ukakane.

Read:

*As you peer down the stairs, you hear the Executive Board talking. Suddenly, you are certain that one of the shadows on the stairs moved. As your eyes become accustomed to the different shades of darkness, you see the faint outline of someone dressed in dark clothing. A darker shade of black marks the outline of a long dagger. That outline is rising as the rest of the shadow-like figure moves toward the back of Tormund Ukakane.*

If the PC(s) act to stop the assassination, begin combat. If they don't, read:

*Out of a portion of the room you can't see from the stairs, a young woman shrieks and jumps between Tormund Ukakane and the assassin. Taking the full force of the blow, she sags back against the guild leader, her eyes bulging. Her body begins to shake and she collapses to the floor. The assassin, with uncanny deftness, tumbles past the stunned faction member's and the dumbfounded guard at the door and is lost in the night.*

➤ **Assassin, female human Rog5/Asn1:** CR 6; Medium-size Humanoid (human); HD 6d6; hp 30; Init +7 (Dex, Improved Init); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (touch 13, flat-footed 10); Atk +7 melee (1d4+3/190, dagger); S A Sneak Attack +4d6, Death Attack; SQ Uncanny Dodge (Dex Bonus even if caught flat footed), Evasion, Poison Use; AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +9, Will +2; Str 15 Dex 17 Con 10

Int 14 Wis 12 Cha 13. Height 5 ft. 6 in. tall

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +11, Bluff +6, Climbing +6, Disable Device +10, Disguise +9, Escape Artist +9, Hide +12, Jump +9, Listen +9, Move Silently +12, Open Lock +11, Spot +9, Tumble +1 *Feats:* Improved Initiative, Dodge, Weapon Focus (dagger), Mobility

*Special Attacks—Death Attack (Ex):* If the assassin studies his victim for 3 rounds and then makes a sneak attack with a melee weapon that successfully deals damage, the sneak attack has the additional effect of possibly either paralyzing or killing the target (assassin's choice.)

*Special Qualities—Poison Use (Ex):* Assassins are trained in the use of poison and never risk accidentally poisoning themselves when applying poison to the blade.

*Possessions:* +1 Dagger poisoned with Black Lotus Extract (3d6 Con/3d6 Con; Contact DC 20)

*Physical Description:* Well-tanned skin; toned muscles; short dark hair; comfortable black clothes. Absolutely nothing to identify who this is or with whom she is connected. If the PCs have any way of communicating with the dead, make sure the answers are as evasive and as uninformative as possible.

*Spells Prepared* (1; base DC = 12 + spell level): 1st—*obscuring mist*.

This can be a lethal encounter, particularly if the PC has prevented the strike against Tormund because the poison will still be on the blade. See DM's Map #1. There are several things to keep in mind.

1) The PC isn't supposed to be in the house. If he/she survives the combat, the faction members will take the PC into custody and try to determine why he is there and what he knows about the assassination attempt. Gemsplitter will recognize the PCs and tell the rest of the group that the PCs most likely are Ardent's men. This may provide an opportunity for the PC to switch sides. If the whole group is present and switches, go to Encounter 5B after reading the last set of boxed text for 4B. Unless all switch, the scenario is over for those who don't: those who didn't are in custody for trespassing.

2) If the PC is killed, any other PCs in the house have the option of leaving undetected or of exposing themselves to the Faction. The latter leads to the same situation as in #1.

3) Any PCs who were outside the house hear the commotion and can look in windows to see what is going on. They have the same options as in #2.

4) If a PC dies in combat: obviously, the scenario is over for him. However, Febal Ukaloa can cast *Delay Poison*, which will provide time for the PC to be taken to a temple for a *Neutralize Poison* spell for 320gp.

5) Anyone who leaves proceeds to Encounter 4A.

6) The first time the assassin has a clear shot at an escape, she will automatically escape.

Faction Members Present in the house:

- Digwel Grosseshnozz (Conductor of the gnomes)
- Lord Gatoril (leader of the army at Ratikhill)

- Sir Barret (Captain of the Guard of House Bredivan)
- Tormund Ukakane (guildmaster, Goldsmiths Guild)
- Febal Ukaloa (chief engineer, Clan Ukaloa)
- Woof Warpman (guildmaster of the Weavers Guild)
- Lymon Gemsplitter (guildmaster, Jewelers guild)
- Bilsby Songweaver (most famous bard in Ratik).

In the crowd at the rally:

All the above plus members of the Farriers Guild, the Mariners Guild, Sir Hengan Mogotten (war wizard of Ratikhill), Wyvel Bazzik (guildmaster of the Shipwrights Guild) and numerous "ordinary" people.

**Treasure:** +1 dagger.

## ENCOUNTER 4A

The PCs report back to Sir Ardent. When queried about the assassination attempt, Sir Ardent denies having anything to do with it. A Sense Motive check determines that there is something odd about his response. He attributes the attempt to a jealous guild member or some cheated customer. In fact, Ardent didn't order the assassination but had heard there would be one. One reason he had sent the PCs was he wanted to find out who was behind the attempt: someone trying to smear his efforts or someone not connected to the political battle at all. If the PCs were present, Ardent will question them carefully about what they saw. He will be particularly interested in a description of the assailant. If the PCs can provide a good description, Ardent will recognize the assassin as a nagent of the Scarlet Brotherhood. Ardent will not share this with the PCs.

*As you head back to Sir Ardent to report your findings, small groups of people have gathered in various places and already are abuzz about the attempt on Tormund Ukakane's life. Much of the debate revolves on whether or not he survived. The rest is speculation on who could have been behind it. Much of the opinion seems to be "some of Ardent's thugs." Clouds have begun to form, blocking out many of the stars and even hiding the moon for periods of time. You arrive at the building in the early hours of the morning as rain has begun to fall. Still, there are people in small clusters up and down the street, most of them taking shelter under awnings. Your feet feel heavier each step they take up the stairs to Ardent's office. There is no secretary to greet you at this hour.*

*Ardent is busy reading various communications and drafting responses by the light of a moderately well-crafted lamp. He looks up as your shadow (from the lit chandelier in the waiting room) crosses his peripheral vision. "Ah, you're back. What have you to tell me?"*

If some of the PCs group has not returned, he will notice their absence. He listens quietly through whatever the

PCs have to report. When the PCs report the perception that Sir Ardent was behind the attack or ask him if he was behind it, Sir Ardent will state that he had nothing to do with it. This is true, but a Sense Motive check (DC 15) will detect that something is “off.” In actuality, Ardent had heard that there might be an attempt on Tormund’s life at the rally but wasn’t sure of the accuracy of his source. One of the reasons he sent the PCs was to see if they could get him information on who was behind the attack. If the PCs describe the assassin, Ardent will frown. He recognizes the assassin described as a member of the Scarlet Brotherhood but does not disclose this. He will wind up the meeting with:

**“It’s late. You have done well. Come back about mid morning and I will have more for you to do.”**

## ENCOUNTER 5A

As the PCs are about to leave Sir Ardent’s, the building is firebombed. The PCs find themselves trapped on the second floor with Ardent, several knights and a number of civilians. They must lead as many of the civilians to safety as possible. In the process, they must hurl themselves against burning doors and help people down to the courtyard. The first PCs out will be fired upon by retreating ruffians, who will disappear into a maze of alleyways. Numerous bystanders have begun forming bucket brigades to put out the fire. Gather Information will develop a description of the arsonists. They turn out to be low-level members of the farriers’ guild.

**The weight of the hours hangs on your shoulders as you exit the office. Your mind, however, is shaken from its early morning listlessness by a acrid smell. Exiting the reception room, you are greeted by a blast of hot air. Fire! Before you, the stairs down from the second floor are burning as is the stairway across the way. Smoke gathers around you and enters the reception room. Soon, Ardent is standing at your side. “Arsonists!” he cries. After only the briefest of pauses, he recalls, “There are women and children in the offices across the way! Until she could complete the widows’ housing being developed north of the town, Lady Evaleigh made those unused offices available to the widows of soldiers who had died on Alain’s ill-starred attack on the Bone March.” Ardent begins running around the walkway toward the other side of the building. “We must save them!”**

There are three widows and seven children in three of the converted offices. The offices are similar in layout to Ardent’s: a central reception area used as a living/cooking/eating area and a room on either side used as bedrooms. See DM’s Map 2 for the layout. The fire has engulfed the stairs and is spreading slowly: 1 foot per round due to the rain-wetted timber. PCs and NPCs within 5 feet of the flames will suffer 1d4 heat damage per round, 2d4 if they actually are in the flames. Getting the people out of the rooms will be relatively easy once the doors are opened: roll a 1d20 for each family. First round, DC 15 for someone inside to be awakened by the smell of smoke. The DC drops by 5 each round.

**Wooden Doors:** 1 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 5; AC 5; Break DC 10.

The younger children cannot climb by themselves. The older children have Climb +5. The women have Climb +2. PCs waiting in the courtyard below can attempt to catch falling children, with Reflex Save (DC 10) if positioned under the child, or (DC 15) if the PC has to maneuver to make the catch. The same can be done for falling widows. However, breaking their fall causes one point of damage to both the woman and the PC. Anyone falling and not caught suffers 1d3 points of damage if climbing down and 1d6 points of damage if falling from the walkway. If the PCs are attempting to get the civilians down from the second floor, Ardent will jump down to the courtyard and limp away on a sprained ankle. He is summoning people to begin a bucket brigade.

**A crowd has gathered and a bucket brigade has begun to bring sand from the shed next to the building. Ardent, his limp becoming worse as he hurries about directing the attempt to put out the fire, displays a commendable organizational skill. As you make sure that all the living have been moved to the courtyard, the fire comes under control. A minute or two later, the stubborn remnants have been smothered. As you survey the street in front of the still-smoking building, two crossbow bolts slam into the wall behind you. A quick scan catches two men disappearing into the maze of alleys about a block away.**

At this point, everyone is down from the second floor or dead. PCs with Alchemy or an appropriate Knowledge or Profession skill may roll a check (DC 15) to realize that Alchemist’s fire was used to start the blaze. A Gather Information check (DC 10), will discover that four men were seen running away from the building shortly before the fire broke out. With a DC of 15, someone identifies the men as being apprentices in the Farriers Guild.

**Ardent will be quite surprised: “Wabitha m is a letheaded guy. This doesn’t sound like his way of dealing with things. It will be dangerous, but can you check this out?”**

## ENCOUNTER 6A

Presumably, the PCs head off for the Farriers’ Guild to track down the arsonists. When they arrive, they must confront higher-level guild members. The latter argue that the assassination involved in the Tormund Ukakane attack was undoubtedly one of Sir Ardent’s stooges: everyone knows that Sir Ardent has been in charge of the anti-parliament forces. If any of the PCs was captured in that encounter, the farriers will note that some of Ardent’s men were captured on the scene. They accuse the PCs of being in cahoots with Sir Ardent in the attempt to kill off members of the guilds and of the fire bombing of the Pregnant Mule Inn. They even remember that the PCs were at the meeting and accuse them of being part of the assassination attempt. A crowd has been forming around the PCs and they must choose



between talking or fighting their way out. If they succeed in calming the crowd and get to talk to the arsonists, they learn that the arsonists were sitting around grousing about the Pregnant Mule fire and how word has gotten around that one of Lady Keth's household (she's an Ardent supporter?) was one of the bombers when a lady suggested that they give Sir Ardent a dose of his own medicine. She even was able to provide them with a couple of flasks of alchemist's fire.

***The sun has begun to rise, or at least its first rays have colored the clouds remaining in the sky. As you approach the Farriers Guildhall, you can see that many people are already, or is it "are still", milling around. Suspicious eyes follow your progress and as you reach the entrance, you are jostled repeatedly. Several members of the crowd peel off a head in opposite directions down the road.***

***You enter an elaborately decorated entrance hall with a magnificent stairway leading to a second floor. Several burly men and women approach you while four men with crossbows watch from the second floor. One of the men downstairs steps forward, his arm outstretched in the universal symbol for "halt." "What business have you here that calls for you to be wearing arms?"***

The PCs are being confronted by three men and two women, trappers who have been in town for a few days selling their furs and buying equipment. With word about the fire bombing at the Pregnant Mule and the assassination attempt on Tormund Ukakane, they have dropped by the Farriers Guild in case of trouble. They are backed up by four men with crossbows (two of these were involved in the shooting at Ardent's office: Spot check (DC 24) to recognize them) standing on the second floor. In addition, numerous other people are milling around. Many of these are trappers and workers who convert pelts into clothes. The men who headed off down the street are going for armed reinforcements. Overall, the mood is quite tense. Make the PCs aware that more and more people are arriving, some with clubs and cutting tools. It should be clear that they have no chance of winning a combat with this many people. The PCs are being required to talk their way into a meeting with the head of the Farriers Guild. With a Knowledge (local) check (DC 20), the PC knows that Syv Wabbitham hates "Elmer-Fudd-type" jokes about his name. If the PCs insist on fighting, simply have one PC roll a D20 vs. your roll. For every point you roll better than them, each PC takes a HP of damage. If the PC rolls higher, it simply means they were subdued without taking damage. The round is over unless they can provide a justification and make a Diplomacy check (DC 30) to get to see Wabbitham.

If the PCs manage to talk their way into a meeting with Wabbitham (they will have to surrender their visible weapons and will be searched for hidden ones), Wabbitham will start off speaking curtly. He will reiterate that there was a fire bombing at the Pregnant Mule Inn and an attempt on Tormund Ukakane's life. If any PCs were taken into custody at the latter event, he will tell the PCs that some of Ardent's men have been

apprehended. If the PCs roleplay this encounter well have them make a Diplomacy check (DC 12), to win Wabbitham around to taking them to the men who fire bombed Ardent's offices. These men were caught bragging about it and have been taken into custody by the Guild pending a guild meeting to determine what exactly should be done with them. If the PCs don't roleplay convincingly, up the DC to 17. If they are belligerent, no checks allowed: go to Encounter 7a (second alternate), below.

Assuming the PCs get to see the arsonists, the latter are very contrite, especially when they hear about the widows and children that were in the building. They will divulge that they were sitting in a local tavern grousing about the Pregnant Mule fire and how word had gotten around that one of Lady Keth's household ("Isn't she an Ardent supporter?") was one of the bombers when a lady suggested that they give Sir Ardent a dose of his own medicine. She even was able to provide them with a couple of flasks of Alchemist's Fire. They can provide a pretty good description of the woman. As the PCs head back to Ardent, it's up to them to reclaim their weapons from the farriers.

## CONCLUSION A

Either the PCs decide too much is happening and they opt out of continuing or they head back to Sir Ardent to demand an explanation. If they go back to Sir Ardent, they find him disillusioned. He knows he must press on defending the power of the arch barony, but he feels sick about the increasing internal violence and how it is tearing the society. If asked about it, he will groan at the information that someone from Lady Keth's household was involved in the Pregnant Mule fire but will perk up at the description of the lady who talked the farriers into their attack. He recognizes her as Vionelle Gliden, a wealthy silk merchant. He will thank the PCs for their efforts and tell them he now has an excellent lead to follow.

## ENCOUNTER 7A FOHGED ABOUDDIT

***Thoroughly disillusioned by the whole mess, you head back to Sir Ardent and tell him that politics is too blood thirsty for you. You bid him good luck and tell him you're off for the Rakers and a good straight up fight with orcs and ogres.***

## ENCOUNTER 7A (ALTERNATE) ONCE MORE INTO THE BREACH

*On your way back to Sir Ardent, you ponder the new information you have gleaned. When you arrive, he is shaking his head. "Someone broke into my office after the fire and has rifled the drawers of my desk. They have taken some of my documents. But why am I burdening you with this? What did you find out?"*

When the PCs describe the circumstances of the farrier fire bombers, Ardent will groan when he hears that people believe that someone from Lady Keth's household was involved in the Pregnant Mule fire. When he hears the description of the woman who gave the farriers the alchemists fire, his face will brighten and he will nod his head. He has recognized Vionelle Glidden, a wealthy and avaricious silk merchant, but will not share this with the PCs. He will thank the PCs for their efforts and tell them he now has an excellent lead to follow. He will offer the PCs 50 gp each:

*"A fair night's pay for work well done. I may yet have to call on you again in the days to come."*

## ENCOUNTER 7A (SECOND ALTERNATE)

### "I CAN'T GET NO RESPECT!"

*Grateful that you could get out of the Farriers Guild with your skin intact, you head back to Sir Arden's office. When you arrive, he is shaking his head. "Someone broke into my office after the fire and has rifled the drawers of my desk. They have taken some of my documents. But why am I burdening you with this? What did you find out?"*

Sir Ardent thanks you for your work and offers the PCs 50 gp each:

*"A fair night's pay for your work. I may yet have to call on you again in the days to come."*

## PLOT 2 ENCOUNTER 2B

The PCs arrive at the Pregnant Mule Inn just in time to take the last table, the one by the stairway to the second floor. The performance by Songweaver is electrifying, or would be in a different place or era. While most of the songs are historical or popular favorites, not

unexpectedly, several of his songs contain politically caustic allusions and the crowd seems to appreciate them, roaring in approval as he skewers Lady Evaleigh for her vacillations on policy, particularly the trade agreement with the Sea Barons and support for House Bredivan in the defense of Loftwood. One song even pokes fun at her efforts to maintain good relations with the Fruztii. Just as he is nearing the end of his closing song, Bilsby falters. Pointing toward the main entrance, he shouts, "No!" A brilliant flash erupts and suddenly there is the crashing of glass and the window and the doorway are masses of flames. Spot checks (DC 20) enable the PCs to see one of the bomb throwers. The PCs must deal with the panicking crowd and lead them to safety. This will require picking the lock on the rear door or breaking it down while holding back the crowd.

If the PCs were arrested and paid their own bail then read the following:

*Relieved that you were able to make bail, you collect your possessions from the Marner Constabulary and head back into the free world. Standing a short distance from the door as you leave the jailhouse is the gnome. "Hi! I'm Lymon Gemsplitter. I want to thank you for coming to my aid. You seem like fine people. I'm off to the Songweaver performance at the Pregnant Mule Inn. Care to join me? I have something to talk over with you."*

If the PCs were arrested and unable to pay their own bail then read the following:

*Relieved that someone was able to make bail for you, you collect your possessions from the Marner Constabulary and head back into the free world. Standing a short distance from the door as you leave the jailhouse is the gnome. "Hi! I'm Lymon Gemsplitter. I want to thank you for coming to my aid. You seem like fine people. I couldn't allow you to remain incarcerated on my account. I'm off to the Songweaver performance at the Pregnant Mule Inn. Care to join me? I have something to talk over with you."*

When they finally make it to the Pregnant Mule:

*When you arrive, you can see that there is quite a crowd. While many are standing around the bar, the innkeeper directs you to a table by the stairway to the second floor.*

*He and Gemsplitter seem on excellent terms.*

(--or--)

*"Gemsplitter asked me to save a table for you."*

*He takes your food order and melds into the crowd. The crowd noise makes sensible conversation impossible. It is a while yet before Bilsby Songweaver makes his appearance. The crowd is enthusiastic. Your food arrives just before Songweaver begins his performance. It is electrifying, or would be in a different place and era. While most of the songs are historical or popular favorites, not unexpectedly, several of his songs contain politically caustic allusions and the crowd seems to appreciate them, roaring in approval as he skewers Lady Evaleigh for her vacillations on policy, particularly the trade agreement with the*

*Sea Barons and support for House Bredivan in the defense of Loftwood. One song even pokes fun at her efforts to maintain good relations with the Fruztii. Just as he is nearing the end of his closing song, Bilsby falters. Pointing toward the main entrance, he shouts, "No!" A brilliant flash erupts and suddenly there is the crashing of glass and the window and the doorway are masses of flames.*

Spot checks (DC 20) enable the PCs to see one of the bomb throwers. The PCs must deal with the panicking crowd and lead them to safety. This will require breaking down the rear door, which has been jammed from outside while holding back the crowd.

**Wooden Door:** 2 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 10; AC 5; Break DC 20. See DM's Map 3.

The rear door is only about 10 feet from the PCs' table, but everyone at the performance seems aware of that. If the PCs get the door open on the first round, there will only be 4 NPCs who need to be rescued from inside the room: they have been burned and/or trampled into unconsciousness (they are at -1 HP). For each round past the first needed to open the door, add another NPC and half of the unconscious NPCs (rounded down) gain an additional -1 HP. Thus, on the second round, there are 5 NPCs, with 2 of them at -2 HP. On the third round, there are 6 NPCs and 2 of them are at -3, two at -2 and 1 is at -1. The DM should describe the progress of the fire in a manner to put pressure on the PCs. Anyone within 10 feet of the fire takes 1d4 HP damage and anyone going through the flames takes 2d4 HP damage. Assume that the NPCs that are unconscious are more than 10 feet from the flames but that the flames are closing on them. Also, for every round the PCs take before opening the rear door, assume that the PCs not opening the door take 1HP damage from holding back the crowd unless the PCs have up-ended their table and are using it to keep the crowd back from the PCs smashing the door down. Assume that the NPCs would be fully healed at 3 HP.

## ENCOUNTER 3B

Having found a way out, the PCs stand about recovering their breath and surveying the damage. In the crowd, they Spot (DC 12) someone in noble livery. A Knowledge (nobility) check (DC 10) identifies the livery as House Bredivan and (DC 15) that the person is Kitavia Bredivan. She is accompanied by a soot-covered man-at-arms. Bilsby comes up and thanks them for their efforts. Gemsplitter shows up and is in a complete tizzy. He is particularly concerned with Kitavia. After Gemsplitter tells Bilsby of how he met the PCs, Bilsby will reveal that he saw two of the arsonists just before they heaved their fire bombs into the Inn. He is sure that one of the men he saw was part of the household of Lady Keth. His description fits the man spotted above. He blames the attack on royalists and offers to take the PCs to a meeting with members of the Guild Faction.

*Out in the night air, you can breathe freely again. Many of the people who had attended the performance are lying on the green that extends behind the Inn. As you look around, you think you see people you recognize. Bilsby comes up to you and thanks you for your "heroic efforts." Gemsplitter is in a complete tizzy but calms down enough to introduce you to Bilsby. "They helped me out of a tough situation tonight: Ardent's men came to my shop demanding information about the Faction and these gallant people interceded for me."*

*"I saw two of the arsonists just before they threw their flasks," replies Bilsby. "One of them I'm sure is a member of Lady Keth's household. Isn't she one of Ardent's supporters? Say, I have to go to a Faction meeting tonight. Do you want to go with me?" It takes a minute before you realize he is addressing you as well as Gemsplitter.*

The description Bilsby gives of the arsonist from Lady Keth's household matches the description of the man the PCs may have seen. If the PCs look around a Knowledge (Nobility) check (DC 10) will recognize that a young lady wears the livery of House Bredivan. At a DC 15, the PC recognizes her as Kitavia Bredivan. She was not one of those injured. The PCs may help with healing the injured who were stabilized or not fully healed in the previous encounter.

## ENCOUNTER 4B

At the meeting, the PCs find a broad spectrum of Marner personages and representatives of a couple of the lordly houses. The meeting is held in two parts. The first part is a general meeting to inspire supporters and to report on progress so far. The second part is secret and the PCs only will be able to gain admittance because Bilsby vouches for them. They witness an unsuccessful assassination attempt on Tormund Ukakane. The PCs may spot the assailant, realize his intent, and intervene themselves, or an apprentice spots the assailant and steps in the way, taking the deadly blow. Ukakane thanks the PCs for their effort, paying for whatever medical attention is necessary if any PCs were injured in the attack. He tells the PCs of the royalist campaign against the Guild Faction, identifying Sir Ardent Bentner as the head of the opposition. He entreats the PCs to go to Bentner's offices and find out his plans and if he had a connection with the assassin.

*You follow Bilsby across West Bridge into the southern portion of Marner. You have left behind the lighted streets of the market district but in the cloudless sky, the stars have been joined by a half moon and there is plenty of light to guide one's steps. You continue following the road that runs past the sawmill until you come to one of the cranberry farms that have flourished in the marshy area south of the Marner River. The meeting is to be held in a cock fighting arena that is off the road about a quarter mile. As you approach, you see that many people already are there and more follow you. From the quality of their clothes, many clearly are among the wealthy merchants, but an equal or even greater number are simple craftsmen, possibly even laborers.*

The arena is full and you have to scramble for a seat. Tormund Ukakane is wrapping up his speech:

*“In the years since Alain failed to return from the Bone March, Lady Evaleigh has vacillated when firm action was required. Our treaty with the Sea Barons, which would increase our trade manifold, languishes. And too frequently she has bowed to the wishes of her father, Count of Knurl, when Ratik’s interests should have been foremost. If Ratik is to survive in this troubled world, the voice of the merchants and guilds must be given a permanent place in the government. A House of Guilds is a necessity if Ratik is to survive.”*

Clearly, this meeting is basically a political rally meant to keep the rank and file aware of the Guild Faction’s latest accomplishments and recognizing good work done by specific faction workers. The meeting lasts until past midnight. After it adjourns, the Faction bigwigs head for the two-story farmhouse to hold their executive meeting in the library room. After everyone is seated, the Faction Executive Committee and their secretary at the table and the PCs and Bilsby in chairs along the wall, the various members report on such things as the current status of the faction treasury.

At this point, have the PCs make Spot checks (DC 22 for normal vision, 18 for low-light, 14 for darkvision). Success means that they see an assassin ready to make an attack on Tormund Ukakane. Read:

*As you look up the stairs which are behind the table, you are certain that one of the shadows on the stairs moved. As your eyes become accustomed to the different shades of darkness, you see the faint outline of someone dressed in dark clothing. A darker shade of black marks the outline of a long dagger. That outline is rising as the rest of the shadow-like figure moves toward the back of Tormund Ukakane.*

If the PC(s) act to stop the assassination, begin combat. If they don’t, read:

*Suddenly, the secretary shrieks and jumps between Tormund Ukakane and the assassin. Taking the full force of the blow, she sags back against the guild leader, her eyes bulging. Her body begins to shake and she collapses to the floor. The assassin, with uncanny deftness, tumbles past the stunned faction members and the dumbfounded guard at the door and is lost in the night.*

➤ **Assassin, female human Rog5/Asn1:** CR 6; Medium-size Humanoid (human); HD 6d6; hp 30; Init +7 (Dex, Improved Init); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (touch 13, flat-footed 10); Atk +7 melee (1d4+3/190, dagger); SA Sneak Attack +4d6, Death Attack; SQ Uncanny Dodge (Dex Bonus even if caught flat-footed), Evasion, Poison Use; AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +9, Will +2; Str 15 Dex 17 Con 10 Int 14 Wis 12 Cha 13. Height 5 ft. 6 in. tall

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +11, Bluff +6, Climb +6, Disable Device +10, Disguise +9, Escape Artist +9, Hide +12, Jump +9, Listen +9, Move Silently +12, Open Lock +11, Spot +9, Tumble +1 *Feats:* Improved Initiative, Dodge, Weapon Focus (dagger), Mobility

*Special Attacks—Death Attack (Ex):* If the assassin

studies his victim for 3 rounds and then makes a sneak attack with a melee weapon that successfully deals damage, the sneak attack has the additional effect of possibly either paralyzing or killing the target (assassin’s choice.)

*Special Qualities—Poison Use (Ex):* Assassin’s are trained in the use of poison and never risk accidentally poisoning themselves when applying poison to the blade.

*Possessions:* +1 Dagger poisoned with Black Lotus Extract (3d6 Con/3d6 Con; Contact DC 20)

*Physical Description:* Well-tanned skin; toned muscles; short dark hair; comfortable black clothes. Absolutely nothing to identify who this is or with whom she is connected. If the PCs have any way of communicating with the dead, make sure the answers are as evasive and as uninformative as possible.

*Spells Prepared (1; base DC = 12 + spell level):* 1st—obscuring mist.

This can be a lethal encounter, particularly if the PC has prevented the strike against Tormund because the poison will still be on the blade. If a PC dies in combat obviously, the scenario is over for him. However, Febal Ukaloa can cast *Delay Poison*, which will delay the second Fortitude Save until the PC can be taken to a temple for a *Neutralize Poison* spell for 320gp.

*“Ardent’s behind this!” shouts someone. The Committee finally manages to calm down enough to conduct rational discourse. “Yes, it would seem so,” acknowledges Tormund Ukakane. “We need someone to get into his headquarters and find the evidence to place this squarely at his feet. From what Gemsplitter tells me, you have proved resourceful in the past; would you undertake this risky assignment now?” Tormund Ukakane clearly is addressing you. “Bring what you find to me at my guild hall at noon.”*

If the PCs turn down the offer, game over. Otherwise, go to Encounter 5B.

**Treasure:** +1 dagger.

## ENCOUNTER 5B

The PCs arrive shortly after the firebomb attack on Sir Ardent’s building. Everything is in chaos. Enterprising Rogues can find a way into the partially burned offices. They will find a draft of a letter from Sir Ardent to Lady Evaleigh in a locked drawer of a totally unsinged desk: the only unburned furniture in the room. The letter details Sir Ardent’s concerns that someone is using the Lady’s friends’ efforts to maintain the position of the Arch Barony as cover for an effort to disrupt the governing of the country. He notes that there have been the usual incidents between rowdy partisans of each side, but some of the attacks have been particularly violent and unconcerned over who dies. Gather Information will produce a description of the arsonists and the result that they were low-level members of the Farriers’ Guild.

***As you approach the offices of Sir Ardent Bentner, a crowd is milling about outside and smoke tendrils spiral into the air. It is obvious that a fire has just been put out. Also obvious is the fact that the whole scene appears disorganized. Bentner is standing to one side talking with some people. Several smoke-besmirched families huddle in the shelter of awnings. Fortunately, the rain that had swept over the town while you were on your way has let up.***

The description given by Tormund Ukakane is that Sir Ardent's offices are on the second floor. The stairs have been burned into uselessness, so some other method of getting to the second floor is needed. Sandlitters the second floor walkway. The door to the office suite will pose no problem because it is substantially damaged by fire. The door to Ardent's inner office also is burned. In fact, the offices have been burned such that the only undamaged furniture is Sir Ardent's desk, which is magically protected against fire. (*detect magic* will show abjuration magic.) The desk is locked (DC 25) or it can be broken into with a Strength check (DC 20). Inside, the PCs can find a draft of a letter from Sir Ardent to Lady Evaleigh detailing Sir Ardent's concerns that someone is using the Lady's friends' efforts to maintain the position of the Arch Barony as cover for an effort to disrupt the governing of the country. He notes that there have been the usual incidents between rowdy partisans of each side, but some of the attacks have been particularly violent and unconcerned over who dies.

Outside, a Gather Information check (DC 10) will discover that four men were seen running away from the building shortly before the fire broke out. With a DC of 15, someone identifies the men as being apprentices in the Farriers Guild. Using bribes will not work here; in fact, it will raise suspicion about the PC. "What's your interest in this, sonny?" If the PCs don't inquire, have the PCs who remain downstairs make a Listen check (DC 12), to overhear bystanders talking about the four members of the Farriers' Guild who set the building on fire. Spot checks (DC 15) will allow the PCs to realize that none of the huddled families has an adult male member. Talking with them will reveal that they were living in temporary housing in the building while waiting for widow's housing that was being built by Lady Evaleigh. Sir Ardent saved them from being lost in the fire.

If the PCs think it is time to report back, remind them that it still is well before noon. If they've read Sir Ardent's letter, an Intelligence check (DC 15), will cause them to realize that there may be someone else behind this fire, and therefore behind the Pregnant Mule Inn fire. Maybe it would be a good idea to track down what happened with the farriers. If all this fails, go to Encounter 7B1.

## ENCOUNTER 6B

Presumably, the PCs head off for the Farriers' Guild to track down the arsonists. When they arrive, they must confront higher-level guild members. The latter argue

that the assassination involved in the Tormund Ukakane attack probably was one of Sir Ardent's stooges: Ardent has been in charge of the antiparliament forces. They wonder why the PCs are bothering with the Farriers Guild when they should be investigating Ardent. A crowd has been forming around the PCs and Diplomacy must be used to calm them down. If they succeed in calming the crowd and get to talk to the arsonists, they learn that the arsonists were sitting around grousing about the Pregnant Mule fire and how word has gotten around that one of Lady Keth's household (she's an Ardent supporter?) was one of the bombers when a lady suggested that they give Sir Ardent a dose of his own medicine. She even was able to provide them with a couple of flasks of Alchemist's Fire.

***Is there a district of Marnier you haven't traversed in the last dozen hours? Anyway, you make your way through the streets to the Farriers Guildhall. The sun has begun to rise, or at least its first rays have colored the clouds remaining in the sky. As you approach the Farriers Guildhall, you can see that many people are already, or is it "are still", milling around. Suspicious eyes follow your progress and as you reach the entrance, you are jostled repeatedly. Several members of the crowd peel off and head in opposite directions down the road.***

***You enter an elaborately decorated entrance hall with a magnificent stairway leading to a second floor. Several burly men and women approach you while four men with crossbows watch from the second floor. One of the men downstairs steps forward, his arm outstretched in the universal symbol for "halt." "What business have you here that calls for you to be wearing arms?"***

The PCs are being confronted by three men and two women; trappers who have been in town for a few days selling their furs and buying equipment. With word about the fire bombing at the Pregnant Mule and the assassination attempt on Tormund Ukakane, they have dropped by the Farriers Guild in case of trouble. They are backed up by four men with crossbows standing on the second floor. In addition, numerous other people are milling around. Many of these are trappers and workers who convert pelts into clothes. The men who headed off down the street are going for armed reinforcements. Overall, the mood is quite tense. Make the PCs aware that more and more people are arriving, some with clubs and cutting tools. It should be clear that they have no chance of winning a combat with this many people. The PCs are being required to talk their way into a meeting with the head of the Farriers Guild. This is where the PCs need to introduce themselves as being sent by Tormund Ukakane. With a Knowledge (local) check (DC 15), the PC knows that Syv Wabbitham is the head of the Farriers' Guild and (DC 20) knows that Syv hates "Elmer-Fudd-type" jokes about his name.

If the PCs mention that they are working for Tormund, they immediately will be brought to Syv. The PCs also can manage to talk their way into a meeting with Wabbitham. Whatever else the situation, the PCs will be disarmed after a thorough search before they get to see Wabbitham. Wabbitham will start off speaking curtly.

He has just caught the men bragging about fire bombing Sir Ardent's offices and has taken them into custody pending a guild meeting to determine what exactly should be done with them. He is very sensitive about the guild's exposure. If the PCs role play this encounter well have them make a Diplomacy check (DC 10), to win Wabbitham around to taking them to the men who fire bombed Ardent's offices. If the PCs don't role play convincingly, up the DC to 15. If they are belligerent, no check is allowed and go to Encounter 7B3.

Assuming the PCs get to see the arsonists, the latter are very contrite, especially when they hear about the widows and children that were in the building. They will divulge that they were sitting in a local tavern grousing about the Pregnant Mule fire and how word had gotten around that one of Lady Keth's household ("Isn't she an Ardent supporter?") was one of the bombers when a lady suggested that they give Sir Ardent a dose of his own medicine. She even was able to provide them with a couple of flasks of Alchemist's Fire. They can provide a pretty good description of the woman. As the PCs head back to Tormund, it's up to them to reclaim their weapons from the farriers. If the PCs decide that they are fed up with this spiral of violence, go to Encounter 7b.

## CONCLUSION

Either the PCs decide too much is happening and they opt out of continuing or they head back to Tormund Ukakane to inform him of what they know. If they go back to Tormund Ukakane, they find him disillusioned. He knows he must press on in the fight for a permanent shift in power to the guilds, but he feels sick about how the increasing internal violence and how it is tearing the society. If asked about it, he will groan at the information that someone from Lady Keth's household was involved in the Pregnant Mule fire but will perk up at the description of the lady who talked the farriers into their attack. He recognizes her as Vionelle Glidden, a wealthy silk merchant. He will thank the PCs for their efforts and tell them he now has an excellent lead to follow.

## ENCOUNTER 7B FOHGED ABOUDDIT

*Thoroughly disillusioned by the whole mess, you head back to Tormund Ukakane and tell him that politics is too blood thirsty for you. You bid him good luck and tell him you're off for the Rakers and a good straight-up fight with orcs and ogres. That is, after you deal with your trial over the confrontation with Sir Kringer's men.*

## ENCOUNTER 7B (ALTERNATE) ONCE MORE INTO THE BREACH

*On your way back to Tormund Ukakane, you ponder the new information you have gleaned. When you arrive, he is shaking his head. "Someone fire bombed Sir Ardent's offices. But why am I burdening you with this? What did you find out?"*

When the PCs describe the circumstances of the farrier fire bombers, Ukakane will nod his head slowly when he hears that people believe that someone from Lady Keth's household was involved in the Pregnant Mule fire. When he hears the description of the woman who gave the farriers the alchemist's fire, his face will brighten and he will nod his head. He has recognized Vionelle Glidden, a wealthy and avaricious silk merchant, but will not share this with the PCs. He will thank the PCs for their efforts and tell them he now has an excellent lead to follow. He will offer the PCs 50 gp each (less whatever Gemsplitter fronted for their bail) and will tell them that he may need their help again in the future. Note that their trial over the confrontation with Sir Kringer's men still is pending.

## ENCOUNTER 7B (SECOND ALTERNATE)

### "I CAN'T GET NO RESPECT!"

*Grateful that you could get out of the Farriers Guild with your skin intact, you head back to Tormund Ukakane's office. When you arrive, he is shaking his head. "Someone fire bombed Sir Ardent's offices. But why am I burdening you with this? What did you find out?"*

Ukakane thanks you for your work and offers the PCs 50 gp each, less whatever Gemsplitter fronted for their bail.

The End

## EXPERIENCE POINT SUMMARY

To award experience for this adventure, add up the values for the objectives accomplished. Then assign the discretionary roleplaying experience award. The roleplaying award should be given for consistent character portrayal and contribution to the fun of the game. You can award different roleplaying amounts to different characters.

Award the total value (objectives plus roleplaying) to each character.

<b>Encounter One</b>	
Defeating Sir Kringer's men	75 xp
or	
Avoiding Combat with his men	25 xp
<b>Encounter Three A</b>	
Getting into the house	25 xp
Thwarting the Assassin	150 xp
<b>Encounter Four A</b>	
Saving the widows and orphans	50 xp
<b>Encounter Five A</b>	
Finding out about the arsonists	25 xp
<b>Encounter Six A</b>	
Speaking to Wabbitham	25 xp
Finding out about Vionelle	25 xp
<b>Encounter Seven A2</b>	50 xp
<b>Encounter Two B</b>	
Saving the concert goers	50 xp
<b>Encounter Four B</b>	
Thwarting the Assassin	150 xp
<b>Encounter Five B</b>	
Getting the documents	25 xp
Finding out about the arsonists	25 xp
<b>Encounter Six B</b>	
Speaking to Wabbitham	25 xp
Finding out about Vionelle	25 xp
<b>Encounter Seven B2</b>	50 xp
Total experience for objectives	425 xp
Discretionary roleplaying award	0-50 xp
<b>Total possible experience</b>	<b>475 xp</b>

- player characters to form relationships with NPCs, but these will not be certified and cannot bring material benefit to the character. Contacts (sources of extra information) must be specifically certified.
3. Theft is against the law, but may be practiced by some player characters. Items which are worth more than 250 gp that are of personal significance to the owner (including family heirlooms), and all magical items, will be discovered in the possession of the character by one means or another. The character must return the item and pay a fine equal to three times the value of the item stolen. In addition, the PC caught receives campaign-decided penalties for being known as a thief. For other stolen items which meet the criteria in #1 above, use your judgment and the circumstances within the game to determine whether a PC thief gets away with the theft or not.

Any item retained according to these rules, which does not have a certificate, will not otherwise have a certificate issued for it.

The campaign staff reserves the right to take away any item or gold acquired for things which it later finds unreasonable but which were allowed at the time.

#### Encounter Four B

- +1 dagger

#### Encounter Seven A2

- 50 gp
- Influence with House Evaleigh

#### Encounter Seven A3

- 50 gp

#### Encounter Seven B2

- 50 gp
- Influence with the Guild Faction
- Influence with Clan Ukakane

## TREASURE SUMMARY

Player characters may keep items from the scenario that are listed on the treasure list below or which meet the following conditions:

1. The item must be non-magical and specifically listed in the text of the adventure (e.g armor on foes). If it is not listed in the text, the characters cannot keep it. Items of this nature can be sold for 50% of book value, or recorded on a log sheet.
2. Animals, followers, monsters, henchmen, and so forth (any living being, basically) may not be kept from a scenario for any reason unless the treasure summary lists the being specifically. It is okay for the