

COR4-09



# A TIGER? IN AHLISSA?!

A One-Round D&D<sup>®</sup> LIVING GREYHAWK<sup>™</sup>

## Core Scenario

Version 1

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Welcome back brave adventurers to Eastfair, the Granite City, and capital of the North Kingdom. Your room at The Whirling Dervish is all ready for you as Clinorus has something important to tell you. Are you prepared to dig deeper into the cause and effect of the ritual-like murder from your last stay in Eastfair? The Hextorian government has been of little help, but perhaps you can expedite the situation through other channels. In a city where evil and tyranny rules, the forces of good are the cults, which makes justice and mercy all the more valuable as trade imports. An adventure for APL 2-6. Part Two of the "Running with the Baatezu" series.

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS<sup>®</sup> rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Richard Baker, and Peter Adkison.

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# INTRODUCTION

This is an RPGA® Network scenario for the Dungeons & Dragons® game. A five-hour time block has been allocated for each round of this scenario, but the actual playing time will be closer to three and a half 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 three players (not counting the DM), for the game session to be a sanctioned RPGA event. As well, you cannot have more than six 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 rulebooks 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:

- 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.
- 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.
- 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" among 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 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, and a character 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 LEVELS OF PLAY

Because players bring their own characters to LIVING GREYHAWK games, this adventure's challenges are proportioned to the average character level of the PCs

Mundane Animals Effect on APL		# of Animals			
		1	2	3	4
CR of Animal	1/4 & 1/6	0	0	0	1
	1/3 & 1/2	0	0	1	1
	1	1	1	2	3
	2	2	3	4	5
	3	3	4	5	6
	4	4	6	7	8
	5	5	7	8	9
	6	6	8	9	10
	7	7	9	10	11

participating in the adventure.

- If PCs bring animals that have been trained for combat (most likely being war horses, dogs trained for war), other than those brought by virtue of a class ability (i.e. animal companions, familiars, paladin's mounts, etc) use the sidebar chart to determine the number of levels you add to the sum above. Add each character's animals separately. A single PC may only bring four or fewer animals of this type, and animals with different CRs are added separately.
- Sum the results of 1 and 2, and divide by the number of characters playing in the adventure. Round to the nearest whole number.
- If you are running a table of six PCs, add one to that average.

By following these four steps, you will have determined the APL. Throughout this adventure, APLs categorize the level of challenge the PCs will face. APLs are given in even-numbered increments. If the APL of your group falls on an odd number, ask them before the adventure begins whether they would like to play a harder or easier adventure. Based on their choice, use either the higher or the lower adjacent APL.

APL also affects the amount of experience you may gain at the end of the adventure. If your character is three character levels or more either higher or lower than the APL this adventure is being played at, that character will receive only half of the experience points awarded for the adventure. This simulates the fact that either your character was not as challenged as normal, or relied on help by higher-level characters to reach the objectives.

Note: LIVING GREYHAWK adventures are designed for APL 2 and higher. Three or four, or sometimes even five 1<sup>st</sup>-level characters may find

participating in the adventure. To determine the Average Party Level (APL):

1. Determine the character level for each of the PCs

difficulty with the challenges in a LIVING GREYHAWK adventure. If your group is APL 1 there are three things that you can do to help even the score.

2. Attempt to create a table of six 1<sup>st</sup>-level characters, or try to enlist higher-level characters to play at that table.

- Advise characters to buy riding dogs to help protect them, and fight for them. All riding dogs are considered trained to attack. PCs who want their dogs to attack must succeed at a Handle Animal or Charisma check (DC 10). Failure indicates that the animal will not attack that round. This is a free action (spoken command) that may be attempted each round. If an animal loses half or more hp in a single round it flees, unless another check is successful.

## TIME UNITS AND UPKEEP

This is a standard one-round Core adventure, set in The Great Kingdom of Northern Aerdy. All characters pay two Time Unit per round. Adventurer's Standard Upkeep costs 12gp per Time Unit. Rich Upkeep costs 50gp per Time Unit. Luxury Upkeep costs 100gp per Time Unit.

## SOURCE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the text of this adventure, sentences, paragraphs and ideas have been borrowed (and expanded on) from the sourcebook *Ivrid the Undying* by Carl Sargent.

The author of this adventure would like to express his thanks and praise to Mr. Sargent and acknowledge the original source material created by him.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

### THE NORTH KINGDOM

The Great Kingdom of Northern Aerdy is ruled by His Righteous and Transcendent Majesty, the Overking of Northern Aerdy, Herzog Grenell the First, Prince of House Naelax (LE male human [flan-oeridian] Clr19 - Hextor).

This is a nation of tyranny and oppression. Outside of the large cities, feudal lords hold god-like power over their small fiefdoms, only paying heed to the more powerful liege above them in the social order.

Inside the city, nobles and the others who are lucky enough to be above the salt practice a lifestyle of hedonistic indulgences and cruelty at the cost of those poor souls who fall below the salt.

The vast majority of the warlike noble families pledge their spiritual faith into the many hands of the Scourge of Battle, Hextor. Cavaliers of the darkest hearts, shiniest armor and most bloodthirsty mounts are a somewhat common sight in these lands-- be they the

clerics of Hextor or the knightly lord of the local manor and village.

Though there are a number of small and rather ineffectual 'cults' of good (usually in a chaotic form) that preach and practice rebellion against the oppression of the government and society in whole, finding them is rarely easy, but when they are, an iron fist is used to crush them.

That is not to say there are no forces of good left within the North Kingdom. Once, not too long ago, this nation was a part of the truly Great Kingdom and the bastion of Oeridian culture.

Thus as Hextor is a part of that culture, so are gods of good and neutrality. Those who would rebel against the tyranny of the lawful evil society (such as Trithereon) have long since been purged to all but the remotest pockets. Followers of gods who would infer its worshipers to a more direct opposition (such as the Arch-Paladin, Heironeous) have been equally purged.

This leaves the followers of good (and neutral) gods who have found a way to work their dogma within the oppressive bounds of the state religion of Hextor. An example of this are followers of the Gentle Hand, Zodal, running orphanages or churches of the Shining One, Pelor, taking care of the poor and sick within the ever-swelling slums of the cities.

The lawful evil nature of the society allows these small churches of good who do not practice rebellion as dogma, to operate and take care of those (poor and sick) that the government do not want to waste time on. The thinking is, "if they want to waste their resources on those types, and as long as they obey our laws, then let them. Besides, it's fun to bully them too, from time to time."

There are some religions that are accepted because they play an important niche roll. Examples of this are the churches of the Money Counter, Zilchus and the Dweller on the Horizon, Fharlanghn, but the political influence of these sects are kept to a minimum. The only power they can express is that bought by coin and even that is limited.

Among the common people (with their heavily mixed Flan heritage) the Oerth Mother, Beory, is worshiped for nature-related issues and, to a lesser extent, so are the Oeridian agricultural gods. Even the different evil gods such as the Reaper, Nerull, and the Black Rider, Incubulos, are given small prayers and appeasement to ward off their callings and hopefully push them on to the their neighbor, but not them.

## Language

The peasants and serfs of the land all speak the Common tongue, with a heavy Oeridian accent and usually mixing in many words and expressions of Old Oeridian, though this by no means guarantees that the serf speaker can actually communicate fluently in Old Oeridian.

The nobility, clerics, sages, elite servants, and anyone with education speak Old Oeridian as their primary language, but all know the Common tongue. Religious

and legal issues are dealt with in Old Oeridian, as well as anything that is the domain of those above the salt.

## Keeping a Low Profile

When the characters visit Eastfair in this adventure, they should not have too much of a problem with the authorities or the general population (most of which are LE, NE and N) as long as they keep their heads down and don't make a scene.

Those who worship chaotic (of any morality) or lawful good gods and do not pass a DC 12 Disguise check (made once for the whole adventure) or whom reveal themselves, suffer a -2 circumstance penalty to all Charisma based skill checks. This is negated if they are dealing with someone of their same ethos (a good worshiper meeting a good worshiper has no problems, etc), but this is left up to you to determine.

A special case is in store for worshipers of Heironeous, the archrival of Hextor. Since it is assumed that a proud worshiper of such a god would adorn himself with the marks and symbols of his divine patron, the Disguise check is DC15. This includes not slipping up and using sayings or dogma in speech. The price for being recognized is a -6 circumstance penalty to all Charisma based skill checks. Even if the character fails his skill check, this does not mean that every city guard and cleric of Hextor automatically spot him in the streets. It's only for when he is up close and interacting with these Heironeous-haters and those who play along out of fear.

Even then though, he only becomes the target of harsh ridicule. As long as the character keeps his cool and dignity, he can get out safe and alive.

If he ever forces the hand of the Hextorians, however "justice" will be swift.

The Hexotrians feel no need to grant a foreigner any sort of honor duel, not in their own capital.

## Pets, Familiars and Animal Companions

Large and/or wild animals are not allowed in the city unrestrained and without a permit. Wolves, bears, any dire animal, and other dangerous creatures must be leashed and muzzled or caged. Dire animals must be caged. A one-week permit costs 10 gp per size category of each animal (starting at Small).

Horses, trained dogs, birds and other common domesticated animals cost a copper each to enter the city, but do not require any special restraints, but the master is responsible for any damage the animals cause.

## Crime and Punishment

The laws of the land are typically the same as one would find in another lawful kingdom, only much, much harsher. The people are copped and silvered to death with special taxes and tariffs. Most commoners are considered property, either to their liege or to the government as a whole should he or she be a Freeperson (an ironic term here).

Minor crimes and public disturbances bring about rough treatment from the town guards or from one's

social superiors (with little chance for recourse). Thankfully, gold is an accepted solution to get the characters out of all but the most unforgivable crimes (usually those perpetrated against someone with rank and power). The laws have been somewhat softened (or just corrupted) from ten years ago. An influential man about town succeeded in plying the right people to raise the execution range on items from its original 500 gp to the new 1000 gp limit. Rumors have it he is the main backer of a new fledgling thieves guild. Thus these Guilders can pay the bribes required for getting caught for minor theft, instead of executed as in the past.

To give an example: If the characters cause the death of a commoner, they can discreetly pay their way out of punishment (the authorities make this clear with a wink and nudge) for the sum of 1,000 gp per dead commoner (or 100 gp for an orc).

Failure to pay this fee sentences the characters involved to 2d6 TU's worth of imprisonment (the sentence would normally be much longer, life even, but its assumed the crafty adventurers can eventually get themselves out of the situation one way or another, along with all their gear but not gold. All coin is removed from the Adventure Record).

**Killing a tradesmen** or other such 'middle' class member of society is 2,000 gp per offence. It doesn't matter how the death was caused. Accidentally or premeditated, death is death. Failure to pay costs the characters 2d8 TUs. Otherwise, this is treated the same as the above entry.

**Killing a Noblemen** or other authority figure requires a DC 15+APL Diplomacy check, just to be allowed to make reparations or else be executed permanently. If the characters succeed in the apology, then they at minimum must pay the full cost to bring the person back from the dead (*raise dead* or *resurrection*) and then another 2,000-4,000 gp (your discretion on severity) on top of that (this secondary amount can be reduced as stated below).

**Theft Over 1000 gp** is a death sentence. Those caught for this crime are almost always publicly executed as an example to the rest of the population. To even attempt to get out of this requires a DC 25+APL Diplomacy check, then confiscation of the item, then a 5,000 gp bribe. Sad to say, few people have those sorts of resources, so permanent death becomes quite the deterrent. Philosophers have pointed out that the crime of theft is more harshly dealt with than the crime of murder and that speaks volumes on the mentality of the government and its people.

For lesser crimes, like;

**Insulting a Noble or a cleric of Hextor** (Diplomacy check DC10+APL to be allowed to pay 200 gp, otherwise 1d6 TUs of imprisonment).

**Interfering with a Guardsmen** (50 gp or 1d4 TUs of imprisonment).

**Public Disorder** (50-200 gp, or 1 TU of imprisonment).

**Theft, Minor** (Half the value of the items and confiscation of the items or 1d3 TUs of imprisonment and confiscation of the items).

**Breaking and Entering** (50-200 gp or 2TU of imprisonment).

**Vagrancy** (a sound beating, then, 50 gp or 1TU of imprisonment and another sound beating).

You should use these as a guideline should they find their players getting into trouble not listed here. When in doubt, though, err on the side of caution and leniency.

These minor crimes can usually be paid on the spot to guards or other authority figures. The more severe charges (like murder) usually take some time to process in the courts. Typically, paying 100 gp can speed it up to 2d6 hours, from 2d8 days (all included in the initial TU's paid for the adventure). This is nothing compared to the poor wretches who spend years in tiny cells awaiting a trial that may never come.

If the characters profess their innocence (whether they are innocent or not, it doesn't matter much) a representative for them all may make a single opposed DC 1d20+3+APL Diplomacy check (per charge). The character may use Knowledge (local—core) instead for this check.

If this is successful, then the cost in gold or TUs is reduced by 50% (round down). But if the check fails, the penalties are increased by 50% (round up).

Some exceptions to this are when the authorities hate the victims more than the characters. For example, killing a cleric of Tharizdun or Vecna doesn't bring about much reprisal (unless the characters committed a lot of other crimes in the process).

Also, the adventure text may list specific instructions on how to handle a crime or a trial. Always use the specific instructions in the adventure text over those listed above.

As stated previously, a typical commoner would expect a life sentence for very minor crimes, but the adventurers (with a few exceptions) are only penalized TU's, for it is assumed that they are able to get themselves out of the imprisonment much before the end of the expected sentence. A death sentence is the exception to this. Without specific instructions in the scenario, death becomes difficult to be paroled from. Note, that after most petty executions, resourceful adventurers can recover the body.

Guard patrols and even their interest depends on what part of the city or (in the case of in rural area) whose land one is on.

In Eastfair, The New City is closely watched by both mundane and even magical means. Those committing crimes have a much higher chance of getting caught. In the Old City, guard patrols are fewer and petty crime is rampant, but the patrol sizes tend to be much larger with a higher chance of special support units (such as mages or brute squads), ready to tear a neighborhood apart till they get the people their after.

Rural lands are under the jurisdiction of whichever noble owns that patch of land, which can have several

layers of authority. These rural nobles have less firepower to back up an arrest then do the city guards against powerful adventurers, so they tend to be more lenient and willing to deal when they feel they lack the upper hand.

### **Law Enforcement in Eastfair**

The everyday city watch duties are held by the Rakers, companies of elite soldiers from the northern border of the North Kingdom. They are much feared and rightly so. Should the need arise the city has garrisons of church soldiers, squadrons of calvary, mage detachments, and orc brute squads (though the orcs are generally kept in the Old City).

Ever the inventive and progressive city, Eastfair has established a system where citizens can pay to have a large bell (and additional smaller hand held ones) that can be rung to call forth a city guard patrol. These bells are specially marked by the Rakers and the authorities. Possession of non-sponsored bells without a permit is illegal. Due to the large fee, these signaling bells are mostly found in the hands of the rich.

Normal folk can still summon the guards per the traditional method of yelling or running up and tugging on sleeves, but the bells provides extra convenience when seconds count.

Patrols, (both foot and mounted) of Rakers can be found all over the New City, both day and night. There response time is usually 2+1d4 minutes for a single patrol, with more patrols arriving within another 1+2d4 minutes. For problem cases, magical assistance, both clerical and arcane can be called in, but due to the monitory cost, this is not used for insignificant cases.

### **Typical patrol in the New City;**

One sergeant (Ftr3), and 2d4 troopers (War2)

### **Elite Patrol**

One lieutenant (Ftr3/Rog2), a sergeant (Ftr3), 2d8 troopers (War2), and 50% of wizard (Evk3), and 50% of Hextorian priest (Clr5)

### **Typical patrol in the Old City**

One orc sergeant (Bar2 or Ftr 2), and 4d4 orcs (War1), and 1d2 ogres

### **Raker patrol**

One veteran sergeant (Ftr4), and 2d8 troopers (War2).

It should be noted that, unlike a typical city in the east, the city guard here are typically evil and uncaring. Good characters trying to turn in bad guys are just as likely to get trouble turned around onto themselves as well with money changing hands being the only way out. The Rakers of Eastfair can't be relied upon to solve all of the character's troubles.

### **Eastfair, The Granite City**

Within the high and heavily fortified outer granite walls of the city, are streets so clean and tidy that they put some high altars of Heironeous to shame.

Heavily worked maintenance crews keep the hard, stark and stern streets sanitary, as much as the elite units of Rakersmen (elite troops of North Province) keep the streets orderly as the town guard.

While it has a reputation for urbanity, ordinary folk in the city work hard and need to in order to compensate for the heavy taxation and cruel red tape. One must pass through the second ring of city walls and into the Old City, in order to get to the interior of the city and to see its true seedy underbelly. Here, the poor and the wretched eek out an existence shut away from the outside, only allowed to exit via special permits or by wearing badges sewn to their vests.

In the last decade or so, this poor interior has turned from poor-man's quarters, though kept almost as orderly as the New City, into a true slum (much to the chagrin of the authorities). This has been caused by the ever-increasing migration of refugees into the city. If you can pay the entrance fee, you can enter Eastfair, but if your not a skilled tradesmen or rich, your shunted to the Old City.

Once there, you can't legally leave without a permit of some sort. This has been causing quite a bit of increased hardship and chaos. The uncaring government's answer is to send in brute squads of orcs and ogres to thin out the population of troublemakers, but never so much that they'll cause a general revolt. Cycles of famine and diseases keep the population levels of the Old City down as well.

Behind its orderly mask, the population of the city is as prone to hedonistic pleasures. Eastfair has always attracted the most debauched and degenerate nobility and merchants of North Province. If you have the money to pay for it, the Nine Hells itself can be yours to experience.

Eastfair attracts wealth. Those riches are either inherited, or else obtained by the best merchants, that is, the most unscrupulous, swindling, money grabbing ones. Given this, it is not surprising that Eastfair's rich like to spend their money on depraved and immoral activities.

Eastfair has a considerable number of truly exceptional craftsmen and artisans within its city walls. These numbers have swollen by the people seeking refuge in the Granite City from more troubled lands and cities. Now, truly, Eastfair is a city where one can buy almost anything -- if one has almost limitless supplies of gold.

When the sun sets and the streets fill with flickering shadows, it's the poor and common men that pay for the vileness of the riches' entertainment, not to mention all the other hidden evils in the city.

In a nutshell, the common people have very few rights and the government enforces itself on the lower class brutally, but usually overlook the vileness that befalls the common man, as long as its done quietly and doesn't disturb the order of the city.

Something one does not see walking the streets of the city are fiends. Baatezu and especially Tanar'ri are not generally accepted by the church of Hextor. Part of this has to do with their god residing on Archeron, and not the Nine Hells. Though fiends are used for specific purposes (and present within the city), as a policy, the authorities don't want them to wander around within the general populace.

The same goes for undead, for they tend to cause a lot of disorder and public disturbance. Of course, there are always exceptions to those with power and the fact that there are several animus nobles in the city makes it a complicated issue. Having undead wandering the streets is an extravagance reserved for the most powerful and connected. Anyone else will find their minions destroyed and themselves held accountable.

It should be noted that, though mostly just rumors, good outsiders have made temporary homes in this large city. They have been called to do good and help the crusading good minority fight the powers of evil. When these beings are discovered they are routed out with extreme prejudice and any mortals found to be supporting them (and even those not) are punished brutally, usually by having an ogre pay them a social visit to discuss the implications of the transgression.

### **Rise of the Thieves' Guild**

For generations, Eastfair has not had a Thieves' Guild. The authorities of the time would crush without mercy any attempt to organize. Visible crime and disorder to society would not be tolerated.

Around ten years ago, there started a large and steady influx of refugees to the city of Eastfair. Some displaced by the Greyhawk Wars, others by the civil infractions with Ahlissa, and still others driven out by orcs from the Bone March.

Those with talents or money found sustenance within the New City. Those of the poor unwashed and huddling masses that were not so well off, were marched directly into the Old City—a district surrounded by walls and streets that end at them.

As the inhuman conditions worsened within the Old City (and more people arrived), violence and thievery became commonplace. Where in the New City, the city watch could quickly crush such disorder, the slums and crowded streets of the Old City proved difficult to police. Many units of Rakers just gave up even trying, sticking to their barracks rather than bring evil tyrannical order to those who desperately needed it to survive (since freedom and mercy were not on the menu).

Then one day, a rich former adventurer came to Eastfair and he made some deals with those with the power to make small changes to the laws. With bribes in the right place and slight amendments to the laws, organized guilders started to rise up from the multitude of street gangs.

Those in the government are split on the issue. Some feel it's a good thing to allow the guilders to operate for it provides bribes and some modicum of control on the

population of the Old City. Others see it as an affront to the authority of the herzog and want every single street criminal wiped out. But as long as the crime stays off the streets of the New City, those factions within the government will continue to debate it. Should the guild ever become a public embarrassment, and then heads will roll. In the meantime, orcs and their kin are used as brute squads to keep the poor in line and the guild disrupted.

Besides, with the influx of refugees and decrease in the amount of resources of control the government has, the criminal/unruly element of the population is going to increase; it's just human nature or at least say the clerics of Hextor.

Now, the government and society hates disorderly crime, but seems to look the other way to stuff that doesn't make it self seen. That is to say, beggars on the streets are a big no-no, but shadows and wraiths haunting a poor neighborhood is not much of a concern. Peasants protesting an injustice are quickly brutalized, but a vampire cultist going out at night and kidnapping a person without money or connections would not interest the authorities much.

It's this apathy that allows the guild to recruit new members to replace the many it loses to risky ventures. Some street gangs are known to be recruiting fronts for the guild, while some rumors claim that all of the street gangs are controlled pyramid fashion by the Guild, as their own fiefs.

What is known for sure is that the street gangs are often hard hit. The authorities wipe them out as brutally as they wipe each other out. The gangs of the Old City are as chaotic as they are cruel.

While petty street crime gets handled by junior members, the more senior members seem to easily gain contracts for lucrative jobs within the New City and beyond. It gives the junior members something to aim for.

Others have wilder theories, things like devils control the guilders, or that the city Nobles control the street gangs, or that the herzog himself is the head guildmaster.

Whatever the true story, the Thieves' Guild of Eastfair is far more complicated than it lets on.

### **Locations in Eastfair**

The following is a quick explanation for places within the city that either is discussed with the characters (but not expect to be visited) or is locations that the characters need to visit as listed in the encounters. A more detailed description can be found within the Encounter dealing with that location.

Eastfair is divided into Old City and New City. The Old City was built circa 80 CY, and the city greatly expanded in size during the third century when New City began to grow outside the original walls.

The Old City is now mostly the province of the poorer people, save for the complex of buildings known as "The Cyst," while New City contains the homes and workplaces of the well off.

For characters approaching Eastfair, their first sight of the city should give them an impression of grandeur. Huge granite walls confer an air of invulnerability, and the stone spires and slate roofs of the buildings inside crowd together like a phalanx of powerful defenders. Great Gate, bearing its mighty shields of Hextor and North Province, is a forbidding entrance to this majestic city.

**The Great Gate** is powerfully defended, with ballista platforms flanking the 30 ft. high granite walls and a pair of huge (22 ft.-high) stone statues of Aerdi warriors standing one each side of them. These statues can be animated as massive stone golems (271 hp each) by a cleric of Hextor who stands special watch as part of the gate detail, to fight in defense of the city.

➤ **Greater Stone Golem:** 271 hp; see *Monster Manual*.

An entrance toll is charged of 1 sp a person (1 gp a merchant or freesword, with extra charges of 1 sp to 1 gp for each horse, wagon). The main gates are opened for wagons and horse, with men on foot using smaller side doors at the base of the ballista towers.

Within Great Gate, the broad boulevard known as The Full Path stretches into the heart of the city and on to Newgate and Spider's Gate. Just beyond Great Gate, the extraordinary sight simply named "Waterfall" greets the visitor; 20 ft. high, 10 ft. long standing waves of water lie either side of the Full Path, a permanent magical reminder that Eastfair lies just north of the headwaters of the Flanmi.

**The Fisherman's Gate:** The north gate of the city is much smaller than the Great Gate, and receives only visitors on foot or on horse in small numbers.

Originally, this was the gate used by humbler tradesmen, hence its name, but in a reversal of history this gate now opens into the richer areas of the city and merchants are sent to Great Gate if they seek entry.

Though this gate has not the powerful defenses of Great Gate, the gatehouse here contains a minor magical artifact which, if the right command word is activated, can shield the gate in a *wall of stone* which is 90% resistant to any attempts to dispel it, save by use of the same artifact used to create it.

Once the trouble starts in the countryside, this gate is magically sealed (as above) and only opened for use by the most powerful of the city. The characters have no chance in getting it open.

**The Cyst** comprises three sets of buildings located behind iron railings protected by priests of Hextor and squads of Rakersmen all in the Old City. None can enter without an invitation, granted pass, or the summons of the Herzog himself.

The central building here, the Herzog's Palace, houses Grace Grenell and the hierarchy of the priesthood of Hextor, together with the most senior city officials (chancellor, city architect, commander-general of the watch). To the right of the palace are the barracks of the Rakersmen, with some 600 troops and a dozen of their most senior commanding officers.

Unless the characters really act up, they should never need to go here. If the situation warrants them going here and getting inside, they are not coming back.

**The Whirling Dervish:** Nested in the Streets of Delight, the Whirling Dervish is a hostelry offering entertainments marginally less depraved, and more varied, than most establishments around it.

The proprietor, Clinorus Kradner, dresses in Baklunish robes and a turban, even though he's never been west of Edge Field in his life. To someone who is from the Baklunish West or has visited them, it is obvious that Clinorus has dressed to the descriptions of embellished stories, not to mention the man is not Baklunish, more of a dark Flan-Oeridian mix.

Clinorus is, in fact, a cleric of Olidammara as well (Clr4), with a strong tendency to good alignment. This is a closely kept secret.

This location is visited in the Introduction Encounter.

**The Merchant Quarter** contains the better markets of Eastfair and the homes of many ordinary merchants. At the center of the entire quarter is the main Temple of Zilchus for the city.

This quarter is also home to an enclave (subsection) of merchants who specialize in exotic goods: silks, spices, peppers, rare herbs, alchemical goods, tropical hardwood furnishings, Ketite rugs and carpets, and all manner of unusual items. This square is sometimes referred to as 'Little Bakluni Town'.

Nearby to these shops of Exotic section is the walled compound of the Zilchus Western Company. This is the major supplier to these particular shops of western goods, though they by no means hold any monopolies on Baklunish trade. This just happens to be the sister headquarters of an order of Zilchus clerics that operate this company.

A small part of this quarter is visited in Encounter 1.

**Old City:** The houses here are those of laborers, serfs (including church serfs), and unskilled workers. This is the new slum district for Eastfair, though it has only formed in the last ten years.

The houses here are dilapidated, and people live in very overcrowded homes, with a fair amount of violence and drunkenness. However, this is the best place for anyone wishing to lie low in Eastfair.

Racketeer landlords rent a bare room for a copper or two a day per person, and the town guard (Rakersmen) patrol the streets rarely unless there has been a recent bout of worse than usual street fighting.

To keep the newly forming slum-like conditions in check, orc and ogre brute squads smash any shanty towns or tent districts that occasionally form out of desperation. The more vocal troublemakers also get the occasional courtesy call from the brute squads—Nothing like an ogre to change your opinion in a philosophical debate.

Good churches and clerics tend to the unwashed masses as best as they can with the limited resources they are allowed, though they are often victims of the brute squads themselves. Some of the more charismatic clerics have made contacts within the guardsmen and/or



authorities (gold is usually involved) and get some special consideration from that.

**Orc Quarter:** Part of the reason for the overcrowding in the rest of Old City is this district, which is walled off from the rest of the Old City (but still inside the Old City). The 3,000 troops of the Euroz Angry Army have settled into barracks here and have made it their own.

At the present, the town guard tries only to patrol the outskirts of this zone, but the orcs have taken to kidnapping ordinary people in Old City (the orcs have secret ways out of the district) and taking them back to their barracks for supper (as it were) or just to torture and kill them out of boredom.

The orcs also act as jailers in the city prison directly opposite Spider's Gate, which allows them some opportunity for indulging their sadism and brutishness.

The orc warlord, Snaggrip Grekk, swaggers about Eastfair as if he owned the place, and there are many humans in Eastfair who would like to have the general population rise up and slaughter him and his men – no matter how many casualties might be suffered.

The situation is very tense, and Grenell knows that while the orc leaders want to be in Eastfair to have a very definite presence in Grenell's capital city, their soldiers often grow rebellious and irritable, needing the fresh stimulus of battle. Brawls and drunken rebellions when out in the countryside are happening with more and more frequency. Usually once the rampaging orcs run out of beer and/or troops are sent out to rein them in, everything settles down again.

A few orc ringleaders (and often their human officers) are severely punished, but the orc regiment is put right back to what ever it was doing before, as if nothing happened.

Though the city has a standard garrison of 3,000 orcs, usually about 1,000 of those orcs are farmed out to nearby garrisons or for special projects (usually as hard laborers).

In this adventure, such a regiment of 600 orcs work and garrison the Holim ruins east of Eastfair.

## THE PLOT

### WHAT HAPPENED IN COR3-17 'WHEN ORCS ATTACK'

Welcome again to Eastfair, capital of the North Kingdom. Within its great granite walls exists a small conspiracy. A Flan man smelling of fish that by night is only known (to very few) as "the Opaquer" and is completely unknown by day, is on his own private quest of evil and has moved into the city. He's a real heart-breaker. Leading into a comedy of errors, this mystery flan man hires two down on their luck thugs to do a hatchet job for him. Their orders are to retrieve the heart of a young cleric of Zilchus (and member of the Zilchus Western Company) who may know too much.

Without the knowledge (or permission) of the tenuously fledgling Thieves' Guild of the city, these two thugs do the act, but a witness gets away. One little boy

has seen too much, and a newly resurrected young Zilchus cleric is hopping mad.

The thugs just need to track down the boy and use magic to interrogate him to find out if he has told anyone else. Problem, the thugs can't let anyone know about what they are up to. The fledgling Thieves' Guild is terrified of getting the heat put on them by the cruel authorities of the city.

These thugs did the deed without permission of the guild, nor would they have ever gotten it. Now they need magic from a source that lives outside of the underworld circles, as well as outside the city. They need old Jed, a washed up cleric of Pyremius.

Now the thugs just need to pick up the boy in question at the orphanage in the countryside that he is hiding out at, then carry him off to a nearby thorp where the Old Jed lives.

Sounds simple right? It would have been. But, with one too many drinks, and a fistfight with a human officer, one of the local orc regiments have gone on yet another drunken rampage in the countryside. This is what happens...When Orcs Attack!

Now the father of the once murdered young Zilchus cleric is offering a reward for someone to look into the case. The adventurers could be such people. They want those thugs collected up and the Money Counter knows, the authorities are not bending backwards to take care of it.

### WHAT IS HAPPENING NOW

The characters have returned to Eastfair to continue the investigation into the forces behind the murder of Dantoni, son of the holy clerk.

As this adventure reveals, the dreaded Opaquer is actually a fish monger named Darrien "The Knife". He arrived in the city two years ago and purchased cheap a fishmongery. He then fought quite hard and expensively to gain the contract rights to supply and deliver fish to feed the orc workers at the just starting Holim ruins dig site. He has used his access to the site to journey there alone without his usual laborers. There is something there that interests him greatly.

Over the two years, Darrien has been collecting the hearts of various people, many of them minor clerics of different churches, to use the hearts in a undisclosed ritual. Dantoni was his last victim.

Dantoni was working as an honest deal mediator, and Darrien, being paranoid about his secrets suspected Dantoni might know too much. So using his two witless thugs, Darrien had the young cleric killed and his heart removed. After which, Darrien skipped town with most of his gear. He left his wererat cohort in charge of his fish mongery and the shrine to Vecna below it. Yes, Vecna. Darrien and his cohort are part of a cult of Vecna up to no good.

It's up to the characters in this adventure to track down the last days of Dantoni's life and find out what prompted someone to murder him, then follow that lead.

To add to the characters troubles, Darrien has hired a southern assassin called the Dawn Tiger to hunt them

down. Luckily for the characters, a representative from the local Guild has reasons of her own to tip the characters off to the impending assassination.

**Arranging the Hit—The Free Floating Assassination:** There is a special order in which a particular encounter happens (Encounter 6). This is the assassination attempt by the Dawn Tiger. It is triggered when the characters travel to the first encounter after midnight of the first day. That is to say, it preempts the intended encounter while the characters are being ambushed *en route*. Which encounter it preempts varies depending on what order the characters have played the encounters. Once the ambush encounter is finished with, the characters are free to proceed on to the intended encounter. Be sure to have read Encounter 6 carefully before starting this adventure.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

**Clinorus Kradner:** This is the proprietor of the Whirling Dervish and is described under that Inn's description above. He spent the night of the murder entertaining his young friend Dantoni with tales of the Baklunish West and other far off places. As a good cleric of the Laughing Rogue and as the boy's friend, he shall do his crafty best to steer the adventurers into taking on Afronidious's mission. Clinorus is also willing to give helpful and friendly advice about the city, but he won't expose himself or his operation, not now. Not when theirs so much more on the line.

♣ **Clinorus Kradner:** Human Male (Flan-Oeridian) Brd4/Clr4 of Olidammara; hp 46; CG; *Undetectable alignment* always cast; Speaks Ancient Baklunish (but very poorly).

**Dantoni of the Zilchus Western Company:** This is the young cleric that was murdered by the two thugs five days before the start of this adventure. He was attacked while coming home from a late night at The Whirling Dervish spent talking with his friend Clinorus Kradner (the proprietor).

Dantoni was not a random victim and was specifically targeted. He normally works alongside his father in the Zilchus Western Company (where his father is the Holy Clerk) where he is training for a lucrative and prestigious position with the senior controllers, once he has gained more knowledge and experience.

Currently though, he (and other junior Order members) have been farmed out to both the main Zilchus temple in the Eastfair and as independent trade negotiators (a typical position for acolytes), being paid to oversee the fair and honest deals between two parties. Once western trade picks up, they'll be brought back in for their main duties.

After his murder and *resurrection* (which took the vast majority of the family's and friend's available wealth) he was sent away from the city to both protect him and so he could recuperate. The Zilchus Western Company is baffled at why he was murdered and have chalked it up to

a random murder, but his father, Afronidious has a gut feeling otherwise.

♣ **Dantoni of the Zilchus Western Country:** Male human (Oeridian) Clr3 of Zilchus; hp 18; LN.

**Afronidious the Holy Clerk:** The father of young Dantoni. When his son was found murdered, the Church of Zilchus, the members of the Zilchus Western Company and the authorities were baffled as to why Dantoni was murdered in such a way. After questioning everyone they could think of nothing and even casting divinations, they could not pinpoint the specifics of the motives. It was chalked up to evil cult activity (rather common as of late) and little more was done.

Even with the discount that Afronidius was entitled to, it was still a very costly procedure to have his beloved son *resurrected*. It has tapped him and his friends (whom he borrowed a fair bit of money from) of their liquid assets and most of Afronidius non-liquid assets.

Now Afronidious has put out the word among his friends that he's looking for some inexpensive yet reliable adventurers to try and look into the matter deeper and off the record, for his own church (and the city authorities) have closed the book on the incident. He doesn't have much in the way of coin anymore, but he promises he'll owe a favor and his word can carry a lot of weight across the Flanaess.

Alfronidius is the Holy Clerk of the temple of Zilchus in the Zilchus Western Company compound. He is the man who sits at the desk at the entrance to temple and makes sure that visitors are following the proper procedures. He also controls access to the temple and coordinates who sees who and when.

♣ **Afronidious, Holy Clerk:** Human Male (Oeridian) Exp4/Clr4 of Zilchus; hp 46; LN.

**Octreth of the Zilchus Western Company:** This is the roommate of Dantoni. He came up with a plan to switch shifts with Dantoni and not record it officially. It was because of this twist of fate that caused Dantoni to be targeted for the murder. Octreth needed the shifts changed because he was courting a girl and the required assignment specified afternoon and night meetings.

♣ **Octreth:** Male human (Suel-Oeridian); N; Clr3 of Zilchus; hp 21;

**The Opaquer/Darrien 'The Knife':** This is the head of a cult of Vecna in Eastfair with connections in both other parts of the North Kingdom and in Ahlissa. He has come to Eastfair two years ago because he wanted access to something in the Holim ruins, something he has visited on several occasions. He has fled the city a month before the current date, leaving some clues behind. Much about this villain still remains a mystery.

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

**Introduction:** The characters are welcomed back to Eastfair as they respond to an urgent message from

Clinorus Kradner, on behalf of the holy clerk and friendly guilders.

**Encounter 1:** On this stop, the characters go see the Holy Clerk who has dug up some research and paper work concerning the last week of his son's life before being murdered.

**Encounter 2:** The characters get the chance to talk to the people who last saw Dantoni alive, or so everyone thinks.

**Encounter 3:** If the clues within Eastfair were not good enough for the characters, they can leave and head to a fishing village on the Flanmi River to get the same clues confirmed.

**Encounter 4:** Once the clues have been confirmed, it's time for the characters to find Dantoni's roommate and accuse him of complicity. This prompts a confession, which steers the character toward the real culprit.

**Encounter 5:** The characters were given a meeting time of 10 night bells. If they miss that, they don't get to meet the Eastfair Guilders and get a warning that an assassin is after them.

**Encounter 6:** Said assassin, called The Dawn Tiger, uses his expert knowledge of the city and customs to ambush the characters on their way to their next chosen encounter location.

**Encounter 7:** The characters following their clues and tips to the fishmongery compound of Darrien "The Knife", only to find that Darrien has left town. He has left in his stead a wererat with artistic aspirations.

**Encounter 8:** Working they're way deepening into the lair, the characters discover that Darrien is actually involved with a Cult of Vecna. The lab has been cleared out, but the rather grabby altar has been left, and it has amulets.

**Conclusion:** The characters are now one step closer to solving this mystery, but they still have much to discover. But for now, they can collect up on all the good will they have garnered.

## REMINDER

In this adventure, the box text represents the in-game word usage of the NPCs when referring to the names of gods. Due to the reverence (and sometimes fear) of these most divine and powerful beings in the North Kingdom, the NPCs do not use the true names of the gods in vain during idle conversation. Only when the god's power is truly being invoked (though not necessarily by a spell) is the true name used. It's a firm belief that to use the gods' true name invokes that being's attention.

For instance, when the NPCs in this scenario wish to refer to Nurell, they say, "The Reaper," in an attempt to avoid his attention. The same is true for all gods both good and evil.

For reference refer to Zilchus as "The Money Changer"; Hextor as 'The Herald of Hell' or 'The Scourge of Battle'; Fharlanghn as "The Dweller (on the horizon)"; Pelor as 'The Shining One'; Zodal as 'The Gentle Hand'. Though these gods have other names, this are what they are most commonly known as in and around Eastfair.

To give some examples of blessings and curses, to say, "Fharlanghn Rules the Roads" is a blessing, invoking the god's attention. To say "Zilchus be poor" is profanity.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

The text of this adventure in many of the encounters lists example questions that trigger certain responses from the NPCs. These are by no means meant to be what the players must ask verbatim. As the Dungeon Master, you need to judge the intent of the question and decide if it's reasonable to trigger the listed response. The intent of this method is to stop NPCs from blurting out all they know, regardless of the context, in an adventure that is designed to be a mystery investigation (of sorts).

## INTRODUCTION

**Note:** For characters (and especially entire parties) that did not participate in the original adventure in this series (COR3-17 *When Orcs Attack*) there is a small alternative/supplementary introduction after this encounter, but it still loops back to this primary one requiring some adlibbing on the Dungeon Master's part depending on the situation.

*Welcome back to Eastfair, The Granite City.*

*A brief letter indicating urgency has summoned you back into the city. Clinorus Kradner, the proprietor of the Whirling Dervish says there are those who need to see you.*

*Located in among the Streets of Delight in the New City, you arrive back once again to the Whirling Dervish and its exotic western décor.*

*The friendly and welcoming atmosphere of this establishment is in stark contrast to the rotting corpses hanging from poles that line the main boulevard when entering the city.*

*"Welcome back infidels, come join my tribe for a feast and a dance!" says your host in a horrible imitation of a Baklunish accent.*

*With a narrowing of his eyes his expression quickly changes to that of recognition, "Friends, it is you! Come, come, a room has been arranged and a special table prepared. We have much to talk about".*

Of all the inns to stay at in the city, this one is the most friendly and least evil. Nested in the Streets of Delight, this inn has the least number of evil auras per capita. Characters asking around would eventually be directed here as being 'more suited' to them.

## LOCATION INFORMATION: THE WHIRLING DERVISH

Nested in the Streets of Delight, the Whirling Dervish is a hostelry offering entertainments marginally less depraved, and more varied, than most establishments around it.

The proprietor, Clinorus Kradner, dresses in Baklunish robes and a turban, even though he's never been west of Edge Field in his life. To someone who is from the Baklunish West or has visited there, it is

obvious that Clinorus has dressed to the descriptions of embellished stories, not to mention the man is not Baklunish, more of a dark Flan-Oeridian mix.

But he plays the foolish part well, and has a range of "mystical conjuring tricks of the exotic west" aided by the small time magic his talent as a 4<sup>th</sup>-level bard gives him (*animate rope, mage hand, prestidigitation, summon instrument, hypnotism, monster summoning, etc.*).

His dancing girls are the best trained in Eastfair—though most are working their way into much loftier careers such as scribes and sages, and his other attractions include "Kumbli, the strongest man living outside Ekbir" (a shaven headed tanned Pontylver exile with Strength 20). As well, he has boas from Hepmonaland trained to curl lazily out of their wicker baskets when Clinorus plays his purposely out of tune conch pipe. To round this all off, vividly colored liqueurs of brain numbing potency, dice game tables, and far more besides are all present to entertain.

Clinorus is, in fact, a cleric of Olidammara (Clr4), with a strong tendency toward good alignment. He is always interested in new visitors among his clientele, and if he spots good-aligned people he often goes out of his way to give them some tips on who, what, and where to avoid within Eastfair.

He overhears indiscretions mumbled by drunken nobles and others at his gaming tables, and might pass on something of what he has heard—for the right price—if he trusts the individual he is dealing with.

In this adventure, Clinorus has dealings with the Zilchus Western Company who supplies him with perishables from the Baklunish West. He is also good friends with Dantoni and would often regale him with wild stories of the west (though these are often rehashed stories Clinorus hears from more senior Zilchus Western Company members). As a friend of the family, the Holy Clerk has agreed to use Clinorus as a middleman in dealings with the adventurers on the case. Another relevant association that Clinorus has is with a certain element of the troubled Thieves' Guild. This is a relationship he tends to keep mum on for obvious reasons. To reward the character's good deeds and friendship, he has made available to them his best suite and a table in the bar just for them.

Other than that, he doesn't reveal his true self or go out of his way to aid the characters (but won't hinder them) besides friendly hints on the city.

🔮 **Clinorus Kradner:** Human Male (Flan-Oeridian) Brd4/Clr4 of Olidammara; hp 46; CG; +11 Will Save; *Undetectable alignment* always cast; Speaks Ancient Baklunish (but very poorly).

**Time:** It is approximately 10 a.m. (10 morning bells) when the characters arrive.

### Entering the Dervish

The Whirling Dervish is known for its friendly manner and exotic entertainment. The host, Clinorus Kradner and all of his staff (and the entire inn) are dressed up like a storybook version of the Baklunish west. The selection of food and entertainment is likewise.

Clinorus is dressed in Baklunish robes and a turban, though his style of wearing them is hardly authentic. He plays the fool to better guile those who would threaten his true nature. He is also willing to use his array of bardic spells to amuse the clients (*animate rope, mage hand, prestidigitation, summon instrument, hypnotism, monster summoning, etc.*).

The characters are free to enjoy any of the entertainments listed:

- Baklunish styled dancing girls.
- Kumbli the strongest man living outside Ekbir.
- Trained boas from Hepmonaland.
- Dice games.
- Food and Drink from the far west.

Clinorus is eager to discuss the events surrounding his summoning of the characters. A private table suitable for such discussion, yet still giving a good vantage point over the rest of the bar is reserved at the far end of the main room.

*"Greetings my infidel friends! It is good to see you again. I am glad you indulged my request and came so quickly. Please have a round of our most exotic drink on me. Perhaps some breakfast as well? For it is early, and adventure seekers such as yourselves should eat heartily before seeking out fame and fortune. I have much to impart to you, but much more awaits you from others. I have two invitations to pass on to you", says Clinorus as he seats himself at the secluded table.*

Clinorus does indeed have two invitations to pass on to the characters, as well as other general information concerning recent goings on in the city.

Clinorus answers questions about the city and culture as best as he can. Consult the adventure pre-text on the city for the answers.

*"The first invitation is from the Holy Clerk Afronidious. He has further information concerning the murder of his son Dantoni and wishes to pass it on to you to help solve the incident."*

Clinorus relates the following:

- The holy clerk of the Zilchus Western Company wishes to meet the characters at the Spice of Life tavern at noon. If the characters can't make this meeting, although he can also meet at 7 bells night if needed.
- Due to the sensitive nature of the politics behind the church of Zilchus and the government, and the less than above board nature of this investigation, Afronidious cannot afford to meet or discuss this business within the Zilchus Western Company compound. His lunch and dinner hour are far more suited for clandestine meetings.
- Afronidious has some documents to hand over, but Clinorus does not know the details of their contents, other than that they relate to records

of Dantoni's last few days before being murdered.

- As a small blessing, there does not appear to have been anymore ritual killings of this manner since Dantoni and the character's apprehension of the two thug minions.

***"The second invitation I have for you is of a more ...sensitive matter... but I fear you are in danger and thus need to be burdened with it. There are certain gentlemen of a discouraged profession that wish to speak with you to impart a warning of a possible threat upon you."***

- The people Clinorus is referring to are a certain faction of the local Thieves' Guild that he has had friendly dealings with in the past.
- Clinorus makes it clear that while he would not trust most members of the guild as far as he can throw them, these particular associates he can vouch for as meaning no harm to the characters.
- Due to the sensitive nature dealing with the guild and the heavy handedness of the authorities, Clinorus is reluctant to reveal details, such as names, pasts or organizational structure (except where noted).
- This faction of the guild approached Clinorus and explained to him that they had reason to believe that an outside threat was forming against his associates (the characters) and that they had gathered some information that might prove beneficial. They are willing to impart this aid free of charge assuming that the characters respect their wishes concerning the meeting arrangements.
- At 10 bells tonight, if the characters wish to participate in the meetings, they are to be in the suite prepared for them here at the Whirling Dervish. The guilders will use the password "origins" in a sentence and the characters must reply with the counter password "Blackmoor via Whiteplume".
- Expect some additional minor security precautions, but as long as the characters cooperate, everything shall be fine.
- Clinorus will not be present at the meeting, but he will be downstairs running the tavern as usual and keeping an eye out for the authorities.
- Clinorus recommends that the characters participate in this meeting.

General information relating to the gangs, Clinorus can relate if the characters ask:

- As the characters may have noticed, the main boulevard leading from the main gates to the gates to the Old City (slums) is lined with the hanging bodies of street criminals.

- The criminals belonged to one of the many brutal thug gangs that inhabit the destitute Old City. Like others before them, the authorities collected them up in an ambush raid. This gang was called the 'Stompen Toms'. (Tom as in a male cat)
- The gang was responsible for ambushing and slaughtering a small orc brute squad led by Ghorm Yuuk (a high ranking lieutenant of the orc warlord). Ghorm Yuuk had been charged with bringing a wagonload of flour and a chest of coins for the provision and payment of a blockhouse garrison of Rakers within the Old City. Despite Ghorm's reputation for combat, he and his troops died and the goods were stolen. A few days later, the 'Stompen Toms' were rounded up and the goods confiscated. The entire gang was executed for the theft of payroll. The payroll was never recovered.
- Like most of the street gangs and petty criminals in the Old City, this gang is rumored connected to the factional Thieves' Guild.
- There is very little noticeable guild activity outside of the Old City and the authorities strive to keep it that way.
- Even with a high turnover rate for criminals within the Old City, the abhorrent conditions of poverty, overcrowding and enforced ignorance all but force the population of the slums into the criminal lifestyle. This provides a steady stream of new recruits into the gangs and the guild.

General information relating to the orcs, Clinorus can relate if the characters ask:

- Tensions between the human population and the orc portion of the garrison have been increasingly high over the last two years.
- Some point to a catalyst for this increased tension as the setting down of roots by the orcs. What started as a purely military contingent within the Orc Quarter, has become a family affair as small groups of orc females have migrated into the city from the Bone March. This is in addition to the unwelcome increase in the half-orc population within the Old City over the last ten years.
- Orc squads (barely kept in line) handle the meeker agitators in the Old City. They are much feared and hated by all (including the street level authorities they are supposed to be allied with).
- Stories have leaked out of gangs ambushing and slaughtering smaller brute squads, and there is little word on any sort of regular retaliation by the authorities.
- About a week ago, Ghorm Yuuk, a high-ranking lieutenant of Snaggrip Grekk (the orc warlord)

was leading a brute squad with a supply wagon within the Old City, when he was ambushed. Despite Ghrom's reputation for endurance in combat and the elite'ness of his person guard, the 'Stompen Tom' gang was able to kill the small orc group. The gang was rounded up a few days later for the theft of the goods and executed for the theft of a Raker's payroll.

If Clinorus is asked to recount what he imparted to the characters the first time they investigated (During COR3-17 *When Orcs Attack*), he tells them:

- Five days before he first talked to the characters, a young friend Dantoni, a cleric of the Money Counter and acolyte of the Zilchus Western Company, was murdered.
- The murder happened after Dantoni was on his way back home (the Zilchus Western Company compound) in the streets of the Merchant Quarter. He was somewhat drunk. His heart was cut out in a ritualistic fashion and the heart is still missing.
- Dantoni often visits to be regaled of stories of the far west.
- The Zilchus Western Company is a trading organization run by an order of Zilchus Clerics.
- Thankfully, Dantoni was resurrected, but it took all the sums of money that his father and his friends (including a gift from Clinorus himself) could put together. It's a misconception that all clerics of the Money Counter are filthy rich, and 5,000 gp is a lot of money on short notice.
- The authorities and the Church of Zilchus are at a loss to figure out the culprits or even a motive. Dantoni only remembers being hit on the head and being carried into an alleyway by two men before he completely blacked out. The authorities have declared it a random murder and the Church of Zilchus is complaining through formal channels to little results.
- Dantoni's father, Afronidious the holy clerk for the Zilchus Western Company compound here in the city, suspects it maybe more than just a random murder. He suspects cult activity (which there is a fair amount of) and fears that they may strike again.
- Dantoni has been sent off west to recuperate and to stay protected if who ever killed him wants to take a second shot.

**Development:** From this point, the characters have a choice about what direction to take. The meeting time with Afronidious is flexible and can be done on any day during the adventure. The meeting with the Guilders is set in stone though. It's this night or nothing.

With good directions from Clinorus, the walk to Little Bakluni Town and the Spice of Life tavern only takes 20 minutes. This leaves curious adventurers plenty of time to attend the lunch hour meeting and have time to do some preliminary investigations before having to come back for the guild meeting at 10pm.

The characters may also wish to inspect their suite. There are no traps or nefarious devices present in the

suite. The room comes with two iron keys for the characters (and one additional one for Clinorus).

## INTRODUCTION: SUPPLEMENTAL

This small supplemental introduction is for characters that didn't play COR3-17 *When Orcs Attack*. Hopefully, most of the characters in the party are repeaters and those new among them can have tagged along and have been filled in on the required questing. But some players may require more motivation and connection for their characters to justify being present and involved.

*Throughout the Flanaess, word has been spreading among the temples of Zilchus. These holy clerks, devout defenders of the bottom line and wardens of the coin, have one of their own in distress. Unofficially, they have been giving hints that foreigners, people from the outside, are needed to help right a wrong in a place where wrongs are right. New adventurers are needed where others have stalled. Pull your cloak up tightly and head off to Eastfair, capital of the North Kingdom. All hints suggest seeking out a man by the name of Clinorus Kradner at the Whirling Dervish, though the clerics of Zilchus are unsettling silent on details.*

Thus individual characters or entire adventuring parties can arrive fresh and still succeed in this adventure and be hooked into the series.

The DM needs to paraphrase the primary introduction to suit characters who are arriving by word of mouth and not a letter. Clinorus is aware that some of the previous adventurers working on the mission either died or became side-tracked elsewhere and thus replacements are needed. He goes out of his way to make these new arrivals feel welcome and does his best to merge loners up with any of those who are veterans from the first part of the mission.

As for why these new characters would be the targets of (and descriptions known) of an assassin who is enacting retribution for previous interference, well there are several possible answers.

It could be that the assassin was informed of the characters interest and travel through Great Kingdom. It could be that it is cases of mistaken identify and incorrect association with veteran characters (as hinted at in Guilder'ing the Lilies encounter). Or it could be a combination of those reasons or something more bizarre and happenstance. Either way, the Dawn Tiger associates them with his targets and moves in for the kill.

## ENCOUNTER 1: LITTLE BAKLUNI TOWN

This is the most likely first destination of the characters after their meeting with the patron of the Whirling Dervish. The characters come here to speak with Holy

Clerk Afronidious and obtain the clues needed to start their investigation.

*After 20 minutes of strolling through the streets of Eastfair you arrive in the part of the Merchant district known as the Exotic Merchant Quarter, or sometimes Little Bakluni town.*

*On the far side of the square are the walls of the Zilchus Western Company compound, and on this side is your destination, the Spice of Life Tavern. The smell of exotic dishes and spices waft from humble looking tavern.*

There are two important locations here in the square: the Zilchus Western Company compound and the other is the Spice of Life tavern.

### **LOCATION INFORMATION: ZILCHUS WESTERN COMPANY; THE SPICE OF LIFE**

**The Merchant Quarter** contains the better markets of Eastfair and the homes of many ordinary merchants. This is also home to an enclave (subsection) of merchants who specialize in exotic goods: silks, spices, peppers, yarpick nuts, galda fruit, rare herbs, alchemical goods, tropical hardwood furnishings, Ketite rugs and carpets, and all manner of unusual items.

Their shops have become poorly stocked due to the looming war and trade interference in the Baklunish West, and they often gather at The Spice of Life, a noisy tavern run by a Ketite expatriate (formerly of the Falwur District) named Sumdaa Al'Firs, who fled during the Ket-Bissel war. Back home, his small trade business relied on his personal good relations with his Bisselite neighbors and relatives. But after the war and the crack down by the zealot church, there was nothing left for him in Ket.

☛ **Sumdaa Al'Firs:** Human Male (Baklunish-Oeridian) Com8; N; hp 20.

Nearby to these shops is the walled compound of the Zilchus Western Company. This is the major supplier to these particular shops of western goods, though the Zilchus Western Company by no means holds any monopolies on Baklunish trade.

In addition to the obvious financial factors, this clerical order uses their trade network for other purposes and have done so for many generations.

The father of the young cleric in question (and the one the characters are here to meet again) is Holy Clerk Afronidious, cleric of the Money Counter, Zilchus, and a middle status (but very prestigious position) member in the clerical order that operates the Zilchus Western Company.

☛ **Holy Clerk Afronidious:** Human Male (Oeridian) Exp4/Clr4 of Zilchus; hp 46; LN.

It should be noted that the characters do not need to visit the Zilchus Western Company compound during this encounter but may visit it in Encounter 4. Holy Clerk Afronidious only wishes to discuss business with the characters at the Spice of Life tavern. If the characters come to the Zilchus Western Company compound, the holy clerk only admits them entrance if they have some other businesses with the clerical order (such as seeking

spell casting or invoking influence favors earned in previous adventures or seeking out Octreth). See Encounter 4 should the characters decide to visit.

### **THE SPICE OF LIFE**

*The smell of exotic dishes and rich flavorful spices waft over you as you open the door. The sounds of non-angry arguments and intense discussions in both common and Baklunish tongues pervade the air. A man with a Ketite accent asks you if you are here for a meal with intent to seat you. Over against the far wall is an older man in heavy armor and the livery of a cleric of Zilchus.*

The Ketite is Sumdaa Al'Firs, owner of the tavern.

The characters do not have much time to interact with the other patrons or Sumdaa before Afronidious recognizes them and beckons them over. Chatting with Sumdaa or listening in to the gossip of the patrons can pick up the following tidbits:

- Things are back to normal over at the Holim ruins. The 'Boyz of Richfest' (the orc regiment that rebelled in 'When Orcs Attack') have returned without incident to laboring at the excavation. I hear they've even got an increase in rations. Yum, more fish heads for everyone.
- The government has been doing a good job lately of routing out and eliminating the street crime that has exploded to unheard of levels in the Old City over the last few years. Thankfully, that street crime never crossed over into the New City.
- The murder and missing person rate in the New City hasn't been so bad the last few years, not ever since that last big influx of refugees into the Old City. They must be good luck.

The older man in the garb of Zilchus is Afronidious, the Holy Clerk and the person the characters are seeking out (again).

### **THE MEETING WITH THE CLERK**

If the characters have met Afronidious in a previous adventure and have not completely disguised their facial features, then read the following:

*The armored man in Zilchus garb is unmistakably Afronidious. After a quick visual inspection of your group, the holy clerk discreetly beckons you over to his table. It conveniently has six empty chairs waiting for you.*

Most characters may be suspicious of this meeting arrangement and they would have some justification for that. In this case though, Afronidious has no malicious intent toward the characters. His reasoning's behind this setup for making arrangements are purely political.

Though he has not been forbidden to, it has been made clear to Afronidious that the Church of Zilchus wishes to handle the matter of a murder of one of their own through official channels first. This is to avoid the risk of giving the Church of Hextor and the authorities an excuse to censure them for interfering in an official

matter (the murder investigation). A censuring would leave the church open to political ever increasing political attack. That is something the authorities would love for the Zilchus church to do and some suspect that is the reason for the delay (and poor handling) in the official investigation.

Because of this, Afronidious wants to keep the mission low profile and is using his own (now limited) funds and resources for the initial transactions. This means having no contact with the characters that could be twisted into appearing to be on behalf of the Zilchus Western Company or the church of Zilchus. So all meetings must be done on his two meal breaks during the day (breakfast is a ritual for the Zilchus Western Company order and thus Afronidious is required to attend).

As the characters may remember, the last time they met up with Afronidious (in COR3-17 *When Orcs Attack*), he had asked them to investigate the ritualistic murder of his son (the details of that conversation are located in this later in this encounter text) and to see if there was further threat to his (resurrected) son. Afronidious promised to compile more information as time and resources allowed. And that is what he has summoned (via Clinorus) the characters for.

Afronidious has collected up copies of the official church documents listing his son's most recent activities (before his murder) as an 'Honest Deal Mediator'. Knowing his son, he feels this could be the only connection (if there even is one) as he spent the rest of his time either in the compound working and studying, and the rest at the Whirling Dervish. As for the Dervish, Clinorus has already assured him that there would have noticed a connection had it happened at his establishment.

Afronidious hands over to the characters the copy of the documents (Player Handout 1). It is written in highlight format for the most relevant entries for the sake of convenience (a real document like this could be many pages long).

The clerk is willing to answer the questions of the characters to the best of his ability.

***"My Friends, I thank you for continuing to assist me in this matter of my son's murder. I have heard from him recently that he is getting along well in the western trade outposts. Take these compiled documents as well, ask of me what you need to know" says the holy clerk.***

The following information is listed by questions the characters might ask. The clerk is not hiding anything, but at the same time, he's not sure what the characters might find relevant and may need some direction in what to say. The question asked does not need to be exactly same as the question listed.

Q: *What is a "honest deal mediator"?*

An 'honest deal mediator' is a cleric of Zilchus is contracted by both parties to ensure neither one is attempting to cheat the other one (other than normal

hard bargaining). This usually involves the use of a *detect thoughts* spell (with the information gained remaining in confidence unless it proves that one side is going to cheat the other). A successful DC 15 Knowledge (religion) or DC 20 Knowledge (local—core) check indicates the character know this.

Q: *Whatever happened to those two thugs we hunted down?*

The two thugs are Syad and Nye. In COR3-17 *When Orcs Attack*, they were discovered to be responsible for the actual killing of Dantoni, but interrogation revealed them to be simple dupes. After being captured, they were placed in the Eastfair Prison.

"I went to see those two scoundrels in our orc managed prison. I found it to be a fitting punishment for them, though I wish they had endured longer, but they were as weak as they were cowardly and succumb to the ministrations of the orc jailers. What I was able to get from them was that a man they knew as 'the Opaquer' hired them to commit ritualistic heart thefts from people pointed out by their mysterious boss. They killed three other clerics from different churches and two commoners, but I've had difficulty ascertaining who as those two dunderheads just don't seem to know much beyond a pointed out target. There boss always sought them out and paid in cash when they met at a prearranged alley to hand over the heart. Much of this took place in the New City.

(Q) *What do you know about 'the Opaquer'?*

"The two thugs described the man as always wearing a leather cowl to disguise his features, but the skin he did display suggests him being of Flan decent. His accent was not local (but the thugs could not place it or imitate it well enough to identify) but I suspect it was from somewhere in the south. They've also described him as smelling strongly of fish, though that's not too uncommon, as fresh fish is a major part of our diet. Because of the ghastly acts and the fact that this is Eastfair, I've consulted the Order's research texts on the arcane and mystic. Part of me suspected to find this to be the name of an evil outsider, but if it is, I could not find any reference to it. The ritual fashion that the hearts were removed in is confusing as well. It could have just been improper implementation by the two thugs, but the ritual methods are inconclusive, possibly even contradictory to any particular known ritual. I wish I had more to tell you on this".

What the holy clerk doesn't know is that 'the Opaquer' is a made-up name, created specifically to fool the two ignorant thugs. A DC 22 bardic knowledge check reveals the name to originate from an old and badly written play out of Mentrey in the See of Medegia. It was first performed some 200 years ago and though somewhat popular within the See, it did not travel much outside of the southern Great Kingdom. The plot revolved around a fiend that would block out the light of knowledge and keep the information for himself, all the while tricking the innocent into conflict with the main character of the play. There are several different versions



of the play, depending on what political power held the See at the time.

*Q: Why can't we meet in the Zilchus Western Company compound?*

"For the political safety of the order, I must distance myself from it when dealing in these matters. There is no danger to you because of it, only danger to myself and the order".

*Q: Does your son have any friends in the city?*

"You've already met Clinorus, of course. I believe Dantoni was on friendly terms with much of the staff of Whirling Dervish, but I don't know if I'd call any of them deep relationships, besides Clinorus. He was friendly enough with his fellow young clerics in the Order. He shared a room with a cleric of similar age named Octreth.

*Q: What does your son look like?*

"Well, he's no longer in the city and (I hope) safely in the west, but he is about 5 feet 6 inches tall, with dark curly hair similar to my own without the touch of gray. He wore the typical basic garment of our order and wore a three stone sapphire (yellow) ring that I gave him at his ordaining. He has his mother's nose though, much rounder than my own and her unblemished skin as well."

*Q: Do you have any enemies?*

I have no personal enemies that I am aware of. As for the order, it could be said that everyone shares an enemy in the government and the Church of Hextor, but don't be caught saying that.

*Q: Who was handling the investigation?*

"A Raker by the name of Captain Falentia is in charge of the investigation, but it would be futile to try and approach him. As far as he is concerned, the case is all but closed with the capture and imprisonment of the two thugs. He believes the story of 'the Opaquer' to be fiction and an attempt to shift the blame for the crimes. I'm sure that Captain Falentia would arrest any who bothered him about the case and charge them with interference. Just stay clear of him, and he won't pay you any mind"

## **THE PLAYER HANDOUT DOCUMENT HIGHLIGHTS**

Highlights from the official logs of the Zilchus Western Company – Eastfair branch and the main Temple of Zilchus -Eastfair; One week leading up to the murder of Dantoni, junior cleric and certified Honest Deal Mediator.

### **Starday:**

Between ten and eleven morning bells: Honest deal mediator request made by client Roward of Shoreshil (occupation Fisher-Lead). Conditions: standard contract, specifically for moderation of fresh fish from Shoreshil on the Flanmi. Pseudo-Client: Hughnard The Fishmonger (of Eastfair). Standard payment, no known holds on Roward or Hughnard. Honest Deal Mediator

Assigned: Dantoni of the Zilchus Western Company — Eastfair branch.

Noon: Sub-Clerk logs delivery of assignment contract to Dantoni

Three evening bells: Dantoni confirms contact with both parties. Preliminary meeting times arranged. The deal process is locked and set in motion.

### **Sunday:**

Between nine morning to three evening bells: Standard Billable hours; honest deal mediator mediating inspection of cargo loads entrusted to client Roward by fellow fishermen of Shoreshil. Cargo stored in tertiary warehouse #341 (as owned by the Zilchus Western Company, standard rent paid in full).

### **Moonday**

Nine morning to four evening bells: Standard billable hours; honest deal mediator mediating inspection of cargo held in warehouse #341, both client Roward and pseudo-client Hughnard present. Delay created by tariff dispute by Eastfair Tax agent. Standard solution presented, but documents will not be ready till Waterday due to Godsdays services within the government structure.

### **Godsdays**

Dantoni of the Zilchus Western Company recorded as present for extended worship ceremonies within the Zilchus Western Company –Eastfair branch. Full tithe recorded as received.

### **Waterday**

Eight morning to four evening bells: Standard billable hours;

All proper documents collected from Eastfair-Tax; necessary claims and notifications for transits of goods (warehouse to warehouse) and passes for additional laborers from the Old City; Roward and Hughnard noted as being in agreement with final exchanges planned for end of work Earthday.

Government approval for transport plan: Seven wagons, along prearranged street route, from Zilchus Western Company T-Warehouse #341 to Compound Warehouse of Hughnard the Fishmonger.

### **Earthday**

Between seven morning bells and two evening bells: Standard billable hours plus end of contract fee; Honest deal mediator oversaw packing, loading, transport, unloading of goods. Notes: No problems, smooth transaction. Both parties have signed statement of agreement and satisfaction.

Contract closed.

### **Freeday**

No listed duties for Dantoni.

Q: What does this document mean, Afronidious?

As far as Afronidious sees it, this is a fairly standard listing for a simple job of collecting a large cargo from an outside source and navigating the somewhat untrustworthy nature of most merchants as well as the moldy red tape of the government.

What Afronidious does not know, is that it was not actually his son performing the assigned contract. In actuality, Dantoni's roommate Otreth instigated a small conspiracy to switch assignments. Otreth did this because he had pressing matters of the heart and his own assigned contract had a specific clause for late evening meetings. The switch was never recorded (nor approved).

As for the details of this transaction; Roward represents a group of fishermen (mostly relatives, Flan descended) based out of the small community of Shoreshil along the east bank of the Flanmi River. Afronidious has heard of the man, but has never had dealings with him personally. Roward arrives in Eastfair, contacts the Church of Zilchus and asks for an Honest Deal Mediator. The church then assigned one (in this case, Dantoni) and set things in motion.

Once signed in, Dantoni would face a fine for delaying or reneging on the contract, so minor subterfuge was required between the two young clerics. If caught, both clerics face a fine and minor punishment. Again, Afronidious does know this rule was broken by the two young clerics.

Hughnard the Fishmonger is one of several local fishmongers. Fish from the Flanmi is a large part of the city's diet, as well when dried, makes an excellent staple for the ration packs of the troops. Afronidious has met Hughnard on a few occasions, once when the Zilchus Western Company purchased stock from him and a few other times at social/financial functions. Afronidious describes him as a short, stingy obese man, but comparatively trustworthy (for a local merchant), though far from socially pleasant.

The Zilchus Western Company tertiary warehouse #341 is one of several holding facilities within the warehouse district owned by the Zilchus Western Company (and not located within the compound). These warehouses are rented out to those with a need for temporary storage of goods, usually involving the awaiting of a transaction mediated by the church of Zilchus.

**Note:** Though the characters can find and visit the warehouse, it is currently empty and has no bearing on this adventure.

Hughnard the Fishmonger's small compound is located in the merchant district and Afronidious can give directions (so that the characters can visit it in a later encounter).

Afronidious does not live with his son (though they both live in the same compound) and though they did pass each other and engage in small talk, Dantoni did not discuss his work that week (which is not unusual), nor did the subject come up.

### What was discussed the first time we talked?

This is the information that was discussed with the characters the first time they met with the holy clerk (in COR3-17 *When Orcs Attack*). If asked, he can impart it to them again.

- In a discreet manner, investigate the murder on my son. Find out who ordered it and why.
- The authorities are being less than helpful and my own church is playing it cautious. They fear that if the Church of Zilchus uses its own resources within the city to look into the case, it may be a trap by the authorities to have an excuse to censure the church. Meanwhile, the Church of Zilchus is protesting through official channels.
- Though I have not been forbidden to, my superiors in my order and the church would not be approving if they knew I was hiring others to look into the matter.
- I have sent my newly resurrected son into the west, where I am certain he will be safe for now. What I need to know is, was it just a random killing or was it something targeted specifically for him? Will who ever did this try to harm him again? Was this aimed to hurt me personally (via my son) or to harm the Zilchus Western Company?
- Other than his money pouch, the jeweled ring I gave him for his ordaining, and his heart, nothing of great value was taken. He carried no secrets of the order or keys to the vaults. The closest thing to a lead was a town guardsmen spotting a running and frantic gutter child close to the area at the same time, probably escaping back to the Old City.
- I realize that this sort of low-key investigation can take a long time in a city as cruel as Eastfair, so I put no time constraints on you. If it takes 100 years to solve this, I shall be happy, as long as it is solved.
- My funds are severely depleted due to the cost of the *resurrection* of my son, but I promise you this, on my word as a holy clerk, you shall always be able to count on others who hold that office to help you when it comes time to truly need it. That and I'll give you 100 gp each (already paid at the end of COR3-17 *When Orcs Attack*).
- You know where I am should you need to ask me anything, just be discreet.

**Development:** Keep track of the time of day it is. The characters may have places to be and deadlines to keep (such as Encounter 5). From here, the characters have several options. They can go back to the Whirling Dervish and await the meeting (Encounter 5); or they can walk 10 min and investigate Hughnard the Fishmonger (Encounter 2); or enter the Zilchus Western Company compound and speak with the roommate (Encounter 4); or leave the city for an overnight stay on the Flanmi river (Encounter 3). Or run off into the city to foresee what troubles follow them come the passing of midnight.

## ENCOUNTER 2: THE FIRST LEAD IS THE DEEPEST

This is most likely the second stop of the characters. This is the fishmongery compound that Dantoni was officially scheduled to be working at (though due to the switch, it was really Octreth pretending to be Dantoni). Here, the characters pick up clues revealing that someone was imitating Dantoni as the physical descriptions do not match up.

*The compound of Hughnard the Fishmonger is easy enough to find among the clean and orderly streets of the New City. The compound consists of a main building, a barn, and a small shack typical of those that house extra labor during busy times. A rickety wooden fence afflicted with gaps, rings most of the compound.*

The characters can find the shop easy enough by asking around in the market district or directly from the holy clerk. Though there are many fishmongers of varying size and influence, Hughnard is the most well known.

A rickety wooden fence surrounds the compound with a wagon gate on the side with access from the alley. The main house acts as the street-facing wall. On either side of the compound are row houses with miscellaneous shops and residences.

During the day, Hughnard and his three regular workers (Jireen, Ludern and Tiven) can be found around the compound doing various tasks, such as processing and sorting fresh fish, smoking fish, filling fillet orders and cooking the fish books. Hughnard rarely goes far from the front desk in the main house during business hours.

After dark, the three workers wind down in the kitchen area of the main house before going to bed (in a room adjoining the kitchen) and Hughnard himself retires to his two rooms located upstairs (above the kitchen area). If disturbed during the night, both groups have hand bells in easy reach to start signaling for the city watch. If such a commotion happens, a patrol arrives in 1d4 minutes in the heavily watched over merchant district.

### DEALING WITH HUGHNARD

Meeting Hughnard is not difficult. He's always willing to do bulk business (though he is not interested in selling small personal supplies of fish) and pretending to be a reputable customer gets his undivided attention rather fast, but risks angering him should the deception be revealed.

The key to dealing with Hughnard is giving him motivation to cooperate. For instance, if Hughnard thinks he can sell more fish, he's cooperative and he'll answer to the best of his knowledge. Failing that approach, the characters can simply bribe him with 30 gp for his time. Threats of violence or pleas to his kind heart

(he's neutral in alignment), run the range of angering him to becoming tight lipped and insistent on up to 60 gp of bribe, depending on how the characters force their views. Use a DC 12+APL Diplomacy check to determine the results, with a failure resulting in anger.

An angered Hughnard demands the characters leave his shop and not return. His three workers do their best to act threatening, but respond with ringing for a Raker patrol instead of direct combat.

*"Greetings customers to the best supply of prepared fish the Flanmi has to offer" says a short obese man finishing his cod-on-a-stick snack.*

Once the characters get Hughnard talking, he has little to hide and reveals the following information to a character asking the right questions.

**Note:** Hughnard is not aware of the identity switch between the two young clerics of Zilchus and has never met either of them before.

- **Why did you use this cleric?** "The Honest Deal Mediator Grattati is used to dealing with has left for greener pastures in the south, Jalpa he thinks. But that is to be expected, as honest eel mediator is a minor position, usually left for the young or unmotivated. This one was assigned by church docket."
- **Is this document accurate? Did any of these events actually happen?** Hughnard confirms the description of events from the records to be an accurate account. Dantoni (who was really Octreth) was acceptable in his duties, if not a little lighthearted and Hughnard thinks the young cleric may have even been day dreaming at one time or another. Definitely preoccupied, but still got the job done. Not usual qualities one finds in a servant of the Money Counter.
- **Did anything unusual happen during these alleged events?** "Unusual happenings? None really. There was a humorous moment when Tiven accidentally caught Dantoni's long blonde locks in the rear gate of one of the wagons and nearly knocked himself off his feet, but the boy showed humility and had a laugh along with the rest of the work crew."
- **What did Dantoni look like?** "Well, he was young and wore the standard neophyte attire with Zilchus Western Company markings. He is about two heads taller than myself, long blonde hair, splotchy face, and perhaps somewhat ungainly, but still a nice enough fellow."
- **Did he have any jewelry (or did you look at his hands?):** "If memory serves, the lad wore a silver holy symbol of the Money Counter, and on his hand was a ring of some sort. I remember it being bejeweled, but I don't remember it too well, one of the reasons I got into fish, was that I

don't see colors all that well, which makes gem dealings out of the question."

- **Tell me about the trade transaction set up by Roward of Shoreshil:** "I have dealt with him on many occasions. Usually, he sells small catches to local mongers, but once in a while, there is a large catch and he acts a lead among his fellow fishermen in his extended clan and brings the shipment to me directly. As pretty typical, he took out a contract for a honest deal mediator. I prefer it; it keeps business smooth. Most of the honest deal mediator payment is added into the sale price."
- **Who was the 'tax agent' mentioned in the document?** "That is the honorable Tal Reydrich, tariffer extraordinaire. He's no different from any of the other officials working for the government. Graff, bribes, kickbacks, blood—that's what it takes to get the gears of society moving around here. Its best to stay away from those types unless you're actively looking for trouble and have a lot of free time on your hands."

Assuming they don't get in the way and haven't upset Grattati, the characters are free to question the three workers (Jireen, Ludern and Tiven) but they have little to add over the information listed under Grattati.

- **Tiven, what happened with the hair?** "I was closing up the back of the wagon and I accidentally got some of the kid's hair caught. As he started to walk away, he nearly yanked himself right off his own feet. His long arms shot out for something to grab, and he caught on to me, but he cut me good on the neck with his ring. I figured he'd have me beaten for sure, but the kid took the accident good naturedly and we all had a short laugh about it."
- **The Ring? Did you see it? Is it safe??** "Er, sure, I saw the ring. I glanced down at it to see what had cut me. Three blue sapphires set on a gold ring".
- **Who else works here? Perhaps a fiend in disguise?** "We three are the only 'permanent' staff. During large transactions, laborers from the Old City are brought in, usually housed in that cottage over there. It's empty now though."

## ALL APLS

🔪 **Hughnard:** Male human (Oeridian) Exp3; hp 20; N.

🔪 **Workers (3):** Male human (Flan-Oeridian) Com3; hp 10 each; N.

Curious characters may suspect everyone in this city of evil. This may lead them to wanting to search the grounds, be it with permission during the day or under the cloak of darkness. Though nothing nefarious relating

to this adventure happened on the grounds, the highlights for the three major locations are as follows.

The main house (described in part earlier) has a front room used for client-oriented business. The smallest sales orders are dealt with here as well as the financial transactions. A small sturdy (but unlocked) chest is located out of sight under the counter. It contains 20-gp worth of copper and silver coins. The backroom is used as both a work area and living quarters for the workers. Stairs lead up to the master apartment. Strangely, there is no cellar. A stonewall separates the kitchen (that takes up the right quarter of the house) from the rest of the house. Hidden under a tile in the kitchen is a bag with 20-gp worth of copper and silver coins. Hidden upstairs in the master bedroom is a chest with 200-gp worth of coins.

The barn triple functions as a production facility, warehouse, and transport storage. The building is approximately 60 feet by 15 feet, with 20 feet by 20 feet addition on the courtyard-side wall. Fish drying, pickling, salting, fresh storage, and other fish-related paraphernalia can be found on the far end of the barn. A wagon is near the main entrance. Barrels both full and empty take up the rest of the space. Sacks of salt and other spice-like ingredients are present with a street resale value of 10gp for any character wanting to take the 30 pounds of sacks and barrels.

The small cottage is in the worst shape of all the buildings. It is single level, with a main room and a small stone addition for cooking and heating. In total, the cottage is approximately 30 feet by 45 feet. It has enough bunks to house ten workers, though the conditions would be quite sad. The wooden walls and bunk posts are covered in years' worth of carved graffiti.

Disturbing any of these buildings at night (from noise via searching or lights) risk waking the ever-wary occupants of the compound. Once alerted, the only way to stop Grattati or the workers from ringing for a Raker patrol is to trick them into thinking the disturbance is being caused by an animal (a somewhat common occurrence). Of course, the animal trick is useless if it's a light source that gives the characters away (which can be seen from the window of the master bedroom).

**Treasure:** Robbing various spots in the compound.

**APL 2:** L: 10; C: 240; M: ogp

**APL 4:** L: 10; C: 240; M: ogp

**APL 6:** L: 10; C: 240; M: ogp

**Development:** From this encounter, the characters should be able to gain enough understanding to point them toward questioning Octreth about discrepancy in the descriptions (Encounter 4).

The characters (if they haven't already) may wish to further confirm the facts by heading out of the city to Roward of Shoreshil. Hughnard can provide directions (Encounter 3).

## ENCOUNTER 3: SHORESHIL OR BUST

For characters that either want to cover all their bases, or did not deduce the nature of the deception from the clues in Encounter 2, they have this chance to leave the city of Eastfair on an overnight trip to a fishing village. At the village is a man who participated in the business transaction with the imposter Dantoni. Leaving the city risks a special attack by the Dawn Tiger.

*Having readied for your trip south to Shoreshil on the bank of the Flanmi River, you pass through the gates of Eastfair city without incident, its giant stone statues watching you with unrelenting menace. A safe round trip to Shoreshil by horse or foot requires an overnight stay at the destination to avoid the unknown dangers that lurk between settlements.*

The characters have decided to make a journey to the riverside thorp of Shoreshil. The settlement is roughly 19 miles south of Eastfair, with about 75% of the trip along the great southern road (highway) and the rest a mixture of road and trackless.

Getting out of the city is easy, assuming the characters are not wanted for something. The main gate can be passed without undue hardship (the small entrance tariffs are counted against standard lifestyle costs). For those who insist on a more dramatic exit/entrance, climbing over the walls is not acceptable by the authorities, for only thieves escape cities via walls, and a patrol would catch them quickly.

There are only two gates out of the city, the main gate and the Fisherman's Gate. The latter is for the rich and influential only, a character requires the luxury lifestyle to use it.

The Great Gate is powerfully defended, with ballista platforms flanking the 30-foot high granite walls and a pair of huge (22 feet high) stone statues of Aerdi warriors standing one each side of them. These statues can be animated as massive stone golems (271 hp each) by a cleric of Hextor who stands special watch as part of the gate detail, to fight in defense of the city or take care of gatecrashers.

➤ **Greater Stone Golem:** hp 271; see *Monster Manual*.

### ON THE RIVERBANK

*You have arrived at the small collect of fishing cottages that make up the thorp called Shoreshil. The faces of the peasants first seem apprehensive, but quickly become more accepting when it becomes less likely that you here to murder and plunder. A women from the village approaches you. "Greetings strangers. What brings you to Shoreshil?"*

This is Callette, the wife of Roward, and she's actually not all that old, but life on the riverbank tends to be harsh. She welcomes the characters, partially out of hospitality, and partially out of concern that insulting the characters may provoke them to murder and plunder. The local lord

is has three such thorps and a hamlet to look after so immediate help is not guaranteed.

Once the characters have informed her that they seek Roward (and not to murder him), Callette tells them that he is out on the river with the other fishermen of the village. He should be back within the hour (with a minor leak in the boat if it makes timing more logical to the situation). Till then, she offers the characters their fill of fish tea and fish-tar-tar.

➤ **Callette:** Female human (Flan-Oeridian) Com2; N.

### ROWARD COMETH

Once Roward is back on the scene, he needs little coaxing to answer the questions of the characters. As long as the characters are not being overly secretive or acting in a suspicious manner, Roward is willing to answer honestly and candidly—not that he has much to say. If the characters seem to loose track, Roward is likely to blurt out any of the below now already covered (he likes the attention).

- **Just the facts, Roward:** Roward can confirm the events relating to him on the record document are indeed accurate. As he has in the past, he contracted the Temple of Zilchus to provide an honest deal mediator. He'd never worked with this one before, but that's not surprising as its pretty lowly work for a Zilchus cleric compared to some of the enterprises they could be involved with.
- **What makes you so special?:** Acting as the fisher-lead, during large catches (and after their liege has been paid), Roven collects up the different catches from the fishermen in the village, (most of which are related in someway to him) and records the amount added to the combined batch and brings it to market in Eastfair. For the more regular small catches, it's more economical to sell them to local mongers and merchants.
- **What's your relationship with the Church of Zilchus?:** Roward readily admits he's not the most educated man (ok, no education), but he's proud that he's wise enough to know that it's in his associates' best interest to use the services of the Temple of Zilchus, specifically an honest deal mediator. The bureaucrats and fiscal pitfalls of Eastfair can be a seller's death sentence (sometimes literally). For large enough shipments, the fee's paid are rather reasonable when compared to all the effort and protection the services provide.
- **Explain to me the intricacies of the socio-political spectrum of Eastfair and the fish trade within it:** Roward did not delve much into the goings on of the transaction's background dealings (arranging of inter-city transport, bribes, and tariffs) but concentrated more on the physical side of the transaction (watching the laborers, watching for potential street

thieves, minding his own transport and equipment, etc).

- **What was it like working with Dantoni?:** “I liked that boy Dantoni. Not quite as standoffish or detached like many clerics of the money counter. I wonder though how much of it had to do with his condition though. He had the ‘Look’ in his eyes. You know, the ‘Look of Spring’, a touch of the Sad Maiden. I was amazed he got all his work done properly, protecting my interests and all, always in a rush at the end of the day. He took off once so quickly I had to yell to him to come back and pick up his ledger. Got a girl I sez’s to him, and he just blushed. Ah, to be young again.”
- **What did Dantoni look like, Roward?:** Young, tall, skinny, spots of youth, blonde hair-Suelish. He wore the vestments of a young cleric in the service of the Zilchus Western Company. His symbol was silver or platinum and he had a fancy ring on his hand like many clerics of his faith wear in these parts.
- **Anything unusual happen during that week?** “Well, my stay in Eastfair was quite enough (Eastfair being a rather overwhelming city), but on the trip home, which I had foolishly decided to start just after dusk, not too far out of the city on the southern great road, I heard an unholy screech far above me. In the very last rays of the sun, and the twinkles of the moons, I saw a sight that chilled me to the bones. Silhouetted against the stars and that last remaining light was a shadowy form that rippled and flapped along the night sky. It was heading east, perhaps northeast. Now, there are always new and strange sights to behold in our enchanted lands, but what terrified me the most was the size of this damnable creature. It must have been as big as my wagon, perhaps even bigger for its distance in the sky made measurements difficult, but it was just mammoth. In my terror, I threw away my jug of ale and sped on till it was no longer in sight. I’ve tried to warn others, but few folk care enough to listen. You believe me though, right? Don’t travel at night outside of Eastfair, it’s just not worth it. Stay as our guest and travel back in the morning.”

◆ **Roward:** Male human (Flan-Oeridian) Exp; N.

**Development:** If the characters had yet to be convinced or missed it from the fishmonger, they should be wise to some sort of identify mix between the two young Zilchus clerics. This is the only location in this adventure that takes place outside of Eastfair. The party should head back to the city.

### ASSASSINATION!

Depending on the order of events and the semi-randomness of assassination, the characters may or may not have already encountered the Dawn Tiger. If the

characters *have not* or if they have, but the Dawn Tiger escaped, then there is an encounter here that overrides any previous arrangement.

Any hit points or spells lost by the Dawn Tiger in an earlier combat are regained as long as he has had time to rest. See Encounter 6 for specifics on the assassination attempt, but make the following adaptations.

- The Dawn Tiger has had a stroke of luck and successfully stalked the characters as they exited Eastfair. If the characters stay overnight in the thorp or make camp somewhere, the assassin strikes in the rural setting using the darkness and terrain to his advantage.
- A bonus for the Dawn Tiger is that he does not have to worry about the impending arrival of guard patrols or other interference.
- If the Dawn Tiger flees from this combat (due to severe injury) he does not return for any other scheduled encounter.
- The Dawn Tiger ignores his usual time limit (for avoiding guard patrols) and stretches out the combat for as long as he needs, picking off the characters slowly.
- If the characters never open themselves to a night time attack (even if just traveling at night outside) then the Dawn Tiger grudgingly attacks during the day to the best use of terrain (as picked out by him along a road). You randomly determine a terrain setup that reflects an ambush planned on the fly by a professional while still keeping the situation realistic and not too unbalancing (please—no convenient 6-foot high walls of mud on the edge of the highway). When in doubt, err on the side of caution.

## ENCOUNTER 4: CONFESSIONS OF A YOUNG CLERIC’S ROOMMATE

This encounter might be visited twice by the PCs. The first time as an initial interview, and the second after the have put together the clues that someone (OctrETH) impersonated Dantoni. Once the accusations are made, the young cleric confesses to his part in this.

### ZILCHUS WESTERN COMPANY

*This small compound sits on the far side of the square in little Bakluni town.*

*Though its main gates are open, the walls are patrolled by the feather plumed and richly dressed pikemen common to the orthodox Zilchus customs originating in the old Great Kingdom.*

*A sign in both old Oeridian and Common proclaims, “The Zilchus Western Company.”*

As long as the characters are polite, civil and can come up with any sort of reasonable cause for entering the

compound (such as to invoke a favor with the order or speak with someone specific), then they may do so and though the elite guards do not search the characters, they do eye them very carefully.

Inside the walls, a courtyard is filled with wagons and horses. Along the sides of the walls are small warehouses, offices and living quarters. At the far end of the compound is the temple itself.

*Guards wearing decorated half-plate and sporting halberds line the entrance to the temple. They wear a rather lavish livery of expensive materials and construction. Their helmets fly a loan feather, with color seemingly to denote rank.*

If the characters approach the temple entrance gate read the following:

*Standing open is a pair of thick and sturdy looking double doors. Above them, written in both old Oeridian and Common, are the words, "Pray within my halls those who desire exchange."*

The double doors lead to the main chamber for public worship. This is where those dealing with the Zilchus Western Company go to give praise and thanks to Zilchus, or to meet with one of the clerics of the order to arrange business matters. All the offices and vaults are secure within the temple.

Depending on the law of the land, Temples of Zilchus can make arrangements or broker deals on many, many items or services. Their confidentiality is guaranteed, with the exception of some of the most dire circumstance, or if the deal betrays the temple. Here in the North Kingdom, the church of Hextor does its best to suppress the amount of influence and control of the Zilchus clergy. It's only because of the need for the coffer filling effects of trade that the servants of the Money Counter are allowed even this much latitude.

It's rumored that at the main temple of Zilchus in the city (not this small one) that what ever you needs have can be efficiently and discreetly brokered for the right price. From information to hiring independent assassins to having your much sought after artifact stored for safekeeping. The Church of Zilchus prides itself on discretion and getting the job done or most of your money back.

This particular small temple is part of the Zilchus Western Company, an order formed for the organization of trade investors and under-writers dealing in the Baklunish west. In addition to looking after their own interests, they also (for a fee) keep an eye on the interests of others in the western lands, for those as far away as the old Great Kingdom. A much less advertised function of this order is to act as bases of operation for agents of finance to help keep trade flowing, including the trade of information.

*Two more fancily dressed soldiers flank the large ornate double doors leading into the Prayer Hall. About a foot past the doors into the hall, standing waist high in the center of the doorway,*

*is an ornate clay vase. The vase is nearly filled with coins of different denominations. A heavy oak desk is off to one side with many papers and ledgers on it. A gold scale and several electrum weights and measures sit upon a tray on the desk. Behind the desk is a middle-aged man in plate mail. He sits in a throne-like chair. His gauntlets are off, exposing his wrinkled ink stained hands.*

*About his neck is the holy symbol of Zilchus. "Greetings patrons, what business do you have with the servants of the Money Counter?" says the man as he dips his quill into his ink and straightens his ledger book.*

To enter the hall, it is sacrilegious to not place a coin in the pot that stands just within side the hall. It can be any type of coin.

The holy clerk has a desk near the entrance as well. He is an armored cleric of Zilchus who performs certain duties within the temple. One of those duties is to direct the business of worshippers and patrons and record names and dates, and collect fees. He becomes quite upset if people enter the hall without dropping a coin in (he can see the pot, and watching it is part of his job).

Have all characters succeeding at a DC 15 Knowledge (religion) know that they must drop a coin to enter. Any character that has Zilchus as their main patron god automatically knows this and should be informed of it.

This is Afronidious, the man that has enlisted the characters to investigate his son's murder. It is not the Church of Zilchus or even the Zilchus Western Company that is offering the reward in this matter. It is Afronidious personally. Because of that, Afronidious refuses to discuss the matter within the compound (as described in Encounter 1).

During lunch times (noon to one evening bell) and supper (between seven and 8 evening bells) Afronidious is not present and instead is across the square at the Spice of Life tavern. During that time, one of the apprentices to the Holy Clerk position fill-in.

In order to see Octreth (Dantoni's roommate at the time of the murder) the characters just have to ask. A page then brings the characters to a non-descript meeting chamber where Octreth joins them shortly. It's likely that the characters make two trips to see Octreth in this adventure. The first as a cursory inquiry, and the second to force a confession of sorts out of the young cleric once the characters have clues that his story does not match up.

*The door to the meeting room swings open and a young neophyte of Zilchus enters. His long skinny limbs and marked face conflict with his long blonde locks, "Greetings. I am Octreth of the Zilchus Western Company, I'm told you wish to see me?" he says with a smile.*

For those looking closely, Octreth also has a silver holy symbol and a ring with three blue sapphires (as opposed to the yellow sapphires of Dantoni's ring).

## OCTRETH THE INNOCENT

Other than breaking some rules, Octreth is guilty of nothing. He is completely unaware that his actions indirectly caused the death of his friend. Because of that, Octreth does his best to hide what he considers his most dire secret. This being the fact he instigated and conspired with Dantoni to switch assignments and actively hide that fact from both the church and from the clients. Octreth fears that if the church became aware of this, he would not only pay a fine of 400 gp, he would face disciplinary action and mar his career. In addition to that, his friend Dantoni would face similar punishment.

Keeping with that, this is the story he is willing to pass on to the interrogating characters.

- **What is your relationship to Dantoni?:** He and Dantoni were roommates for several months. In addition to their mundane duties as part of the Zilchus Western Company, they both worked within the pool of honest deal mediators for the main temple of Zilchus in the city (which heads the Church of Zilchus for the surrounding area).
- **What do you know of his murder?:** The two clerics were/are good friends and he was shocked to find out about the murder. Once Dantoni got better, Octreth was saddened to see Dantoni being shipped off by his father to the relative safety of the west. Eastfair can be brutal and cruel, but you never figure it will happen to you and or someone you know.
- **Are there any clues still in the room you two shared?:** Dantoni took all his belongs with him from the room they shared when he left for the west. A new roommate has yet to be assigned. The characters are welcome to look around, but he doubts they will find anything of interest (and they won't besides one small clue); The room as many fresh flowers (and weeks old wilting ones too) filling up all manors of containers that can hold water. Octreth just shrugs off any mention of them, not wanting to go into details.
- **What did you do the week he died?:** "It was a good time for fish harvests and I got assigned to another fish deal. We were both the pair that week, reeking of fish. I worked mostly during the afternoon and after dusk. Marshevel of Emmery Pond was the contractor and Darrien 'The Knife' the Fishmonger was the Psedu-Client. (Characters wishing to make a Sense Motive check here need to beat a DC 8+APL to notice that Octreth is holding something back).
- **Anything strange happen?:** "Nothing happened out of the ordinary that week, nor did Dantoni mention anything being out of place or wrong for him. Nor did he confide in me any secret understanding he may have had about his murder before he left. I honestly think he's as dumbfounded as the rest of us.

Just another senseless act of chaotic violence in Eastfair".

## OCTRETH THE GUILTY

Whether they believe him or not, Octreth stubbornly sticks to his original story, until that is, the characters directly accuse him of swapping places (or similar accusation) during that week. Octreth is horrified by the idea that he may unknowingly had something to do with his friend's death and coming clean to the characters under the pressure of interrogation now seems like a good idea at the time.

- **We're on to you Octreth. Spill your guts before we spill them:** "Ok, ok! I did it. I did it... It was my idea to switch duties. It was my idea to report in each day for the other. But I can explain! Oh why won't you let me explain!"
- **Time for you to sing:** "It all started when I met this girl. She sells flowers down by the main boulevard. What can I say, I love the flower girl. But there were others I tells you, others! I couldn't bare to think of some knuckle dragging Hextorite cleric winning her heart (and possibly eating it eventually) and time was running out. Imagine my woe when I got handed a contract that specified afternoon and night appointments. Luckily Dantoni had a schedule for day work. It was too late to risk asking for an official switch, so we just decided to check in to our superior in person, but switch assignments and identities when in the field. It went off without a hitch, but if our superiors find out, we would both be in a lot of hot water."
- **But what does any of that have to do with you murdering Dantoni?:** "Murder..Dant...what?? Hold on, I'm talking about us getting caught forging our duty roster, what are you talking about?!"
- **Admit it, Dantoni was sweet on your girl, he wanted her flowers all to himself, so you killed him and faked the ritual heart murder stuff!** "You got it all wrong! Dantoni didn't have any interest in Alaern (the flower girl), she wasn't his type at all. I didn't have anything to do with his murder. He was my friend. Besides, I was with Alaern the night Dantoni was murdered, but that's something she and I would both prefer not get mentioned, at least not till after the wedding"
- **Ok, so why don't you tell me about.. DID YOU DO IT!** "For the last time, No! I spent my days working for Rovin and Grattati and my nights working for Alaern. Dantoni filled in for me over at Darrien 'The Knife' fishmongery compound, and his free time either here or sometimes at the Whirling Dervish. He'd go there for scented baths sometimes right after work to reduce the pungent smell of fish. Fish



from Emmery Pond tend to be rather pungent compared to sea fish or Flanmi fish.

- **What is this 'Emmery Pond' you speak of?** "It's a small lake 50 or so miles to the west. Marshevel a merchant noble brought in shipment and contracted for a honest deal Mediator to negotiate the sale to Darrien the Fishmonger"
- **Who is Darrien 'The Knife'?** "He's one of several of the smaller fishmongers here in Eastfair. He's only been here a few years though. Dantoni mentioned something about the man wanting to return to the south where the weather is better. I know where his compound is, but I don't think I've ever met him. They call him 'The Knife' because he and his staff are proficient at the quick gutting of fish. They have it down to a few flicks of the wrist, knife goes in, guts come out. I hear because of that, Darrien procured a lucrative contract to provide fish guts to orc regiments out in the field and here in the city. Orcs love fish guts. Though, I also hear that he aggressively went after that contract and foolishly way underbid. I'm surprised he would be making any profit at all."
- **DC 20 Bardic Knowledge check:** A successful check reveals that Darrien 'The Knife' is new to the area (from the south) and has been in the city for two years. He purchased this fishmongery from an old man who died suddenly leaving no heirs. Darrien is regarded as somewhat financially foolish for underbidding himself so much to gain the food supply contract for the orc regiment at the Holim ruins' project. He has a second in command named Yoirrak. The above can also be learned with a DC 10+APL Knowledge (local—core) check.
- **Wait a minute; the contract specified that the meetings had to be in the late day/dusk hours! Doesn't that sound odd to you?** "In a city like Eastfair, a lot of people prefer the dark hours for many different reasons. They follow different lifestyles and cultural aspects than those of the west. As long as I'm making a profit and getting out alive, I try not to judge."
- **Thanks for the info Octy, now I'm going to turn you in;** "Please don't say anything to my superiors. If not for my sake, then for Alaern's or Dantoni's! It was foolish of me to pull something like that, but I had no intentions of hurting anyone."

♣ **Octreth:** Male human (Suel-Oeridian) Clr3; hp 21.

**Development:** If the characters have broken poor Octreth correctly, then they should have the right clues to point them toward the Darrien Fishmongery compound as the most suspicious location (Encounter 7).

If by the end of the adventure, the characters have kept Octreth's secret, they gain a special reward (see Conclusion).

If the characters check on Octreth's story about a flower girl, they do indeed find one. Every thing true (which includes everything from the guilty section) that he said can be verified with her.

## ENCOUNTER 5: GUILDER'ING THE LILIES

*The hour of the meeting, 10 evening bells, approaches. As per the instructions, you await inside the suite. Despite your ever watchful and alert eyes, nothing out of the ordinary has manifested itself. That is, until a heavy knock signals a presence at the door.*

The knocking is the guilders ready to start the meeting. Keep in mind that the above box text may very well be inaccurate in accordance with the actions of the characters. It's likely that they have disobeyed the instructions and set up spies, decoys, and traps or just never showed up.

The three guilders are ever watchful for such things. It is not just the characters they have to worry about, its powerful enemies who may seize this opportunity to do them in. These three guilders have at their disposal various detection magics (*detect magic, detect evil, detect thoughts, see invisibility*) not to mention their own better than average sight and skills. Characters who may have placed themselves in a seemingly threatening position (for instance invisible in a hallway, hidden in a hall closet, or waiting on the roof) 'scare' the guilders off. Characters in the suite (regardless of their actions) or in other suites, down at the bar or away from the building, do not interfere with the guilders approach.

*A gravelly female voice calls from the other side of the door, "Greetings, we are travelers seeking directions. What route do we take to go to your various lands of origins?"*

If a PC does not reply with the words "Blackmoor via Whiteplume" somewhere in his or her next few sentences, then the guilders retreat.

Otherwise, the guilders enter and begin the information transaction.

*The door opens to allow three cloaked figures to enter. The one in the lead throws back its hood to reveal a scarred human female face. With her gravelly voice she address you, "I am Malaya. The names of these others are not for you. Stand and prepare for our precautions. They will only take a few moments", with that the other two start to cast.*

These two others are casters (a cleric and a bard). The cleric casts *detect good* and the bard casts *detect thoughts*. After a few rounds of observation, the cleric casts *detect evil* and the bard casts *see invisibility*. Once the trio is satisfied, Malaya begins the somewhat one-sided briefing. If the characters begin to act hostile or interrupt the precautions, the trio leaves, using a fighting withdrawal if necessary, but under no circumstances do they use lethal

force on the characters; they always attempt to flee rather than fight it out.

## **THE BRIEFING**

As far as Malaya is concerned, she is the only one with information to transfer, or at least, that is her demeanor. Anything important the characters insist on saying, she'll listen, but keep herself cool as a cucumber, never asking questions, always observing. Once an uncomfortable silence starts, she begins where she left off with her briefing.

The following are the points she addresses with the characters.

- You are in danger, more so than usual. A professional has come to Eastfair and he is seeking you. He has been asking questions and conducting his type of research into putting together a profile on you. We suspect it would only have been a matter of time before he left the city and started searching for you all throughout the Flanaess. I've heard reports of some questions not matching up to what I've since heard about you, which leaves me to suspect there may be a case of mistaken identity involved, or maybe not, time will tell. (This last line is intended for characters that did not play the previous adventure in this series).
- The assassin is known as 'the Dawn Tiger', and he operates out of Ahlissa. He is named for his magical hermit mentor, but I'll say no more on that. He has earned himself quite the reputation for dedication to the job. Ambush and trickery are his methods of choice.
- I'm sure you're wondering why I am telling you this or even trying to help you at all. Suffice it to say, we have our reasons. Part of those reasons is that some of us don't like the way he has conducted himself in our city— a lack of etiquette. He still has connections with associate organizations down south, so as a whole, our factions must grant him some freedom. Of course, as friends of a friend, I find it only fair to give you the warning.
- We do not know who hired the Dawn Tiger to come here to hunt you, but we can only guess it is someone with resources that stretch across the new borders of the old Great Kingdom. If the rumors I have heard are true, then you would be doing many people a service to survive—but I'll say no more on that.
- We don't know where he is at the moment, as he hides his tracks very well and keeps on the move. One thing is for certain, though—he will find you.
- As you may or may not know, the Guild of Eastfair is not very popular with the judicial authorities of the city. I suggest you keep your open contact with the gangs of Eastfair to a minimum, and do not proclaim any connection

to any guild faction to anyone. No matter your gut instinct, the authorities and the government can't be trusted, but then again, neither can some guilders.

- To keep yourself alive and well, keep a low profile from all. At the same time, don't worry so much about what those back home may think concerning the things you might have to do here to survive. As someone said the other day, just like in Wintershiven, what happens in Eastfair, stays in Eastfair.
- The Guild of Eastfair of course desires no conflict with our southern associates and as always, respects the etiquette we share with those visiting our territory. At the same time, I know some people who might be grateful if a certain privately funded foreign assassination didn't succeed, if you catch my drift. Perhaps, if you did that favor for me, I could do a favor for you in the future.
- We never had this conversation. We were never here.

At the end of this, the three guilders back out the door and escape into the night.

## **SAY, I KNOW YOU!**

During the casting of the spells and the briefing, the two male guilders reveal bits of their physical identity. The cleric is a male human of indeterminate Oeridian-Suel mix. He guards the mystical words of his spells and ecclesiastic beliefs well, but a DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check reveals him to be a worshiper of the goddess Lirr.

More interestingly, the bard is a somewhat more notorious persona, and those in the know just might recognize him. He is a male half-elf with a slight Nyrondese accent and a banjo-like instrument. A DC 20 bardic knowledge check reveals a snippet of his identity.

His name is Ghalarq-something. His features are described in a small section of a ballad originating out of Greyhawk City. This Ghalarq-something, is described as a novice bard accompanying the expedition of an experienced adventurer called Talon, into the Bluff Hills some fifteen years ago. The ballad mentions that Ghalarq is ordered away by Talon because of increasing danger. The ballad continues to describe a defeated expedition crushed by demonic ogres, without any further reference to Ghalarq.

Of course, both men deny any allegation that the characters recognize them or anything about them. They start with polite, "No, you're mistake", and eventually end with "I said no, now take off!"

## **ALL APLS**

♣ **Malaya:** Female human (Suel) Ftr6/Rog4; CG.

♣ **Ghalarq:** Male Half-Elf Brd10; CG.

♣ **Cleric of Lirr:** Male human (Oeridian-Suel) Clr6/Rog4; CG.

All three NPC's have *nondetection* and *undetectable alignment* cast on them.

**Development:** Once the experienced and prepared guilders leave the meeting, they blend back into the night and do not contact the characters again (nor can the characters contact them).

The characters can try and get some rest or they can go explore more leads during in the night.

Going down stairs to try and get Clinorus to reveal secrets about the guilders won't help, except the name of the female guilder sub-boss, Malaya.

Remember, past midnight, the characters become fair game for the Dawn Tiger (Encounter 6) once the characters start traveling the streets to their next encounter.

## ENCOUNTER 6: THE DAWN TIGER

This encounter is somewhat different than usual. This encounter is triggered just before the first encounter that the players choose to go on after the meeting with the guilders. Even if the chosen location is not a scripted encounter location, the meeting with the Dawn Tiger occurs *en route*. To make the ambush believable for the players, and to represent the professional abilities of the Dawn Tiger, you need to be flexible and inventive but still stay within the guidelines presented.

Depending on what time of day it is, the set-up will be different. As well, you need to create your own street layout for the ambush, depending on where the characters trigger the encounter.

**Note:** This is always an on-the-street ambush. The Dawn Tiger does not attack lairs, so the suite that the characters are staying at is off limits. Nor does the Dawn Tiger attack the characters while they are inside the buildings of one of the other encounters (and near NPC allies). It's this assassin's philosophy to strike groups that are on the move, preferably during the early mornings (but he's not picky).

### NIGHT

During the night, the characters could be sneaking through the many back alleys and side streets of Eastfair, or they could be boldly strolling down the main streets that separate the blocks.

The street population is vastly decreased at night (with a few exceptions, like the Streets of Delight), so the Dawn Tiger is free to strike more openly. A down side to this is that he does not have the crowds to cover his approach and shadowing of the characters.

If the characters are using back streets and alleys for travel, then the Dawn Tiger (after casting his buff spells) sneaks up on the last character in line and attacks (assume from invisible).

If the characters are traveling on one of the main roads, the Dawn Tiger heads off the characters, casts his buff spells then attacks the first character in line.

The Dawn Tiger is considered to be on home turf here and his use of ambush terrain should be reflected in your creation of combat terrain.

### TIME LIMIT

The Dawn Tiger is familiar with the typical response times of the town guards and other possible sources of interference. To counter this, the Dawn Tiger does not engage in combat past three minutes (30 rounds). If the combat is still raging, he flees on the 31st round. He expects typical guard response to be about four minutes (due to his premeditated delaying of the guards).

The Dawn Tiger also attempts to flee if he is reduced to 3 or fewer hit points.

### DAY

During the day the streets (including back streets, but not so much the alleys) have many people on them. These crowds are orderly and without vagabonds or other social displaced. When any type of combat breaks out (like this assassination attempt) the locals back off and in no way get involved. In these matters, they never know what's behind it, so they don't dare help or hinder one side or the other, nor do they interfere with the dead or dying (no healing, no stealing, no peeling). What the locals will do is call for the guards.

If the characters are using the back alleys (possibly to avoid unwanted guard attention) then the skilled Dawn Tiger finds them there; handle this stalking the same as the above night alley stalking.

If the characters are out in the open streets, the Dawn Tiger has some well-honed tricks up his sleeve. For starters, he has used a distraction elsewhere to retard the response time of the local guard patrols (such as a false alarm or a bribe) as well as detoured any patrol that would be in this area away from it.

It is within the Dawn Tiger's resources to have a wagon or cart roll out or tip over in the street in front of the characters (followed up with a rear assault); or the Dawn Tiger can have an innocent looking small child come up and give one of the characters a flower- then follow up with an attack from any direction; or have an old woman (total stranger who's been paid off) to call out for help from under some conveniently placed crates of avocados. It is up to you to use this range to best suit the location that the characters are in during the ambush. Remember, the crowd runs away from the action, and does not interfere or get involved (other than calling for guards).

### Picking his Brain

For a neutral evil assassin, the Dawn Tiger actually has a rather disciplined mind. With the smell of the hunt in his nostrils, the actual reasoning's behind it are pushed to the far back of his mind. Thus, thought reading or similar forms of interrogation fail to get a full confessional from him. But, he can slip up and the following little tidbits are what can be learned.

- His usual associates and employers are not fully aware of his mission—a mission he obtained via his mentor (the original Dawn Tiger) who introduced him to a powerful man with a far-reaching hand.
- One thought repeats in his head (and might whisper it), ‘All Roads lead to Rauxes’.
- “...the herd prey has drank from a watering hole it should not have. The beast of the valley wants the herd killed among the tall brush...”
- I am the Dawn Tiger. I am the hunter and you are the prey. I smell your blood on the wind and soon, others will too.

## TERRAIN

You need to use good judgment and situational interpretation to layout the simple street structure that the ambush takes place in. If in a seedier area, use smaller houses, more alleys, and fewer carts. If on a busy street, like the Street of Delight, have many booths, wagons, and crowds. All streets have alley's connecting between sub-blocks of houses. Alleys tend to be 5 ft. wide, while side streets range from 10 ft. to 20 ft. wide. Main streets (those between blocks) can be as wide as 40 ft. in some places. Houses range from rickety single storied hovels, to three leveled hovels. Wagons and semi-attached wood/out houses can be placed to give access to roofs.

All in All, the Dawn Tiger picks his place of ambush well, thus the terrain can be placed as such, but for consideration of fair play, do not remove all of the players advantages –assume randomness in the Tiger's plan has left some flaws for the characters to exploit.

**Creatures:** The following creatures are encountered here:

### APL 2 (EL 5)

☛**Dawn Tiger:** Male human (Suel-Oeridian)  
Rgr2/Rog3; hp 30; See Appendix 1.

### APL4 (EL7)

☛**Dawn Tiger:** Male human (Suel-Oeridian)  
Rgr2/Rog3/Assassin 2; hp 40; See Appendix

### APL6 (EL9)

☛**Dawn Tiger:** Male human (Suel-Oeridian)  
Rgr2/Rog3/Assassin 4; hp 50; See Appendix

**Tactics:** Before even entering combat or triggering his ambush, the Dawn Tiger prepares himself with his resources. Firstly, this involves poisoning his two kukri blades. He always has his blades poisoned, which he has done hours before. This leaves him with two extra uses of poison. Then, depending on APL, he uses either a *potion of invisibility* or *dust of disappearance*. Research the effects of the dust, as it differs slightly in magical detection from normal *invisibility*.

At APL4 and APL6, the Dawn Tiger has levels of the assassin prestige class. This gives him a limited amount of spells. At APL6, he casts his *cat's grace* during buffing. At

APL4 and APL6, he uses his *true strike* spell one round before he makes his initial attack (situation permitting). Otherwise, he makes liberal use of the spell during combat.

Depending on the ambush situation, the Dawn Tiger combines the use of his +1 *glamered chain shirt* and his *disguise self* spell (upper APLs only). This can be used to disguise himself as any sort of non-descript commoner.

At the upper APLs, the Dawn Tiger's *brooch of shielding* should provide enough protection from enemy mages while he whittles the party down piece by piece.

After the Dawn Tiger has prepared himself, he gets close to the characters and keeps pace with them (invisible or disguised as part of the crowd) and starts the three rounds he needs to use his death attack ability. He goes for a kill, not a stun. If the opportunity arises, the Dawn Tiger attempts coup-de-grace attack. He's paid by the death, not the wound.

If the Dawn Tiger is reduced to 3 hit points or less, he attempts to retreat. A dead man can't stalk prey, but a wounded one can lick his wounds and continue the hunt.

**Treasure:** Defeat the Dawn Tiger and loot him.

**APL 2:** L: 16; C: 0; M: two masterwork kukris (51 gp each), four *potions of invisibility* (4 gp each), +1 *glamered chain shirt* (329 gp).

**APL 4:** L: 16; C: 0; M: two masterwork kukris (51 gp each), four *potions of invisibility* (4 gp each), *brooch of shielding* (125 gp), +1 *glamered chain shirt* (329 gp).

**APL 6:** L: 16; C: 0; M: 2 masterwork kukris (51 gp each), 4 *potion of invisibility* (4 gp each), *brooch of shielding* (125 gp), 2 pinches of *dust of disappearance* (291 gp each), +1 *glamered chain shirt* (329 gp).

**Development:** After the street brawl (whether the characters are still there or not) the city guards show up. The characters risk losing everything on the body of the Dawn Tiger if they don't remove it (all the valuable stuff is in one convenient container) before the guards take the body into custody. If the characters stick around for the guards to show, then a reasonable explanation (he just attacked us) and a DC 10 +APL Diplomacy check (remember any modifiers to that) along with 20 gp can have the situation moved right along. Otherwise, its 100 gp or risk charges of public disturbance.

Once the Dawn Tiger is taken into custody (alive or dead) he is forever removed from the reach of the characters (the authorities have dibs on him and they have ways to make him talk).

It's possible that the characters may take the Dawn Tiger alive and drag him away from the combat for interrogation. The limit of what can be learned from him is listed above.

There is no retaliation against the characters by the city authorities for this disturbance. Though guard patrols appear to be more alert in the area and adventurer types may be more prone to shake downs, but there is no manhunt put out on the characters and they are free to go about the city. They have slipped through the cracks of justice. The exception to this is if the characters (not the Dawn Tiger) killed civilians or caused large amounts of property damage (*fireballs* going off next to shop carts and

produce stands, and so on). For that, the characters are brought in on the appropriate charges should they be spotted by a guard patrol (but still no man hunt).

From here, the characters can go continue on to the encounter they intended to head to in the first place.

## ENCOUNTER 7: THEY CAME FROM THE SEA

*Before you is a compound little different from the many others that dot this unfair city. It has a combination wood and stone wall with the main house built into the wall and a wagon gate on the opposite side. The 7-foot tall wall reveals the roofs of a barn and two smaller buildings in the work yard.*

This is the fishmongers' compound owned and operated by Darrien 'the Knife' and his cohorts. It was purchased two years ago after the previous elderly owner died suddenly leaving no heirs.

This is also the local headquarters for a cult of Vecna. The head of this cult chapter is Darrien 'the Knife'. His second in command is Yoirrak the wererat (but at APL2 he's just a human commoner). Darrien moved into the city from the southern part of the old Great Kingdom two years ago and quickly went after the food supply contract for the (then) recently started excavation and construction at the Holim ruins (the epicenter of the orc rebellion in *When Orcs Attack*).

Currently, Darrien has been away from the business visiting 'friends' to the southeast for a month or so (not too long after Dantoni was murdered). This has left Yoirrak to handle the day-to-day affairs.

Depending on whether the characters come visiting during the day or the night, this encounter may vary. There is an entry below for each.

### SO IS THIS THE GUY WHO DID THE STUFF?

Darrien 'the Knife' is indeed the Opaquer. The Opaquer is just a name he took from an old play he had read in his youth and felt it fitting enough to dupe the two slow-witted thugs.

It was Darrien (Flan skinned, smelling of fish, leather cowl) that directed the two thugs in the various ritual murders, that last of which was Dantoni. He was after the hearts of certain kinds of people, some of which passed muster. Darrien is truly responsible for the murder of Dantoni, but he's not here. But he's left clues and evidence behind in his lair.

When Marshevel of Emmery Pond (who has nothing to do with the murders or Vecna) arrived with a fishload of goods, Darrien could not resist the good prices. But Marshevel went ahead and contracted an honest deal mediator due to slight sneakiness in the past on Darrien's part. Thus shows up Dantoni, going by the name of Octreth. Part of the honest deal mediator duties is to occasionally use the *detect thoughts* spell to scope suspicious things out. Darrien got spooked near the end

of the dealings when Dantoni was snooping around and using magical detection.

For Dantoni's part, he wasn't sure what was wrong and was just going on a gut feeling. He didn't suspect Darrien at all, and was checking out the hired laborers for underhandedness. But Darrien is a bit paranoid about his evil secrets, so he followed Dantoni to the Whirling Dervish and pointed him out to his two hired thugs who did the deed and stole his heart.

After the characters interfered and spoiled things in COR3-17 *When Orcs Attack*, Darrien used his connections with the rest of the cult to bring in a professional to hunt down and do away with those pesky adventurers.

### DAY VISIT

*A weasely-looking armed clerk, looking as if he bathed in grease, handles the front desk of the shop in the main house. A crew of six strong backed laborers prepares assorted shipments of fish from within the barn and the courtyard.*

During the day, Yoirrak can be found on the main floor of the house (which like most compounds, doubles as the business center) handling paper work and other mundane tasks. He won't be too happy to see the characters, as he knows full well that these are the ones that his master (Darrien) is having hunted down and murdered. But in the daylight, Yoirrak figures he still has the protection of public decency and the Watch Bell nearby.

Yoirrak has little patience for the characters and does not want to answers questions. He explains that his master is away and that he's not interested in taking on more contracts (if characters try and use the new business tease). He eventually tells the characters to leave, and if they do not (or if the characters become hostile) he uses one of the Watch Bell's to ring (loudly) for a patrol to come. The patrol arrives in 1d4 minutes.

If hostile, Yoirrak defends himself as described in the tactics section below. The hatchway into the basement is open and at his command, the rats can swarm up the ladder. Though it's not his interests, Yoirrak does not fear the city guards discovering his pets or his true state of being (a wererat at APL4 and APL6) for its technically not a crime and a small bribe can make it go away.

Instead of (or in addition to) trying to speak with Yoirrak, the characters can strike up a conversation with the slightly more chatty laborers. These workers know nothing of the secret goings on of Darrien and Yoirrak and have never been down into the basement. They don't know anything about Yoirrak being a wererat (but they do know he's a weasel). The workers are all neutral commoners.

The following is what the laborers do know and are willing to part with while they take five. The workers are chatty and can volunteer bits of information even if the characters don't ask.

- Most of the crew here has worked here for two years. They've never noticed anything unusual (for Eastfair that is).

- They rarely go into the main house and keep to working the shipments in the barn and smoke houses.
- None of the work crew live at the compound, they all have their own homes in a low rent area of the New City.
- Only Yoirrak and Master Darrien live in the main house—but Master Darrien left about a month ago with many items packed up. He was heading to visit relatives and/or friends to the south. Till then, Yoirrak is in charge.
- Master Darrien taught them an effective technique for gutting fish with an ordinary knife. Even for experienced fish processors, the crew was impressed with his knowledge and ability.
- Normally, this crew packs then delivers shipments to the various clients, but when it comes to the supply shipments for Holim Ruins (and the orc hard laborers), Master Darrien takes the matter into his own hands and delivers the shipment himself, occasionally taking only Yoirrak along.

## NIGHT VISIT

*The compound still stinks of fish in the night air but the sound of labor are gone—silence in the main house, passers by in the streets and the eerie chirp of fiendish crickets.*

At night, the work crews have all gone home, leaving the barn and smoke houses occupied only by innocent fish. The main gates and house door are locked, but it doesn't take much to get over the 7-foot high border fence. The yard side door to the main house is unlocked.

Inside the main house, a small staircase leads to a two-room apartment that belongs to Darrien, but anything of value has been moved out with him. A month's worth of dust has settled and outlines reveal a few missing trunks.

The shop area on the main floor holds no surprises that one would not normally expect in a fishmongery. The one section of interest is the closed trap door that leads into the basement. During the day it is open and Yoirrak does not stray far from it when there are strangers around.

Opening the trap door reveals a wooden staircase leading down 15 feet into a 30-foot by 30-foot stone basement. The floor is covered in a rickety wooden subfloor. The actual stone floor is about a foot beneath the wooden floor.

Beneath the wooden floor is where the swarms of rats live. They have burrowed a small warren for themselves into the soft stone. When needed, the rats easily squeeze through the floorboards. This crawl space is filled with fish and human bones, as the rats are regularly fed such meals by Yoirrak—who in turn uses the bones to make his 'art'. The floorboards are not strong and breaking is an issue (see below). There are loose rats hidden about the place and give warning squeaks should

the trap door open. During a night battle, Yoirrak makes no attempt to call the city guards.

*In the flickering illumination of candlelight, a ghastly imitation of life, made from bones, both mammal and fish takes up 10 ft. of the far wall. It's obvious that this hollow construct is only half finished. Its artisan, a slouching man, drops his glue and twine in favor of a rapier to face you.*

This is Yoirrak. He is using bones, twine, glue and various fabrics (including skin) to build his 'artwork'. This half finished statue takes up the 10-foot. by 10-foot squares against the wall the stairs face. The statue is not alive or arcane in any way.

The rest of the room has 'art' supplies and the sleeping area of Yoirrak. The room also contains a secret door located in the stone wall to the left of the statue. This secret door leads to a cut stone corridor that connects to the lab/altar room.

🔪 **Secret Stone Door:** 4in thick; hardness 8, 60 hp; Search check DC 14.

## Trouble with the floor

The wooden floor is in bad shape and risks breaking. If a character weighing more than 200 lbs.; or a character use the Jump skill; or a character uses the Tumble skill, then that character risks one of their feet breaking through the board and getting stuck (roll once at the beginning of movement).

The character must succeed at a DC 12 Reflex save or their foot becomes stuck between the broken boards. The character is stuck till they succeed at either a DC 15 Strength check or a DC 12 Escape Artist check. While stuck, only movement is restricted, the character has not been denied dexterity. Another character can attempt the strength check to pull them out.

**Creatures:** The following creatures will be encountered here:

## APL 2 (EL 4)

🐭 **Rat Swarm:** hp 13; see *Monster Manual*.

🐭 **Fiendish Dire Rats (3):** hp 5 each; see *Monster Manual*.

🐭 **Yoirrak:** Male human (Suel-Oeridian) Com1; hp 3; Rat Empathy (Ex)—see *Monster Manual* Lycanthrope entry.

## APL4 (EL 5)

🐭 **Wererat (Yoirrak):** Male wererat (human) (Suel-Oeridian); hp 12; see *Monster Manual*.

🐭 **Rat Swarm (2):** 13 hp (each); see *Monster Manual*.

## APL6 (EL 8)

🐭 **Yoirrak (Wererat):** Male wererat (human) (Suel-Oeridian); Rog5; hp 35; see Appendix 1

🐭 **Rat Swarm (2):** 13 hp (each); see *Monster Manual*.

**Tactics:** It's most likely that Yoirrak is alerted by one of his rat sentries. As the read-aloud text describes, he has put down his arts and crafts and taken up his sword. His leather armor doubles as his work smock and his palette doubles as his buckler (standard wererat gear). Though at APL2 is only a human commoner and not a wererat, he still has the rat empathy that he was freakishly born with, which helped Darrien pick him as a cohort.

Once the characters have come down the stairs to engage him, Yoirrak calls forth his rat swarm(s) from the floor. Yoirrak starts in human form, but prefers his hybrid form for combat. At APL2, the fiendish dire rats come out of holes in the floor at the corners of the room. Yoirrak can take cover at the corner of his artwork if the characters try to shoot him to death from the trapdoor opening or stairs (be careful of the angle, longbows for instance might not fit). If need be, Yoirrak can send his rats up the stairs (or up the walls and through the house's floor) to get at cautious characters.

Yoirrak fights to the death. Though he does not desire damage to his artwork or his rats, he does not allow them to be used as a weakness against him. The rats also fight to the death, regardless of Yoirrak's state.

**Treasure:** Defeat the Yoirrak and loot his lair.

**APL 2:** L: 16; C: 5; M: six unfinished documents (1 gp each).

**APL 4:** L: 16; C: 5; M: six unfinished documents (1 gp each).

**APL 6:** L: 16; C: 5; M: six unfinished documents (1 gp each).

Among Yoirrak's possessions are six unfinished work orders/passage permits for delivering supplies into the Holim Ruins, thus bypassing the 500 or so orcs and various humans. These just might be useful to the characters at some unknown future date, but the documents will need some touching up to be of use.

**Development:** From here, the only progressive way to go is down. The secret door leads to a tunnel that ends in a large chamber (Encounter 8).

## ENCOUNTER 8: ON THE GRIPPING HAND...

*The 15-foot wide stone door opens to reveal a passageway that looks like it was half carved and then melted, perhaps by some magical means. It twists and turns and ends some 100 feet later in a large chamber of similar construction. The smell of blood is in the air and the chamber contains two large eyesores—a patchwork statue to the far right and a black obsidian altar to the far left. The altar is shaped like a hand holding an eyeball. Neither looks like they would fit through the tunnel.*

The corridor twists and turns for a total of 100 feet but it slowly slopes down another 15 feet. Both the tunnel and the chamber have been crafted with the use of magic (tunneling spells and summoned creatures) and some hand tool work in the soft stone.

The chamber is shaped similar a cartoon heart or a balloon. The tunnel entrance is at the apex. The chamber is 25 feet high, and 100 feet at its widest, and 80 feet at its longest. The altar and a finished example of one of Yoirrak's artwork each occupy one of the two corners.

Strewn about the ground is broken glass and pottery. Blood and organ tissue are left in trace amounts in the chamber with much blood on the altar. This was (up to a month ago) a lab/ritual area that Darrien used. Among other things, he kept the hearts he had collected here. It has all been packed up and shipped out, minus the debris.

Knowledge (arcana) or Spellcraft are enough to reveal that some serious endurance style rituals went on here, possible of an evil nature, but due to the damage to the floor and the disarray, it's impossible to tell.

Looking at the altar, a DC 15 Knowledge (religion) confirms that it is indeed an altar venerated to the lesser god Vecna (as most players will have guessed). Hanging from the fingers (and into the palm) of the hand shaped altar are six amulets. These radiate faint abjuration magic and have the name Grynanquill written in Infernal on them.

The artwork does not radiate any magic nor is it alive or a threat to the characters. Though it may appear to be the most sick and grotesque item in the room, the hand and eye altar are the actual deadly threat to the characters.

The two parts of the altar animate and attack any who have not been properly marked by the cult. Once the characters come within range of the hand, it lashes out and grabs the nearest person while the eye rolls around trying to do its worst. Neither part of the altar will leave the room (even if they could).

**Creatures:** The following creatures will be encountered here:

### APL 2 (EL 4)

👁 **Small Eye:** Small animated object; hp 15; see Appendix 1.

👤 **Large Hand:** Large animated object; hp 52; see Appendix 1.

### APL 4 (EL 6)

👁 **Large Eye:** Large animated object; hp 52; see Appendix 1.

👤 **Huge Hand:** Huge animated object; hp 84; see Appendix 1.

### APL 6 (EL 8)

👁 **Huge Eye:** Huge animated object; hp 84; see Appendix 1.

👤 **Gargantuan Hand:** Gargantuan animated object; hp 148; see Appendix 1.

**Tactics:** The animated hand and eye that make up the altar stay perfectly still, unflinching to enemy attacks and interaction until triggered. They are triggered by proximity. Once a character passes within 40 feet of the altar (even if just moving by) the hand launches out using

a charge action and attempts to grapple the character. The tactic for the hand is simple. Find someone, grapple them, and keep squeezing till either they escape or they die. If the hand becomes empty, it tries to grapple the next closest person. A victim must stop thrashing for one whole round before the hand lets go thinking the prey dead. This means that when the character first goes into negatives, the hand tries to squeeze one more round after that before dropping the body. A smart but patient character could play dead and escape this way, but they must go totally limp playing dead. As the hand crushes a PC he may make a Will save to not react to the pain. The DC is equal to the amount of damage inflicted by the hand in that round. Failure means the hand still thinks they are alive.

The eye picks a different target than the hand and attempts to roll people over. At APL 2, the eye just attacks the person nearest to it on its turn. At APL 4 and APL 6, the eye uses its trample ability to roll over as many people as it can.

Once activated, should all live targets leave the room/visibility, the hand and eye return to their original location and form back up into the altar.

Characters can use this to their advantage and pepper the altar with ranged attacks and spells without reactivating the altar. The hardness value of 10 should render most missile weapons ineffective, though.

**Treasure:** Destroy the hand and take the amulets.

**APL 2:** L: 0; C: 0; M: six Grynanquil amulets (1 gp each).

**APL 4:** L: 16; C: 5; M: six Grynanquil amulets (1 gp each).

**APL 6:** L: 16; C: 5; M: six Grynanquil amulets (1 gp each).

Hanging from the fingers (and into the palm) of the hand shaped altar are six amulets. These radiate faint abjuration magic and have the name Grynanquil written on them in Infernal. These may play an important roll in a future adventure.

## CONCLUSION

If the characters have made it this far, then they have most likely avoided death or imprisonment by the authorities and successfully raided the lair of the Vecna cult (not that there was much left there).

If the characters have been keeping track and did not miss the clues, they should have pieced together a connection between Darrien 'the Knife' fishmonger/Vecna cultist and the Holim ruins (over the last two years). As well, that Darrien headed about a month ago to the south packed away with what ever was taken out of the cult lair.

So while the characters have figured out who is responsible for the ritual heart murders, they have yet to find out why, nor bring the person responsible to justice.

Once the characters have licked their wounds and put the pieces together, it will be time to head on over to

the off limits Holim ruins just to see what had Darrien so interested.

For now though, its time for the characters to make the rounds to collect their various rewards and relax.

### DUSK TIGER?

If the characters killed (not captured or turned over) the Dawn Tiger, Malaya of the Thieves' Guild passes on word to the characters that she is pleased with them helping take care of that awkwardness. She owes them a one. A small one.

### WHAT'S A GRYNANQUIL?

The name written in Infernal on the amulets can be researched, but the only useful information is that its definitely the name of a baatezu who fell out of favor a very long time ago. The amulet themselves may act as pass wards or identifiers.

### OCTRETH, YOUR SECRET IS SAFE WITH US!

If the characters manage to finish the adventure without revealing (be it on purpose or accidentally) either the fraud with church of Zilchus, or the relationship with the flower girl, then Octreth can pull in a few family favors and provide the characters access to a ring of mind shielding.

### HALF FINISHED WORK ORDERS?

They may not seem like much now, but with some careful penmanship and the right additions, these documents might be of use should the characters ever want to gain 'legitimate' access to the Holim site.

### THANKS FROM AFRONIDIOUS

Afronidious is very happy to hear that the characters have gotten so far in the investigation. He is very anxious now to see the murderer brought down and the full range of his schemes revealed. Afronidious is disturbed to learn (assuming the characters tell him) of the involvement of a Vecna cult. No matter what is going on, it cannot be good for anyone.

Afronidious would pay the characters a bonus reward, but he's very strapped for coin right now, but he's waiting on a big investment to pay off and when it does, he'll reward the characters properly.

But in the meantime, the holy clerk has gone ahead and used his influence to arrange certain reserved stock held within the vaults of the various temples to become available for purchase to the characters. This is quite the honor for as the scriptures of Zilchus say, "...it's a seller's market..." See the AR for special reward.

*Another day and night passes by the city of Eastfair and no more threats make themselves known to you so perhaps it is safe to rest your heads on the soft pillows provided at the Whirling Dervish. Your tasks for this day are done, but the mission seems far from over. Too many clues point to the*



*Holim ruins to be coincident, but the 500 orcs guarding it won't be easy to persuade into an inspection. But you can cross that bridge when you come to it, for now, sleep.*

**The End**

## EXPERIENCE POINT SUMMARY

To award experience for this adventure, add up the values for the objectives accomplished. Then assign experience award. Award the total value (objectives plus roleplaying) to each character.

### Encounter 6: The Dawn Tiger

Defeat the Dawn Tiger

APL 2	150 XP
APL 4	210 XP
APL 6	270 XP

### Encounter 7: They came from the Sea

Defeat the various rats

APL 2	90 XP
APL 4	150 XP
APL 6	210 XP

### Encounter 8: On the gripping hand...

Destroy the hand and eye altar of Vecna

APL 2	120 XP
APL 4	180 XP
APL 6	240 XP

### Story Award

Solving the mix-up mystery

APL 2	20 XP
APL 4	30 XP
APL 6	45 XP

### Good roleplaying:

APL 2	70 XP
APL 4	100 XP
APL 6	135 XP

### Total Possible Experience

APL 2	450 XP
APL 4	675 XP
APL 6	900 XP

## TREASURE SUMMARY

During an adventure, characters encounter treasure, usually finding it in the possession of their foes. Every encounter that features treasure has a "treasure" section within the encounter description, giving information about the loot, coins, and magic items that make up the encounter's treasure.

The loot total is the number of gold pieces each character gains if the foes are plundered of all their earthly possessions. Looting the bodies takes at least 10 minutes per every 5 enemies, and if the characters cannot take the time to loot the bodies, they do not gain this gold. If you feel it is reasonable that characters can go back to loot the bodies, and those bodies are there (i.e., not carted off by dungeon scavengers, removed from the scene by the local

watch, and so on), characters may return to retrieve loot. If the characters do not loot the body, the gold piece value for the loot is subtracted from the encounter totals given below.

The coin total is the number of gold pieces each character gains if they take the coin available. A normal adventuring party can usually gather this wealth in a round or so. If for some reason, they pass up this treasure, the coin total is subtracted from the encounter totals given below.

Next, the magic items are listed. Magic item treasure is the hardest to adjudicate, because they are varied and because characters may want to use them during the adventure. Many times characters must cast *identify* or similar spells to determine what the item does and how to activate it. Other times they may attempt to use the item blindly. If the magic item is consumable (a potion, scroll, magic bolts, etc.) and the item is used before the end of the adventure, its total is subtracted from the adventure totals below.

Once you have subtracted the value for unclaimed treasure from each encounter add it up and that is the number of gold pieces a characters total and coin value increase at the end of the adventure. Write the total in the GP Gained field of the adventure certificate.

L = Looted gear from enemy

C = Coin, Gems, Jewelry, and other valuables

M = Magic Items (sell value)

### Encounter 2: The first lead is the deepest

Robbing various spots in the compound.

**APL 2:** L: 10; C: 240; M: 0

**APL 4:** L: 10; C: 240; M: 0

**APL 6:** L: 10; C: 240; M: 0

### Encounter 6: The Dawn Tiger

Looting the Dawn Tiger

**APL 2:** L: 16; C: 0; M: masterwork kukri (x2) (51 gp each), *potion of invisibility* (x4) (4 gp each), +1 *glamered chain shirt* (329 gp).

**APL 4:** L: 16; C: 0; M: masterwork kukri (x2) (51 gp each), *potion of invisibility* (x4) (4 gp each), *brooch of shielding* (125 gp), +1 *glamered chain shirt* (329 gp).

**APL 6:** L: 16; C: 0; M: masterwork kukri (x2) (51 gp each), *potion of invisibility* (x4) (4 gp each), *brooch of shielding* (125 gp), *dust of disappearance* (x2) (291 gp each), +1 *glamered chain shirt* (329 gp).

### Encounter 7: They came from the Sea

Defeat the Yoirrak and loot his lair.

**APL 2:** L: 16; C: 5; M: unfinished documents (x6) (1 gp each).

**APL 4:** L: 16; C: 5; M: unfinished documents (x6) (1 gp each).

**APL 6:** L: 16; C: 5; M: unfinished documents (x6) (1 gp each).

### Encounter 8: On the gripping hand...

Destroy the hand and take the amulets.

**APL 2:** L: 0; C: 0; M: Gryinanquil amulets (x6) (1 gp each).

**APL 4:** L: 16; C: 5; M: Gryinanquil amulets (x6) (1 gp each).

**APL 6:** L: 16; C: 5; M: Gryinanquil amulets (x6) (1 gp each).

### Conclusion

If Octreth is happy and/or Zilchus Temple vaults

**All APLs:** L: 0; C: 0; M: ring of mindshielding (0 gp, not lootable); staff of divination (0 gp, not lootable); stone of alarm (0 gp, not lootable); folding boat (0 gp, not lootable); carpet of flying, 5 ft. by 5 ft. (0 gp, not lootable); decanter of endless water (0 gp, not lootable); dimensional shackles (0 gp, not lootable).

### Maximum Possible Treasure

APL 2: 400 gp

APL 4: 600 gp

APL 6: 800 gp

### Adventure Record Text

Cross out the following if it does not apply:

### ALL APLs (if awarded)

**Gryinanquil Amulet:** These radiate faint abjuration magic and have the name Gryinanquil written in Infernal on them. These may play an important role in a future adventure.

Access: Adventure; Caster Level 3<sup>rd</sup>; Prerequisites: Not Reproducible; Weight- 1 lbs; Cost: 1 gp

**Eastfair Thieves Guild Influence:** Despite the factional nature of the guild in Eastfair, everyone respects the street cred' of Malaya, and being her friend just might be enough to ice the cake, as they say in the Old City. Remove when used.

**Zilchus Temple Vault:** In lieu of coin, the Holy Clerk Afronidious has used his influence to arrange certain reserved stock held within the vaults of the various temples to become available for purchase to the characters. This is quite the honor for as the scriptures of The Money Counter say, "...it's a seller's market...".

The character gains access to the following items: staff of divination; stone of alarm; folding boat; carpet of flying, 5 ft. by 5 ft.; decanter of endless water; dimensional shackles.

**Unfinished documents:** Among Yoirrak's possessions are six unfinished work orders/passage permits for delivering supplies into the Holim Ruins, thus bypassing the 500 or so orcs and various humans that guard it. These just might be useful to the characters at some unknown future date, but the documents will need some touching up to be of use. Cost: 1gp

### Items Found During the Adventure

Cross off all items not found

### APL 2

Ring of mindshielding (Any, DMG)

Gryinanquil amulet (Adventure, see above)

Unfinished documents (Adventure, see above)

+1 glamered chain shirt (Adventure, DMG)

Staff of divination (Any, DMG)

Stone of alarm (Any, DMG)

Folding boat (Any, DMG)

Carpet of flying, 5 ft. by 5 ft. (Any, DMG)

Decanter of endless water (Any, DMG)

Dimensional shackles (Any, DMG)

### APL 4 (all of APL 2 plus the following)

Brooch of shielding (Adventure, DMG)

### APL 6 (all of APL 2-4 plus the following)

Dust of disappearance (Adventure, DMG)

# APPENDIX 1: NPCS AND MONSTERS

## ENCOUNTER 6: THE DAWN TIGER

### APL2

☛ **Dawn Tiger:** Male human Rgr2/Rog3; CR 5; Medium humanoid (human); HD 2d8+3d6+5; hp 30; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +4; Grp +5; Atk +7 ranged (1d4+1/19-20, dagger) or +8 melee (1d4+1 + poison 18-20x2 masterwork kukri); Full Atk +6/+6 melee (1d4+1 plus poison/18-20 masterwork kukri) or +8 melee (1d4+1 plus poison/18-20, masterwork kukri); SA, 1<sup>st</sup> favored enemy (human), sneak attack +2d6; SQ evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +1, wild empathy; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +9, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 10.

**Skills and Feats:** Balance +2, Bluff +3, Climb +4, Concentrate +2, Decipher Script +2, Diplomacy +3, Disable Device +4, Disguise +4, Escape Artist +4, Hide +9, Jump +3, Knowledge (geography) +2, Listen +6, Move Silently +9, Open Lock +4, Sense Motive +4, Search +4, Spot +6, Survival +6, Tumble +4, Use Rope +4; Combat Reflexes, Two-Weapon Fighting, Two-Weapon Defense, Weapon Finesse, Track.

**Poison (Ex):** The Dawn Tiger begins combat with coatings of Large scorpion venom on his kukri blades. Injury DC 18, Initial 1d6 Str. Secondary 1d6 Str. Poison lasts until the weapon scores a hit.

**Possessions:** 3 dagger, 2 masterwork kukri, masterwork thieves tools, +1 *glamered chain shirt*, 4 *potion of invisibility*, 2 doses large scorpion venom poison.

### APL4

☛ **Dawn Tiger:** Male human Rgr2/Rog3/Assassin 2; CR 7; Medium humanoid (human); HD 2d8+5d6+7; hp 40; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +5; Grp +6; Atk +8 ranged (1d4+1/19-20, masterwork dagger) or +9 melee (1d4+1 plus poison/18-20x2 masterwork kukri); Full Atk +7/+7 melee (1d4+1 plus poison/18-20, masterwork kukri) or +9 melee (1d4+1 plus poison/18-20, masterwork kukri); SA death attack, poison use, spells, 1<sup>st</sup> favored enemy (human), sneak attack +3d6; SQ +1 save against poison, evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge, wild empathy; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +12, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 10.

**Skills and Feats:** Balance +2, Bluff +5, Climb +4, Concentrate +2, Decipher Script +2, Diplomacy +5, Disable Device +4, Disguise +6, Escape Artist +4, Gather Information +2, Hide +11, Jump +3, Knowledge (geography) +2, Listen +6, Move Silently +11, Open Lock +4, Sense Motive +6, Search +4, Spot +6, Survival +6, Tumble +8, Use Rope +4; Combat Reflexes, Two-Weapon Fighting, Two-Weapon Defense, Weapon Finesse, Track, Quickdraw.

**Poison (Ex):** The Dawn Tiger begins combat with coatings of Large scorpion venom on his kukri blades. Injury DC 18, Initial 1d6 Str. Secondary 1d6 Str. Poison lasts until the weapon scores a hit.

Assassin Spells Prepared (3; save DC 11 + spell level): 1<sup>st</sup>—true strike, sleep, disguise self.

Assassin Spells Known (0/3); true strike, sleep, disguises self.

**Possessions:** 3 masterwork dagger, 2 masterwork kukri, masterwork thieves tools, +1 *glamered chain shirt*, 4 *potion of invisibility*, 2 doses large scorpion venom poison, brooch of shielding.

### APL6

☛ **Dawn Tiger:** Male human Rgr2/Rog3/Assassin 4; CR 9; Medium humanoid (human); HD 2d8+7d6+9; hp 50; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +5; Grp +6; Atk +8 ranged (1d4+1/19-20, masterwork dagger) or +9 melee (1d4+1 plus poison/18-20, masterwork kukri); Full Atk +7/+7 melee (1d4+1 plus poison/18-20, masterwork kukri) or +9 melee (1d4+1 plus poison/18-20, masterwork kukri); SA death attack, poison use, spells, 1<sup>st</sup> favored enemy (human), sneak attack +4d6; SQ +2 save against poison, evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge, wild empathy; AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +13, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 10.

**Skills and Feats:** Balance +2, Bluff +5, Climb +4, Concentrate +2, Decipher Script +2, Diplomacy +7, Disable Device +4, Disguise +8, Escape Artist +4, Gather Information +2, Hide +13, Jump +3, Knowledge (geography) +2, Listen +8, Move Silently +13, Open Lock +4, Sense Motive +8, Search +4, Spot +8, Survival +6, Tumble +10, Use Rope +4; Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Two-Weapon Fighting, Two-Weapon Defense, Weapon Finesse, Track, Quickdraw.

**Poison (Ex):** The Dawn Tiger begins combat with coatings of Large scorpion venom on his kukri blades. Injury DC 18, Initial 1d6 Str. Secondary 1d6 Str. Poison lasts until the weapon scores a hit.

Assassin Spells Prepared (/4/1; save DC 11 + spell level): 1<sup>st</sup>—true strike (3), disguise self; 2<sup>nd</sup>—cat's grace.

**Possessions:** 3 masterwork daggers, 2 masterwork kukris, masterwork thieves tools, +1 *glamered chain shirt*, 4 *potions of invisibility*, 2 doses of large scorpion venom poison, brooch of shielding, 2 pinches of dust of disappearance.

## ENCOUNTER 7: THEY CAME FROM THE SEA

### APL6

☛ **Yoirrak the Wererat (human form):** Male human Rog5; CR 7; Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger); HD 5d6+1d8+7; hp 35; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20, touch 13, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +4; Grp +5; Atk +7 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow) or +7 melee (1d6+1/18-20, rapier); Full Atk +7 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow), or +7 melee (1d6+1/18-20 rapier); SA sneak attack +3d6; SQ alternate form, evasion, low-light vision, rat empathy, trapfinding, trap sense +2, scent, uncanny dodge; AL LE;

SV Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +4; Str 13, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 8.

**Skills and Feats:** Balance +5, Bluff +6, Climb +0, Disable Device +6, Disguise +4, Escape Artist +8, Hide +8, Listen +9, Move Silently +8, Open Lock +8, Sense Motive +9, Search +3, Spot +9, Tumble +8; Alertness, Combat reflexes, Dodge, Iron will<sup>b</sup>, Weapon finesse<sup>b</sup>.

**Possessions:** leather armor, buckler, rapier, light crossbow, 10 bolts, artisan's tools.

➤ **Yoirrak the Wererat (dire rat form):** Male human Rog5; CR 7; Small humanoid (human, shapechanger); HD 5d6+1d8+7; hp 35; Init +6; Spd 40 ft., climb 20ft; AC 20, touch 17, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +4; Grp +1; Atk +11 melee (1d4+1 plus disease, bite); Full Atk +11 melee (1d4+1 plus disease, bite); SA disease, sneak attack +3d6; SQ alternate form, damage reduction 10/silver, evasion, low-light vision, rat empathy, trapfinding, trap sense +2, scent, uncanny dodge; AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +10, Will +4; Str 13, Dex 22, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 8.

**Skills and Feats:** Balance +11, Bluff +6, Climb +8, Disable Device +6, Disguise +4, Escape Artist +14, Hide +14, Listen +9, Move Silently +14, Open Lock +11, Sense Motive +9, Search +3, Spot +9, Tumble +14; Alertness, Combat reflexes, Dodge, Iron will<sup>b</sup>, Weapon finesse<sup>b</sup>.

**Possessions:** leather armor, buckler, rapier, light crossbow, 10 bolts, artisan's tools.

➤ **Yoirrak the Wererat (hybrid form):** Male human Rog5; CR 7; Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger); HD 5d6+5 plus 1d8+2; hp 35; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 21, touch 14, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +4; Grp +5; Atk +10 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow) or +10 melee (1d6+1/18-20, rapier); Full Atk +10 melee (1d6+1/18-20, rapier) and +5 melee (1d4+1 plus disease, bite) or +10 ranged (1d8/19-2, light crossbow); SA disease, sneak attack +3d6; SQ alternate form, damage reduction 10/silver, evasion, low-light vision, rat empathy, trapfinding, trap sense +2, scent, uncanny dodge; AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +10, Will +4; Str 13, Dex 22, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 8.

**Skills and Feats:** Balance +11, Bluff +6, Climb +3, Disable Device +6, Disguise +4, Escape Artist +14, Hide +14, Listen +9, Move Silently +14, Open Lock +11, Sense Motive +9, Search +3, Spot +9, Tumble +14; Alertness, Combat reflexes, Dodge, Iron will<sup>b</sup>, Weapon finesse<sup>b</sup>.

**Possessions:** leather, buckler, rapier, light crossbow, 10 bolts, artisan's tools.

## **ENCOUNTER 8: ON THE GRIPPING HAND...**

### **APL2**

➤ **Small Eye:** Small animated object; CR 1; Small construct; HD 1d10+10; hp 15; Init +1; Spd 70 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +0; Grp -4; Atk +1 melee (1d4, slam); Full Atk +1 melee (1d4, slam); SQ construct traits, darkvision 60 ft., improved speed, hardness 10, low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will -5; Str 10, Dex 12, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

**Improved speed (Ex):** This creature is shaped like an eyeball and thus rolls as its form of movement. The creature's speed reflects this.

**Hardness (Ex):** An animated object has the same hardness it had before it was animated. The special stone material has a hardness of 10.

➤ **Large Hand:** Large animated object; CR 3; Large construct; HD 4d10+30; hp 52; Init +0; Spd 40 ft.; AC 14, touch 9, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +10; Atk +5 melee (1d8+4, slam); Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+4, slam); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA improved grab, constrict; SQ construct traits, darkvision 60 ft., improved speed, hardness 10, low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will -4; Str 16, Dex 10, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

**Improved speed (Ex):** This creature is shaped like a human hand and thus uses multiple fingers to walk as its form of movement. The creature's speed reflects this.

**Hardness (Ex):** An animated object has the same hardness it had before it was animated. The special stone material has a hardness of 10.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, the animated hand must hit with its slam attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. The animated hand may on the following round use its constrict ability in conjunction with the improved grab ability.

**Constrict (Ex):** The animated hand is ideal for squeezing its victim. It deals additional damage equal to its slam damage value plus 1.5 times its Strength bonus with a successful grapple check. This is the same grapple check as the improved grab ability and works in conjunction with that ability. The Constriction damage is 1d8+4.

### **APL4**

➤ **Large Eye:** Large animated object; CR 3; Large construct; HD 4d10+30; hp 52; Init +0; Spd 60 ft.; AC 14, touch 9, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +10; Atk +5 melee (1d8+4, slam); Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+4, slam); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA trample; SQ construct traits, darkvision 60 ft., improved speed, hardness 10, low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will -4; Str 16, Dex 10, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

**Improved speed (Ex):** This object is shaped like an eyeball and thus rolls as its form of movement. The creature's speed reflects this.

**Hardness (Ex):** An animated object has the same hardness it had before it was animated. The special stone material has a hardness of 10.

**Trample (Ex):** An animated object of at least Large size and with a hardness of at least 10 can trample creatures two or more sizes smaller than itself, dealing damage equal to the object's slam damage +1.5 times its Strength bonus. Opponents who do not make attacks of opportunity against the object can attempt Reflex saves (DC 10 + 1/2 object's HD + object's Str modifier) to halve the damage. In this case, the DC is 15 and the damage is 1d8+4.

🦾 **Huge Hand:** Huge animated object; CR 5; Huge construct; HD 8d10+40; hp 84; Init -1; Spd 40 ft. multiple legs; AC 13, touch 7, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +6; Grp +19; Atk +9 melee (2d6+7, slam); Full Atk +9 melee (2d6+7, slam); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; SA improved grab, constrict; SQ construct traits, darkvision 60 ft., improved speed, hardness 10, low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will -3; Str 20, Dex 8, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

**Improved speed (Ex):** This object is shaped like a human hand and thus uses multiple fingers to walk as its form of movement. The creature's speed reflects this.

**Hardness (Ex):** An animated object has the same hardness it had before it was animated. The special stone material has a hardness of 10.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, the animated hand must hit with its slam attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. The animated hand then may on the following round use its constrict ability in conjunction with the improved grab ability.

**Constrict (Ex):** The animated hand is ideal for squeezing its victim. It deals additional damage equal to its slam damage value plus 1.5 times its Strength bonus with a successful grapple check. This is the same grapple check as the improved grab ability and works in conjunction with that ability. The constrict damage is 2d6+7.

#### APL6

🦾 **Huge Eye:** Huge animated object; CR 5; Huge construct; HD 8d10+40; hp 84; Init -1; Spd 60 ft. wheels; AC 13, touch 7, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +6; Grp +19; Atk +9 melee (2d6+7, slam); Full Atk +9 melee (2d6+7, slam); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; SA trample; SQ construct traits, darkvision 60 ft., improved speed, hardness 10, low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will -3; Str 20, Dex 8, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

**Improved speed (Ex):** This creature is shaped like an eyeball and thus rolls as its form of movement. The creature's speed reflects this.

**Hardness (Ex):** An animated object has the same hardness it had before it was animated. The special stone material has a hardness of 10.

**Trample (Ex):** An animated object of at least Large size and with a hardness of at least 10 can trample creatures two or more sizes smaller than itself, dealing damage equal to the object's slam damage +1.5 times its Strength bonus. Opponents who do not make attacks of opportunity against the object can attempt Reflex saves (DC 10 +1/2 object's HD + object's Str modifier) to halve the damage. In this case, the DC is 19 and the damage is 2d6+7.

🦾 **Gargantuan Hand:** Gargantuan animated object; CR 7; Gargantuan construct; HD 16d10+60; hp 148; Init -2; Spd 30 ft. multiple legs; AC 12, touch 4, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +12; Grp +31; Atk +15 melee (2d8+10, slam); Full Atk +15 melee (2d8+10, slam); Space/Reach 20 ft./20 ft.; SA improved grab, constrict; SQ construct traits, darkvision 60 ft., improved speed, hardness 10, low-light vision; AL

N; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 24, Dex 6, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

**Improved speed (Ex):** This creature is shaped like a human hand and thus uses multiple fingers to walk as its form of movement. The multiple leg speed represents this.

**Hardness (Ex):** An animated object has the same hardness it had before it was animated. The special stone material has a hardness of 10.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, the animated hand must hit with its slam attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. The animated hand then may on the following round use its constrict ability in conjunction with the improved grab ability.

**Constrict (Ex):** The animated hand is ideal for squeezing its victim. It deals additional damage equal to its slam damage value plus 1.5 times its Strength bonus with a successful grapple check. This is the same grapple check as the improved grab ability and works in conjunction with that ability. The Constrict damage is 2d8+10.

## APPENDIX 2: PLAYER HANDOUTS

Highlights from the official logs of the Zilchus Western Company – Eastfair branch and the main Temple of Zilchus - Eastfair; One week leading up to the murder of Dantoni, junior cleric and certified honest deal mediator.

### **Starday:**

Between ten and eleven morning bells: Honest deal mediator request made by client Roward of Shoreshil (occupation Fisher-Lead). Conditions: standard contract, specifically for moderation of fresh fish from Shoreshil on the Flanmi. Pseudo-client: Hughnard the Fishmonger (of Eastfair). Standard payment, no known holds on Roward or Hughnard. Honest deal mediator Assigned: Dantoni of the ZILCHUS WESTERN COMPANY—Eastfair branch.

Noon: Sub-Clerk logs delivery of assignment contract to Dantoni

Three evening Bells: Dantoni confirms contact with both parties. Preliminary meeting times arranged. The deal process is locked and set in motion.

### **Sunday:**

Nine morning bells to three evening bells: Standard billable hours; honest deal mediator mediating inspection of cargo loads entrusted to client Roward by fellow fishermen of Shoreshil. Cargo stored in tertiary warehouse #341 (as owned by the ZILCHUS WESTERN COMPANY, standard rent paid in full).

### **Moonday**

Nine morning bells to four evening bells: Standard billable hours; honest deal mediator mediating inspection of cargo held in warehouse #341, both Client Roward and Pseudo-Client Hughnard present. Delay created by tariff dispute by Eastfair Tax agent. Standard solution presented, but documents will not be ready till Waterday due to Godsdays services within the government structure.

### **Godsdays**

Dantoni of the ZILCHUS WESTERN COMPANY recorded as present for extended worship ceremonies within the ZILCHUS WESTERN COMPANY –Eastfair branch. Full tithe recorded as received.

### **Waterday**

Eight morning bells to four evening bells: Standard billable hours;

All proper documents collected from Eastfair-Tax; necessary claims and notifications for transits of goods (warehouse to warehouse) and passes for additional laborers from the Old City; Roward and Hughnard noted as being in agreement with final exchanges planned for end of work Earthday.

Government approval for transport plan: Seven wagons, along prearranged street route, from ZILCHUS WESTERN COMPANY T-Warehouse #341 to Compound Warehouse of Hughnard the Fishmonger.

### **Earthday**

Seven morning bells to two evening bells: Standard billable hours plus end of contract fee; honest deal mediator oversaw packing, loading, transport, unloading of goods. Notes: No problems, smooth transaction. Both parties have signed statement of agreement and satisfaction.

Contract closed.

### **Freeday**

No listed duties for Dantoni.