



WATERDEEP
GUARD DUTY

Power Plays I

Guard Duty

Guard Duty contains a series of four related mini-adventures. The first scenario starts characters in the middle of the action as they protect a warehouse from arsonists. Characters break up a protection racket in the second scenario. In the third scenario, they act as protection for a clandestine meeting. Finally, in the fourth scenario they do some investigative work prior to confronting their employer's rival. This encounter is optimized for a party of 4 level 1 characters.

The adventure also contains new locations, NPCs, and six encounters that can be used in other urban adventures. As written Guard Duty is based in Waterdeep, but it is easy to move to any urban area. This is a stand alone adventure, but provides hooks for future adventures and also is the start of a story arc that takes characters to 5th level (and possibly beyond).

by EBrun

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Guard Duty

“That’s how you tell a merc is dead; he just stops collecting paychecks.”

– Mercedes Lackey, *By the Sword*

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Introduction

This adventure contains four scenarios and a series of optional encounters, optimized for a party of four 1-level characters. Characters should reach second level by the end of the third scenario. The scenarios are based in Waterdeep and its surroundings, but can easily be moved to any large city. These scenarios are gritty and a bit shady. In fact, the characters are working for a Zhentarim agent, but likely won’t know that reality.

Burning Down the (Ware)House! begins this collection in-situ. Instead of starting in a bar, the PC’s are thrust immediately into the action as they protect a warehouse under siege.

In **Shakedown** the characters are asked to break up a small-time protection racket pestering a market in the slums of the Dock Ward.

After two (hopefully) successful assignments, the characters have gained the trust of their employer. In **Guarding the Dead**, they get to meet their boss as they guard a clandestine meeting in Waterdeep’s City of the Dead.

In the last scenario, the characters learn the whereabouts of the malcontents behind recent attacks. It’s time for **Payback!**

The Spyglass Tavern is home base for the characters’ fixer. It serves as a convenient meeting place and, if needed, lodging for the characters. The **Optional Encounters** can be used to spice up the down time between scenarios.

This adventure is designed to stand by itself as an introduction to a campaign. However, the following **DM’s Guild** resources can help you round out a campaign based in Waterdeep.

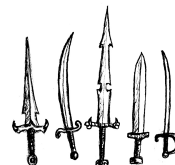
- Faction Folio: Waterdeep DM’s City Guide
- Faction Folio: Waterdeep Players’ City Guide (free)
- City Encounters
- Road’s End Robbery

Guard Duty is the first adventure in the **Power Plays** story arc. The broader story arc is described in the “What’s Next?” section at the end of the adventure.

Getting Started

This adventure starts in the middle of the action. The PC’s have been in Waterdeep. The adventure assumes that the characters already know each other and have worked together in the past. Before starting, have a discussion with the players to determine their shared history.

Begin by having players briefly introduce their character. Encourage them to not share game mechanics, but instead explain what the other characters would know from their past association. Then have the group establish a rationale for why they stick together. Also, determine what “adventures” the group has already been involved in – keeping in mind that they are novices! Finally, have them explain why they were in Waterdeep – are they locals? If not, what brought them to the city?



Burning Down the (Ware)house!

In this scenario, the characters have been hired to protect a warehouse in the southern end of the Trade Ward. Characters have a brief opportunity to discuss strategy before the action begins.

Ah, the glory!" you think as you look around the dingy warehouse that you have been hired to protect.

*Beggars can't be choosers – A tenday ago, you met the ruffian, **Sly Sela** at The Spyglass Tavern. He seemed like an honest-enough chap, at least honest enough for someone hiring sellswords in the Dock Ward. You were low on coin and the job sounded pretty easy. Apparently, there have been a rash of break-ins and arsons around the city and a few extra guards are needed.*

This is your third night in this ramshackle warehouse. The normal guard is outside by the front door and you wait inside as nasty surprise for any illicit late night visits. Your only diversion from the boredom has been the once-every-hour check-in by Sly. For 5 gold a day, it is barely worth it.

If the players haven't done character introductions yet, now is the time to do it. Ask the characters for their passive perception scores and show the characters the map (at the end of this scenario) Give them no more than five minutes to describe what they are doing and how they are arranged. Once they are ready, the attack begins.

Characters with a **passive perception of 15 or greater** hear a soft grating noise coming from somewhere near the window farthest from the PCs. They have time to make one action as a black-clad thief (**bandit** stats) climbs through the window. A second **bandit** will enter on the next round. These characters do also have the option to alert the other characters. Alerted characters act on the next round. **Roll initiative!**

Characters with a **passive perception of 10-15** hear a soft thud coming from somewhere near the window farthest from the PCs. Two black-clad **bandits** have entered through the window and are crouching along the wall. These characters can also alert other characters. Characters alerted can act on the next round.

Roll initiative!

Characters with a **passive perception of less than 10** are surprised unless alerted. The two **bandits** get a free ranged attack. **Roll initiative!**

As soon as there is an obvious altercation (verbal or physical), the front door is bashed open. One more **bandit** enters the warehouse, followed by a brute of a man (**torch**) wearing black and orange leathers and carrying an odd torch-like contraption.

Torch - Medium Human

AC 14, Hit Points 22 (4d8+4), Speed 30 ft
STR 15(+2) DEX 14(+2) CON 13(+1)
INT 10(+0) WIS 11(+0) CHA 8(-1)

Skills: Athletics +4, Stealth +4

Senses: passive perception 10, **Languages:** Common
Challenge 1/2 (100xp)

Attacks.

Flamethrower. Melee attack +4 to hit, 10ft reach, one target. **Hit:** 6 (1d8+2). Fire damage. Anyone hit with the sticky, flaming substance takes additional damage on subsequent rounds until the fire is extinguished (1 action). Damage starts at 2 on the first round after a hit and increases by 2 each round as the fire spreads.

The **flamethrower** consists of a hollow staff topped with a torch on one end and a hose running to an oiled leather backpack on the other end. A pump on the staff forces oil from the backpack to jettison from the torch end. **If the operator is hit, there is a 15% chance that the flamethrower will begin leaking** – any open fire may cause the backpack to explode (6d8). The backpack holds enough oil for 10 attacks.

Overspray from the flamethrower can start a fire.

There is a 25% for stone or 75% for wood or other flammable material chance that a fire will start on the square directly behind the target. Each round, the fire spreads one 5ft square (roll a d8 to determine direction). Anyone in the square takes 2 points of damage. A character can use an action to extinguish a fire in a 10ft square.

Aftermath

If the characters manage to defeat the intruders and keep the warehouse from burning down, give them XP as follow (or use a milestone approach that advances them to 2nd level at the end of the 4rd scenario).

25 xp for each bandit defeated

100 xp for defeating Torch

100 xp for keeping the warehouse from extensive burn damage.

75 xp if they keep one bandit alive.

The bandits have a total of 9 gold pieces and 17 silver pieces. Their weapons and armor are well used. Torch is carrying 15 silver pieces, 3 gold pieces, and a bloodstone worth 40 gp. If the characters check, the guard outside is dead (and carries 1 gold piece, 12 silver and is wearing a cheap copper bracelet.).

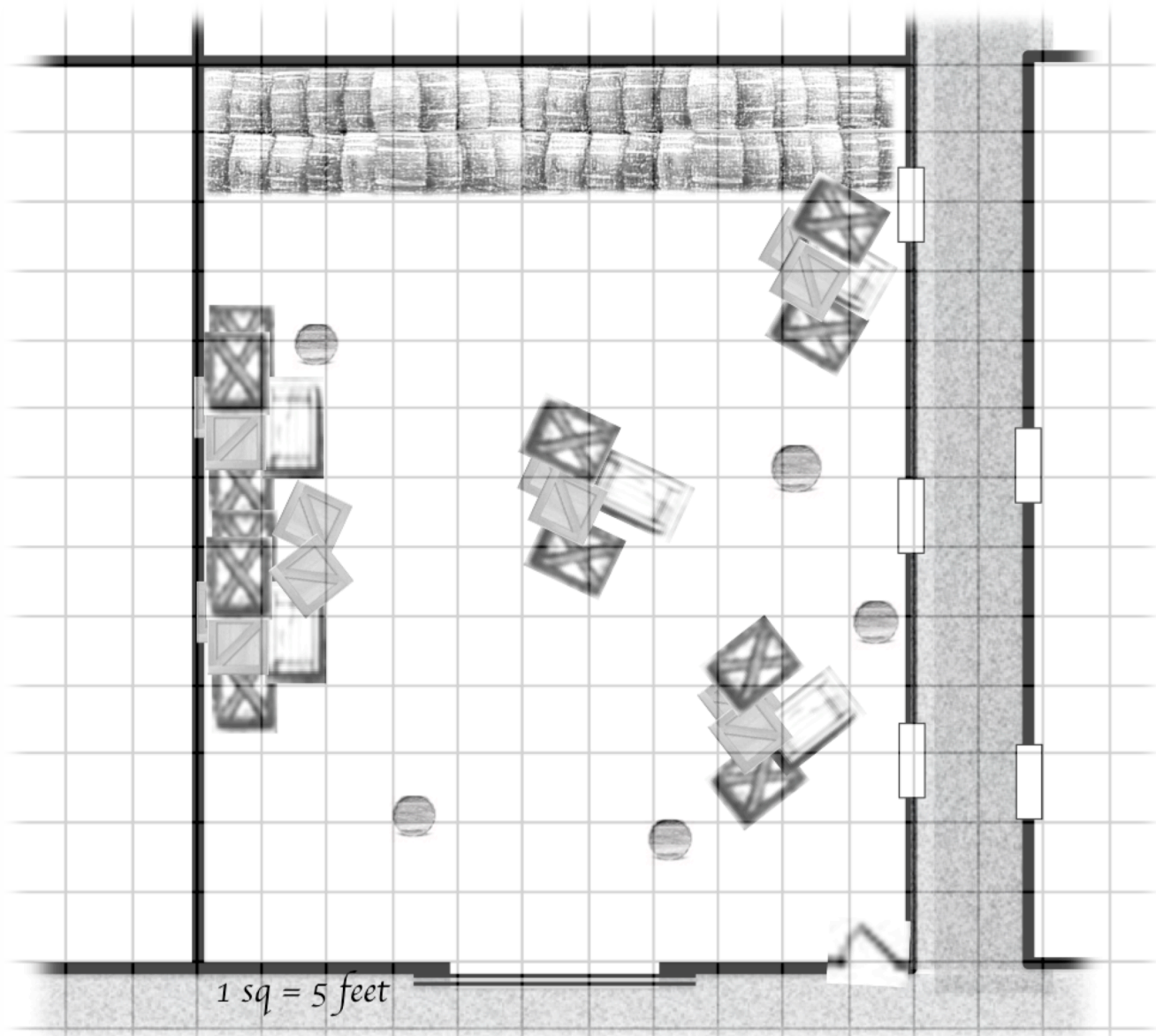
The bandits do not seem to be anything special. The Torch has a tattoo on the inside of his forearm.



If the characters keep any of the intruders alive, they can attempt a **persuasion** or **intimidation** check (DC 12 for a bandit, DC 15 for Torch) to get information. If successful, they learn the names of the intruder (bandits = Gorm, Theem, and Bardan – the Torch) and that a man named Zalam gave them a list of warehouses to burn.

Sly Sela (use **Bandit Captain** stats) arrives about 20 minutes after the fight. Sly is quite pleased that the characters have defeated the intruders and minimized damage. He will give them their pay (15 gp for 3 nights + 5gp each bonus) and ask them to stay for the rest of the night. If they keep one of the intruders alive, Sly will give them an extra 20 gp bonus.

The characters have a day, or so, of downtime before **Sly** comes looking for them again (Shakedown). If any of the characters choose to do so, they can ask around town for information on Zalam. It costs them 2 gold pieces in food and drink to pry loose (have them make a **persuasion** or **intimidation** roll) that Zalam is a small-time thug in the Calishite neighborhood (Little Marekh) on the border between the South and Dock Wards.



The strategically placed barrels hold water and a bucket to douse any attempts at arson. The ceiling is 15 ft high with open rafters. The rafters do not look incredibly sturdy (25% chance of breaking). The windows are 3 feet tall and located about 8 feet from the ground.

Shakedown

Shortly after the events in *Burning Down the (Ware)house*, the characters receive word that Sly would like to meet them at The Spyglass Tavern. He arrives at the tavern with a sharply dressed woman. After whispering in her ear, she takes a seat next to the hearth as Sly approaches the characters.

“Lovely, isn’t she?” Sly says with a smile, “The pleasures of a job well done. Thank you again for your service at the warehouse. How have you enjoyed your time?”

He will pause for the characters to do a bit of storytelling before continuing.

My superior also noticed your work. He suggested that you might be able to help us out with another problem in the Thieves’ Market,” Sly states. You know that place – a few blocks in the slums of the Dock Ward – a mix of ramshackle shops and stalls selling legitimate and stolen goods. “A group of small-time thugs, the Dock Ward Cutters, are shaking down the shopkeepers for protection money. We can’t have that. I need you to make a lesson of them. It should be an easy afternoon’s work...interested?”

He offers the characters 10 gp each, but will go as high as 25 gp. He suggests that the characters start with Maugre, the old woman at the Pious Pauper. She usually has her ear to the ground – and is willing to share if you buy something.

Thieves’ Market

This market stretches for a few blocks and the side alleys off of Anhoki street in southern Dock Ward, one of the poorest neighborhoods in Waterdeep. The more reputable shops are located in buildings riddled with leaky roofs, missing wall planks, and flimsy doors. The road and alleys themselves are lined with stalls selling trinkets, clothing, and household items – all of poor quality and dubious origin. Many of the alleys are covered with faded, yet colorful, rotted

cloth awnings. The peddlers’ families often use these alley stalls for sleeping at night. Although poor, the residents are quite friendly, and the persistent call of, “How can I take your money?” follows any potential shoppers. Bartering and trade are the norm throughout the market. The **Pious Pauper** can be found down one of these crowded alleys. A map of the alley is located at the end of this scenario. Allow the characters to explore the market before introducing the **Cutters**.

Butchers’ Market is housed in a large dilapidated warehouse with a door opening to Anhoki street. Close to a dozen butchers set up tables with everything from raw chickens to rats and pigeons. **Hamo** arrived early this morning and displays a single carcass of a large boar, hung from the rafters. He has the best meat in the place (according to him) and is willing to sell for a great price (1 gp, negotiated to a silver). If asked about the **Cutters**, Hamo looks nervous and afraid to talk. He is willing to share that they haven’t been by yet today.

Jupp’s is a small eatery, serving fried bean curd patties, some sort of meat-kabab, and tea. Jupp is a female, grease-covered dwarf with a braided greying beard. Jupp knows that a filthy dwarf named **Bluntknuckles** leads the **Cutters**.

Pious Pauper shares a building with Jupp’s – separated by a patchwork of thin boards. The dusty shelves lining this store are overflowing with broken and discarded religious icons. The proprietor, **Maugre**, is a balding, withered old woman. She will seemingly ignore questions about the **Cutters** until the characters buy her prized possession – a tarnished pewter skeletal hand (2 sp). Once the sale is made, she informs the characters that two dwarves (Bluntknuckles and Toothless Teg), a half-orc (Naghat), and Bluntknuckles’ pet demon come late in the afternoon every other day, making a mess of things until they get their payment (1 sp from each store, and a few coppers from each stall). “It would be great if you could fix ‘em. I ain’t got much coin left, you know,” she states. Since it is

obvious that the are interested in odd happenings in the market, she will also add that a tall, muscled, black lady with fiery red hair came in to the shop a few days ago and bought a copper bowl etched with a design around the end. If asked, she will sketch the pattern in the dust on a tarnished silver (fake) plate with the holy symbol of Sune crudely painted on the face. "Never seen nothing like her. You should buy this plate."



Greenfield Spices is a mix of fragrant spices and herbs, the pungent smells barely covering the smells of mold, sweat, and sewage from the outside. **Aymer**, the portly owner has the best spices and prices in all of the 'Deep' (according to him). A character with the appropriate skill could cobble together a healer's kit for 1/3rd of the normal cost. Aymer, is afraid to talk and asks the characters to leave if they continue ask about the **Cutters**.

Wood and Spike is a large shop facing the street. It sells 'recycled' building supplies and shoddy tools. The owner, **Barat**, will give a fair price. He also offers his services as a carpenter.

Bird Market is owned by a tall, dark-skinned, human male named **Gilpin**. He is thrilled that the characters are interested in his beautiful birds. Hundreds of these birds squawk from overcrowded cages. The building itself only stands because it is wedged between two others, the rotten ceiling is riddled with holes. If asked about the **Cutters**, Gilpin hangs his head. "I have to pay, or that damned lizard eats my birds," he sighs, "That thing is meaner than the boys."

Marial's Antiquities is a surprisingly clean store, run by **Marial** and his wife **Sarka**, both halflings. The store contains mostly household items, but shelves near the front contain a collection of antiques – ranging from a 3-foot tall iron

elephant statue, to a set of matching curved daggers.

Alleyway stalls line both sides of the alley, along the walls of the shops. About a dozen peddlers attempt to sell all manner of junk. **Esobel**, a teenage girl, is nursing a nasty bruised face (struck by one of the **Cutters**), while attempting to interest the characters in hand-made jewelry and other trinkets. **Izett**, a talkative bald rock gnome, is hawking a collection of door handles, spools of wire, shards of metal, and other reclaimed supplies. On an **investigation** check (DC 10 for someone with a lock pick kit or DC 15 for others) it appears that trap making materials are spread throughout Izett's wares. **Terryn**, a middle aged woman in a grimy dress, splits her time between selling second hand clothing and carrying for her unconscious husband (**Galfred**). Galfred was attacked by **Bluntknuckle's** lizard, and is near death from the poisonous bite.

Collection time

Use your judgment as to when to have the **Cutters** arrive. Players should explore the market for a while, but not long enough to get bored. Spread the thugs along the opposite side of the alley.



You hear a crash and a yell. As you turn to look, you see that a nasty looking half-orc has thrown one of the peddlers through a stall and into the middle of the street. "Told ya dat you gotta pay," yells the half-orc,. "Next one dat holds out gets skull cracked."

As you scan the alley, you quickly spot two dwarves roughing up other peddlers.

Use the **bandit** stats for Toothless Teg (a dwarf) and Naghat (the half-orc). Use **thug** statistics for Bluntknuckles (the other dwarf), Bluntknuckles also has a fierce looking lizard on his shoulder that will attack anyone that is in melee with the dwarf. If two of the collectors fall, the third will try to escape.

Claw - Lizard

AC 13, Hit Points 4, Speed 30 ft, climb 30 ft
 STR 2(-4) DEX 16(+3) CON 11(+0)
 INT 1(+0) WIS 10(+0) CHA 3(-4)

Senses: passive perception 10, blindsight 10 ft

Challenge 1/8 (25xp)

Actions.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5ft, one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw, taking 5 (2d4) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

Aftermath

If the party kills or drives off the thugs, **Esobel** will run to them and attempt to hug one of the characters. She gives them each character a handmade bracelet made of painted clay beads and a unique item (e.g. a bird skull, jagged amber lump, a small key, a broken broach emblazoned with a lamp). **Maugre** similarly gives a small stone carved with a rune to any characters that you feel role-played well during the scenario. Any character that speaks giant or succeeds on an **arcane** (DC 12) check knows that it is the Skold, or shield, rune. If checked, the stones glow with faint magic. The stone allows the bearer to dodge the next attack that would reduce the character to zero (taking no damage). The stone only has one charge that is used automatically on the next death-blow.

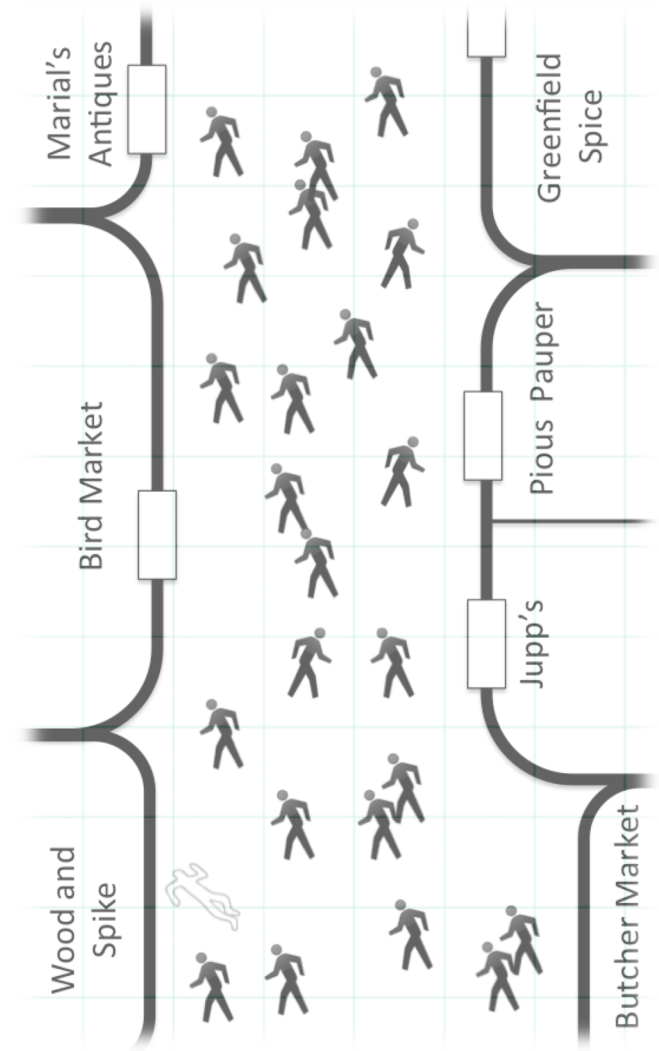
Sly is pleased with the characters and provides payment when they report success.

XP

Teg, Naghat & Claw = 25 xp each

Bluntknuckles = 100 xp

Story Award = 225 xp if the characters help any of the injured peddlers, are charitable, and/or roleplay well.



Alley in the Thieves' Market
 1 sq = 5 ft

Guarding the Dead

Give the characters a few nights of downtime (DMG page 127). Characters can shop and or carouse to their heart's content. If they continue to ask around about Zalam, the rumor on the street is that he has been living large at the Abu Shakra tavern in the Little Markesh neighborhood (requires 2gp in drinks/bribes).

Sly Sela will join them on occasion and may be able to help them procure non-standard equipment. He will also introduce them to some of his (less-than-reputable) associates. It is best to have characters narrate their actions during downtime and make appropriate rolls for the outcomes. On the last night of their downtime, Sly informs the characters that his boss wants to meet them and suggests they meet at **The Spyglass Tavern** just before midnight on the following day – ready for some night work.

When they meet Sly, he lets them know that his boss wants to hire them to help guard a meeting. He will give them each 20 gold pieces for about two hours of work. If they agree, Sly will lead them through the Dock and Trade Wards to a dark alley across from an entrance to the City of the Dead.

A powerfully built man with short cropped hair, dressed in dark leathers and breastplate, stands at the end of the alley. A giant of a half-orc stands glowering behind him. "So, you are the guys that Sly found, good," the man says gruffly, "keep your eyes open."

The half-orc moves forward and signals – two short and one long – flashes of light from his lantern. One quick flash of light returns from the guard tower across the street. They dart from the alley towards the cemetery gates. After a short jog across pathways, and passed tombs, the man stops in front of a mausoleum that has seen better days. "Sly, you come with me. You," he points at the characters, "watch the front." "Got it, Mac," says Sly as he, Mac, and the half-orc start walking towards the open doors of the tomb.

Deepwinter Vault is ornately carved into the stone above the open doors. Any characters native to Waterdeep know that this mausoleum has been abandoned for years and is often used for illicit (or amorous) meetings. A **player map** is provided at the end of this scenario.

The characters have a minute or so to position themselves around the front of the mausoleum. If they look, a **perception** check (DC 12) allows them to see their co-conspirators approaching a group of three cloaked and hooded men inside of the tomb.

If any characters have a **passive perception** greater than 15, they hear a soft murmuring coming from the trees across from them. Before they can react, chaos erupts at the front of the tomb. An outward gust of wind erupts from the steps as two vaguely humanoid beings of fire (**fire elementals**) erupt into existence and streak into the tomb. At the same time, the water in the fountain begins to boil, the steam forming into two skeletal shapes with clawed hands and a protruding beak of a nose (**steam mephits**). The steam shapes engage the characters. **Roll initiative!**

If the characters run in the direction of the muttering, they see two dark-clad humanoids dash off. A reddish glow emanates from the ground as another skeletal shape – this one, glowing dark red – forms (**magma mephit**). If the characters pursue, one of the humanoids turns and engages them (**bandit**) to allow the other to escape. If the characters do not move towards the muttering, the magma mephit emerges from the pathway behind them. The magma mephit also engages the characters.

If characters go down, the mephits (and bandit) do not go for the kill. Instead, the bandit flees and the mephits enter the tomb to join that fight.

Aftermath

If the characters defeat the mephitis they can join the fray in the tomb. Sly and a robed humanoid both lay smoldering on the ground. Mac is in the process of finishing off one of the fire elementals while Bladgrul and one of the other robed men is finishing off the other. After the elementals are defeated, the robed man (**Yaun-Ti Pureblood**) hisses, “take your man and go, quickly.” A wounded and smoking Bladgrul throws Sly over his shoulder as Mac motions for them to leave. A **Perception** check (DC 15) allows the PCs to notice that portions of the skin of the slain robed man are covered with greenish scales.



Mac leads the group along the cemetery wall back to the gate. When they reach the alley across the street, he thanks the characters for their help and demands that they split up to head back to the Dock Ward.

If the characters are defeated by the mephitis, they wake up, with wounds dressed, at Saint Sollars the Twice Martyred, an Ilmater hospital in the South Ward. The characters are free to go.

XP Award:

Steam Mephit = 50 xp

Magma Mephit = 100 xp

Bandit = 25 xp

Story Award = 125 xp if the characters defeat the mephitis and attempt to join the fray in the tomb.

Deepwinter Vault

Deepwinter Vault is more fully described in *Dungeon Magazine* 127. The vault is often the site of illicit meetings – amorous affairs during the day and darker meetings at night.

Deepwinter Vault is found just off of a main pathway near the cemetery wall. Vines and lichen cover most of the exterior. Where the cracked masonry shows through, you can see hints of a snow-covered landscape carved into the crypt walls. Five steps lead to large iron doors (1).

The front chamber (2) is unnaturally cold, a lingering magical effect. Ice obscures wall frescoes of the glories of the Deepwinter family. The chamber is ringed with shattered columns that look to have once held family treasures. The family crest, a snow-capped mountain and stylized snowflake, grace the center of the floor. The crypts (3) were plundered long ago, the floors are now littered with dust, bones, and broken masonry. A large, snow-covered sarcophagus dominates The Hall of the Patriarch (4). The lid of the sarcophagus is adorned with the carving of an armored knight holding a broadsword. If the lid is lifted slightly and turned, the giant sarcophagus pivots, revealing a stairway leading into the depths. Chambers to each side of the Hall also contain sarcophagi adorned with snow-covered knights. The Hall and Chamber are 40 feet deep.

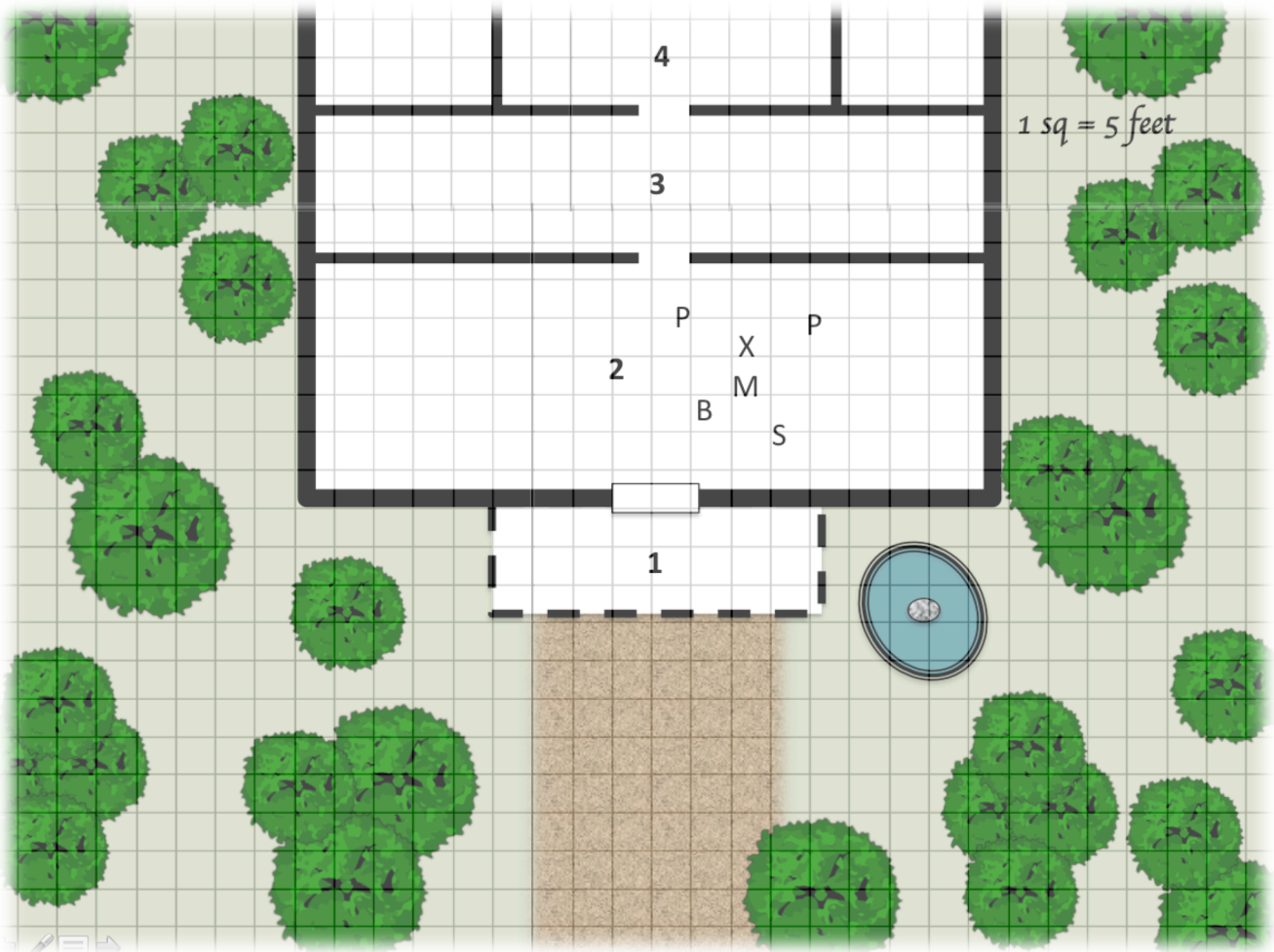
If the characters explore the Deepwinter Vault directly after the combat in this scenario, 6 robed figures (**Yaun-ti Purebloods**) are arrayed around the room. One hisses, “Leave. Your time here is done.”

The City of the Dead

1. Ahghairon's Statue
2. Deepwinter Vault
3. Hall of Heroes
4. Hall of Records
5. The Hall of Sages
6. House of the Homeless
7. Lord's Respite
8. Mariner's Rest
9. Merchants' Rest
10. The Road's End
11. The Road's End



Deepwinter Vault



- Mac Bondo (M)
- Bladgrul (B)
- Sly Sela (S)
- Negotiator (X)
- Bodyguards (P)

Payback!

This scenario starts the morning directly after the events of *Guarding the Dead*. When the PCs come into the common room of The Spyglass Tavern (either fresh from the hospital or a short night's sleep), they learn from Billy Benbow (the barkeep) that Sly died during the attack. Mac is enraged and threatening to destroy the Muzad – a Calishite thieving ring – even if he has to burn Little Marekh to the ground in the process.

If the characters do not set out on their own to find Zalam, Mac leaves a message with Billy to send the characters to Glassworks (in the Dock Ward). When the characters arrive at Glassworks (a glass-blowing shop), Mac is in mid-tantrum – yelling, “find him” at two men running out the door. Mac throws a glass sculpture at the wall, barely missing one of the characters. A wounded, burned, and bandaged, Bladgrul sits on a stool in the back of the room, nervously licking his lips. Mac sends the characters to the streets around Little Marekh with the directive to do anything necessary to find Zalam – or he will burn the neighborhood down himself.

Investigations in Little Marekh

Little Marekh, named after the great marketplace in Calimport, is a predominantly Calishite neighborhood (or sabban) on the border between the South and Dock wards. Residents are slowly building a low brick wall around the neighborhood in the Calishite drudach style. The center of the sabban is dominated by a replica of the The Fountain of the Qysars, a green and white glazed domed fountain and palisade surrounded by seven statues representing rulers from the Shoon Imperium. The Nine Pasha Trading Coster owns a large warehouse and covered marketplace (housing famous spice stalls) next to the fountain.

Across the square from the marketplace is the ornate Abu Shakra tavern. Ghazi Ghulam (boisterous, overweight, dark-skinned, black ponytailed, male Calishite) runs the Muzad

thieving guild out of Abu Shakra. The guild is named after the Calimport undercity.

Either from previous investigations (scenario 1), Mac's suggestion, or the obviousness of the establishment, the characters should start their investigations at the Abu Shakra tavern.

Planting the clue: Be ready to plant a clue as to the current whereabouts of Zalam. Reveal the clue at a location that best fits with the pacing and interest of your group. For example, Shavaresh at Antarang might be willing to provide the location if a PC pays her 15 gp. Or, a small boy living at Malabar Holdings may tug on the arm of a PC and offer to take them to Zalam's apartment...for a small tip. Alternatively, you can skip the investigation by having the young boy meet the characters at The Spyglass Tavern as a messenger for Ghazi – He doesn't want to cross paths with Mac and sent the kid to take the PCs to Zalam's hideout. *Note: The clue from Savaresh about the meeting with a plain-looking scarred woman does connect to future adventures.*

Abu Shakra is a large tavern and gambling hall, colorfully and comfortably decorated. The patrons are almost entirely Calishite – the PCs stick out! Most of the patrons ignore the characters. A **perception** check (DC 12) reveals that patrons sitting in a few different booths are discreetly watching the characters. **Persuasion** checks have a DC 10 and **Intimidation** checks have a DC 15 (home turf!) in this tavern. Any overt intimidation or aggression will get the attention of Muzad members in the tavern (2 **spies** and 6 **bandits**). The characters need to buy about 15 gp worth of drinks and tips to get the information below.

The barkeep and waitstaff know the following:

- Zalam was a regular and partied pretty hard recently, but he hasn't been in for a while.
- He has a large outstanding tab, the barkeep in particular would like to see him again soon.
- A couple of nights ago, he was excited about 'something big' coming.

- He was often accompanied by Savaresh, a girl from Antarang.

If the characters approach a table of watching patrons, they take on intimidating postures. If the characters don't approach, one of those patrons will wave the characters over. They can learn the following:

- They believe that the characters are Zhent agents.
- Ghazi wants no trouble with the Zhent.
- Zalam isn't one of theirs – he has his own crew.
- Zalam and his crew often gamble in a hidden drug den under the Shivaji Ghat laundry.
- Zalam has a regular, Savaresh, from Antarang, a brothel nearby.

Shivaji Ghat is a clean building with fake marble plaster walls. Rows of twenty giant washtubs dominate the ground floor of this building. A narrow stairway leads to the upper floors and the basement. The second story is open to the outside and used to dry clothes. During the day, the building is a hive of activity as men, women and children wash the clothes of the “well to do” of Waterdeep.

The basement is a small 15 x 15 foot storage area. During the day, an **Investigation** check (DC 10) reveals a secret door into the drug den. At night, the door is obvious since it is guarded by two **guards**. The characters can either bluff (**persuasion** DC 10) or **Intimidate** (DC 17) their way into the drug den.

During the day, the den is mostly empty – with a few unconscious patrons. At night, a handful of individuals lounge on the cushions lining the room. One **thug** and three **bandits** are sitting at a table – smoking and shaking dice. They are in a bit of a stupor and invite the characters to join (1 gp for the smoke, silvers to gamble). Do resisted **gambling** checks to see who wins the pot (4 + PCs silver). The thug and bandits have disadvantage on the roll due to drug impairment. The characters can be sociable and attempt to

persuade, or intimidate. They can learn the following:

- Zalam used to come in with a big dude named Bardan (the Torch from Scenario 1).
- Zalam came by himself a couple of days ago talking about a game-changing mission in the City of the Dead.
- He hasn't been in since. He either scored big or is dead.
- Some of his crew used to crash at the abandoned Malabar Holdings warehouse.

Malabar Holdings is a derelict warehouse south of Little Marekh. It hasn't been used as a warehouse for years. Squatters use discarded pieces of wood and other refuse to eke out small homesteads inside. Two half-orcs (**guard** stats) are lounging outside, drinking. They try to get the characters to leave. Successful **Persuasion** or **Intimidation** checks (DC 10) allow the PCs to get past with nothing more than empty posturing.

The residents inside include about a dozen **commoners**, cramped into small makeshift shacks. A larger shack dominates the south side of the warehouse. Six **orcs** can be seen through the open doorway, drinking the afternoon / evening away. The Orcs can be intimidated or bribed with alcohol or silver, but have no idea who Zalam is. They took this space over from some stinking humans that left a few days ago, and they are not going to give it back. The commoners can be easily intimidated or bribed with a few coppers and have the same information. No one in the warehouse wants a fight – they just want to be left alone.

Antarang

Antarang, Calishite for ‘pleasure,’ is a temple to Sharess – the Lustful Mistress. The temple is housed in an ornate three-story whitewashed building. The gold painted doors are adorned with the holy symbol of Sharess - a pair of red, voluptuous lips. A statue of the scantily clad goddess and double staircase dominate the entry foyer. A labyrinth of rooms showcase the temple's collection of paintings, sculptures and

other artifacts (modern and ancient) related to sex. Beautiful docents are available to provide guided tours.

Upon entry, a priestess will ask if they are seeking a particular individual. If not, they are free to explore the ground floor to see if anyone interests them. The rooms on the upper floor are available for individuals and their escorts.

Savaresh is available if a character asks for her. She is visibly nervous if any of the characters ask about Zalam. **Persuasion** (DC 15) or **Intimidation** (DC 10) checks can reveal the information below.

- Zalam was a regular customer and treated her well.
- Two days ago, he was excited about a big project. He asked her to leave so that he could use the room for an important meeting.
- If the characters bribe her, she will also admit that she listened in to that meeting. Zalam met with a slim, muscular woman. She was plain-looking and had an old, white scar running through her eyebrow. Savaresh couldn't hear much, besides doing something at the City of the Dead the following night.
- Zalam wasn't in last night or tonight. He promised that he would see her and bring a nice gift.

Raiding Zalam's Apartment

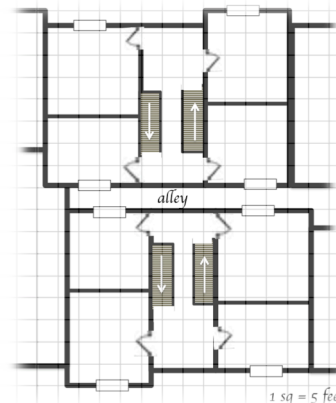
The five-story apartment complex indicated by the boy looks like it would have collapsed if not held upright by the building next door. There appears to be only the one door opening to the street, with a refuse-strewn alleyway in the back.

The apartments on this block are all identical construction – stone foundation with cheap wood upper, slightly pitched roof, and barred windows. The rickety stairs are noisy (disadvantage on stealth checks). Zalam is living on the west side of the third floor.

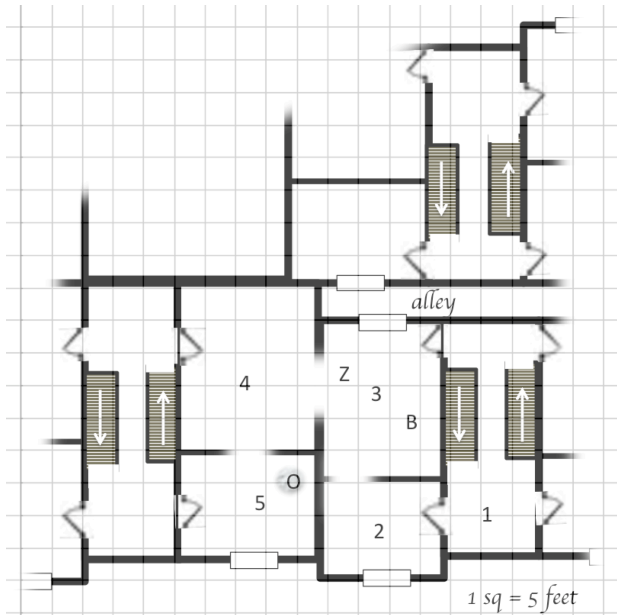
As the characters approach the complex, have them make a **perception** check (DC 20). If successful, they notice that one of the beggars, a dark-skinned female, appears to be in disguise. If confronted, it is quickly obvious that she is a drow elf. She quietly introduces herself as Amilica (**Drow Priestess**) and explains that the characters have nothing to fear from her. She is just waiting for her sisters. The character with the highest perception roll (on the previous check) notices that she is wearing a necklace with a symbol of a naked drow wielding a silver broadsword and dancing in front of a full moon. A **religion** check (DC 10) reveals that this is the holy symbol of Ellistrae – the Dark Maiden – A drow goddess of good. If pressed, she indicates that she is scouting the apartment due to rumors of cultists in the area. She will leave if the characters demand. However, she will not join the attack if asked.



Apartment Complex – Ground Floor



Apartment Complex – generic upper floors.



Apartment Complex – Third Floor, Room 3 connects through the exterior wall into the building next door. This map indicates the starting locations of enemy combatants.

A larger player’s map of the third floor is included at the end of the scenario. There is no indication from outside of the apartment that the two buildings are connected. A search for traps (**investigate** or **perception** DC 10) allows a character to identify that the doors into rooms 3 and 4 are nailed shut from the inside and that the door into room 5 is barred from the inside.

1. Landing

This landing looks the same as the other floors. However, a **perception** check (DC 15) indicates that the floorboards in front of the door to room 2 are loose and will make a loud creaking noise if stepped on (alerting the residents). The door to room 2 is locked (**Pick Locks** DC 15 or **Athletics** DC 15 to break down).

2. Sitting Room

This room contains a few crates and sacks. The crates contain a mix of loot, foodstuff, and supplies. 37 gold pieces, 112 silver pieces, 8 amethysts worth 10 gp each, 3 bloodstones

worth 20 gp each, 3 carved statuettes of dancing women (7 gp each), silver eating utensils (35 gp), and a collection of costume jewelry (15 gp).

3. Common Room

If the enemies were alerted by attempts to open the door into this room or the creaking floorboard, they are already in position (Zalam retreats to his room, the **bandit** hides in the corner for a surprise attack). If the characters do not alert them, they sprint into position as the characters enter room 2. The Bandit will attack anyone entering the room (**Perception** check DC 12 or PCs surprised). If combat is going poorly, he will attempt to dive through the open window and crash through the window into the apartment across the alley.

4. Sleeping Room

Six sleeping mats are strewn around this room. If characters search, they find a flat pouch with 2 polished garnets (10gp, 25 gp).

5. Zalam’s Room

This room contains a bed and small desk. **Zalam** (Use **cult fanatic** stats) is using the desk as partial cover. A **grey ooze** is located in the corner and attacks anyone besides Zalam. Zalam is dressed in dark black and greenish leathers, with shoulder length reddish brown hair. If Zalam was alerted to the attack, he has already started the top of the table on fire. If he was not alerted, his second action during the attack (his first action is to run to this room) is to use a cantrip to start the items on the top of the desk on fire. The fire pops occasionally with flecks of green and blue fire. Zalam and the ooze fight to the death. As Zalam dies, he whispers, “Iila (ee-la), forgive me for failing you.”



Aftermath

Zalman has a pouch containing 23 gp and 3 small emeralds worth 30 gp each. His dagger has a fire opal mounted in the hilt (50 gp value). If searched, his right forearm is horribly disfigured from acid burns. They can barely make out a tattoo under the burns similar to the one found in the first scenario.

The desk has no drawers and contains the remains of papers, a scroll tube ink pot, and a quill. Sifting through the papers reveals a salvageable scroll (**Arcane** DC 10, summon steam mephit) and a partially burned list of addresses in Waterdeep (the warehouse from the first scenario is included). The charred wooden scroll tube has an etching of a greenish-purple triangle one side.

Mac Bondo is pleased that the characters eliminated the cell. He doesn't recognize the symbol on the scroll, but will absolutely follow-up. If the characters mention the meeting that Zalman had with the woman, he will give a slight grimace, but won't provide any explanation. Mac will give each character 75 gp and a month's lodging at The Spyglass Tavern. As he leaves to give Sly's mother the news of her son's death, he mentions that he will likely need them again.

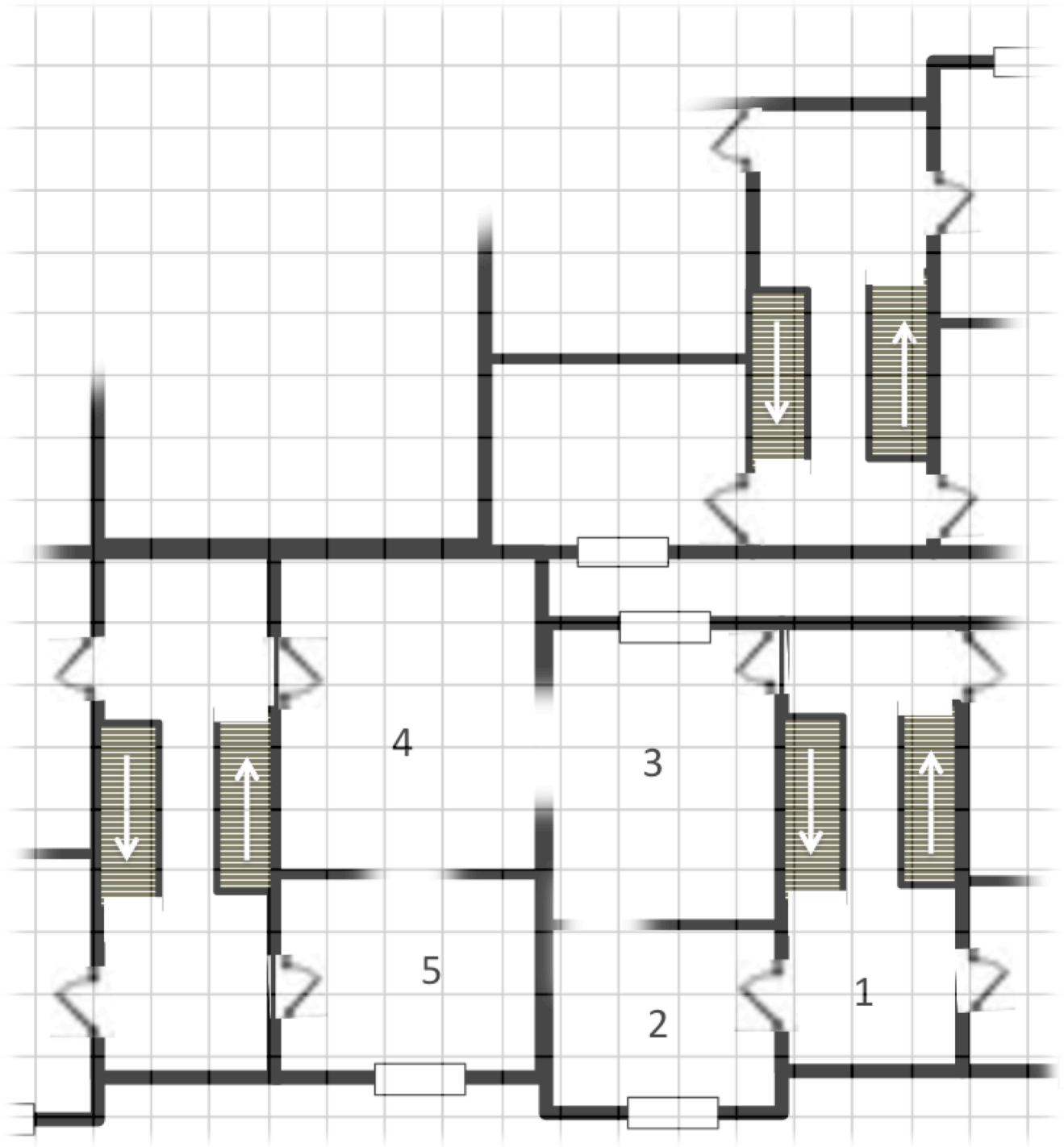
XP:

Bandit = 25 xp

Zalman = 450 xp

Grey Ooze = 100 xp

Story Award = 225 xp



Zalam's Apartment - 3rd Floor
1 sq = 5 ft

Important NPC's

The descriptions of Mac Bondo and Bladgrul are excerpted from *Faction Folio: A DM's City Guide* available on DMs Guild.

Sly Sela is the characters' "fixer" in the first two scenarios. Sly is a lithe, half-elf dressed in dark green and gray, with an ivory hilted scimitar and matching dagger. He has a corny sense of humor and is deadly serious while working, yet the life of the party while at play. Use **bandit captain** stats.

Mac Bondo is Sly's boss. *Mac* is a gruff male human that owns and operates Glassworks in the Dock Ward. Bondo rose through the ranks of the Black Network as a successful mercenary and now controls most of the Zhentarim activities in Waterdeep. He is a Zhentarim agent and controls most of the activities of the Black Network in Waterdeep. Of these activities, the most successful has been the creation of a near monopoly on mercenary and private guard business in the city. This has been accomplished through the careful cultivation of loose network of "independent" mercenary companies that all pledge allegiance to the Black Network.

Dungeon Master Notes: Mac Bondo is a ruthless pragmatist. He maintains good relationships with many of the movers-and-shakers in the city and deals quickly with those who cross him. Bondo may make for an excellent contact for PCs, since he often needs unaffiliated help for his plots. **Stats:** Use the **Gladiator** entry, but modify as follows: Use an axe and heavy crossbow instead of a spear, add *Leadership* (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). Bondo can utter a command or warning whenever a non-hostile creature that can see him within 30 feet makes an attack roll or saving throw. That creature can add d4 to the roll. This effect lasts for 1 minute or until Bondo is incapacitated.

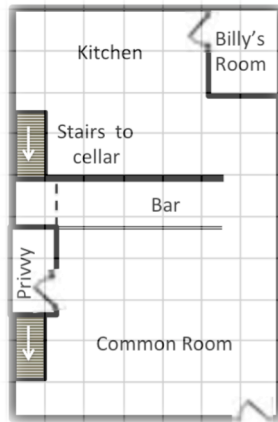


Bladgrul, Mac Bondo's bodyguard, is a gigantic and repulsive half-orc. He is usually found brooding near Bondo, making everyone uncomfortable with his annoying tic - continually licking his lips. **Dungeon Master Notes:** Bladgrul is a member of the Black Hand mercenary company. His tic is caused by his cannibalism. **Stats:** Use the **Veteran** entry, add *Reckless*. At the start of its turn, Bladgrul can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls, but attack rolls against him have advantage.

Zalam is a former member of the Cult of the Eternal Flame and now follows a new path, attempting to remove his fire tattoo as a sacrifice - leaving him with horrific burns on his arm. Zalam is now dedicated to the mysterious lila (ee-la) Kamini. He generally wears dark clothes with greenish trim and has shaggy, shoulder length hair. Use the **cult fanatic** statistics. His dagger has a fire opal embedded in the hilt.

The Spyglass Tavern

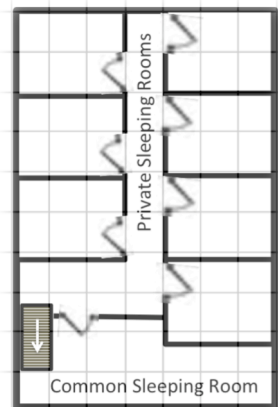
The Spyglass Tavern is a seedy tavern and inn near the center of the docks in Waterdeep's Dock Ward. It serves as a convenient meeting place for the characters. Rooms are available on the second floor if characters need a place to stay. The rooms are free while the characters are working for **Sly Sela**.



Ground Floor
1sq = 5 ft

The tavern is a popular place for rowdy sailors and other ruffians. **Billy Benbow** (A barrel-chested, black-bearded, classic pirate type – use **veteran** stats) is the proprietor and almost always behind the bar. They serve a few simple dishes (pig knuckle, ham steak, bread, ale cheese) and one style of ale – take it or leave it.

Scurvy (blind, disheveled, male human – use **bandit** stats) is a fixture at the bar – he sports an eye patch over one eye and the other is sewed shut and scarred. He loves to talk about his adventures as a pirate and a few times each hour, he'll ask those near him if a one-armed man has come in yet. When pressed, he'll name the man as 'Black Dog' and remains certain that he will show. Scurvy recently purchased room and board (bought, not rented) from Billy for a small fortune, so his antics are tolerated.



First Floor
1sq = 5 ft

Optional Encounters

The first three encounters can occur in The Spyglass Tavern. Don't forget Scurvy's repetitive questioning about the one-armed man! The second three can occur anywhere in the city. For the combat games, use stats for guards, bandits, scouts, and thugs. Of course, there is a possibility that a tougher (spy, bandit captain, veteran, gladiator) patron is ready for fun.

Pirate This game is initiated with gusto when someone yells, "Pirates!" as the players quickly drag two tables into place. The first occasion of the game should confuse the characters as they assume that the tavern is under attack.

The rules: Two study tables are set parallel to each other. One player stands on the table acting as a pirate ship. The defender stands atop the table being boarded. This player has the option of using a sack of potatoes as a weapon. The goal is for the 'pirate' to 'board' by jumping from one table to the other, while both players attempt to knock the other off. The winner is the player that remains on the 'boarded table'. The loser buys a beer for the winner. The winner remains as the defender as the next pirate attempts to board.

The mechanics: An **athletics** or **acrobatics** check is needed to jump from one table to the other. A DC of 10-14 is a success, but the pirate has disadvantage on the next die roll. A success on a DC of 15 or higher means that the pirate lands and is ready for action. The **defender** gets the first action when the pirate lands on the table. He can attempt to grapple, shove, or hit the character with the sack of potatoes.

- Shove: Contested Strength (Athletics) versus Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics). If the attack is successful, the target flies from the table.
- Grapple: Contested Strength (Athletics) versus Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics). If the attack is successful, the target can be thrown from the table on the attacker's next action (unless the target escapes using a contested roll).

- **Potatoes:** The potatoes do 1 hp of damage on a successful hit. In addition, the target must make a dexterity (acrobatics) or strength (athletics) test to remain on the table. The DC is 10 + the attacker's strength modifier.

There is a 10% chance (more for big players) per jump that the table collapses, ending the game with much laughter as players give the barkeep a few coins for repairs. Betting on matches is encouraged.

Knives This is a simple game. A target is drawn on a block of wood hanging from a wall in the tavern. The players throw knives at the target. The target's AC is 10, the highest attack roll hits closest to the middle. A fumbled attack roll (1) results in a spectator being hit by the knife – hilt first – for 1 hp of damage. Players should also roll a d6, on a roll of 1, the knife hits hilt first...resulting in a fair amount of heckling. Each game is played as best of 3, with the loser buying the winner a beer (or losing the wager).

Fisherman Giffer, a local fisherman, comes into the tavern with a barrel of salted fish and yells, "Benbow, a beer for me...free fish for all." Many of the patrons rush the barrel for a snack, as Giffer starts on his first step towards getting staggeringly drunk. If the characters strike up a conversation, he will let them know that he found a diamond ring while gutting a large fish – tonight he gives thanks to Umberlee with lots, and lots of beer and women.

Soap Seller On a corner near a market, a crowd has gathered around a slim half-elf standing on a crate and selling wrapped bars of soap. The price depends on the neighborhood, ranging from a few coppers to a few silvers). He yells, "Try your luck – some of these bars have coins in the middle!" He tosses the soap to a buyer after his assistant (a 10 year old girl) collects the coins. Occasionally, someone in the crowd yells, "Coin!" when they break open a bar. Each yell leads to more sales and a growing crowd. If a character succeeds on a **perception** check (DC 15), he or she notices one of the 'customers' switching soap bars with one in his jacket before finding the coin. If the character calls them out,

the customer turns to run, while the soap hawker grabs his sack of soap and runs. If needed, use **commoner** stats for the customer and **scout** (with no bow) stats for the soap seller.

Kenku Mugging At night, the characters hear the soft sound of a baby crying and a mother sobbing for help coming from an alleyway. Have characters roll both **Wisdom** (Insight) (DC 14) and **perception** checks (DC 20). On a successful wisdom check, the character thinks the mother's voice sounds odd. The characters see a form cradling a baby in the darkness of the alley. A successful perception check reveals two more forms in the shadows. If the characters enter the alley, the 'mother' stands and asks for money for her child. The characters glimpse a clawed foot and beak protruding from the mother's ragged robe and more shapes emerge in the alley. Use one **kenku** per character in the group. If half of the kenkus are killed or incapacitated, the others will attempt to flee. The baby is just a cloth doll. Each Kenku has d4 gold pieces and d20 silver. The 'mother' also has a sack containing d20 gold, 3d20 silver, and d6 pieces of jewelry (average of 15 gp value each). [XP = 50 each]

Food Poisoning While the characters are exploring town, they see a plump woman shuffling towards a food cart while the seller is engaged with a customer. The sickly woman had blotchy skin and long tendrils of greasy dirty blonde hair. She is wearing a dirty, patched robe and carries a large sack. The shifting bulges of the sack are strong evidence that there are living creatures (her pets) inside. As the woman moves closer to the cart, it appears that she is attempting to steal food. However, as she grabs at the food, the character with the highest passive perception notices that she flings a fine powder across the food on the cart before taking a piece of fruit. If she is not confronted, she scurries away – leaving the seller unaware that his food has been poisoned (touch: rash, ingested: results in d6 damage in 10 minutes and poisoned condition until the next long rest, a **constitution** save DC 15 halves the damage and reduces the poisoned condition until the next short rest).

If confronted, she will try to talk her way out of trouble. If that doesn't work, she drops her sack and attacks. The sack spills a **Swarm of Rats** that also attacks.

Poisoner – *Medium Humanoid*

AC 12, Hit Points 22, Speed 30 ft,
STR 10(0) DEX 14(+2) CON 11(+0)
INT 11(+0) WIS 14(+2) CHA 8(-2)

Senses: passive perception 15,

Challenge 1/2 (50xp)

Spellcasting. The poisoner is a 1st – level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): Poison Spray, Guidance, Thaumaturgy

1st level (3 slots): Inflict Wounds, Cure Wounds, Ray of Sickness

Actions.

The poisoner takes two actions per round. She can use her knife, but prefers her spells.

knife. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. Hit 3 (1d2+2) slashing.

The poisoner carries d6 silver and d20 coppers, a holy symbol of **Talona**, and six packets of a greenish powder. The powder is a poison that only causes an itchy rash if touched, but inflicts d6 damage and the poison condition until the next long rest (a **constitution** save DC 15 halves the damage and reduces the poisoned condition until the next short rest). [XP = 100 if the characters defeat the poisoner and rats, 50 if the vendor is convinced that his food is poisoned. Another 50 if a priest in the party purifies the food.]

What's Next

These scenarios can be used as a starting point for your campaign, acquainting them to the city, introducing them to a variety of NPCs and locations, and advancing them to level two.

- Who hired Zalam?
- Why did Mac meet with the mysterious humanoids?
- Do the Cutters want revenge?
- What is Scurvy talking about?

I'll be following up on these in future adventures that take characters from level 2 to level 5.

In **Monster Squad**, the characters are hired to protect a Noble's wilderness estate from attacks by monsters that should not be in the Savage Coast.

In **Mercenary Monkey Wrench**, the characters are hired to make a rival mercenary company look bad. Mac's rivals also return with a vengeance.

In **Waterdeep at War**, the violence between Mac Bondo's organization and his rivals come to a head. The rivals engage in terrorism throughout the city while Mac goes on the offensive.

Credits

The artwork used in this adventure is from many of Patrick Pullen's collections available on the DMs Guild.