

HEARTS OF SHADOW

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A small adventure of mystery, intrigue, and revenge.



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ON THE COVER

A morose woman in a mask looks forward knowing what needs to be done.

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INTRODUCTION

STORY OVERVIEW

Feel free to paraphrase or read the following text out loud to your players when you start:

There is unrest in Field Ward, Waterdeep's unofficial eighth ward. Recently a rash of missing persons and horrific transformations are turning the already dangerous ward into a nightmare. Due to this unrest the Masked Lords have seen fit to increase the City Watch presence along the main roads leading into the city. Many suspect the Zhentarim of orchestrating these events, but no one knows the plans of the Black Network. It is up to the party to investigate these strange and horrific occurrences and bring whoever is perpetrating them to justice.

Hearts of Shadow is an adventure designed for a party of four to six, levels 3-5. This adventure has a decent mix of combat, investigation, and social interaction so all character classes will prove useful to the party. It can be done as a standalone one-shot adventure or incorporated into **Waterdeep: Dragonheist** as additional content or as an adventure that can be played if not everyone can make it.

THE VILLAIN

The main antagonist of this story is a halfling wizard named Gweniver Wildheart, her backstory can be found in Appendix A for more insight into her character and her fall from grace. She owns and operates a small charms and protection shop in Field Ward to find victims and to serve as a cover for her actions. She is the one responsible for the kidnappings and for the monsters roaming the alleys at night. To do this she is using enchanted crystal charms and henna-like tattoos. The orange charms she sells in her shop contain powerful enchantment magic that she can activate to make people obey her orders via enhanced versions of the charm person and command spells. Her tattoos are the result of years of magical research and a pact with an evil entity of the Shadowfell.

When the tattoo is broken the bearer will transform into a monster of shadow and undeath called a Shadow Wretch. Combat statistics for both Gweniver and her creations can be found in Appendix B. When the party first meets her unless they are directed to her through the course of their investigation, she should seem kind and be generally helpful to try and throw her off her scent. She will only get directly antagonistic if confronted or if she learns that the party is working with the City watch. Depending on the party there is a chance for them to switch sides and aid Gweniver in her quest of revenge. If that happens be prepared for a lot of chase scenes and infiltration as they will be trying to assassinate a City watch Captain.

ADVENTURE STRUCTURE

Hearts of Shadow is a murder mystery revenge plot split into three chapters: Shadows Lengthen, where the party will start out on their investigation and encounter the villain and her monsters, Encroaching Darkness, where the party's suspicions are fully aroused and they closely watch the villain, and finally The Shadow Witch where the party confronts the villain and the adventure is resolved. Each chapter will start with a revelation that the party should come to before they move on to the next section of the adventure. There are multiple ways to get to these revelations, but do not be afraid to ad lib or mix paths if the party does the unexpected. After all no plan survives first contact with the party! Listed below are brief descriptions of adventure hooks you can use to get the party interested in the adventure. Occasionally you will find text boxes like the one below. These are descriptions that can be read aloud to your players or summarized with your own flair. Feel free to embellish on what is provided based off what your players are doing and saying.

Feel free to read texts in these boxes out loud.

CHAPTER 1:

SHADOWS LENGTHEN

THE REVELATION

The party should end this chapter with suspicions about Gweniver and that the Shadow Wretches are a serious threat.

ADVENTURING HOOKS:

Listed below are the three main adventuring hooks that you can use to entice the players into starting their adventures. In “Self-Preservation” the adventurers will be spurred to stop these monsters due to them either living in Field Ward or having some connection to it. In “Do it for the Prestige” the adventurers will be recruited by one of three guilds the Zhentarim, the Harpers, or the Order of the Gauntlet. In “Doing Your Civic Duty” the party is attacked by one of the Shadow Wretches early on and the City Watch saves them. In recompense they ask the party to help them get to the bottom of what is going on.

SELF-PRESERVATION

You remember your time living in Field Ward being tough but living there is what made you the hardened adventurer you are today. So, when you got a letter from Valdric the owner of the Slaughterer’s Skull tavern you obliged the old man and headed over to see what is amiss.

The party will start out in the Slaughterer’s Skull tavern a run-down tavern that while large barley seems to be pulling in enough money to survive. The owner Valdric, known around town as Valdric the Ugly, is an aging half-orc man who has seen his fair share of scraps. Cuts and scars litter his skin, his nose is set at an awkward angle, and one ear is missing replaced by a slightly rusty tin horn. Valdric will brighten when he sees the adventurers approach and will insist that they find an empty table and that he will be there shortly to chat with them. After pouring a few more rounds he comes over to the table to

address the party. In a rather gruff and gravelly voice he will say:

“Look thank for reading to my letter, and for coming to see me. I know that you’ve grown past this place and I’m happy for you. It’s not very often that someone makes it out of Field Ward and makes something of themselves and I’m glad, truly I am. But now your old home needs your help. People have been going missing and folk are talking of strange and horrifying beasts roaming the alleys at night. The City Watch is no help unless the roads into the city are threatened and the gangs that run the streets are too spineless to do anything about it. People are terrified and we need this taken care of before it gets to out of hand. If you could deal with this, you would be doing your old neighborhood a great service and I am sure I can scrounge up some gold to make it worth your while. What’cha say?”

If the party agrees then Valdric is overjoyed and calls over Mary, one of his barmaids, to get the party some more drinks and to answer any questions they might have. Mary has an intricate tattoo on her forearm and a blue crystal charm around her neck. Both are from Gweniver’s shop and Mary will tell them that they are for warding off evil and for guaranteeing good luck. She recommends they go and see Gweniver at her shop the Sorrow’s Respite to get some charms of their own if they are going to stay out overnight.

DO IT FOR THE PRESTIGE

If none of the party decide to have any connection to Field Ward and they have some connection to some of the guilds within Waterdeep this may be the best hook to use. Depending on which of the two guilds the adventurers have earned some renown with choose which NPC to have them meet in the Slaughterer's Skull. Listed below are the two guilds, their associated quest giver, and their introductions. All these hooks start with the party receiving a mysterious letter asking them to come to the Slaughterer's Skull in Field Ward. What follows is a description of the tavern.

As you approach the tavern mentioned in the letter you received you are unsure to even call it a tavern. The tavern itself is a combination of several other shacks and squat buildings cobbled together with cracked bricks and roofed with broken clay shingles. The interior is absolutely filthy as the namesake suggests this tavern is the favorite stop of the various trades people who work in Field Ward, mainly butchers, tanners, or anyone else who does a job where a strong stomach and dull sense of smell are an asset. Due to the clientele the air within the tavern is foul smelling of meat just starting to turn and harsh chemicals. No music fills the tavern in the traditional sense but the sounds of the near constant bar brawl that roams from room to room provides a background noise that is distinctly Field Ward.

THE ZHENTARIM

The Zhentarim or Black Network is a large organization of mercenaries and smugglers whose members are willing to do anything if the price is right. They seek to gain as much power across the world as they can and are willing to crush those who get in their way. The quest giver for the Zhentarim is an up and coming star for the Zhentarim in Waterdeep. A blue skinned teifling named Leucious "Lucky" Le' Guy. Lucky has spent

much of his life grifting and hustling the people of Waterdeep. It was only when he was offered legitimacy with the Black Network that his combat and subterfuge really took off. He is a smooth talker who is always pleasant and is slow to anger. If the party fights him or you want to let them recruit him, he uses the **Spy** statistics found on page 349 of the Monster Manual. As the party enters the tavern Lucky will stand and wave them over.

A blue skinned teifling stands as you enter the tavern and waves you over to the table that he is sitting at. "Ah my new friends! I am so glad that you got my note and have agreed to come to this little meeting. I know you must be interested in what this is all about and I will get to it shortly, but first some ale." He waves over the bar maid and orders rounds for you all. "Please bring my new friends here the best stuff in the house. I apologize their best stuff still isn't very good but please accept this little gesture as my thanks just for hearing me out. Now to the reason for our little meeting some very strange things have been occurring here in Field Ward and the City Watch have wrongfully assumed that the organization that I am apart of are the culprits. Why we would want our own informants and smugglers disappeared and transformed into hideous monsters I could never fathom, but they seem hells bent on blaming us. So, I am asking you my new friends to get to the bottom of it! Of course, if you accept you shall be rewarded! Feel free to keep any money you find over the course of your investigation. Also, should you ascertain how these transformations are occurring a special bonus will be paid. And as if that wasn't enough you will have earned a favor from me Lucky Le' Guy and I repay my debts.

After this initial introduction Lucky is willing to share the following pieces of information with the party.

- That some of his informants who live here in Field Ward seem to have gone missing. The last time he spoke with one of them was by the Square Market by the North Gate.
- He has heard that during the night strange and terrible monsters have now been roaming the alleys. From what he has heard they seem to attack indiscriminately.
- What few informants he still has have told him that there is a young halfling woman who owns a shop that has been selling charms and special tattoos that are reported to ward off evil and guaranty good luck.

Once the party has finished their conversation with Lucky he will bow and take his leave reminding them that the Black Network has ears everywhere and he will be here most days for them to report their progress.

THE HARPERS

The Harpers are a loose collection of like-minded individuals who oppose evil and tyranny where they find it. Wherever their cells operate they try and support equality and fairness. Always acting in the shadows, the Harpers seek to bring equality to the world without anyone ever knowing that they had a hand in it. The quest giver for the Harpers is a new cell member here in Waterdeep a half elf woman named Isabella Strongfellow. Standing at average height her rosy cheeks and strawberry blond hair make her stand out in the Slaughterer's Skull, but that does not seem to dampen her cheery disposition. Always looking for the best in everyone she meets Mariana is the pinnacle of upbeat positivity. If the party seeks to gain her aid or attacks her use the **Spy** statistics on page 349 of the Monster Manual. She will be waiting for the party outside the tavern and waves them over to her as they approach.

As you approach the Slaughterer's Skull you can see a bright-eyed young half elf waving you over as you approach, she greets you. "Hiya! I am so glad you got my letter. I was starting to worry that you weren't going to show up. Why don't we go inside and I can talk to you about the job that I mentioned." You follow her inside and she leads you to a table and orders you some drinks. "The ale is not very good here but its better than nothing. Oh gosh I almost forgot to introduce myself Mariana Strongfellow Harper extraordinaire although I guess you probably shouldn't know that. My mentor always says keep a lower profile Izzy don't be so excitable Izzy but anyway the job! Someone has been kidnapping people around Field Ward and if that isn't bad enough there are spooky monsters lurking in the alleys now! Sense we Harpers are stretched a little thin at the moment I have been authorized to hire some outside help. If you accept you will be paid 50 gold dragons each and have the thanks of me, my mentor, and the people of Field Ward. So how about it?"

Once she is done explaining the job Isabella will also give out these three pieces of information.

- Someone has been kidnapping beggars as they sleep. This does not seem to be an issue near a local shop the Sorrow's Respite.
- The City Watch contingent that patrols the High Road near here is very on edge. One of their patrols was attacked last night near Square Market.
- The watch captain, Captain Kepesh, has been seen patrolling the streets again, very unusual.

After the party finishes their conversation with Isabella, she will thank them for helping her out and encourage them to come back anytime to keep her updated or just to talk. Once she is done explaining the job Isabella will also give out these three pieces of information.

DOING YOUR CIVIC DUTY

This hook is the most straightforward but also the most dangerous. As the party is wandering the streets of Waterdeep have them be attacked by one Shadow Wretch, statistics can be found in Appendix B. As the Wretch attacks read this description of the creature.

From the shadows you hear an unholy scream. Lunging out from a nearby alley a creature that you assume was once human attacks. Wisps of shadow billow off the creature waving like small flags in an unseen wind. Long claws made entirely of shadow protrude from where fingers should be, and a dull orange glow emanates from its chest. The tattered remains of rough spun clothes can be seen hanging from the creature's body.

The Wretch that attacks the party is already transformed. After it dies the shadows fade away to reveal the broken and shredded body of a human man. When searched the following pieces of information can be found:

- There is a strange orange color crystal growth on the creature's chest.
- With a DC 15 investigation or perception check a tattoo of various arcane runes can be found on the tattered remains of the corpses forearm.

Once the fight is over a gruff looking silver dragonborn will approach them and ask them about what just happened. He will then tell them that similar things have been attacking the members of his Watch contingent in Field Ward and will ask the party to help him root out the cause and destroy it. For their service he is willing to offer 250 gold dragons. He will then tell them to meet him at the End Shift Tavern in Field Ward tomorrow morning to get started.

LOCATIONS OF FIELD WARD

The party can begin their investigation in several places. As they visit and investigate, they will encounter a frightened populous that quickly goes about its business during the day and hurriedly returns home to locked doors as night comes. A larger contingent of

City Watch can be seen patrolling the streets and some even stray from the High Road which is highly unusual. Each place will have a description text box to read to the players and have clues that can be found at that location. Bear in mind the party should not progress to the next chapter till they have met Gweniver or Captain Kepseh and have had at least one combat encounter with the Shadow Wretches.

THE SLAUGHTERER'S SKULL

The starting location for two of the plot hooks. The Slaughterer's Skull is a popular hangout for the various butchers and tanners who work in Field Ward. It is number 1 on the map at the end of the adventure. If you used the "Doing Your Civic Duty" plot hook than read this description as the party approaches and enters the tavern for the first time.

As you approach the tavern mentioned in the letter you received you are unsure to even call it a tavern. The tavern itself is a combination of several other shacks and squat buildings cobbled together with cracked bricks and roofed with broken clay shingles. The interior is absolutely filthy as the namesake suggests this tavern is the favorite stop of the various trades people who work in Field Ward, mainly butchers, tanners, or anyone else who does a job where a strong stomach and dull sense of smell are an asset. Due to the clientele the air within the tavern is foul smelling of meat just starting to turn and harsh chemicals. No music fills the tavern in the traditional sense but the sounds of the near constant bar brawl that roams from room to room provides a background noise that is distinctly Field Ward.

Valdric the bartender knows the following things and will gladly share them with the party if they say they are working to solve the problems plaguing Field Ward.

- These attacks seem to be targeting the City Watch, which is bad news for Field Ward.
- Many of the Watch go to the End Shift Tavern when they are done patrolling to relax. It may be a good place to go to get a feel for the Watch's attitude.
- Gweniver Wildheart's shop Sorrow's Respite has had a large uptick in customers recently. They say her charms and mystic tattoos can repel evil and bring good fortune.

One of Valdric's barmaids Mary is a hidden member of the Xanathar thief guild and while she does not know it has been marked for death by Gweniver. Her orange charm will force her to transform and attack any City Watch person who enters the Slaughterer's Skull. This is an opportunity to have the party fight a Shadow Wretch in a more chaotic environment.

SORROW'S RESPITE

Sorrow's Respite is owned by Gweniver Wildheart a stout halfling wizard/warlock who has lived in Field Ward for some time. It is labeled as number two on the map. With all the recent attacks and rumors her shop has been seen as a safe haven from the darkness and many citizens of Field Ward have begun to congregate there in their off hours. As the party approaches for the first time read.

Standing before you is a quaint two story building with a wooden sign hanging from a post depicting a raven sleeping on a grave. Near the steps of the store lie a small candle lit shrine with a small portrait of a half-orc female in chain armor. A line of people stretches out from the shop with smaller groups loitering around and gossiping. They fall silent and turn to look at your approach only for a moment before they go back to gossiping.

The portrait in the shrine depicts Jaisa, Gweniver's lost love who tried to clean up this section of Field Ward but was killed in a mugging several years ago. If asked any of the people milling around the shop will give this information to the party. Around towards the back of the shop in the eastern alley there is a cellar door made of wood and locked with chains and a sturdy padlock. The lock itself can be picked with by beating a DC 15

dexterity check plus thieves' tools proficiency if applicable or by a DC 18 strength check to break the wooden doors. Breaking the doors is incredibly loud and will draw the attention of any people at the front of the shop and anyone inside the shop. The people in line get rather disgruntled if the party force their way into the shop but will not start a conflict and will run if attacked. If the party approach the shop at night, there will be two people guarding the front door and one person guarding the cellar door. All these people are wearing the orange crystals and have the tattoos that will transform them into Shadow Wretches.

SORROW'S RESPITE INTERIOR

Read the following description the first time the party enters the shop.

The interior of the shop is softly lit with candles and blue and purple gems floating in sconces placed around the walls. Deep blue curtains cover the windows and drape across the counters and display cases. A faint smoky fog lingers in the air. You can see a few customers milling about the shop with a small woman standing near a man lying face down on a table a large feathered quill in her hand. The whole shop smells of lavender and patchouli given off from the many censers that you see hanging from the ceiling.

As the party enters a small call can be heard from a raven that roosts above the door. It flutters over to Gweniver and she will pop her head up and tell the party that she will be with them in a moment. Once she has done tattooing her current customer she will hop down and start conversing with the party. If asked about the current goings on she will reveal the following information, though a DC 20 insight check will reveal that she is certainly hiding something and is not being entirely truthful.

- People around Field Ward are terrified about the recent bouts of kidnapping and the monsters that have been roaming the streets. Some are even saying that they are connected as they started at the same time.
- She has been trying her best to keep everyone calm no thanks to the Watch by providing charms and tattoos

at discounted prices to those who can pay and free to those who can't.

- She blames the rise in tension on the Watch captain, Captain Kepesh, who can be seen reviewing his command or drinking at the End Shift.

As the party investigates the shop the following clues can be discovered.

- Any users of arcane magic will feel its essence suffusing the air.
- Close examination of some of the ink that she uses will reveal that some of it seems to move with a mind of its own.
- If a party member puts on an orange charm have them roll a charisma saving throw which they will succeed. Gwen will try to stop them from trying to put on any of the merchandise, however.
- If any of the party, try to detect undead they will find a blip from underneath the floorboards of her shop. This is the reanimated remains of her lover Jaisa who Gwen continues to keep alive in this state because she refuses to let go.
- Any detect magic will determine that the orange crystal charms have a strong aura from the enchantment school of magic and some of her living ink has a strong necromancy aura mixed with transmutation.

SORROW'S RESPITE CELLAR

The party can gain access to the cellar one of two ways a trap door that can be found behind the west counter on the ground floor beneath a rug, or via the cellar door on the east side of the building. The basement is filled with various cages and four tables. Three of these tables are covered with alchemical apparatuses and the fourth seems to be some sort of torture table. The cages contain unconscious kidnapped victims. Their cages can be opened by either a key that sits on Gweniver's belt, a DC 20 dexterity check plus thieves' tools proficiency if applicable, or a DC 25 strength check though the breaking of the cage doors are incredibly loud and will alert Gweniver that the party is in her cellar.

As you enter the cellar of the Sorrow's Respite the first thing that hits you is the almost constant sound of moaning and as you look around the dark interior you can see four people lying on the stone floor locked in steel cages. Dominating the east side of the room are three large tables covered in alchemical equipment that give off a foul sulfurous odor which seems mixed with the smell of decay.

The cages contain three agents of the Xanathars and Zhentarim guilds who have been knocked unconscious. As the party approaches, they will see that all of them have orange charm necklaces and tattoos on their forearms. The fourth cage holds the still relatively intact undead body of Jaisa. Gweniver has been keeping her from decomposing by the use of magic. If awoken Jaisa will plead with the party to free her and to stop Gweniver. Should a fight erupt Jaisa will fight on behalf of the party if they can free her from her cage and have a weapon for her to use. For Jaisa use the **Ogre Zombie** statistics from page 317 in the Monster Manual with the following changes.

- Her size is medium instead of large.
- Her AC is 16 due to her chain mail.
- Her Wisdom and Intelligence scores are 10 and her Charisma score is 13.
- She also knows and has prepared the following Paladin spells; Heroism, Blinding Smite, and Cure Wounds. She can cast each of these twice.

THE END SHIFT TAVERN

One of the few nice taverns in Field Ward the End Shift Tavern is where members of the City Watch go to relax after their shifts guarding the High Road when not in their barracks. The End Shift tavern is labeled three

As you approach the clean looking one-story tavern you can see various members of the Watch walking in and out or just loitering around the front entrance. As you get nearer the door they all look at you funny but do not bar you entry.

on the map. Run by a relatively upbeat teifling named Brewer the End Shift is also one of the cleanest places in town.

Within the tavern are about five to ten members of the Watch, but a quick glance over the room will see that they are all rather downtrodden. If the "Doing Your Civic Duty" adventure hook was used, then Captain Kepesh and two of his personal guards will be sitting at a table near the back and after seeing the party enter, he will wave them over.

As you enter the tavern the immediate smell of pine and sage assaults you as it seems the proprietor is trying to fight off the stench of Field Ward. Small groups of demure soldiers can be seen nursing ales at the many tables. Near the back corner a rather severe looking dragonborn sits in deep conversation with two watch members sitting at his table.

The following information can be gained from either the Captain or any other Watch member if the party states that they are attempting to solve the problems that are plaguing this section of Field Ward.

- A Watch patrol was attacked last night and all, but one member was slain. The survivor is recovering in the infirmary at the Watch barracks by the northern gate.
- There are rumors that should the attacks continue the Masked Lords may consider more drastic measure to secure the High Road and prevent the creatures from spilling into the city proper.
- While many of the Watch do not trust her, some have visited Gweniver at her shop. These members can be seen with orange charms around their necks.
- Three members have been talking about forming a hunting party and are planning to go and hunt the creatures that killed their friends. They can be found at the Square Market.

If the party talk to the dragonborn he will state that his name is Captain Kepesh and he has no time to deal with petty problems right now. If the party say that they are investigating the creatures he will immediately give them his full attention and will tell them that he could really use their help. After a conversation he will direct them to the northern barracks to talk to Jenkins, the only survivor of the attack last night, and to an alley northwest of the Square Market, where the attack occurred to investigate. He will also state that if the party is willing to help him, he can put them up for the evening at the northern barracks.

THE NORTHERN WATCH BARRACKS

Lying just east of the northern gate the watch barracks holds the small contingent of City Watch that are assigned to guard the High Road into Waterdeep proper. The barracks is labeled as four on the map. The two-story barracks looms over the other buildings in the surrounding area. Within the barracks are

2d8+5 members of the Watch along with other various noncombatants. The first floor is split into a few rooms including a large kitchen, an infirmary, a bathroom, a storehouse, an armory, and a general lounge type meeting area. The second floor is split into three main areas one half is occupied by the beds that the members of the Watch use to rest when not on duty, the second half is divided between Captain Kepesh's quarters and the war room.

As you approach the Watch barracks you see people rushing in and out doing various chores for the Watch or soldiers going on patrol. The imposing building stands two stories tall joining with the wall that runs around the city.

THE INFIRMARY

Within the infirmary can be found a few nurses and clerics as well as the only survivor of the attack on the Watch patrol, Jenkins. Jenkins knows the following information and will share it with some hesitation after some coaxing or freely with anyone working with the Watch.

- The creatures that attacked him and his patrol were able to move through solid objects like ghosts and seemed almost impervious to their weapons.
- Each of the creatures had a distinct orange glow emanating from their chest.
- He was only saved when a cleric of Tyr came and assisted them with his holy magics. If he hadn't shown up Jenkins is convinced, he would not be here today.

After their conversation, the party will be shewed out of the infirmary by the nurses so Jenkins can get his rest. If the party is not working with Captain Kepesh he will confront them as they leave the infirmary. He will ask what they are doing there and to explain themselves. If he finds their answers to be satisfactory, he will ask for their help in getting to the bottom of these attacks. If he does not, he will have the party thrown out of barracks and have a Watch member assigned to tail them. Periodically role stealth for this guard if it is relevant.

SQUARE MARKET ALLEY

This stone paved alley lies just north west of the Square Market and is marked as five on the map. It was in this alley that a Watch patrol was attacked last night. As the party

approaches the alley some Watch soldiers will tell them to halt and explain their business here.

Approaching the alley, you immediately smell the coppery scent of blood. Two members of the Watch bar your way into the alley refusing to move.

The party can either persuade them to move with a DC 15 persuasion or intimidation check. The soldiers will move freely if they mention that they are working for the Watch or for Captain Kepesh. An investigation of the alley will reveal the following clues.

- There are multiple large pools of blood that can be found. One pool is near some crates near the northwest corner of the alley. If the party has seen a Shadow Wretch transform it is reasonable to assume that this pool is where the two Wretches transformed. The second pool can be found near the grate towards the center of the alley. The bodies of the creatures still lie here with the bodies of the Watch members already being carried off for their funeral rites.
- There are footprints that follow the pattern that Jenkins said his watch performed. They were being watched and were ambushed.
- Investigation of the creatures' bodies will show the tattered remains of tattoos from Gweniver's shop on their forearms and a strange orange crystal growth on their ribs.

If the party investigates the alley around dusk or at night have them be attacked by two Shadow Wretches.

CHAPTER 2:

ENCROACHING DARKNESS

THE REVELATION:

At the end of this section of the adventure the party should confirm that it is Gweniver who is responsible for the kidnappings and the creation of the Shadow Wretches and be ready to confront her.

ADDITIONAL SURVEILLANCE

If your party seems confident in their assumption that Gweniver is the culprit feel free to skip this chapter and continue to chapter three which will detail the final confrontation. If they need a little bit more of a push, then have them do some additional

investigating into Gweniver and Captain Kepesh.

SURVEILLING GWENIVER

If the party decides to surveil Gweniver have them roll a group stealth check. Everyone should roll stealth and if the majority beat a DC of 15 then they succeed and can continue to surveil her. If they fail two tattooed citizens wearing orange charms about why they are snooping around. They will ask for the party to come with them and will take them to the cellar beneath the Sorrow's Respite and attempt to throw them into the cages. If the party resists, they will transform into Shadow Wretches and the ensuing combat will alert Gweniver and she will come down and aid the party in the fight before asking what they are doing. If Gweniver joins the fight she will only use her at will spells saving her main stuff for a potential combat with the party.

The party can also try to gain more information on Gweniver and her backstory. As discoverable gossip, share the following information with the party.

- Several years ago, Gweniver's lover was killed in a mugging on the stoop of the Sorrow's Respite. Gweniver went to the Watch to try and get justice but the captain on duty Captain Kepesh refused her request.
- While she has not been overtly hostile to the Watch it is no secret that Gweniver has no love towards them and would love to see them suffer.
- While everyone has just attributed it to the poor living conditions and her emotional toil, people have been hearing quite a bit of sobbing coming from the Sorrow's Respite recently.

SURVEILLING THE CAPTAIN

If the party decides that they should surveil Captain Kepesh again call for a group stealth check with a DC of 15. They will follow him around for part of the day and will learn the following information.

- The Captain is highly regimented in his daily routine and does a meticulous inspection of the readiness of the people under his command.
- You see that some of the guards are taking bribes and engaging in some other shady dealings under their Captain's nose. He is either willfully ignorant of this or seems to sanction it.
- You notice that you're not the only people following the Captain a small group of 1d4+2 citizens are following him as well. These people are on orders from Gwen to attack the Captain transforming into Shadow Wretches before they do so. The attack will occur in the alley and the party can either aid him or stand aside.

CHAPTER 3:

THE SHADOW WITCH

THE REVELATION:

It is clear now that Gweniver is responsible for everything and she must be stopped. The party must infiltrate her shop and confront her.

THE INFILTRATION

The party has two main times when they can confront Gweniver in her shop; day or night.

DAYTIME INFILTRATION

If the party decides to confront Gweniver during the day they can easily enter the shop. When they enter, she will be just finishing up with a Watch member who has gotten her tattoo and orange charm necklace. If the party confronts her and starts a combat, she will command the Watch member to transform and attack the party while she bolts out the back door. She then runs and hides somewhere within Field Ward. She will return to her shop that night to gather all the people under her control for an assault on the Watch Barracks. The party can stop this all out assault if they wait for her in the cellar or confront her on her way in. If the party adopts a more diplomatic approach Gweniver can be persuaded via a DC 18 persuasion or intimidation check to close her shop early. She will then ask the party to follow her to her cellar through the trap door where she will listen to what they have to say. Depending on what they say or how aggressive they are refer to the appropriate confrontation path outlined below.

NIGHTTIME INFILTRATION

If the party decides to infiltrate her shop during the night, they can avoid any potential civilian casualties and stop Gweniver from running. She will have two controlled sentries posted at the front of her shop with one posted at the cellar doors. These sentries will not transform and attack the party but if given the opportunity they will cry out and alert Gweniver to the party's presence. The party can either knock out the sentries, kill them, or attempt to sneak pass them by making a DC 15 deception check to gain their attention and then succeeding on a group

stealth roll at a DC of 15. Again, both locks can be picked with a DC 15 dexterity check or broken down with a DC 18 strength check, though the latter path will make a lot of noise and alert Gweniver to the party's presence.

THE CONFRONTATION

As the party enters the cellar, they will find Gweniver standing over a Watch member who is strapped to her table forcibly tattooing them with the intent to use them as an assassin against Captain Kepesh. When they party has finished entering, she will finish what she is doing and will greet the party pleasantly. If the party starts a conversation with her, she will freely admit to being the one responsible and will tell them that the Watch has it coming to them. At this point there are three ways to resolve the conflict; the party can convince her to stop seeking her vengeance and try to help her escape, they can attack her at which point a massive conflict ensues, or they can be convinced by Gweniver that the Watch is the real enemy here and that Captain Kepesh needs to die at which point they can work with her to kill Captain Kepesh and his more corrupt guards. Each potential path is explained in more detail below.

WHAT YOUR DOING IS WRONG

The party can talk her down and convince her to stop through a persuasion boss battle, the rules for this are at the end of the chapter, if they fail go to the second outcome and run the combat encounter. The party can make this a little easier if they recognize the very well-preserved zombie half-orc in one of the cages as Jaisa Gweniver's former lover. If they accomplish this, she will beg for them to help her get out of the city so she can start a new life. At this point the party hears boots stomping around upstairs and the sound of glass shattering. The city watch has decided to take action into their own hands and are going to capture and execute Gweniver. Turns out she and her minions were not that stealthy when it came to kidnapping the guard she has strapped to her table. Begin a chase sequence using the rules on page 252 of the Dungeon Master's Guide. This will either culminate in Gweniver escaping or Gweniver and the party being captured. At this point the party can decide to either betray her, or if you are using this as part of Waterdeep:

Dragonheist, attempt to use their clout with any organizations they have, to get themselves free. If caught Gweniver will be executed the following week. If the players cannot get free, they are released after three weeks of confinement since there is no evidence of their participation in the crime. When they are released and if the “Do it for the prestige” hook was used they see either Lucky or Isabella waiting for them outside of the jail and over a pint of ale they will explain that their organization was able to pull some strings to get them their early release though now they are indebted to them.

KILL THE WITCH

The most straightforward of the resolutions. Have the party roll for initiative, if they failed to sneak up on Gweniver, have three transformed minions come out of the shadows and attack the players. If they did manage to surprise Gweniver her first action will be to have the three captured humanoid transform and phase out of their cages. Roll an initiative for them and they will escape their cages on the next round and attack the party. Once combat begins the party will hear a loud voice saying that she wants to help them fight. This is the zombified corpse of Gweniver’s lover Jaisa. If the party can free her have her join combat. She uses the **Ogre Zombie** statistics from page 317 in the Monster Manual with the following changes.

- Her size is medium instead of large.
- Her AC is 16 due to her chain mail.
- Her Wisdom and Intelligence scores are 10 and her Charisma score is 13.
- She also knows and has prepared the following Paladin spells; Heroism, Blinding Smite, and Cure Wounds. She can cast each of these twice.

Gweniver will fly into a rage at seeing her lover take up arms against her and will fight till the bitter end. After the conflict is over the party will leave the shop and encounter Captain Kepesh and some of the city watch who are seeking a kidnaped comrade of theirs. They will question the party and give them some rewards and influence with the City Watch for helping them stop this menace.

KILL THE GUARDS

With this third option Gweniver will have the party assist her in killing Captain Kepesh and the other Watch members who patrol the High Road. After the discussion that leads up to this the party will hear the sound of

armored boots above them and glass shattering. Gweniver will suggest that one of the party members go upstairs to see what is going on and if it is the watch lure them down here for an ambush. The noise upstairs is being caused by Captain Kepesh (stats can be found at the end of Appendix B) and five guards (Use the stats for a guard found on page 347 of the Monster Manual). After the ambush Gweniver will realize what she has done and after crying tears of relief ask the party to help her and Jaisa escape the city. Gweniver decides to burn down her shop to prevent her research from creating anymore trouble. She can be persuaded by a DC 18 persuasion check to turn over her notes before burning down her shop. At this point you can run a chase or not depending on if the final battle was climactic enough.

PERSUASION BOSS BATTLE RULES

The party starts with three “lives” representing their attempts to persuade Gweniver, Gweniver starts with three “lives” representing her stubbornness and wanting to see the city watch suffer. The party can make any sort of check to try and persuade Gweniver, but they must justify it. For example, a character may use arcana to explain the pain that the people who she is forcing to transform feel. As Gweniver loses one of her “lives” the DC of subsequent rolls are reduced by however much you see fit. If the party fails their check they lose one of their lives and the DC of subsequent rolls increases. The first group to lose all of their lives loses the “battle”. The DC for this will start at 20. Adjust the DC how you see fit based on the players justification for their role and their argument.

CONCLUSION:

Depending on the path chosen by the party in the previous chapter a few different outcomes can occur. Feel free to read the following resolutions word for word or embellish them as you see fit.

IF THE PARTY HELPED GWENIVER ESCAPE WITHOUT KILLING CAPTAIN KEPESH

IF THE PARTY WAS NOT CAPTURED

A few weeks have passed since you helped Gweniver escape. Since then you have heard that the city watch has accepted that a larger force needs to be patrolling Field Ward. Until the culprit is caught and brought to justice a strict curfew has been placed on Field Ward and special documents are needed by citizens of the city to enter and exit Field Ward. The High Road is now flanked by a spiked wooden fence. While they oppress the people of Field Ward, the Masked Lords have acknowledged their failures and there is a growing movement in the city to make Field Ward an official Ward with more resources going to it in an attempt to prevent something like this from happening again.

IF THE PARTY WAS CAPTURED

You walk out of the dungeons of Castle Waterdeep having spent three miserable weeks within them. You can still remember the cries of “Murderer!” and “Death to the shadow witch!” from Gweniver’s execution as if they were still ringing in your ears. It was only by the grace of the Gods and Goddesses that you were not executed with her. While the public was not allowed to witness that did not stop the City Watch from enjoying the show. After leaving with your belongings, you magic items too, you wander back through the town stopping by the Yawning Portal for a drink or returning to Trollskull Tavern if the party has acquired it. If the “Do it for the prestige” hook was used add: As you leave the Castle Waterdeep the large iron bound wooden gates slamming behind you, you look up to see Lucky, or Isabella, that strange teifling, or half elf, who hired you for this job. “Come on let's go get a drink”. They lead you back to the Yawning Portal where they find you all a secluded table and something to drink.

IF THE PARTY KILLED GWENIVER

It has been three days since your conflict with the revenge crazed halfling wizard, and all seems to be returning to normal. By stopping the threat, you managed to prevent the crackdown on Field Ward that the watch had planned though they treat the area with a more malicious neglect. You were thanked personally in a private ceremony by Captain Kepesh and given the promise that if you need

anything just call on him and he can help get things taken care of.

IF THE PARTY KILLED CAPTAIN KEPESH

It has been two weeks since you helped Gweniver get her revenge and the news of the killing of Captain Kepesh has been in the throats of all the city criers. Along with that news comes the news of a horrible crackdown in Field Ward in an attempt to find the killer or killers responsible. Families were ripped out of homes and many places of business were left in ruin after the City Watch was done with them. Life in Field Ward is now much harder after the Masked Lords decided that a more hands on approach was needed. A strict curfew was placed into effect and no citizen of Field Ward is allowed entrance into the city proper. Special papers are now needed to enter and leave the Ward, and the few taverns have been permanently closed. Rumors of rebellion have started to crop up though such an ill-advised idea would surely lead to the cleansing of the ward and a return to the wagon fields that it once was.

REWARDS

There are several rewards that can be gained from completing this quest. All total through the various encounters some 150gp, 250sp, and 400cp can be earned from various looting of the bodies and strewn about the Sorrows Respite. The party can gain three renown with the following factions depending on who the party was working for. By default, the party will earn membership with the Lord’s Alliance and gain some renown with them. If they worked with Lucky then they will gain membership with the Zhentarim and earn some renown there, the same is true with the Harpers if the party worked with Isabella. Lastly for any spellcasters the party can acquire Gweniver’s notes on her enchantments and rituals. These are written in a complex code that takes four successful intelligence checks of DC in order of 25, 20, 20, and 15. Each check reveals a little bit more of her process. Once all checks are done the person making them acquires the knowledge to make their own mind controlling totems and how to make their own living ink. Descriptions of these items can be found in Appendix C.

APPENDIX A:

GWENIVER WILDHEART'S BACKSTORY

Guinevere Wildheart has always been an exceptional mage and kind person. Growing up on the Sword Coast she always heard stories of the fabulous wealth and opportunities in Waterdeep. So, when it was discovered through study that she had a knack for magic she decided to set off and travel to Waterdeep to study in the fabled City of Splendors. When she got there, she was crestfallen to discover that this supposed city of wealth and splendor could not or chose not to care for the citizens on the outskirts. Determined to make a difference she set up a small shop where she could use what small amount of magic she had to aid the people of Field Ward. It was during this time that she met Jaisa, a young and ambitious half orc who, like her, was determined to improve the lives of her neighbors. While Gweniver took a less direct approach, healing where she could and engineering new potions and charms to help where she could not, Jaisa's approach was more aggressive. She quickly formed a small group of likeminded citizens who would roam the streets making sure that they were safe to walk at night and that shops were not burgled. Taking no money Jaisa quickly earned a reputation as an honest and kindhearted woman who was quick with a joke and even quicker to protect her friends and family. And while her reputation soared within Field Ward that kind of notoriety also attracts powerful enemies. The Xanathars an up and coming thieves guild/street gang were tired of Jaisa's group cutting into their profits and snatching up potential recruits, so they decided to do something about it. Late one night outside Gweniver's shop a large group of thugs ambushed Jaisa and cut her down in the street after vandalizing the shop. Gweniver tried to heal her but her wounds were too intense and after minutes of tears and consoling Jaisa passed on the stoop where so many memories were made. Gweniver, still a believer in justice, stormed into the End Shift Tavern and reported to the city watch what had just occurred. Her cries for justice fell on deaf ears. The Xanathars had paid off some of the watch plus as Field Ward is not a recognized ward of the city, they had orders

to not stray too far from the High Road and that investigative resources were better spent on crimes within the city. Outraged by this Gweniver returned to her shop and sought a way to get justice for her fallen love. Upon her return she found a strange man in her shop lamenting her plight in exchange for the occasional favor he would give her the power to enact vengeance on those who stole her love from her, and even the power to bring her back for more time. Gweniver signed the deal on the spot. Ever since she has been using the shadowy powers gifted by this mysterious man to engineer the perfect response to her enemies. Now that her studies are finished and her ritual is perfected it is time for them to pay, and this city who stole her heart from her will burn in shadow and fire.

APPENDIX B:

In this appendix you will find the stat blocks for Gweniver Wildheart, the Shadow Wretches, and Captain Kepesh.

GWENIVER WILDHEART

Gweniver Wildheart is a halfling wizard/warlock with chestnut brown hair that she normally keeps up in a loose bun. She is clad primarily in purples and blues. Her cheery outward disposition hides a sinister purpose.

GWENIVER WILDHEART

Small Humanoid Halfling, Neutral Evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 57 (3d6+4d8+25)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Int +8, Cha +7

Skills Arcana +8, Insight +3, Deception +7

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Halfling

Gaze of Shadows: Choose a creature within 30 ft that you can see, that creature makes a DC 16 Wis saving throw or become frightened of you. You can spend a bonus action each turn to maintain this effect. A creature loses this status if they take damage. Once a creature has saved or broken free of this effect they cannot be targeted again for 24 hours.

Spellcasting: Gweniver is a 7th-level spellcaster. Her casting ability is Intelligence (Spell Save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following spells from the warlock and wizard spell lists prepared:

Cantrips: Blade Ward, Chill Touch, Eldritch Blast, Acid Splash, and Fire Bolt

1st-level (4 slots): Hellish Rebuke, Armor of Agathys, Hex, Charm Person, Shield, Sleep

2nd-level (3 slots): Ray of Enfeeblement, Earthbind, Blur, Darkness, Hold Person, Shadow Blade

3rd-level (3 slots): Slow, Bestow Curse, Enemies Abound

SHADOW WRETCH

The Shadow Wretch is a humanoid that has been twisted and transformed through an evil arcane ritual condensing shadow and malice creating an undead killing machine. Those people who transform with an orange charm around their necks are bound to follow the creator's commands. If a Shadow Wretch is created without a command charm than it goes on a killing spree driven mad by the painful transformation it attempts to kill the closest living thing and will not switch targets until it does.

SHADOW WRETCH

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 66 (12d8+12)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14(+2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Con +3

Skills Stealth +7

Damage Vulnerabilities Radiant

Damage Resistances Acid, Necrotic, Thunder, Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from nonmagical weapons.

Damage Immunities Cold, Lightning, and Poison.

Condition Immunities Exhaustion, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned, Prone, and Restrained

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Telepathy 120 ft.

Shadow Stealth: When in dim light or darkness the Shadow Wretch can take the Hide action as a bonus action.

Incorporeal Movement: The Shadow Wretch can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Shadow Wretch makes two attacks with its claws each turn.

Shadow Claws: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) necrotic damage. On a successful hit the target must also make a DC 10 Con save. On a failed save the targets Strength score is reduced by 1d4 or is not reduced on a successful save. The target dies if this reduces a creatures Strength score to 0. Otherwise the reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest.

CAPTAIN KEPESH

Captain Kepesh is a large silver dragonborn who has served with the City Watch of Waterdeep for many years. For the past decade he has been assigned the command of guarding the High Road through Field Ward. He regrets the sacrifices that he has had to make in order to keep the peace along the road but is staunchly loyal to the Watch members that he commands and would do anything for them.

CAPTAIN KEPESH

Medium Humanoid Dragonborn, Lawful Neutral

Armor Class 17 (Splint Mail)

Hit Points 73 (12d8 +18)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws Str +7, Con +4

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +2

Damage Resistances Cold

Senses Passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Draconic

Great Weapon Master: Captain Kepesh is incredibly skilled with his greatsword. When he rolls for damage, reroll 1s and 2s and take the new roll.

Improved Critical: Captain Kepesh scores a critical hit on a roll of a 19 or 20

ACTIONS

Multiattack: Captain Kepesh make two attacks with his greatsword, or one attack with his heavy crossbow, or uses his breath weapon.

Breath Weapon: Captain Kepesh can use his draconic ancestry to exhale a 15ft. cone of cold as an action. All creatures caught within the cone must succeed a DC 13 Con save or suffer 3d6 cold damage on a failed save or half as much on a successful one.

(Recharges on a 6)

Greatsword: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Heavy Crossbow: *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

APPENDIX C:

Necklace of Charm and Control: This orange gem necklace is made by Gweniver in her shop and is enchanted to make anyone who wears it supremely friendly towards Gweniver and forces them to follow her commands which she can either give verbally or have a given trigger. (Requires Attunement)

The Living Ink: This special ink is what Gweniver uses to force the transformation into Shadow Wretches on her selected victims. This is enchanted ink that has distilled Shadow and Shadow Demon blood infused within. The transformation occurs when the tattooed charm is broken either from the ink wearing off or the lines being broken. It may be possible with various arcana checks to adjust this ink to other various elements with Gweniver's notes, but severe research would be needed to make this transformation temporary and non-lethal.

APPENDIX D:

MAP OF FIELD WARD NEIGHBORHOOD



REVENGE IS BEST SERVED FROM THE SHADOWS

It has been seven years since her love was taken from her and now she is finally ready to exact her revenge. Plotting in her shop Gweniver Wildheart performs arcane rituals and conducts research that would make even the darkest litch proud. Soon her creations will be unleashed upon Field Ward and it is up to you to stop her.

Gather your friends and follow the clues to track down Gweniver and put a stop to her nefarious plans. Or maybe join her in her quest to destroy the corrupt Watch captain who failed to stop the ones who killed her love. The choice is yours in Hearts of Shadow. Saviors or killers? Enforcers or fugitives? Decide as you play!

With three potential resolutions leading to four unique endings this short adventure makes for a perfect one shot adventure to get your feet wet with the world's greatest tabletop RPG, or use it as a fun side quest when not everyone can make it while playing Waterdeep: Dragonheist. The choices are waiting, and the citizens of Field Ward are waiting for their heroes. So, take your chance and give it a roll.

