

Waterdeep Primer



**A primer on the City of Splendor in the
Forgotten Realms update for 5E**

by Jason Hardin



Waterdeep Primer

City of Splendors

Introduction: Waterdeep is a vast and complex city where an entire campaign can take place. Wizards of the Coast has published much about Waterdeep over the years, and much of that information needs to be updated and expanded on for 5th edition. Dungeon Masters will find an introduction to Waterdeep within. This module provides an overview of the history, geography, government, society, military, and education in Waterdeep. Dungeon Masters should use this module to gain an overall understanding of the City of Splendors.

by Jason Hardin



DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, D&D, Wizards of the Coast, Forgotten Realms, the dragon ampersand, *Player's Handbook*, *Monster Manual*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, D&D Adventurers League, all other Wizards of the Coast product names, and their respective logos are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast in the USA and other countries. All characters and their distinctive likenesses are property of Wizards of the Coast. This material is protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America. Any reproduction or unauthorized use of the material or artwork contained herein is prohibited without the express written permission of Wizards of the Coast.

©2018 Wizards of the Coast LLC, PO Box 707, Renton, WA 98057-0707, USA. Manufactured by Hasbro SA, Rue Emile-Boéchat 31, 2800 Delémont, CH. Represented by Hasbro Europe, 4 The Square, Stockley Park, Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB11 1ET, UK.

Table of Content

		Criminal Organizations	15
Table of Content	2	Military	15
Overview	3	City Guard	16
A Brief History	3	City Navy	16
Elven and Dwarven Cities	3	Griffon Cavalry	16
Human Expansion into Deepwater Bay	4	Gray Hands	16
Founding of Waterdeep	4	Society	16
Lords of Waterdeep	4	Noble Families	17
Founding of Skullport	4	Religion	17
The Rise and Fall of the Guilds	5	Guilds	17
Reign of Baeron	6	Secret Societies	18
Reign of Lhestyn	6	Factions	19
Reign of Piergeiron	6	Education	20
Spellplague	6	Magic Schools	20
Map	7	Bards' Colleges	21
Wards	8	Credits	22
Castle Ward	8	Bibliography	22
Dock Ward	9		
Field Ward	9		
North Ward	9		
Sea Ward	10		
Southern Ward	10		
Trades Ward	11		
City of the Dead	12		
Undercliff	13		
Government	13		
Lords of Waterdeep	13		
Legal System	13		
The Courts	14		
The Magisters	14		
City Watch	14		

Overview

This setting guide is an introduction to Waterdeep. Dungeon Masters will learn a little about its history, geography, government, military and society. This document provides links to more detailed products where available. I will update the document as new Wizards of the Coast, and DMs Guild products that focus on Waterdeep are released. As with everything in Dungeons and Dragons use what you want, change what you want, and throw out the rest.

A Brief History

Deepwater Bay, the bay on which Waterdeep sits, has been home to many races over the years. Some have had more impact than others. Below is a condensed version of Waterdeep's history.

Elven and Dwarven Cities

The first city near Deepwater Bay was created by elves in -8500 DR. We know three things about the elves that settled in Deepwater Bay. First, we know they named their city Aelinthaldar. Second, we know they razed their city when they left for Evermeet in -1100 DR. Third, we know that they created a high magic effect that prevents the plateau of Mount Waterdeep from collapsing. The elves cast the spell because a clan of dwarves had settled under Mount Waterdeep and began aggressively mining. They also cast the spell in exchange for a large sum of mithril. The magical effect still exists on Mount Waterdeep today.

The dwarves came to Mount Waterdeep next following their leader, Melair. Melair discovered a rich vein of mithril within Mount Waterdeep. He used the prospect of mining mithril to convince more of his kin to join him and founded a city beneath Mount Waterdeep named the Underhalls of Melairbode. When the dwarves expanded their domain up into Mount Waterdeep, they drew the

elves' attention. The upper area of the Underhalls of Melairbode is now known as Undermountain.

During Melair's reign, a group of Netherese mages known as the Sarguah Enclave claimed an area of Melairbode that the dwarves had not yet excavated. The Netherese died when two-thirds of their domain collapsed after the Weave collapsed in -339 DR. Magic released during the collapse twisted those who survived into the Skulls of Skullport; the magical undead.

In -677 DR, drow began an incursion into Melairbode that lasted hundreds of years. In 34 DR, the drow were able to force the dwarves out of Melairbode and further below Mount Waterdeep. The drow



established a city and named it Kyorlamshin, and the dwarves eventually vanished.

Human Expansion into Deepwater Bay

The rest of the history of Waterdeep focuses on humans and their settlement of the area. In -50 DR Illuskans from Ruathym settled at the mouth of the River Delimbiyr, which is south of Deepwater Bay. The Illuskans expanded their settlement north along the coast into Deepwater Bay and beyond. For two and a half centuries the Illuskans inhabited this area.

In 168 DR, a wizard named Halaster Blackcloak and his apprentices, known as the Seven, established a tower on the Deepwater Plateau north and west of the Illuskan farms. Halaster and the Seven made incursions into the Underhalls from the tower. These incursions eventually forced the drow lower into their domain. As Halaster and the Seven became more and more successful in holding levels of the Underhalls they stopped using the tower, and it fell into disrepair.

In 302 DR, the Illuskan rule began to decline and they eventually fragmented into tribes. One of these tribes settled near Halaster's tower and founded the settlement of Blackcloak Hold.

In 482 DR, a Tethyrian warlord named Ulbaerag Bloodhand unified the warring tribes in and around Blackcloak Hold. Blackcloak Hold became a vital anchoring point for ships when they came to harvest timber from the surrounding area. Bloodhand renamed the settlement Bloodhand Hold.

In 882 DR, several cities fell to demons which caused displaced dwarves, humans and elves to seek refuge throughout Faerûn. One such refugee was a great human warrior named Nimoar the Reaver. He led an army in search of a new place to settle. He found and seized Bloodhand Hold. Nimoar renamed the settlement to Nimoar's Hold and began constructing a wooden fortress.

Over the next ten years, pirates and barbarian tribes tested Nimoar, his army and Nimoar's Hold's defenses. Each time the Hold was victorious. With each victory, Nimoar's army expanded and fortified the Hold. The fledgling town grew larger, more prosperous and known as the town of Waterdeep.

Founding of Waterdeep

Over the next two decades, 932 DR to 952 DR, Nimoar's Hold and the Dessarin River Valley became the center of several wars. After the Orcfastings War in 936 DR, Nimoar died of old age. Gharl, Nimoar's most accomplished general, became his successor as Warlord of Waterdeep. When Gharl died, Amphail the Just became the next Warlord of Waterdeep. Six more warriors became the War Lord of Waterdeep over the next twelve years.

In 952 DR, the humans of the North banded together and destroyed the last of the orc hordes. Several individuals became heroes of the wars, but one would shape Waterdeep's history. The human nations recognized Ahghairon as the Premier Wizard of the Savage North. The War Lord of Waterdeep appointed Ahghairon as his official advisor.

Waterdeep emerged from the wars as a significant power in the region, and after the wars were over the War Lord commissioned the construction of Castle Waterdeep. In 974 DR Laroun, the first female War Lord of Waterdeep, began her reign in the castle. The City continued to expand, and Laroun officially founded the Free City of Waterdeep.

Lords of Waterdeep

Because peace never lasts long, a new war started after a group of Waterdavian adventures called the Dawnbringers plundered a sacred crypt of the orcs. In the ensuing war with the newly raised orc horde, Laroun died. The title of War Lord of Waterdeep passed to Raurlor, the leader of the city's army.

For two years Raurlor built up Waterdeep's standing army to an unprecedented level, striking down any

descent. In the year 1032 DR, Raurlor proclaimed Waterdeep the Empire of the North, and Ahghairon struck down the self-crowned king, by transforming Raurlor's sword into a viper.

Ahghairon claimed authority over the city and decreed that wisdom, not might, would rule Waterdeep from now on. Ahghairon gathered a group of Lords from all walks of life. He masked and disguised these Lords when they appeared in public and gave them authority equal to his. Thus, began the ruling of Waterdeep by one Open Lord and several Masked Lords.

Waterdeep prospered under the Lords of Waterdeep, and the system of wards came into being. In 1071 DR, a noted adventurer flew into Waterdeep astride a copper dragon. The ease with which they entered the city prompted Ahghairon to create a magical ward that deters dragons from entering the city, and the ward stands to this day.

Founding of Skullport

In 1148 DR, a Netherese wizard, named Shradin Mulphor, discovered and settled into the ruins of the Sarguah Enclave. Shradin, who became known as The Lord of Bone, encouraged trade with the other Underdark powers. Within twenty-five years, Shardin had converted what was the Sarguah Enclave into Skullport, a secure settlement for

smugglers, slavers, assassins, thieves, and buccaneers.

Skullport flourished under the Lords of Waterdeep and is seen by the Lords as a necessary evil. Skullport provides an area for the seedy underbelly of Waterdeep to blow off steam, which reduces the number of incidents in Waterdeep. Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun the Elder arrived in Waterdeep, at the same time Shradin founded Skullport and constructed Blackstaff, where he lived, studied, and educated his apprentices.

The Rise and Fall of the Guilds

In 1256 DR, Ahghairon passed away. On the day of the ceremony, the guild masters of Waterdeep secretly had all but two of the Masked Lords killed. Over the next two months, the Guilds warred with each other. After much blood was spilled the war ended and the Guilds decided that a Council of Guildmasters would rule Waterdeep.

For six years, the Council of Guildmasters argued and inevitably war erupted again. The war killed all but two guild masters. The surviving two guild masters agreed to rule together as Lords Magisters. It was at this time that the Shadow Thieves discovered the Underhalls of Melairbode. The Shadow thieves



established a base in the Underhalls and began expanding their ranks and influence.

In 1273 DR, the two Masked Lords, who survived the guild masters' coup, killed the two Lords Magister in their court and claimed authority over Waterdeep. Lord Baeron Silmaeril unmasked himself and declared himself the Open Lord of Waterdeep.

Reign of Baeron

During Baeron's reign, Waterdeep prospered. The borders of the city expanded to include the North and Sea Wards. Baeron rebuilt the Masked Lords, selecting fourteen individuals from all walks of life. He made sure that a coup would not be so easy in the future, by having only seven Masked Lords in one place at a time. Baeron and his wife had a daughter Lhestyn in 1276 DR.

In 1298 DR, Lhestyn infiltrated the Shadow Thieves and exposed them. A battle raged between the Shadow Thieves and the City Watch for the next ten days. The fighting ended with the death of most of the masters of the Shadow Thieves. Those who survived fled Waterdeep.

Reign of Lhestyn

In 1308 DR, Baeron died of fever and Lhestyn succeeded him as Open Lord of Waterdeep. Lhestyn reigned for only six short years. In that time, she saw the construction of the Palace of Waterdeep, and the death of her husband by some unknown perpetrator. Durnan, a noted adventurer and Masked Lord, founded the Red Sashes in 1311 DR because of the death of Lhestyn's husband and the inability of the Watch to find the culprit. Lhestyn died in 1314 DR. Piergeiron Paladinson, a paladin, an officer of the city guard, and Masked Lord became the next Open Lord of Waterdeep.

Reign of Piergeiron

For four decades of Piergeiron's reign, Waterdeep knew peace. Then in 1355 DR, Amril Zoar, the scion of an exiled Waterdhavian family, killed two Masked

Lords and wounded the Open Lord. The City Watch captured Amril, and Storm Silverhand, a prominent Harper, insisted and kept Amril from death.

During the Time of Troubles, Shar appeared in Waterdeep. She disguised herself as Selune, and attempted to weaken her rival. Then Myrku's Legion and the avatar of the Lord of Bones invaded Waterdeep and caused mass destruction in the Dock, Castle, and Southern Wards. Mystra and Cyric ascended to Godhood on the slopes of Mount Waterdeep. After the Time of Troubles, a drought caused political unrest in Waterdeep. At the height of the unrest, a green dragon named Grimnoshtadrano, the Riddling Dragon of the High Forest, ridden by a mad bard attacked Waterdeep. The City Guard thwarted the attack, but the unrest and attack combined nearly ended Piergeiron's rule.

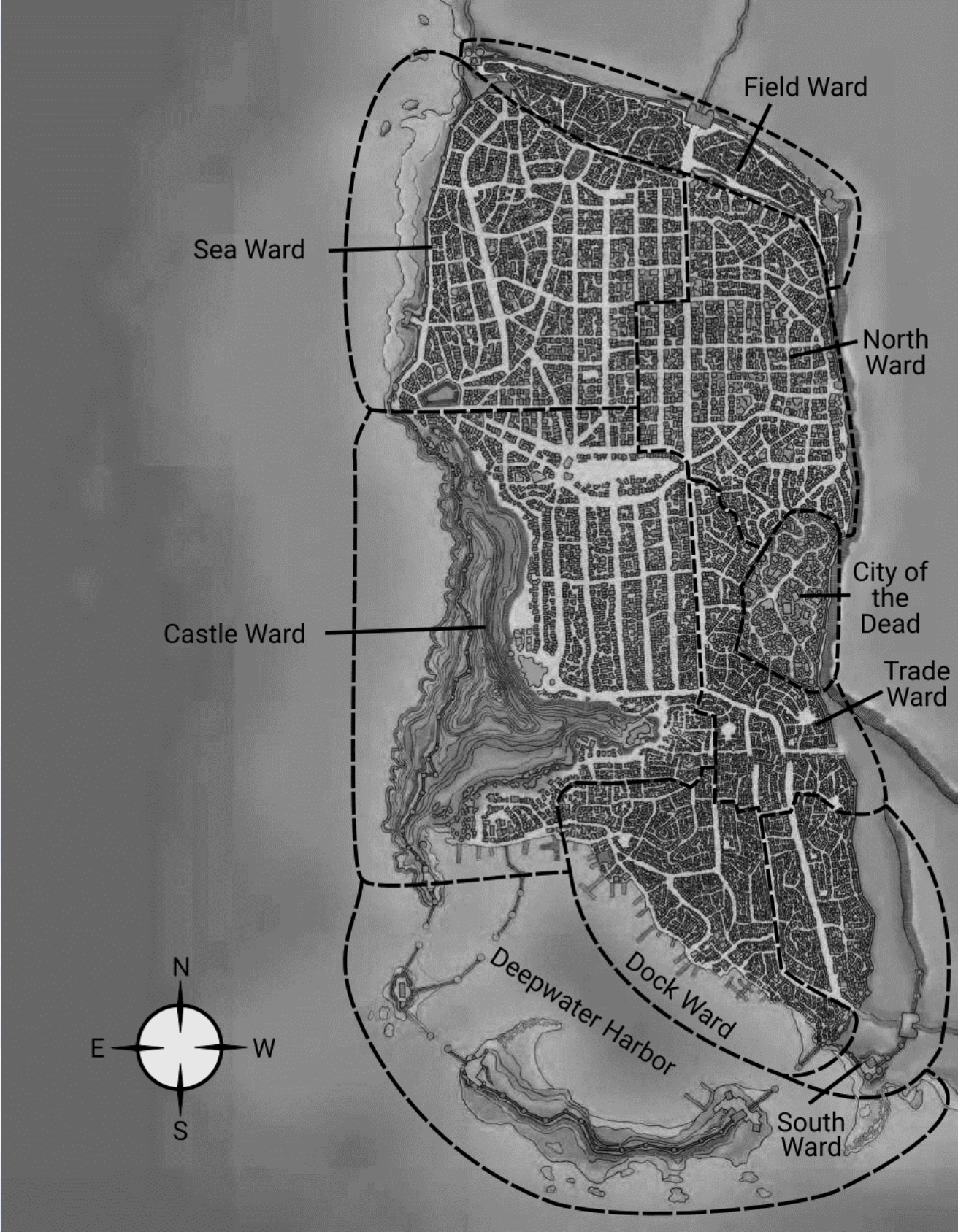
In 1369 DR, an army of sea creatures led by a colossal wereshark caused significant damage to the Dock and Sea Wards before being vanquished. Many of the sea creatures escaped into Waterdeep's sewers. Shortly after that, Halaster's Highharvestide caused many portals in the city to malfunction and release monsters into the city, causing damage to the Castle and Trade Wards.

Spellplague

Waterdeep was left mostly untouched by the Spellplague. The only notable incident was the day the statues walked on their own and caused damage to various wards. At dusk on the same day they started walking the statues stopped wherever they were and never moved again.

After the disaster, the citizens of Waterdeep banded together and rebuilt the damaged structures. One interesting note is that during the rebuilding several structures were built around or on top of the statues. There is now a growing wealthy merchant class building prestigious homes on top of the statues that rest against Mount Waterdeep.

Map



Wards

Waterdeep is made up of nine large regions. Seven of these regions are called wards, and the two additional areas have significance to Waterdeep. The wards of Waterdeep separate Waterdeep's social classes and business interests. Their names suggest the services and types of activities that an individual can find within.

Locals identify themselves by the ward or wards they live and work in. They dream of opportunities to advance to more prominent wards. No laws restrict a given activity or class of people to any specific ward, but social class and money often do. For visitors to Waterdeep, wards and the layout of the town can become confusing quickly.

Castle Ward

The Castle Ward is at the heart of Waterdeep, both geographically and politically. Geographically, the ward wraps around the eastern slopes of Mount Waterdeep. Politically, the Castle Ward is where the wealthy and influential, who are not nobility, live. The Castle Ward also houses many public, administrative, religious, and educational buildings that serve all Waterdeep.



Watch Presence

Two watch patrols protect the Castle Ward day and night. The Watch has offices and cells in Castle Waterdeep, and the Watch staff on duty can assist any patrols in trouble.

Notable Locations

Blackstaff Tower

From the outside, Blackstaff Tower is a simple three-story stone structure surrounded by a curtain wall. Those who train within, however, learn that there are at least a dozen more sublevels of the tower reachable only by magic. Some say Blackstaff Tower is sentient, a statement never refuted by those residing within its walls.

Castle Waterdeep

Castle Waterdeep is a thick-walled stronghold, with pennants and banners flown from its many battlements. The castle walls rise 400 feet, at their greatest height from the ground, and are 60 feet thick on average. The city has placed many spells on the walls of the castle that protect it from attack.

The Guard maintains a garrison within the castle, with at least thirty guards on duty at any given time. The Guard and the Watch use the courtyard to train their soldiers and horses. The Castle also maintains enough food to feed fifty thousand people for ten days in the event of a siege.

New Olamn

New Olamn is a noted education center and storehouse of knowledge. Bards from across the Realms come to New Olamn to study within its walls.

Lords' Palace

Formerly known as Piergeiron's Palace, The Lords' Palace is the seat of local government. Magisters hold court daily in the Lords' Hall and the Hall of Justice. The Masked Lords meet here once a ten-day in secret conclaves and Open Court. In Open Court, the Open Lord entertains deputations and debates

from outland envoys, visiting trade delegations, and local citizenry.

All of the ranking officers of the Watch, the Magistrates, and some visiting dignitaries have offices here. The Watch also has several prison cells that are used to hold prisoners awaiting trial.

The Market

The Market is the largest open area in Waterdeep. Buildings surround it and inside is a maze of temporary stalls and carts that appear both day and night. The moneylenders and pawnshops have storefronts within the buildings surrounding the Market. It is the best place in the city to haggle for lower prices on goods, but there's no guarantee you'll be able to find what you need.

Dock Ward

The Dock Ward is home to many taverns, dives, brothels, and inexpensive inns. People crowd the narrow and windy streets of the Dock Ward. Street urchins beg and steal from any unsuspecting visitors, and monsters have been known to rampage throughout the Ward.

The majority of Waterdeep's harbor and warehouses are a part of the Dock Ward, and because of this, the Ward has a great deal of traffic and activity. The hustling and active nature of the Ward makes it harder to patrol for the Watch. Unsavory types like smugglers and thieves, as well as malcontents, take advantage of the reduced rule of law to run the black markets and thieves' guilds.

Watch Presence

One Watch patrol protects the Dock Ward, because the Watch doesn't have enough people or money to maintain a presence more substantial than the criminal enterprises. The Watch takes a hands-off approach to the Docks. Only a serious crime or threat to Waterdeep will cause the Watch to raid a warehouse, inn, dive or vessel in the Dock Ward. The

Watch performs raids with five to ten patrols worth of Watch members and sometimes with the Guard.

Notable Locations

The Keelhauled Dwarf

The Keelhauled Dwarf is a tavern created out of a cavernous cellar beneath a warehouse named the House of Tarmagus. The tavern is the favored drinking spot for duergar, half-orcs, thugs and ruffians.

The Monster Pit

The Monster Pit is an abandoned gladiatorial arena under the Fishscale Smithy. It is used by various gangs in the Dock Ward to settle arguments.

Field Ward

Field Ward is the northernmost, newest, and poorest Ward in Waterdeep. The Field Ward sprang up in a haphazard and uncoordinated fashion between the North Ward and Waterdeep's northernmost wall. Caravans used to use the area to stay over while selling and delivering their goods. Over time those unable to afford to live in other Wards began to create more permanent structures. The Field Ward is a shanty town, and as such something that the nobility is not fond of having so close to their lovely villas.

Watch Presence

A single watch patrol safeguards the Field Ward. Watch members are also posted regularly at all wall towers, at the request of nobles to protect their property should someone in Field Ward get the bright idea to scale the wall into the Sea or North Wards.

North Ward

The North Ward is the second wealthiest Ward in Waterdeep, next to the Sea Ward. Most of the lesser noble families and middle-class households have their homes here. The North Ward is a very quiet

and restricted Ward and appears to shut down at dusk each night. However, inside the houses families hatch intrigues and schemes to execute the next day. The families in this Ward also have some of the highest amounts of contraband and smuggled goods in Waterdeep.

Watch Presence

A single watch patrol protects the North Ward always.

Notable Locations

The Grinning Lion Tavern

The Grinning Lion Tavern is the most rancorous tavern in the North Ward. Fake battle trophies from all over Faerûn adorn its walls. People come here to drink Zzar and wine and eat fried onions and eels.

Cliffwatch Inn

The proprietor of this rambling tavern knows a wealth of tales. The inn's cellars are rumored to connect to the city sewers and Undermountain.

Sea Ward

The Sea Ward is where the wealthiest noble families, religions, and wizards reside. The Ward has the most opulent temples and villas in all of Waterdeep. Families who have built a fortune or come into a large sum of money work hard to build a home in this Ward.

Watch Presence

Two watch patrols safeguard the Sea Ward always, except for the temples which are expected to police themselves.

Notable Locations

Aurora's Realms Shop

Aurora's is a high-end luxury and exotic goods shop. There are versions of the shop in all Wards in Waterdeep as well as other Cities throughout Faerûn. The shops offer a large selection of goods

from Toril that vary based on the typical income of the potential clientele.

Shop owners can procure specific or very rare items that they don't have in store. They use a magical connection between shops to transport goods from store to store.

Field of Triumph

The city stages exciting spectacles of magic, martial skill, horse racing, and monstrous exhibitions in this enormous open-air stadium. It also acts as a public forum for the Open Lords' proclamations.

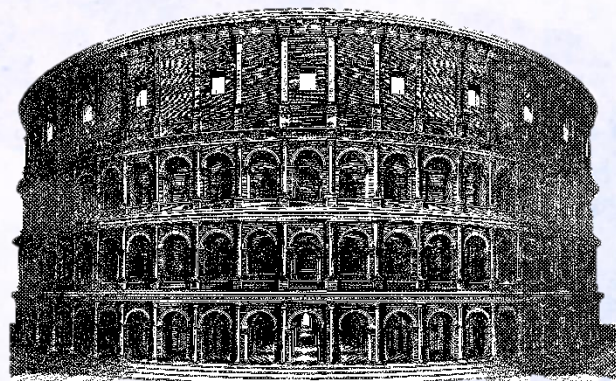
Southern Ward

The Southern Ward is where caravans from the south enter the city. In this area, there are amenities and services provided to assist the caravans in unloading and storing goods.

The Southern ward contains stables, warehouses, and shops related to horses and land travel. Hardworking folks can easily get low paying jobs helping to load and unload caravans. Those skilled in fighting and protection can hire on last minute as mercenaries, protecting caravans on their distant travels.

Watch Presence

Two watch patrols guard this small area during the day to protect the caravan's goods. One watch patrol guards the Ward at night and mostly near the warehouses.



Notable Locations

Builder's Hall

Builder's Hall is the headquarters for the Guild of Stonecutters, Masons, Potters, & Tile-makers it is the first stop for anyone wishing to build in the great city of Waterdeep.

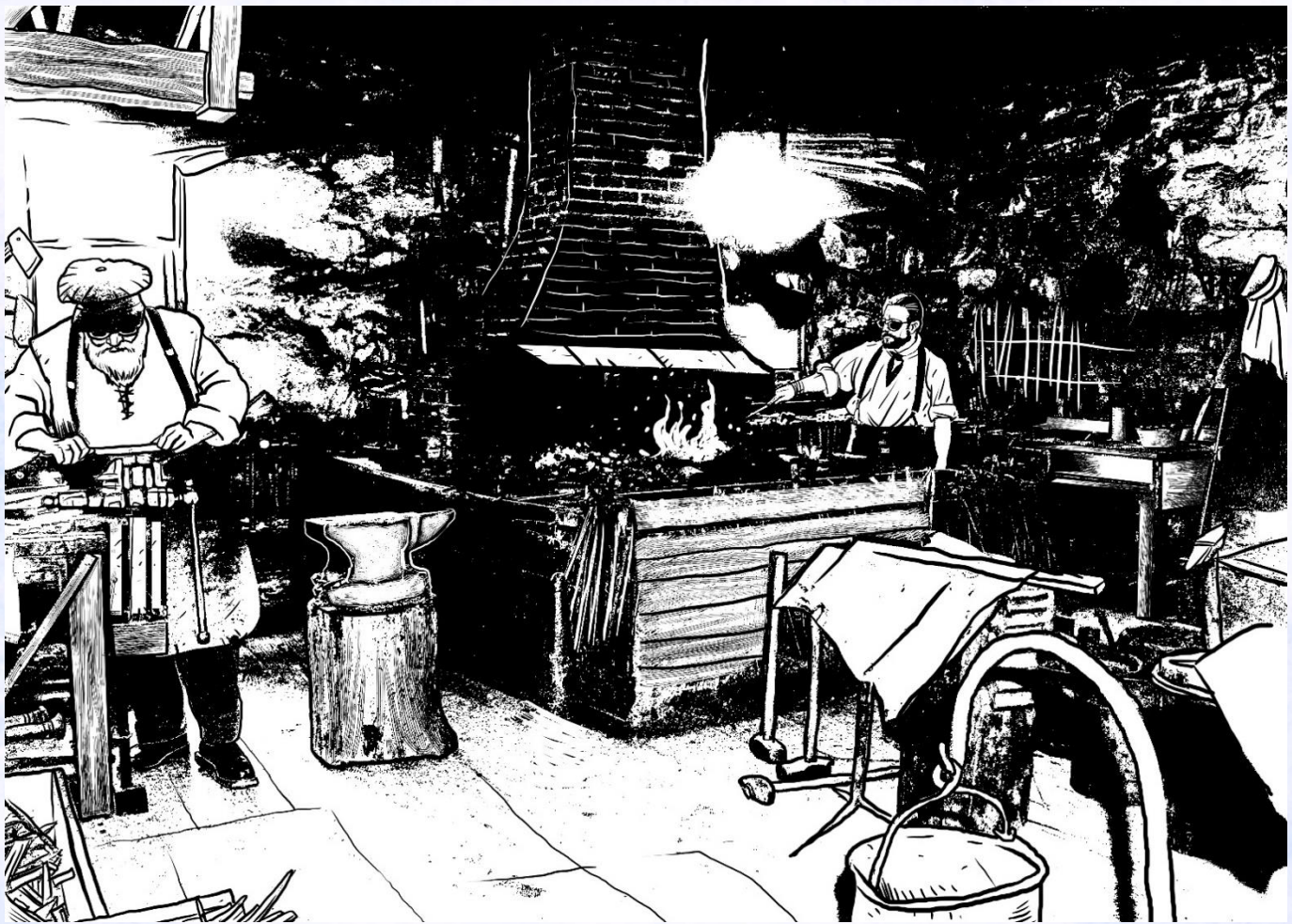
Waymoot

The Waymoot is a signpost created by the Watchful Order of Magists. The signpost will magically direct travelers to a destination spoken into a crystal on the post. Once a destination is spoken, the signpost writes the name on one of the signpost's arrows. The arrow points the direction of travel and gives the distance to the destination. Travelers leaving Waterdeep use the Waymoot to determine which gate to use.

Trades Ward

The Trades Ward is the area to the west of the City of the Dead and east of the Castle Ward. Compared to other Wards the Trades Ward is small but highly active. The Trades Ward rarely slows down even in the twilight hours. Because of its size and focus on commerce, the Trades Ward doesn't have a well-established residential community.

At any time of day or night, residents and visitors to Waterdeep can purchase legal goods either in the open bazaar or merchant's storefronts. Waterdeep citizens make their daily purchases here, and many noble families sell their goods through storefronts in the Trades Ward.



Watch Presence

The Trades Ward is seen by the Watch as the life's blood of Waterdeep and needs to be an area all can go to and feel safe. Because of this three watch patrols protect the Trades Ward night and day.

Notable Locations

The Plinth

The Plinth is a temple open to worshipers of any faith. Worshipers use the temple because their deity lacks a sizable congregation in Waterdeep. The Plinth is a tower that resembles a tall, thin, pyramid with the top cut off. Small balconies spiral around the tower. Because of its great height and many balconies individuals sometimes commit suicide here by plummeting to their deaths. The wealthy and powerful use the top of the Plinth as an aerial landing pad.

Court of the White Bull

This area is a meeting place for caravan owners because no one will build on the land. A great mage duel took place here and caused a planar breach. The God of Magic repaired the breach, but wild magic sometimes occurs in this area.

City of the Dead

East of the Trades Ward is a walled-in area called the City of the Dead. The City of the Dead has green lawns, marble tombs, and has served as the only cemetery in Waterdeep for centuries. The City of the Dead is one of the only green public areas inside Waterdeep, and citizens go there to escape the hustle and bustle of life in the Wards.

The Watch imposes a curfew at dusk in the City of the Dead because undead have been known to rise in the Ward. However, citizens of Waterdeep ignore this curfew and visit the City of the Dead at all hours of the day or night.

The wall surrounding the City of the Dead has been raised twice, once when it ran out of space for

burials, and a second time when many undead escaped their tombs. During the first incident, the wall was built up to place more dirt in the Ward. The second time the city warded the tombs, made the wall taller, and added fortifications and watchtowers. Since then there hasn't been a major undead uprising.

Watch Presence

Two watch patrols protect the City of the Dead during the day. Three larger patrols guard the City of the Dead atop the walls and towers at night and only enter if necessary.

Notable Locations

Lords' Respite

The Lords' Respite is a small black marble tomb where the city may bury Masked and Open Lords. In



the western face of the tomb, there is a door made of some smoky material. No one can see inside the tomb or enter, thus keeping the Lord's identities secret.

The Hall of Sages

The Hall of Sages is a special tomb for sages, which is rumored to contain many of the interred sage's rare tomes and books. This is a false rumor maintained by the Lords of Waterdeep to ferret out dealers in evil lore.

Undercliff

The Undercliff is an extension of Waterdeep, not as a Ward where business takes place, but as an area that is lawfully part of Waterdeep and that the guard protects. The Undercliff consists of all the farms and villages that sprawl out to the east of Waterdeep. Waterdeep has established barracks, forts, and training facilities in the area. The Guard training and patrolling the Undercliff are expected to be an early warning system for attacks from the east.

Watch Presence

The Watch does not patrol the Undercliff because it is too large to patrol. Crime is very low in these areas, due to the distance between farms and the strong support system the communities provide. The Watch will perform investigations within the Undercliff, if requested or if a murder has occurred.

Government

Lords of Waterdeep

In 1032 DR, Ahghairon saved Waterdeep from itself by unseating Waterdeep's warlord and would-be emperor, Raurlor. Ahghairon declared that wisdom, not strength of arms, would rule in the city, and created the Lords of Waterdeep.

Since then Waterdeep has always had a single Open Lord, except during the guild coup. The Open Lord

selects several Masked Lords who support them. The Masked Lords bear masks, robes, and amulets to disguise themselves when performing their duties publicly. The Lords of Waterdeep, open and masked, make policies for Waterdeep.

Open Lord

The Open Lord Waterdeep holds the titles of Warden of Waterdeep (Commander of the Guard), Overmaster of the Guilds, and Commander of the Watch. He or she is the only Lord who exposes their face, is known to the public, and serves as the city's chief diplomat.

Laeral Silverhand is the current Open Lord of Waterdeep. Laeral is a human wizard who has a rich and involved history with the Sword Coast and Waterdeep. She was once the leader of an adventuring group called the Nine. During an adventure, Laeral succumbed to the Crown of Thorns and went mad. Khelben Arunsun, a previous Blackstaff of Waterdeep, who later became her consort, nursed her back to health. She was at one time considered the Lady Mage of Waterdeep and was a member of the Harpers.

Laeral was also long thought dead and, reemerged only recently. She swiftly rallied the Masked Lords to support her supplanting Dagult Neverember as Open Lord of Waterdeep.

Masked Lords

The Masked Lords of Waterdeep come from all walks of life, from noble to dung sweeper, and from merchant to cleric. Every Waterdhavian has suspicions of who is or isn't a Masked Lord. So far, no one has been able to prove that a person is a Masked Lord publicly.

If caught impersonating a Masked Lord, the punishment is death. Because of this, if a Masked Lord appears in the city in full dress the officers of the Guard or Watch alert the Open Lord immediately. The Open Lord can demand any Masked Lord unmask themselves. Failure to do so is

punishable by death. It is not uncommon for those seeking to improve their standing, socially or economically, to claim to be a Masked Lord.

Legal System

Waterdhavians are mostly law-abiding citizens. They have great respect for property, and support for a strong and objective police force. These opinions exist because most Waterdhavians make their living from trade. Much of the law of Waterdeep is unwritten, and both Lords and Magisters are free to determine the absolute guilt or innocence of a plaintiff.

Waterdeep separates its legal code into four Plaints, categorized by who the crime victimizes. The four Plaints are:

- Crimes Against the Lords
- Crimes Against the City
- Crimes Against the Gods
- Crimes Against Citizens

Under each Plaintiff are four classes of offense: Severe, Serious, Lesser, and Minor.

There is no bail or lawyers in Waterdeep. The plaintiff is expected to state their case to the Lord or Magistrate. The Magistrates employ several clerics to cast compel truth on plaintiffs, at the Magistrates discretion. Magisters and Lords use the death penalty only in cases of dangerous and incurable lunatics, murderers, and those who commit acts of treason against the city or the Lords. Plaintiffs sentenced to death will sometimes choose exile to Undermountain instead.

The Courts

Waterdeep has two courts, the Lord's Court and the Common Court. The Lord's Court hears all cases of murder, reports of suspicious deaths, rape, misuse of magic, succession and inheritance disputes, and appeals from the citizenry against Magisterial judgments. The Common Courts hear all other cases.

The Open Lord chairs the Lord's Court, and at least two Masked Lords and two Magisters attend each session. Magisters preside over the Common Courts. Those who preside over the courts have the power to pass sentence instantly; however, sentences are conditional on the supporting evidence of witnesses. Any citizen of Waterdeep is allowed an appeal to the Lord's Court within two days of any sentencing by a Magister in the Common Courts.

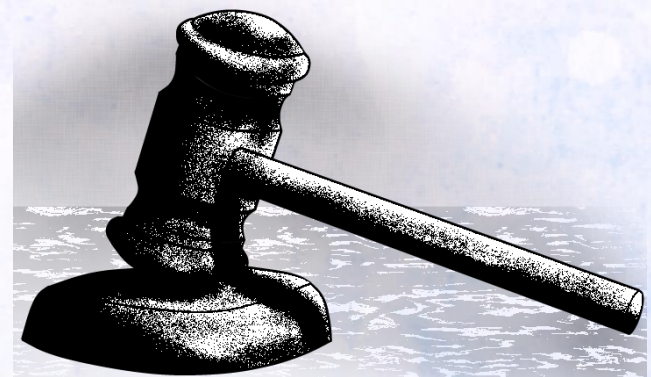
The Magisters

Below the Masked and Open Lords in power are the twenty-six appointed Magisters, also known as the Black Robes. At least three Magisters are always on duty at the Common Courts in the Palace. A Magister serves at each gate of the city during daylight hours. At least six members of the City Guard protect a Magisters at all times.

The Magisters are honest and perceptive people, or they do not hold their positions for long. Lords create Magisters through a public decree.

City Watch

The City Watch is the police force in Waterdeep. The City Watch patrols all Wards, some with more regularity than others, the City of the Dead, and the sewers. The watch patrols do more than just police the streets. The city expects them to perform civic duties like aid with heavy loads, provide directions, basic medical assistance, and settle disputes. Watch members also investigate crimes and search for lost or kidnaped adults and children.



A Watch member can enter any building or area in the city without hindrance or warning and can search any person, place, or container at will unless forbidden explicitly by a Lord. The Watch is funded to pay up to one thousand six hundred members at any point in time.

For more detailed information about the City Watch of Waterdeep read Joseph Carriker [The Watch of Waterdeep](#) on the DMs Guild.

Criminal Organizations

Most of the criminal enterprises in Waterdeep have their roots in the Dock Ward. With the light presence of the Watch in the Dock Ward, criminals can make deals without fear of punishment. The Dock Ward also provides criminal enterprises easy access to imports and exports. The Watch treats most criminal organizations in the Dock Ward as a necessary evil, to keep it running smoothly. These criminal organizations will often do what heroes won't and make the hard choices easier for society to bear.

The Unseen

The Unseen is an organization of criminals who are shape changers, thieves, illusionists, and assassins. They are extraordinarily secretive, and little is publicly known about them other than rumors and whispers. Most public knowledge about the Unseen has come during failed operations. The group's goal is to replace critical individuals in Waterdeep society with doppelgangers and rule Waterdeep without any Waterdhavians knowing.

Xanathar's Thieves Guild/Agents of the Eye

The history of these two organizations, now one, is a power struggle between beholders. In the beginning, a beholder named the "Eye" ran the Agents of the Eye, and a beholder named Xanathar ran Xanathar's Thieves Guild. The Eye discovered Xanathar and his lair and destroyed him. When the Eye took over

Xanathar's Thieves Guild, he charmed or convinced everyone who had power or control to call him Xanathar, as if it were a title, not a name. Now the title of Xanathar is used by whichever beholder runs the organization. No one knows how many different beholders have run Xanathar's Thieves Guild and the Agents of the Eye over the years.

The organization is a group of mercenaries, slavers, spies, and thieves. Their goal has always been to gather wealth and political power through slavery, spying, thieving and information gathering. The organization is primarily known and feared for capturing and trafficking slaves. They run slaves through Skullport, and many of the missing persons cases the City Watch investigate are individuals snatched by the group.

The Shadow Thieves

The Shadow thieves were once the most powerful criminal organization in all Faerûn. They influenced most of the illegal, and many legal deals in cities all over Faerûn. Then Lhestyn infiltrated and exposed the members of the Shadow Thieves. In the ensuing ten days, the City Watch killed the leaders and many members of the Shadow Thieves. These deaths caused the Shadow Thieves to collapse and go to ground.

Most of Faerûn believes the Lords of Waterdeep were entirely successful in eradicating the Shadow Thieves. However, this is not the case. The Shadow Thieves have begun to gain back power over the last hundred years. They keep to the shadows and work through an even higher number of intermediaries. Their goal is to one day be as powerful as they once were.

Porcelain Dolls

The Porcelain Dolls are a highly effective organization of female assassins. The organization trains orphaned female children in the art of seduction and death. They are hired to pose as courtesans and concubines. The Dolls use their

training and cover to blackmail or assassinate their targets. They operate out of a house within the North Ward and accept clientele only by word of mouth.

Military

City Guard

The City Guard is the standing army of Waterdeep. They are responsible for protecting the city, the surrounding areas, visiting diplomats, and the Lords of Waterdeep. The Guard and the Watch jointly man all entrances to Waterdeep. The Guard controls access to Waterdeep, while the Watch observes those who enter and deals with any troublemakers.

During Neverember's time as the Open Lord, the City Guard became part of the City Watch. Laeral and the Masked Lords reversed this decision. The Lords have financed the City Guard for up to one thousand two hundred members and up to twelve thousand in times of war.

City Navy

Waterdeep's Navy was once powerful and dominated the seas around the city. When Neverember was the Open Lord, he disbanded the City Navy and hired a mercenary company to protect Waterdeep's harbor. Laeral dismissed the mercenaries and funded the creation of sixteen fast ships and fifteen large ships for troop transport. The Guilds and Noble families involved in shipbuilding and soldiering are pleased with the change. The shipyards are active twenty-four hours a day to rebuild the navy quickly.

Griffon Cavalry

The Lords of Waterdeep formed the Griffon Cavalry in 1235 DR to combat the threat of orcs to Waterdeep. With each significant battle, the Griffon Cavalry lost griffons. At the time the decision was made not to replace those griffons, and eventually,

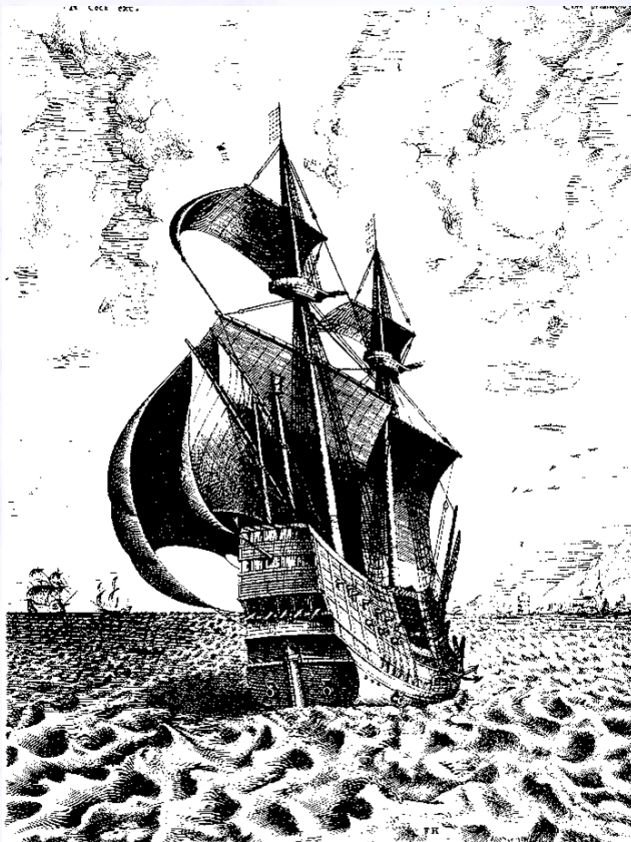
there weren't enough griffons to maintain the cavalry. The Open and Masked Lords at the time disbanded the Griffon Cavalry.

Laeral and the Masked Lords have funded the rebuilding of the Griffon Cavalry. They believe the Griffon Cavalry provides Waterdeep with superior defensive capabilities. They know that the rebuilding process is going to take time. Recruitment of griffon trainers and riders has begun, but finding and capturing griffons is proving to be a challenge.

Gray Hands

The Gray Hands are an elite group of high-powered, capable, and trustworthy individuals called on to defend Waterdeep from extreme threats. They answer only to the Lords of Waterdeep.

The Gray Hands have matured since their inception as a single high-powered adventuring group. They have become more formalized, and have around thirty members, separated into five groups of five to six members, called a hand. Members from various



walks of life who can work together in times of need make up a hand.

A hand is typically comprised of at least one offensive spell caster, healer, fighter, and ranged attacker. The Lords expect members of a hand to stay in the city for a period of up to a month and are on call if danger arises. One to two hands are always on call while the other groups can engage in their normal activities.

Society

Noble Families

Most of the Noble families in Waterdeep today arrived as merchant families or lesser nobles from other lands. They used their wealth to grow trade and commerce to and from the new city, and subsequently their power and influence. Over time these families became the backbone of Waterdeep's social and civil stability.

Aghairon gave these merchant families the title of noble to reduce chaos and fighting between the families, and to draw powerful and wealthy landowners in the surrounding areas to Waterdeep.

There were initially over one hundred noble families, but because of poor business decisions, marriages, and the Guild wars, there are now between seventy and eighty noble families.

Initially, only the Open Lord could make an individual or family a noble, but during Lord Neverember's rule, nobles could sell their titles to others. Several noble families who had become indebted to others sold their titles. The new nobles often had to sell their title again in a year or two when they ran out of money. Laeral put a stop to this with the support of the noble families. She also restored the land and title to those families who had sold their titles. Ascending to nobility is now all but impossible. For more information read Bryan Holmes' [Nobility of Waterdeep](#)

Religion

Waterdeep is the most inclusive city in Faerûn when it comes to the worship of the gods. All faiths are welcome and tolerated in Waterdeep if they follow three simple rules:

- Worship of a deity cannot involve theft or destruction of property or other beings (i.e., kidnapping, or human or animal sacrifices).
- Those who are not followers of the deity cannot be required or forced to pay tribute.
- Followers cannot force non-believers to participate in harmful acts condoned or supported by the deity.

Temples and worshipers who do not follow these rules find the city quickly becomes unfriendly.

Waterdhavians vary in their commitment to worshiping and venerating the gods. The city has temples to Gond, Lathander, Mielikki, Mystra, Oghma, Selune, Silvanus, Sune, Tempus, Tymora, and Tyr. The Plinth provides a template for worshipers of gods that do not have a temple.

Most of the citizens of Waterdeep do not publicly acknowledge the dark gods, but the dark gods do have a presence in the city. Waterdhavians pray to the dark gods to ignore them or to assist them in a dark deed such as murder. Cults and temples to many of the dark gods exist within the city or Undermountain.

Guilds

At present, the City of Splendors officially recognizes forty-seven guilds. None are socially prominent, but several wield influence behind-the-scenes because of their firm, forceful, and charismatic guild masters. A strike by an influential guild can bring Waterdeep to a standstill.

Each guild has a guild hall as their main headquarters. In the guild hall, members show off their craft, meet about guild business, and strike up deals with new patrons. Each guild has its own set of

laws that are separate from the city laws but do not override them. The guild laws govern what guild members must do, how they trade, and their ranks in the guild. Guilds cannot restrict non-guild members from creating and selling goods and services that are the guild's purview. However, non-guild members do not receive guild protection, rights, or privileges. The guild can publicly state if a crafter is not a member of the guild.

Secret Societies

There are many societies within Waterdeep. Some like the nobles, guilds, and religious organizations are publicly known, and some meet and act in secret. These secret societies operate outside of Waterdeep's laws and social norms to pursue their

agendas. Sometimes these agendas benefit Waterdeep and others are a direct threat.

Red Sashes

The Red Sashes are a vigilante group who excel at intrigue, hiding people, and finding people who do not want to be found. They step in when the Watch is negligent in pursuing a criminal or if the Watch is pursuing someone who is innocent. They do not act rashly or take extreme actions.

They work in cells, one in each ward, and focus mostly on the poorer wards of Waterdeep. The cells report only to the leader of the Red Sashes, named "the One." The Open Lord knows about the Red Sashes from her past in Waterdeep but is ambivalent about them. Her attitude will likely stay the same as



long as they don't make an open mockery of Waterdeep's City Watch or legal system.

Knights of the Shield

The Knights of the Shield are a group of merchants, nobles, and other hidden individuals who work to manipulate the economies of the Sword Coast to their advantage. The history and leadership of this group are shrouded in mystery and legend. They have been in subtle, but active combat with the Lords of Waterdeep for many years. The Lords of Waterdeep stopped the group's one attempt at a coup. The Lords believe they drove the Knights of the Shield out of Waterdeep.

The Knights of the Shield only left Waterdeep for a few years. They have moved underground more since the coup, and their power has shifted into intelligence gathering. They bide their time as they learn all they can before they strike again.

Kraken Society

The Kraken Society is an organization known for kidnapping, torture, assassinations and general thuggery. However, their real power lies in their information gathering capabilities. The Kraken Society's power in Waterdeep resides in the Dock Ward where their agents spy on all manner of



activities in Waterdeep. The Lords of Waterdeep have attempted many times to ferret out the agents of the Kraken Society, but so far to no avail.

The Tel Teukiira

The Tel Teukiira are a group of renegade Harpers who seek to bring together humans, elves, and other races against the many dangers lurking in the shadows of Faerûn. The Tel Teukiira have been more and less active over the history of Waterdeep, based on the tides in the shadow world. Currently, there are only a few active agents in Waterdeep.

Factions

Faerûn has many factions that have their own goals, philosophies, and agendas. These factions work hard to influence Waterdeep's politics and populace. The Dungeons and Dragons Adventurers League has an excellent [overview of each of the factions of Faerûn](#). You can also review Adam Dayton's [Council of Waterdeep](#) to find some useful faction NPCs and a different description of the factions.

Harpers

The Harpers have eyes and ears everywhere in Faerûn and Waterdeep is no exception. Over the years many in power in Waterdeep have become corrupt, and the Harpers position their agents to stop such corruption. The Harpers have agents in all of the powerful Guilds and Noble houses as well as the Castle of Waterdeep.

Emerald Enclave

Members of the Emerald Enclave pass through Waterdeep as guards for caravans. They rarely stay inside the city, preferring to look for new work outside. The Enclave has begun to worry that Waterdeep will expand into the forested areas surrounding Waterdeep and upset the balance of nature in the area. The Enclave will act in force to stop Waterdeep from causing such an imbalance.

Order of the Gauntlet

The Order of the Gauntlet has members in the temples to Tyr, Helm, Torm, and Hoar in Waterdeep. The clerics and paladins of the Order watch many citizens of Waterdeep and are prepared to act should they display signs of corruption by evil.

Lord's Alliance

The Open Lord is a member of the Lord's Alliance and provides Waterdeep's perspective to the council. Should something threaten all of civilization, then Waterdeep will be one of the first to mobilize to stop the threat. The Open Lord will also actively engage other members of the Lords Alliance in cooperative efforts to ensure the safety of civilization.

Zhentarim

The Zhentarim have always had some presence, seen or unseen, in Waterdeep. Zhentarim's presence currently is visible in Waterdeep with Zhentarim mercenaries being hired to protect caravans and guard warehouses. Agents of the Zhentarim are searching for the identities of the Masked Lords to eliminate them.

Education

Waterdeep has no formal educational system. Waterdhavians understand the value of the written word and make sure their children learn how to read and write. Most Waterdhavians learn how to read and write Common from their parents or the temple of Oghma. Nobles and wealthy merchant children receive more formal education from private tutors, and noble counselors retained by their families.

The Lords of Waterdeep encourage literacy in the citizenry because a literate population improves the quality of goods and services the city provides and increases trade.

Individuals showing promise in magic or who dedicate themselves to a temple can receive a scholarly education that can last years, and sometimes lifetimes. Individuals who join a guild learn specific skills for the trade from mentors within the guild.

Magic Schools

Waterdeep has a strong tradition of magical research and draws to it individuals with the innate ability and drive to learn to cast magic. Because Waterdeep is a central trading hub, it is easy for a practitioner to obtain almost any spell component. The Watchful Order of Magists and Protectors combined with Waterdeep's guild dominated trade infrastructure has prevented the formation of many magic academies. Because of this, most Waterdhavian wizards and sorcerers are either very powerful lone practitioners or members of the Watchful Order.

Blackstaff Tower

Blackstaff tower is an elitist mentorship academy. Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun and Laeral Silverhand started the academy by accepting a roster of mages as apprentices. Those apprentices took on students of their own and an informal elite arcanists' academy formed. The current Blackstaff is always the head of the academy.

Approximately fifty apprentices reside in Blackstaff Tower at any point in time. The Blackstaff takes on several apprentices whom they tutor. Each apprentice of the Blackstaff is expected to have a junior apprentice whom they mentor. The Blackstaff and their apprentices defend the Tower against monstrous incursions and hostile wizards.

Eltorchul Academy

Lord Thesp Eltorchul started the Eltorchul academy as a bastion of arcane education for noble and wealthy children. In 1368 DR, the academy opened its doors to anyone who was willing to pay. The money paid restitution for those who died during

the dream sphere incident caused by the family's heir. Opening their doors to anyone moved the academy from an elite arcane academy to an ordinary arcane academy. The current patriarch of the Ethorchul family longs to rebuild the academy's reputation and compete directly with Blackstaff Tower and the Watchful Order.

Watchful Order of Magists and Protectors

The Watchful Order of Magists and Protectors is both a guild and the largest arcane academy in Waterdeep. As a guild, the Watchful Order protects less powerful wizards and sorcerers from those distrustful of the Art. The Watchful Order does this in two ways. First, they encourage control and discipline in the use of magic by magic users. Second, they encourage the citizens of Waterdeep to accept wizards as individuals to respect and look up to, not fear and actively oppose. The guild uses its influence to mitigate the most egregious behavior of any mage in Waterdeep.

As an arcane academy, the Watchful Order ranks second to the Blackstaff Tower and is the most mainstream arcane academy in Waterdeep. Mages graduating from the Watchful Order's academy can easily become guild members.

Bards' Colleges

New Olamn is the only Bard's College in all Waterdeep. Because of this, Bards in Waterdeep are either lone troubadours, traveling musicians passing through the city, or members of the college.

New Olamn

New Olamn is a noted education center and storehouse of knowledge. Bards from across the Realms come to study within its walls. New Olamn is backed primarily by the Crommer, Estelmer, Majarra, Melshimber, and Thann noble families as well as the Council of Musicians, Instrument-Makers, and Choristers.



Credits

Author

Jason Hardin

Layout

Jason Hardin

Editor

Jill Koelling

Art

Jason Hardin (pg. 10, 14, 19)

Art (continued)

Publisher's Choice Quality Stock Art ©Rick Hershey / Fat Goblin Games (Cover page background, page background, pg. 11, 12)

DMS Guild Art (Cover art, pg. 3, 7, 8, 21)

David Lewis Johnson (Myth Cult pg. 18)

Antoine Benoist (pg. 5)

Pieter Brueghel the Elder, Frans Huys and Hieronymus Coc (pg. 16)

Bibliography

Boyd, E. L. (2005). *City of Splendors: Waterdeep*. Wizards of the Coast. Retrieved from <http://www.dmsguild.com/product/25995/City-of-Splendors-Waterdeep-35?it=1>

Boyd, E. L. (2005, 9 28). *City of Splendors: Waterdeep, Part 1 Noble Houses of Waterdeep*. Retrieved from Wizards of the Coast website: <http://archive.wizards.com/default.asp?x=nd/we/20050928a>

Boyd, E. L. (2006, 5 3). *City of Splendors: Waterdeep, Part 2 Environs of Waterdeep*. Retrieved from Wizards of the Coast website: <http://archive.wizards.com/default.asp?x=nd/we/20060503a>

Boyd, E. L., Reynolds, S. K., & Schend, S. E. (2000). *Cloak and Dagger*. Renton, WA: Wizards of the Coast.

Carriker, J. (2016). *The Watch of Waterdeep*. Oakthorne Scrivenings. Retrieved from <http://www.dmsguild.com/product/195905/Watch-of-Waterdeep>

Coast, W. o. (n.d.). *Factions*. Retrieved from Dungeons and Dragons:

<http://dnd.wizards.com/dungeons-and-dragons/Realms>. Wizards of the Coast.

Dayton, A. (n.d.). *Council of Waterdeep*. Retrieved from DMS Guild: <https://wstory/factions>

Cordell, B. R., Greenwood, E., & Sims, C. (2008). *Forgotten*

www.dmsguild.com/product/188396/Council-Of-Waterdeep

Greenwood, E. (2005, 7 27). *The City Watch of Waterdeep, Part One*. Retrieved from Wizards of the Coast website: <http://archive.wizards.com/default.asp?x=nd/rl/20050720a>

Greenwood, E. (2005, 7 20). *The City Watch of Waterdeep, Part Two*. Retrieved from Wizards of the Coast website: <http://archive.wizards.com/default.asp?x=nd/rl/20050727a>

Greenwood, E., Reynolds, S. K., Williams, S., & Heinsoo, R. (2001). *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*. Renton, WA: Wizards of the Coast.

Lee, A., Lindsay, C., Mearls, M., & Sernett, M. (n.d.).
A Guide to the Factions of Faerûn. Retrieved
from
[http://www.dmsguild.com/product/199498/
A-Guide-to-the-Factions-of-Faerun](http://www.dmsguild.com/product/199498/A-Guide-to-the-Factions-of-Faerun)

Schend, S., & Greenwood, E. (1994). *City of
Splendors Campaign Guide*. Cambridge,
United Kingdom: TSR, Inc.

Schend, S., & Greenwood, E. (1994). *City of
Splendors Whos Who in Waterdeep*.
Cambridge, United Kingdom: TSR Inc.

Wizards of the Coast and Green Ronin Publishing.
(2015). *Sword Coast Adventure's Guide*.
Wizards of the Coast. Retrieved from
[http://dnd.wizards.com/products/tabletop-
games/rpg-products/sc-adventurers-guide](http://dnd.wizards.com/products/tabletop-games/rpg-products/sc-adventurers-guide)