



BLACK SNAKE DAWN

A *THIEVES' WORLD*
ADVENTURE FOR THE
D20 SYSTEM

By ROBERT J.
SCHWALB



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BLACK SNAKE DAWN

A D20 ADVENTURE FOR THE THIEVES' WORLD CAMPAIGN SETTING
FOR FOUR TO SIX CHARACTERS OF 9TH LEVEL

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Sanctuary. *Thieves' World*. A wretched wart on the ass of the Empire. Recent events have not been kind to this city huddled on the edge of the sea. The city groans with infighting and corruption. Though ruled in name by Prince Kadakithis and his consort, the alluring Shupansea of the Beysibs, in truth, Sanctuary is contested, a toy caught between the slaving jaws of countless factions vying for control. Sanctuary has descended into near anarchy, broken up into districts under the control of ruthless cutthroats and heartless villains, each bent on claiming a bloody chunk of the city. It is winter in Sanctuary, and all comforts are cold this year. Set during one of the most tumultuous times in the Rankan era, *Black Snake Dawn* finds the city fraught with internal turmoil. People vanish from the streets, claimed as slaves by the pirates of Scavenger Isle. Terrorists murder and destroy at whim, all to drive out the hated Beysibs. And beneath it all lurks the foul witch Roxane, who has declared war against Ranke and all its vassal cities and provinces.

Black Snake Dawn takes place during the middle of *The Dead of Winter*, the seventh anthology from the classic series. This is a particularly dynamic era, with the tensions between the Sanctans and the Beysib, and at the fringes of an empire reeling from a costly war with the Mygdonian Alliance. As established in the short stories (as well as in the *Thieves' World Gazetteer*), the Nisibisi witches and agents have spread throughout the Empire and installed themselves as spies and terrorists, working to destroy the rule of law and plunge civilization into anarchy. Sanctuary is as much of a target as the other cities held by Ranke, but it faces a far graver threat, for Roxane, Death's Queen herself,

has chosen *Thieves' World* as her battleground. Designed for four to six 9th-level characters, PCs should attain 10th level by the adventure's conclusion. Although this adventure is set during the Rankan era, it can be adapted, with a little work, to fit in the Irrune era. For details, see **Adapting the Adventure**.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Sanctuary is on the brink of ruin. The tensions between the Beysibs and the Sanctans have not eased, and Roxane and Ischade's conflict has opened the gates of hell, releasing the spirits to haunt the living. The dead walk the Shambles, while gangs of thugs and killers run rampant through the streets. Death squads murder at whim, while the PFLS spreads misery and terror in the city streets. The Hell Hounds and city garrison are all but emasculated, and so it falls to vigilantes, Straton and the few Stepsons who remained behind, and Chenaya's gladiators to forge a new peace.

Throughout the tumult, Kadakithis has not been idle. Although his public face is one of infatuation with Shupansea, he has secretly taken steps to restore his control over the city. The Empire has no soldiers to send, especially to a backwater like Sanctuary, so he's turned to private aid instead. Several months before the start of the adventure, Kadakithis invited Raiden SaVell to come to Sanctuary. Raiden is an influential Aurveshani noble with many military connections, but also famous for his addiction to *krrf*. Kadakithis promised money and favored trade agreements, and above all, cheap *krrf*. Intrigued, and unaware of Sanctuary's predicament, the noble agreed and traveled to

ADAPTING THE ADVENTURE

Much of this adventure depends on Sanctuary's unstable climate that defined some of the darkest moments the city endured during the classic anthology. This said, with some reconstruction you could adapt it for the Irrune Era. The best way to do this is to set it after *Enemies of Fortune*. In this possible future, Arizak finally succumbs to his injuries and dies in the palace. The city is thrust into upheaval once more as the chief's sons fight for the right to take the throne. In the instability, the Dyareelans get the foothold they need to infest the city once more. Spreading out to the various neighborhoods, they incite violence, urge gangs to take arms against the Irrune, and worse. Instead of the Nisibisi being the antagonists, it's the Dyareelan cultists and they aim to punish the city for its transgressions against their god-goddess. You should probably modify the stat-blocks and install different characters from the Irrune era in place of Chenaya, Strat, and so on. As mentioned, this will take some work, but the pay off and general structure should be about the same.

In addition, you can also modify the adventure to suit characters of different levels. You don't have to change a thing in the book until the final scene in **Act IV**. For lower level characters, replace Roxane with Haught and reduce the guardians' numbers by half. For powerful parties, Roxane should be able to respond to the PCs and may act once every 1d3 rounds while she's casting the ritual. Furthermore, add two additional guardians for each level the party is above 9th.

ABBREVIATIONS

This adventure references information found in other *Thieves' World* sourcebooks. *Shadowspawn's Guide to Sanctuary* is abbreviated *SGtS*, while the *Thieves' World Player's Manual* is abbreviated as *TWPM*, and the *Thieves' World Gazetteer* uses *TWG*. The core rulebooks, as normal, are abbreviated with *PH*, *DMG*, and *MM*.

Sanctuary in the company of his son, daughter, his ward, and their slave. Kadakithis hoped to befriend the man and convince him to lend aid in restoring order in the city. It was a desperate move, but one forced by circumstance.

When the noble arrived after a long sea voyage, the city and its situation appalled him. He became even angrier when instead of being offered coronations (gold coins), the prince offered land. The negotiations failed before they could begin. Raiden vowed to leave the city, but before he could depart, he discovered his daughter had gone missing. Naturally, suspicion fell on Kadakithis. The Prince committed what resources he had to finding the girl, but she had vanished. His failures further enraged the noble, who blustered terrible threats, of which some could be disastrous for not only the Prince but also for the city. Kadakithis would have turned to Shadowspawn, but

the infamous thief was gone, vanished to some far-flung land. Desperate, Kadakithis turned to his closest advisor, Molin Torchholder, and asked him to recruit a couple of roaches to find the girl before it was too late.

Although it appears Raiden SaVell was summoned under false pretenses, in truth, Raiden intended to double-cross the prince. What he failed to tell Kadakithis was that his vaunted armies were utterly destroyed in the war against the Nisibisi and thus he had nothing to offer the prince or Sanctuary. Instead, he planned to take Kadakithis's money and retreat to Ranke, where he could indulge his excesses to his heart's content. Given Abakithis's well-known animosity toward his half-brother, Raiden believed he could get away with what is patently theft.

Jenna SaVell, the missing girl, is another matter entirely. The palace and the SaVell family believes the girl was kidnapped, but in truth Jenna is a thrall to Death's Queen and intends to sacrifice herself to some foul demon-god to commemorate the terrible Black Snake Dawn. With this act, Roxane could conjure up a dreadful plague that would wipe out the city and spread, like a cancer, into the heart of the empire, giving the Nisibisi the victory they so desperately crave.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

Black Snake Dawn is primarily an investigative adventure. The player characters will have to do some snooping around, talk to people, and chase various leads to find out what's really going on. Since the pacing and flow of the adventure ultimately rests with the players, you will have to be fast on your feet and ready to improvise, filling in details as you go. Before running the adventure, it would be a good idea to read the entire thing, and review relevant sections of *SGtS* and *TWPM*, taking notes as you do so.

This adventure has four parts. **Act I** points the PCs in the right direction—toward the Golden Oasis, which is where Jenna SaVell vanished. By exploring the place and talking with her brother Jerome, the characters should have plenty of leads to keep them busy.

Act II examines the city as it is during these dangerous times. It presents a broad overview of some of the factions controlling the streets, offering roleplaying and combat opportunities aplenty. Characters who interact with the various factions might also acquire a few more clues about Jenna, helping to guide their questions when they get down to the investigation itself.

Act III explores the investigation itself. Rather than trying to anticipate what the characters are bound to do, which is in itself impossible, it focuses on the key facts and how the PCs could go about to learn about them. Presenting the information in terms of Gather Information checks, contacts, iconic characters, and some exploration, you're likely to spend most of your time here.

Once the characters have pieced together that Jenna left on her own to give her life to Roxane, and once they learn the



consequences of this sacrifice, they should make haste to reach the Swamp of Night Secrets. Thus in **Act IV** the PCs navigate the Downwind and travel through the swamp to confront Roxane in the bloody red light of the Black Snake Dawn.

This is a challenging adventure since it not only puts the adventurers into harm's way, it doesn't give them the time to rest up and recover from their wounds. However, spellcasters have an easier time. The mana level for this adventure is high. Also, if the party is particularly small or consists of non-optimized characters, Molin should give the PCs a few *potions of convert moderate wounds* to help them survive the night.

OTHER CHARACTERS

This adventure barely scratches the surface in presenting the major characters of Sanctuary during the Rankan era. Presenting all of the people in *SGtS* is simply beyond the scope of this book. This said, you should feel free to add other classic *Thieves' World* characters to the mix. During this period, most, if not all, of the iconic characters found in the anthologies were in the city and it's certainly possible for characters that are believed to be absent to in fact be secretly present in the city.

WHAT DO I DO WITH THIS?

If you're new to running roleplaying games, this adventure can be a challenge to run. There's all sorts of room to expand the content, add layers of complexity, and a slew of characters, plots, and places to keep track of. This adventure also relies on

you keeping everything straight, while your players wander all over the city, leaving you almost no way to predict where they'll go next.

The best thing you can do is read through the entire adventure. Fix the end in your head. This should guide every other decision you make as the plot unfolds. You know where you want the PCs to go; now get them there. Next, roll up a few zones to get that information ready ahead of time. When your game starts, listen to your players, follow their line of reasoning, and react to what they want to do. Don't try to anticipate every action. Give them some freedoms. Let them go where they wish, talk to whomever they want. If you start getting nervous, or they head into an unfamiliar area, you can always use a combat to give yourself some breathing room. Or, give them a clue from an NPC you can handle to get them out of the murky depths of Sanctuary.

Above all, remember this is your game and it's now your adventure. If you prefer a more structured approach, instead of allowing the PCs to go where they want, insert extra clues that point to where the characters should go next. Even better, let Molin be more accessible. When the characters pick up clues, they can go back to the priest to get his help in the investigation. For example, when the PCs find the idol, Molin might tell them to talk to Illyra. Once the PCs meet the seer, she tells them that it's a Nisibisi relic, and advises them to chat with Ischade. The witch can reveal what's going on and offer her suspicions about where the girl is. From there, it's just a matter of getting to the swamp and grabbing the girl. Easy! Have fun, and good hunting.



THE CITY OF SANCTUARY

RANKAN ERA

FARMS

WHITE FOAL RIVER

SWAMP OF NIGHT SECRETS





RANKAN ERA MAP KEY			
1. General's Road	9. Jubal's Estate	19. West Gate Street	29. Land's End
2. Kurd's House	10. Caravan Square	20. Governor's Walk	30. Gate of Gold
3. Street of Red Lanterns	11. Farmer's Run	21. The Processional	31. Jeweler's Quarter
4. Cemetary	12. Common Gate	22. Governor's Palace	32. Pyrtanis Street
5. Gate of Triumph	13. Westside	23. Gate of the Gods	33. Path of Money
6. The Bazaar	14. Fisherman's Row	24. Headman's Gate	34. Fish Market
7. Animal Pens and Beef Market	15. Wideway	25. Granaries	35. Shamble's Corner
8. Downwind	16. The Maze	26. Vashanka's Square	36. Processional Gate
	17. Empire's Wharf	27. Avenue of Temples	37. Zoo Gardens
	18. Old Wharf	28. Promise of Heaven	38. Palace Gate



The adventure begins an hour before dusk. Where the characters are and what they're doing is not important to what comes next, so let the players decide what they're doing in the city. Maybe one is cleaning up after murdering a fat merchant, while another pins the arms of a whore that just tried to kill him, and yet another may be delivering a few bricks of *krrf* to an eager buyer near Land's End. What they do and why they're doing it doesn't matter, so let the players have some fun. As part of this process, ask the players to describe why they're still in the city now that the violence is spiraling out of control. Reasons could be as simple as a family member in the city, or a favorite prostitute, or even a side business the character is loath to abandon. By having the PCs come up with their reasons, it gives them the motivation to stick around when things get ugly later on.

The adventure assumes the characters know one another, by reputation if not personally. Before beginning, have each player describe his daring exploits in the city to help establish the mood and give the other PCs a chance to get a sense of their fellows before starting. If you'd rather the PCs begin as strangers, you'll need to allot a little extra time during **Invitation to Disaster** to let them get to know one another.

When you're ready to begin, the next step is to describe how each character is "invited" to the palace. You should summarize or even dramatize the experience, incorporating the activities that the PCs undertake before the adventure begins. You can narrate these events or allow the players to roleplay through them, but be sure to limit the time you spend so as not to drive the other players to thoughts other than the adventure at hand.

Suggestions follow:

- *With a Prostitute:* While dallying with a whore, a pair of Hell Hounds kicks down the door, and commands the character to accompany them to the palace. They toss a sack of padpols at the courtesan to buy his or her silence.
- *On a Job:* As the character breaks into the house, shop, or temple, he finds waiting for him a Hell Hound with four toughs. Rather than arresting him, the Hell Hound escorts the roach to the palace.
- *Delivering a Package:* While the character is in the middle of negotiating a price for *krrf*, poison, or some other illicit substance, some guards led by a Hell Hound show up. They let the buyer off the hook, and drag the PC back to the palace.
- *Swilling Wine:* A Hell Hound and a few guards make their rounds through the dingy taverns in the Maze, looking for conscripts. At one of them, they come upon one of the PCs. Rather than recruiting him for the watch, they take him to meet Molin instead.

THE PALACE

Once the characters are corralled, they are each escorted to the palace at the center of the city. Since the arrival of the Beysibs, the palace and its grounds have acquired a decidedly alien feel, incorporating many of the aesthetic elements favored by the fish-eyed folk from across the sea. As the PCs, individually or as a group, pass through the Processional Gate, they see graffiti

cursing the prince, the Beysibs, and several other political and not-so-political figures. A Beysib and Sanctan guard each watch the gate, staring warily at the PCs as they enter. The characters are led across Vashanka's Square, through the antechamber doors, and into the labyrinthine corridors beyond. Finally, after nearly a half an hour of seemingly aimless wandering, the PCs are led through a small side door set in a shadowy alcove into a bare, windowless room fitted with a second door on the opposite side. The guards leave, closing the door behind them. Left to themselves, the PCs are free to talk, explore, or do whatever they like.

The doors are both held shut by stout wooden bars. Since there is no locking mechanism, the PCs can't pick them. A successful DC 25 Strength check will break the door down, where the characters find a quartet of elite palace guards (use stats for Palace Guard Officers, *SGtS* page 211) standing with arms crossed. They politely urge the characters to stay where they are. Should the characters fight their way past the guards, they are free to explore the palace, but in doing so, they make the Torch angry and when—not if—the guards capture the PCs, the characters find themselves kicking at the end of a rope by dawn.

Assuming the characters are content to stay put, have each player describe his character. Once everyone has an idea of what their companions look like, allow them to talk, form plans, and speculate as to why they are here. When the conversation dies down, proceed with the next scene.

INVITATION TO DISASTER

After a few minutes, Molin Torchholder enters the room through the opposite door. Read or paraphrase the following text.

The door opposite of the one you entered opens, revealing a long hall lit by torches and choked with guards. Through it comes a tall and fit man dressed in long robes cut in the Rankan style. He has strong aristocratic features, with a straight nose, dark eyes, and a square jaw. A golden circlet holds his shoulder-length hair back from his face. He closes the door behind him, and then turns, regarding you with flinty eyes and a flat expression. His distaste is palpable. He clears his throat and says, "Welcome. I have an offer you'd be fools to refuse..."

Allow characters to make DC 25 Knowledge (local) checks with a +7 bonus to identify the man. If no one succeeds, Molin doesn't bother to introduce himself unless one of the PCs thinks to ask who he is. Such a question causes the priest to sneer: He spits out his name, but not his titles. Characters are entitled to a second Knowledge (local) check at the same DC to figure out just who he is.

Molin wastes little time with pleasantries and gets right to it. Having such scum in the palace offends his sensibilities and



ACT I: DUSK

so haste is his paramount concern. Molin explains the PCs have a chance to provide the city with an invaluable service. By aiding him, they aid the prince. Canny characters are probably aware that Kadakithis and his cronies have little power—just look out over the city at night! But all the same, Molin seems to feel this is enough.

Once the initial introductions are over with, Molin explains what he needs.

“The daughter of an important ally to the palace has been stolen from her chambers. Her kidnapping has cast a pall over some delicate negotiations and if she is not returned this very night, the situation for your... our city would be disastrous.”

He straightens his robes, pausing as if to consider how next to proceed and what he should reveal.

“In short, the girl is the daughter of a visiting noble from Ranke—I’m sure you can guess what this implies given the unfortunate times in which we live.”

(In all likelihood, the players may have no idea what this means, and if not, Molin certainly doesn’t fill them in—he’s referring not only to the troubles in the city, but also the troubles with the empire.)

“I suspect that an ambitious faction has thought to profit by embarrassing Prince Kadakithis and has abducted this girl for some nefarious end. My guards have had little luck in tracking down the errant daughter, and so I fear unconventional methods are needed to produce the child. This, then, is where people of your talents come in.”

Undoubtedly, the PCs have a few questions. Here are some possible questions and Molin’s likely answers. If the characters ask a question not covered here, wing it. Molin knows this night is sacred to the Nisibisi, for it precedes the Dawn of the Black Snake. He suspects Roxane is somehow involved, but he will not impart this information since if the girl is not recovered, it will destroy the last shreds of Kadakithis’s dignity and respectability, which would ultimately result in his removal, and quite likely offering an avenue of escape from Sanctuary for Molin himself. (Molin has not yet realized the budding ties of loyalty and affection blooming in his heart for Sanctuary.)

So, how much are you paying?

Molin offers the characters a fair reward for the recovery of the girl, promising 100 coronations for the group—a fair sum indeed, though good luck to any who tries to spend these coins

in the city. Persistent PCs can up their price to 200 coronations if they succeed on an opposed Diplomacy check (Molin’s check modifier is +36). Under no circumstances will Molin give the PCs any coin up front. He’s no fool.

Who’s the bint?

Jenna SaVell. She’s the daughter of a Rankan noble named Raiden SaVell. He says nothing else about the SaVell family.

Where was she kidnapped?

From her rooms in the Golden Oasis on the Processional. If the PCs ask why the SaVells were not staying at the palace, Molin grudgingly explains the Beysib unsettled the visitors and they opted to stay in the city. This is half-true. Raiden SaVell left the palace because he was disgusted by the state of the city and intended to leave on the following day. Molin doesn’t reveal this information, and makes a Bluff check (+20) to conceal this deception. Raiden believes he was brought to the city under false pretences, which is correct, since the prince cannot afford to pay the noble in anything but land.

Why is it so important that she be returned tonight?

Molin angrily exclaims it is imperative the girl be returned. *It’s a matter of diplomacy, dammit.* Molin is hiding the truth here. He fears if word gets out about the girl’s disappearance, it could be disastrous for both himself and the prince, endangering other secret negotiations in which the men are involved.

Can we see the rooms at the Golden Oasis?

Molin agrees this is a good idea, provides directions if the PCs are not familiar with the location (a DC 15 Knowledge: local check reveals where along the processional this fine restaurant stands), and gives the PCs a seal from the palace to let them access the rooms.

Can we speak to SaVell?

Yes, he’s at the Golden Oasis now. This is risky for Molin, since the noble may reveal the truth about some of the priest’s deceptions. But Molin also understands he can’t deny the PCs access to the man, since it’s likely he may hold some clue as to what has happened.

Which factions would do such a thing?

Any and all. The good prince has made many enemies since coming to Sanctuary.

Can we contact you for more information?

Of course. Molin explains he has told them all he knows, and if the PCs spend all their time at the palace, they are not out on

the streets finding the girl. He advises the PCs to use their time wisely. In truth, Molin does not intend to see the PCs for the rest of the night. He is not available again until dawn.

A NIGHT IN SANCTUARY

When the characters have asked their fill of questions, they are free to proceed as they wish. Molin orders the guards to escort the PCs from the palace and deposit them at the Processional Gate. Morally bankrupt characters might try to skip town, and if they do, let them try. Sanctuary is a nasty city, and it is home to all sorts of folks that would gladly put a knife in the back of a fool wandering the city at night. The PCs might be picked up by pirates to be taken back to Scavenger Island, enslaved by the Raggah and taken into the Grey Wastes, or simply murdered by Nisibisi spies. Alternatively, the characters might just lay low, hiding out until the next day. If so, they gain the Torch's enmity. He commits a great deal of time and energy toward tracking down the PCs to bring them back to the palace for a good hanging. You should impress upon the players the importance of completing this mission and warn them that the consequences of screwing over Molin are quite severe.

Finding the girl is not easy. The first step is probably obvious: talk to the family at the Golden Oasis. From there, the PCs will have a slew of leads, chasing the girl all over the city. This in itself is an adventure, for the city is full of factions battling for control. Simply walking down a street can find a character caught in the middle of a vicious fight between the PFLS and the 3rd Commando. Diving into an inn might lead the PCs into a mob of ravenous zombies, while gang members lay in wait in the alley on the other side of the back door. No simple task indeed.

How the investigation unfolds is largely up to the player characters. There is no specific order of events, and no structure to which the PCs must adhere. Allow them total freedom to go where they wish, talk to whom they like, and draw whatever conclusions they want. The various encounters presented in the following chapter offer opportunities for the characters to get back on track or to become misled, pulled from their course by some red herring or other. Use these carefully, since the enjoyment of this adventure comes from putting the puzzle-pieces together and the realization that they must go into the heart of darkness to pluck a willing victim from the jaws of death.

GOLDEN OASIS

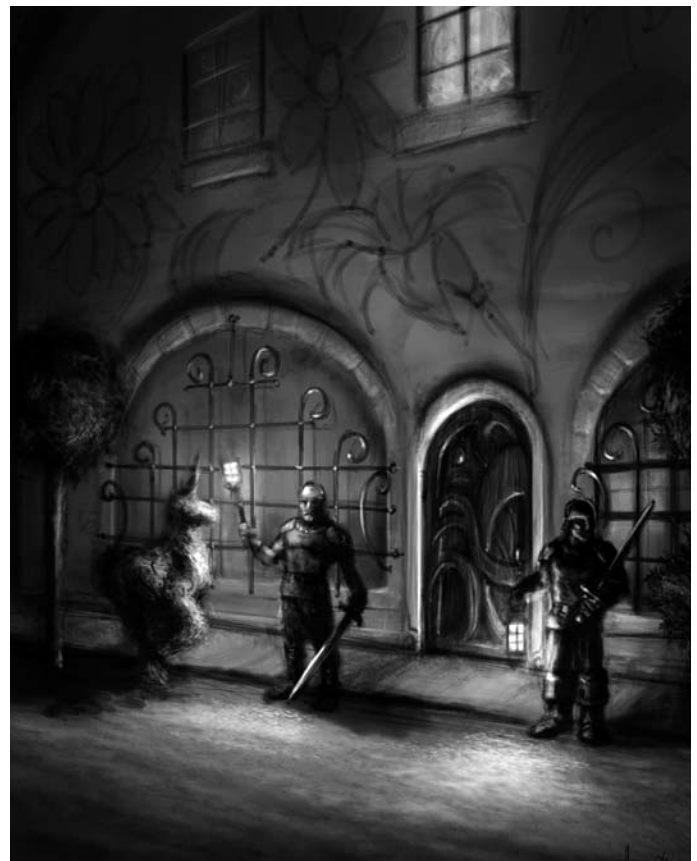
The most likely place to begin the investigation is at the scene of the crime—the Golden Oasis. Luckily, this restaurant and boarding house is quite close to the Processional Gate, and so the PCs should have little trouble reaching it. In fact, aside from the usual types hurrying to their homes, the way to this place should be considered under the control of the city garrison. Since the PCs left the palace in plain view, the guards do not accost them.

DEALING WITH NPCs

The player characters may speak with the same NPCs several times during the adventure, probing deeper and deeper to learn all they need to piece together the plot. The information acquired depends on the character's attitude towards the PCs. The characters may have better luck with someone else, figuring out the proper questions to ask, and then return to an NPC to dig out more information about the apparent kidnapping. Multiple interactions are not only expected, but encouraged. Each time the PCs talk to an NPC, they may acquire additional information, which may be for the best if they botched their first, or even second, rolls.

The Golden Oasis is one of the finest and most famous restaurants and inns in the entire city, standing in stark contrast to the macabre reputation held by the Vulgar Unicorn. Catering to the wealthiest of travelers and having served lords, merchant princes, priests, and more, it retains its high-class ambience and provides the very best service in the city.

The exterior of the structure is clean and maintained. Its walls are freshly washed white and nary a shingle is missing from its peaked roof. Lining the front of the building are a number of small ornamental trees and shrubbery manicured into the shapes of fantastic animals. The walls are painted to depict a riot of colorful flowers, setting the place apart from almost every



other shop on this wide street. Large glass windows protected by stylized ironwork front the building and frame the ornately carved wooden door that serves as its main entrance.

The interior is similarly impressive, with a meticulous attention to detail and an eye toward making the Oasis's guests comfortable and welcome. The main floor consists mostly of a large common room filled with clothed tables and upholstered chairs. Lining the walls are booths with curtains that offer a bit of privacy for those who request it. Attached to this room are the kitchens, storerooms, cold storage in the basement, and a wash room for cleaning linens as well as dishes.

A staircase perpendicular to the front door leads to the private rooms that make up the second floor. Each room is a small suite comprising a pair of sleeping quarters and a common sitting room. The beds are comfortable with goose down mattresses and warm blankets and a small fireplace. The Oasis has a dozen of these rooms and all are priced steeply, though the rooms over the kitchen are a bit more expensive in the winter.

GETTING INSIDE

A group of a dozen or so well-paid mercenaries (use hawk-mask statistics on page 212 of *SGtS*) forms a cordon around the outside of this building to ensure that no one who shouldn't be here crosses their line. Unless the characters present the seals they received from the Torch (assuming they asked for them),



they have to convince the guards to let them past. The guards are unfriendly and suspicious and they refuse passage to anyone dressed in less than a noble's outfit. If the characters manage to improve a guard's attitude to friendly (they get a +2 circumstance bonus for every 2 shaboozh they spend in bribes), the guards relent and allow the PCs to pass.

If the PCs don't manage to get past the guards the honest way, they'll need to find some other way. How they get in is not important; they just need to get in and talk with the people here. So, whatever scheme they concoct should work.

Once inside, the characters find the place as described previously, but there are few people about. Those that are present wear nervous expressions, their eyes sweeping over the PCs with naked fear. Among the people in the common room are two maids, Jerome SaVell—Jenna's brother—and 1d4+1 other people of consequence, being merchants, lesser nobles, and dignitaries. One of the maids approaches the PCs and offers to take them to a table. Unless they announce their business, she takes them to one of the booths, where she serves them drinks and a meal should the characters have the means to pay for such fare. Alternatively, the PCs may waste no time and announce their purpose to all and everyone. Such an unsubtle approach avails the characters little and the attitudes of everyone present worsen to unfriendly.

The other guests know nothing of the kidnapping and they have no interest in getting involved. These are generally noncombatants and if things turn ugly, they flee to their rooms. The two maids are likewise ignorant of what happened, except that they know the "unpleasant girl" has gone missing. Following up on this reveals that Jenna was both cruel and selfish.

JEROME SAVELL

Jerome is the eldest son of the SaVell family. He stands to inherit his father's fortunes such as they are, and the fact that they are rapidly diminishing disturbs him greatly. His father's addiction to *krrf* drains the family's coffers and Jerome fears that unless his dear old dad meets some end and soon, there will be nothing left to sustain his family fortunes. As such, he broods a great deal, spending most of his time sipping fine wines and considering how to deal with his unfortunate predicament.

The heir has another problem—his sister. He won't admit it, but he covets her. Marriage between siblings is not unheard of in Ranke, and encouraged in some families, but given the family's financial straits, such a match would be disastrous since it prevents any chance of attaining a dowry. Jerome could set aside his feelings on this matter, but Treight, Jenna's current paramour, has a shady past, no family of consequence, and in fact, seems to be more destitute than even the SaVells. Despite this, Raiden seems to be taken with the youth and permits the torrid affair even though the romance casts shame onto the SaVell name. Jerome's frustration and envy lead him to plot the unspeakable—patricide.

APPEARANCE

A man in his late twenties, Jerome has pleasant, widely-spaced features, long brown hair that he wears loose, and a thin moustache. He's never without a scowl and his eyes smolder with scarcely concealed hatred. He wears long red robes trimmed in white, though close inspection reveals they are a bit threadbare.

JEROME SAVELL

CR 3

Male Rankan aristocrat noble 3; CR 3; Medium humanoid (human); HD 3d6+3; hp 16; MDT 13; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+2 Dex, +1 armor), touch 12, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +2; Grap +2; Atk +3 melee (1d8/19–20, masterwork longsword) or +5 ranged (1d4/19–20, masterwork dagger); Full Atk +3 melee (1d8/19–20, masterwork longsword) or +5 ranged (1d4/19–20, masterwork dagger); SA inspiration (competence, courage), organize +3; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 8, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +8, Bluff +11, Diplomacy +17, Disguise +1 (+3 acting), Intimidate +13, Knowledge (nobility) +13, Listen –1, Sense Motive +7, Spot –1; Iron Will^B, Persuasive, Skill Focus (Knowledge: nobility)^B, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Languages: Cirdonian (S), Ilsigi (S), Rankene (S/W)

Reputation +1; *Contacts* influence 1

Inspiration: Six times per day, as a full-round action, Jerome can inspire those within 30 feet and who can hear him speak. This is a language-dependant, mind-affecting ability.

Competence: Jerome may grant one ally within range and who can clearly see or hear him a +2 competence bonus on skill checks. This ability lasts for as long as Jerome concentrates, up to a maximum of 2 minutes.

Courage: All allies within range gain a +1 morale bonus to saves against charm and fear and a +1 morale bonus to attack and weapon damage rolls for 2 rounds.

Organize: Whenever two or more characters use the aid another action to improve a skill check, Jerome may make the same check to grant a +3 bonus on the lead character's check.

Possessions: masterwork longsword, masterwork dagger, bracers of armor +1, cloak of resistance +1, noble's outfit.

SPEAKING WITH JEROME

Starting Attitude: Unfriendly

Jenna's disappearance merely adds to the young man's ire. He blames his father for everything, and the more he reflects on this fact, the angrier he gets. When and if the PCs approach him, he snarls at them to leave him alone. He immediately calms if

they reveal their purpose, but he is guarded if they reveal they work for Molin Torchholder, who is someone Jerome has been slow to trust. Even then, he refuses to cooperate unless the PCs manage to smooth his temper by improving his attitude to at least indifferent. The following questions and answers reflect some of the things the PCs might ask Jerome and his answers based on his attitude, which is noted parenthetically.

What's your problem with the Torch?

I don't trust him. There's something about him I don't like. He's to blame for all of this—bringing us to Sanctuary with false promises (indifferent). You know, there are all sorts of rumors about him back in Ranke, disturbing things about his habits to say nothing of his ambition (friendly). Why, I've even heard that he has the blood of the witches in him (helpful).

False promises?

Did he not tell you? Well, it's no matter, and it's certainly none of your business (indifferent). I doubt it relates to the disappearance of my sister anyhow. It was a business deal, that's all. We would supply mercenaries and they would pay us. Simple, no? Well, instead of coronations, they offered us land. Land! (friendly) What we need is coin, not worthless dirt fields. My father has expensive tastes (helpful).

What kind of tastes?

We're Rankans. We're not accustomed to living within our means. In particular, my father likes exotic things, none of which is cheap. In fact, my father has a taste for krrf, and by far, the majority of our fortunes seem to go toward feeding his great appetite (helpful).

Could this somehow be related to your sister's disappearance? Do you have any debts to people who might do something like this?

Undoubtedly, but not in Sanctuary. No, nothing of the sort. We have coin enough to keep my father in a haze for many years to come (friendly or better).

So it's a ransom then?

There are no demands (indifferent). No, I would think so. They could have taken a great deal of treasures from her room if they were after gold and they didn't (friendly). It's clear to me that they came for her and, I suppose, her lover (helpful).

Her lover?

Oh yes, didn't you hear? Her paramour, Treight, is missing too. I've never trusted him. I bet all this business somehow involves him. In fact, I wouldn't be surprised if he was behind the whole thing (helpful).

Really? Why is that?

He's funny. He talks with an odd accent. He's no Rankan that's for sure. I can't believe my father permits his filthy foreign hands on my chaste sister. It's disgusting and it shames us all. I would challenge him to a duel if it weren't for the fact that my father has commanded me not to (helpful).

You seem a bit resentful towards Treight. Why is that?

Sod off! (indifferent) I refuse to accept that my sister will wed a penniless backwater rustic. It adds nothing to our fortunes and it soils our honor (friendly). Alas, I must confess. My hatred for this knave is because I adore her. We would wed, but my father has squandered our wealth and so she must marry a man of consequence or we are doomed to destitution. Hence, though I am willing to set aside our marriage bed, I will not do so for one such as Treight! (helpful)

Where were you when she was kidnapped?

Here. Always here (indifferent). That's not quite true. I spent the early part of the day here, but just before dusk, I slipped off to the Street of Red Lanterns (friendly). If my father can live like a fool, I should like to sample what few delights are here while I can afford them! (helpful)

Can anyone corroborate your story?

Is not my word good enough (indifferent)? Of course. I spent the evening at the Aphrodisia House (friendly). I was with a pair of young women. Their names? Ah, yes. Annale and Merith (helpful). (Jerome is telling the truth, and if the PCs go to the brothel, both Annale and Merith confirm his story for a reasonable fee of 4 shaboozh.)

Regardless of Jerome's attitude, he can direct the PCs to Jenna's room (number six) and should the PCs think to ask if there was anything missing, Jerome thinks for a moment and adds, "nothing aside from her stiletto." He tells the PCs they are free to look around to their hearts' content, "though you won't find anything. I didn't." Finally, Jerome will take PCs who want to speak to Raiden SaVell up to his suite.

RAIDEN SAVELL

The patriarch of the SaVell family is an unpleasant man by the name of Raiden SaVell. Deep down, he blames himself for his wife's death. She perished giving birth to Jenna, and Raiden was away, bedding some whore in one of Ranke's many brothels. Since then, he has given up on life and indulged in all sorts of diversions, ranging from drugs to women, sampling the exotic and the forbidden. Unfortunately, his wealth has begun to diminish and he's getting desperate for coin to feed his addictions.

The source of his income was in the several mercenary companies he employed. He would sell their services, pay them a cut and claim the profits. The war in the north was far more costly than he had expected, and his brilliant legions were reduced to a handful of maimed and dying warriors. It seemed doom was upon him. And then the letter came.

Prince Kadakithis, in response to the growing crisis in the city, has been seeking help from Ranke, but for all his efforts, he received only vague promises. Lacking support from the capital, the prince had to find some other way to restore order in his city. The Torch advised him to recruit mercenaries. While the advisor freely admitted this could create even more problems, the piffles and other violent groups forced their hands. So, Kadakithis sent a request for help to Raiden SaVell, for it was said that his fighting men were among some of the best in the land. Kadakithis hoped to buy their services by giving the lord land around the city. Kadakithis believed that the land, if properly farmed, could be a good revenue generator, while also tending to the food shortages that had always haunted the city. Raiden, however, believed there was gold in the offering. Despite the fact that he had no mercenaries to speak of, he was more than willing to take the fool's gold.

As he prepared to collect his coins from the distant city, his daughter somehow convinced him to take her with him. And if Jenna was going to go, Jerome would not be far behind. So the group booked passage on a sleek ship and set out for the city of thieves. As the weeks passed, Raiden grew hungrier and hungrier for the great wealth he would gain in Sanctuary, giddy from the double-cross he had planned. Such expectations only sharpened his disappointment when he arrived at the doorstep of a city ripped apart by civil war. He met with the prince and learned, to his shock and dismay, the nature of the offer: mercenaries for land. Enraged, he scorned Kadakithis and his priest advisor, vowing never to help them and declaring he would leave the following morning. Naturally, this didn't happen, for Jenna vanished that very night.

After she vanished, Raiden grew fearful, suspecting that the prince was on to his ruse. He fled to his chambers, locked the door, and calmed his nerves by eating, smoking, and drinking. Since leaving for his chambers he has not emerged, causing many to wonder just what, exactly, is going on in there. Evidently, Raiden drunkenly choked on a goblet of meat, collapsed, reaching out for help, and promptly voided his bowels in death.

FINDING RAIDEN

Raiden's bedroom is connected to the suite rented by the family. He shared the suite with Jerome. Like other lodgings, it consists of two bedrooms connected to a main sitting room that has a door that opens onto the hall. The door to Jerome's quarters is open, revealing a neat and orderly chamber. The sitting room itself has been cleaned recently, but there's a loathsome odor emanating from Raiden's chamber. The door is locked (DC 25 Strength check or DC 20 Open Lock). Once the door is opened (or shattered), through the heavy cloud of *krrf* smoke, the source of the stink becomes apparent. The PCs see Raiden, lying on the floor, arm outstretched towards his door and purpled face and bulging eyes staring longingly for escape. His tongue is dark, dry, and swollen, sticking out of his mouth. He lies in a puddle of urine, and his robes are stained with his own excrement. The stench is particularly vile. All characters must succeed on DC 15 Fortitude save or become nauseated for as long as they remain in the room and for 1 minute afterward.

Raiden's death is apparent to anyone who succeeds on a DC 10 Heal check. He died choking on a bit of ham. A character with delicate fingers (and who succeeds on a DC 12 Dexterity check) can pluck the offending piece of flesh from the victim's throat, releasing the man's last exhale and also forcing another DC 15 Fortitude save to avoid becoming nauseated all over again.

Examining the room's contents turns up little: a writing desk on which stands an oil lamp, a sheaf of papers, an ink pot, a quill, and a bag of sand; a wardrobe with its door ajar, a rumpled bed, a well-used pipe, half a brick of *krrf*; shredded brown paper that smells of the drug, and an empty chamber pot near the door. A DC 15 Search check while examining the papers reveals the contract that shows Raiden paid passage from Ranke to Sanctuary by means of the *Sea Hag* for himself and four other passengers. In addition, the PCs also find the letter sent by Kadakithis inviting the Raiden to Sanctuary—it contains the standard sort of stuff one would expect in a letter inviting a noble from a far-away place. It also mentions that with the letter, Raiden would find 100 coronations with which he could secure passage to the city.

A DC 20 Search check of the bed turns up the purse. Inside, there are only 12 coronations. Canny characters that look for the cost of passage, which is revealed in the contract, learn the voyage for Raiden and his four companions only cost 50 coronations. This suggests either Raiden blew through 38 coronations along the way—a veritable fortune to be sure, or he was robbed. In truth, Crezda, the family's slave, stole some of the coins to pay her way home to Ilsig.

JENNA'S SUITE

Jenna and Treight, much to Jerome's disgust, shared a suite, from which sounds of their pleasure carried through the upper floor throughout the first night they stayed in Sanctuary. So rude was Jenna to the staff of the Oasis, the maids were reluctant to even approach the room to clean it, thus it is left more or less intact.



The door to the sitting room is unlocked and opens easily. Inside, the first room is clean and untouched, as is Treight's room, which appears not to have been slept in at all. Jenna's chamber is another matter. The room is tousled, the sheets foully stained, and bottles of wine lie scattered throughout the place. The stench of the city wafts through the open window, and the chamber pot lies on its side, contents spilled onto the floor.

Despite its appearance, the room does not look ransacked and any character making a DC 10 Wisdom check correctly deduces that this room evidences nothing more than the leavings of a wild night. Examining the room's contents turns up a bit more. Jenna left behind all of her possessions, including spare dresses, smallclothes, brushes, cosmetics, and all the other accoutrements one would expect of a young noblewoman. Characters may find a few valuables, but worth no more than 500 *sb* in all. The only thing missing (realized with a successful DC 10 Intelligence check) are her nightclothes. There's no shift, nothing for her to wear while she sleeps. A Rankan character automatically knows it's customary for Rankan women to sleep in garments and so the absence of such apparel is conspicuous. If the characters spoke with Jerome, they may have learned Jenna's stiletto is also missing. A thorough search of the room confirms it isn't here.

What the PCs do find in searching the room is very interesting however. For each DC 15 Search check, the PCs find one of the following items: a brick of *krrf*, an idol, and a small painting. The *krrf* is still wrapped in brown paper tied in place with cord. The idol is an odd statuette depicting a toad-like being covered in

phalluses and mammary glands. Finally, the painting is a portrait of an attractive young man who has dark hair, dusky skin, and smoldering black eyes. For more information on these findings, see **Evidence in Act III**.

Having examined one or both rooms, the PCs should have plenty of clues to propel them through the rest of the adventure. Before they set out from the Oasis, though, they may wish to reveal their findings to Jerome and ask a few more questions just to be sure.

GOING BACK TO JEROME

When and if Jerome learns about his dead father, he lets loose a sign, and feigns sadness. In truth, he's gladdened by this development and somewhat relieved, a fact the PCs might pick up on if they succeed on a Sense Motive check opposed by Jerome's Bluff check. Otherwise, the man plays the part of the grieving son, head hanging, with a few forced tears. He's also smart enough not to abandon his family and cast his own reputation into doubt, so he's content to wait, at least for a couple days.

Despite Jerome's efforts to maintain his indifferent façade, Raiden's death lightens his mood and he's a bit more willing to talk to the PCs. Treat his attitude as one step improved. He may elaborate on his answers to the previous questions, or should the characters have new ones based on the evidence they found, he'll answer them depending on his current mood. Sample questions and appropriate answers follow.

How many people were in your party when you left Ranke?

Four (indifferent). No wait, make that five (friendly or better).

And they were?

The family of course (indifferent). My father, sister, her paramour, and our slave (friendly or better).

Slave?

Oh yes. Didn't I mention her? We brought our house-slave, Crezda. A gentle woman. I seem to recall she had a fine figure in her youth (friendly or better).

Where is she now?

Why, I don't know really. I saw her this morning (friendly or better).

The ship you came in on: what was its name?

I believe it was the Sea Hag (indifferent). It's still here, or rather, it had better be (friendly). The captain's name is Arad Shent (helpful).

Do you recall the price of passage?

No (indifferent). Yes, I believe it was 10 coronations per passenger (friendly). Though I cannot believe father paid full price for our slave to go with us. Her place was in the hold with the other slaves (helpful).

Did your father have any special relations with your slave?

Who would care if he did? I fail to see how this is important to the investigation (friendly). It wouldn't surprise me though if he did. She has appeal, if you like older women (helpful).

So if the price of passage was about 10 coronations per passenger, what happened to the rest of the money?

I'm not sure I follow your line of reasoning. What money (indifferent or better)?

Did your father use krrf?

Perhaps (indifferent). Yes, yes he did. He had a taste for the stuff and he smoked away our family fortune (friendly).

Where did he get it?

I'm not certain (indifferent), but I suspect that Treight may have had something to do with it (friendly).

Have you ever seen this idol before?

Yes. It belonged to my sister. Treight gave it to her as a gift (indifferent). Abominable thing, isn't it (friendly)?

What about this portrait?

Ah yes, my nemesis in paint. Again, this was my sister's (indifferent). I don't recall seeing it done. It just appeared one day (friendly). Another gift, I suspect. She had it when we left Ranke (helpful).

Unfortunately, many of these questions may lead to more questions. The most pressing matter involves the slave, though, for she is yet another member of the entourage who has yet to be accounted for. When the PCs ask about her, have them make DC 10 Spot checks to notice the two maids heading toward the kitchens just as soon as the characters begin this line of questioning. Following them could lead to additional information.

THE MISSING PASSENGER

Jerome has no idea where the slave has gotten too, nor does he seem particularly concerned. With his father dead, his mind is already working on a plan to stabilize his finances in Ranke. Jerome does indeed want his sister returned—he loves her, after all. But there is a growing unease in him that she has been soiled. This distracts him a great deal and he's even less forthcoming about his answers than before.

The staff, however, may lend a hand. Characters who noticed the maids leaving the common room and heading for the kitchens may follow without making too much of scene. Once there, they see the two women, Aralda and Gemen (noncombatants), slipping through the back door. If the PCs shout for them to stop or move to intercept, both surrender, collapsing into tears, pleading for the PCs to have mercy on them. In a rush of words punctuated by hiccups and sniffles, they explain they helped Crezda escape the Oasis, to be free of that abominable family who abused her so. They add that at dawn, they escorted the woman to the Maze; it's not the safest place, but it's the best to disappear. They don't know where she is now, or even if she's alive, but (if the PCs improve their attitudes to helpful from indifferent), they say she was trying to find passage to the Kingdom of Ilsig.

CONCLUSIONS

The exploration and investigation of the Golden Oasis offer many critical clues to finding the missing girl. However, most if not all of these clues are meaningless without more information, so it falls to the characters to hit the streets and scrounge up whatever tidbits they can find. **Act III: The Investigation** picks



up with the clues the characters have uncovered and explores the various ways the PCs might learn more about them. Since much of this information depends on the knowledge of NPCs, Gather Information checks, and so on, the characters likely have to navigate the deadly streets, maneuvering through the various zones as they make their way to their destinations. **Act II: Sanctuary by Night** provides a system and encounters for handling the character's movement through the city.

From this point on there is no "proper" order. The characters can go where they like, and talk to whomever they wish. And once the PCs have the right information, they can proceed toward the adventure's conclusion as described in **Act IV: Night's Secrets**.





The city braces itself for yet another violent night. Sanctans hurry home, their eyes watching the sky to gauge how much time they have left before the chaos begins. Those remaining members of the city watch retreat to strong points, erecting barricades and readying weapons, knowing there is little they or anyone can do to put this city back on course. And like cockroaches under the cover of darkness, thugs, terrorists, soldiers, death squads, and splinter groups take positions, readying themselves for another night of fighting in the bloody war for Sanctuary.

Helpful Hint: You'll be moving back and forth between this chapter and the next for a good part of the entire adventure. The rest of the adventure is far less straightforward and the plot unfolds in a way particular to your players.

GETTING AROUND IN SANCTUARY

The first thing to remember about Sanctuary in this era of history is that it stands on the precipice of destruction. The city is chopped up into smaller districts, each controlled by one of the factions struggling for control. Kadakithis and his Hell Hounds are more or less impotent. The Beysib, for all their cold cruelty and competence in battle, have learned to withdraw to safe houses or to their ships in the bay. Thus, the folks in charge are the 3rd Commando, Straton and the remaining Stepsons, Zip's PFLS, Chenaya's gladiators, the Beggars, and about a dozen or so violent gangs and crime lords who shift loyalties like the wind. Then there are the undead. These shuffling corpses cause no shortage of horror and trouble

as they wander the streets of the Shambles and other parts of the city. One might think this city navigable by sticking to those areas that are friendly, but the boundaries change all the time. One gang might hold a block in the Maze only to lose it to the PFLS by the next day. There's simply no way to predict who's in charge, and of what.

Rather than attempting to sketch the zones and the factions controlling them, a couple of rolls on the following tables can help you determine the power group in charge of a particular area and the extent of their control. Whenever the characters enter a new section of the city, roll 1d100 plus or minus the neighborhood modifier on **Table 2-1: Neighborhood Modifiers**. Next, roll on the following table to determine who's in charge, the extent of their control, and what, if anything, the controlling faction demands of people moving through the area. For details on the various power groups and possible encounters with each, consult the entries that follow. For details on the various districts, see **Chapter Two: Sanctuary Then and Now** in *SGtS*.

Example: *he party leaves the Golden Oasis and heads down the Processional. This area has a +20 modifier, so you'd roll 1d100+20. You do, and get a 64 (44+20): uncontrolled. You roll 1d3-1 to determine the extent and roll a 1 (2-1), so you know the next block is uncontrolled and more or less safe. The characters turn onto a side street, so you roll again, getting a 59 this time: contested. Rolling twice more, you get an uncontrolled and 3rd Commando. This suggests that the 3rd Commando are coming into this area to take control and there may be some fighting*

ACT II: SANCTUARY BY NIGHT

with locals. You roll for extent using the 3rd Commando entry and determine that the extent of this faction's efforts extend about 2 city blocks.

It's a good idea to roll up a few areas ahead of time to speed things up and get a sense of the types of environments the PCs will have to go through to arrive at their destinations. You don't need to roll for each zone, and if you prefer, you can handle movement through the city in a narrative fashion, describing the scenes of violence as the characters make their way to their next destination. You can then use the following faction descriptions for possible encounters depending on your needs for the adventure.

TIME

Black Snake Dawn is a timed adventure, and going back and forth to different neighborhoods chews up most of the night. Given the street conditions, you should expect it takes 1d4+1 hours to get from one side of the city to the other, or about an hour of time to move through each district, possibly longer if the PCs get stuck in the Maze. This is a guide, not a rule. Modify as appropriate to the situation.

THE MOON

On this night, the moon is full, hanging large in the sky and casting its frigid beams onto this broken city. Since this adventure is a ticking clock, with time being the biggest enemy the PCs have, you should be sure to use the moon in your descriptions, describing its position in the sky to heighten the sense of urgency to complete the mission. While also a way to increase the drama, the full moon also helps characters move around without needing torches.

SPLITTING UP

In general, dividing the party is a bad idea. It dilutes the party's strength and presents more opportunities to trigger multiple encounters at once, to say nothing of taxing your resources and attention. That said, in this adventure it may not be such a bad idea, for it allows the PCs to spread out and follow up their various leads. Since doing so allows them to cover more ground more quickly, they're less likely to be hassled as they move through the zones since they can probably slip past undetected. This still makes your job more difficult and creates a lot of downtime for the other players who are waiting for their turn. In small groups, this isn't a problem, but in larger groups, this could be disastrous. If the party does split up, encourage them to divide into no more than three teams. While so split, spend no more than 10 minutes at a time with any particular team, rotating to each group to keep the action moving.

CONTESTED ZONES

In the narrow alleys and side streets, gangs fight bloody battles for control over a few feet of filthy road, while in other parts

TABLE 2-1: NEIGHBORHOOD MODIFIERS

Neighborhood	Modifier
Avenue of Temples	+20
Bazaar	+0
Caravan's Square	+5
Cemetery	+0
Copper Corner	+10
Fisherman's Row	+10
Governor's Walk	+5
The Hill	+30
Jeweler's Quarter	+10
The Maze	-20
The Palace	*
Processional	+20
Promise of Heaven	-10
Pyrtanis Street	+20
Westside/Shambles	-30
Wideway	-10
Downwind	-20
Street of Red Lanterns	-10

*The Palace is still under the control of Kadakithis and the beysibs.

TABLE 2-2: POWER GROUPS

Roll	Faction	Extent of Control (City Blocks)*
-21 or less	Undead	1d2-1
-20-01	Minor Gang	1d4-1
02-10	Crime Lord	1d6-1
11-25	Death Squads	1d3-1
26-30	Moruth's Beggars	1d3-1
31-60	Contested (see entry on at left)	1d4
60-70	Uncontrolled	1d3-1
71-80	PFLS	1d6-1
81-90	3rd Commando	1d6-1
91-100	Stepsons	1d4-1
101-110	Gladiators	1d3-1
111-120	Garrison Soldiers	1d3-1
121+	Beysibs	1d2-1

*If extent is 0 blocks or fewer, the group controls a portion of a block, an alley, or even just a single building. Generally, these areas are checkpoints, but they can also hold snipers.

EVOKING THE CITY

It's important for you to relate Sanctuary's hectic, dangerous environment. Sounds of fighting should be a constant din, while explosions and fires paint the night sky red. The PCs should see the dead and dying littering the streets, burned out shells signaling the shattered lives of Sanctuary's victims in this ongoing conflict. The city should feel like it is being torn apart and every sight, sound, and smell should add to this experience. Finally, you can also use **Table 6–6: Urban Set Dressings** in *SGtS* for further details, adding a bit of color to the parade of buildings the PCs pass along the way.

of the city, the 3rd Commando fights vicious conflicts against the death squads that wage a guerilla war against the Rankan powers occupying this wretched city. Tonight is no different, and pockets of violence flare up through Sanctuary. The screams of the dying, the splatter of blood, and the muted footfalls of roaches scattering to the shadows serve as a chorus to the city's brutal crimes and desperate acts.

Many of the places the characters enter as they move through Sanctuary are deemed contested. These are areas where control is not clear, where the various factions fight to seize control over the zone. These are nasty dangerous places, but in the confusion, there are plenty of opportunities for the PCs to slip past without attracting attention. Of course, these are also opportunities for the characters to get swept up in the fight and likely meet a bloody end. As with any controlled zones, a contested area is measured in city blocks. To determine the number of factions present, roll 1d3–2 and add 1 for every block beyond 1. So, if the PCs entered a contested zone that's 3 blocks long, you'd roll 1d3 minus 2 plus 3 or 1d3+1 to determine the number of factions present. Once you determine the number of factions, roll on **Table 2–3: Contested Zones** and apply the modifiers presented on **Table 2–1** to determine which factions are present. If you get duplicate results, simply double the faction's presence (see respective entries), or in the case of more generic entries such as gangs, undead, or crime lords, you can have multiple groups of the same kind, possibly fighting against each other.

TABLE 2–3: CONTESTED ZONES

Roll	Faction
–21 or less	Undead
–20–+20	Minor Gang
21–40	Crime Lord
41–55	Death Squads
56–65	Moruth's Beggars
66–80	PFLS
81–90	3rd Commando
91–100	Stepsons
101–110	Gladiators
111–120	Hell Hounds and Palace Guards
121+	Beysibs

Finally, roll 1d100 for each faction. This determines the percentage of casualties they've endured. Should a faction have 80% or higher casualties, they are considered defeated and routed, but signs of their presence (corpses, blood, broken weapons, and badges) should be present.

Example: *The characters move out of a Stepson controlled zone and into the Jeweler's Quarter. Tonight, this middle class district is thick with fighting. The GM rolls 1d6 to determine the extent of the contested zone. He gets a 4, giving him a pretty large battlefield. To determine the number of factions present, the GM rolls 1d3+2 (–2 plus 4 equals 2) and gets a 4 total. He rolls on **Table 2–1** four times (each getting a +10% modifier due to the neighborhood): Stepsons (this makes sense), PFLS, death squad, and a band of gladiators. The GM then rolls for each group to determine their casualties. Getting 88% for the Stepsons, 92% for the PFLS, 21% for the death squad, and 55% for the Gladiators.*

From these numbers, the GM can piece together what's going on. The PFLS have had the worst casualties, followed by the Stepsons. The Gladiators are next, and then the death squad. The GM decides that the PFLS unwisely ambushed a Stepsons outpost in the center of this area. While they were fighting, a death squad attacked, crushing both groups. While the Stepsons were attempting to retreat, Chenaya's gladiators tore through the area, butchering the PFLS as they fled. Unfortunately for them, the Nisibisi were in a better position, forcing the gladiators to throw in with the few remaining Stepsonsto have a chance to survive the fight.

PCs AND CONTESTED ZONES

PCs that enter a contested zone have several options available. The first, and most likely, is to cross through the zone without getting killed. Set up the fight in whatever way makes sense to you and allow the characters to move, hide, and make their attempts to get through intact. Generally, most factions will allow such people to go by unless they are recognized as being allied with an enemy (hostile) faction. In that case, at least some of the faction's attacks go against the recognized character. Or if the character is recognized as an ally, the PC in question will be called to help.

PCs who choose sides in such a fight are bound to develop a reputation for being allies with the side they're fighting on. At any point throughout the rest of the night, if members of

a hostile faction recognize the PCs, the faction members will treat the PCs as enemies.

GETTING INFORMATION

Considering the nature of these zones, it's unlikely for the PCs to have the opportunity to chat with the NPCs—they're fighting for their lives, after all. The PCs can only interact with an NPC once the combat ends (1d10 rounds if the PCs don't participate), at which point the zone becomes a normal faction-controlled zone.

RUNNING COMBAT ZONES

Blundering into combat zones is dangerous for a variety of reasons. First, it potentially exposes the characters to unexpected combats, which can unduly weaken them for events that occur later in the night. Second, it undoubtedly slows the PCs' progress, with each combat making it more and more unlikely that the characters will have the time or resources to finish the investigation. Finally, running combat zone after combat zone after combat zone is dull and repetitive.

To deal with these challenges, you should use such sites as set-dressing, as a way to spruce up the atmosphere and emphasize the city's instability. Have the PCs go through a few minor fights, a few close calls, and have them move on. The PCs should not participate in more than one or two of these unless the players have little interest in fulfilling their mission. In that case, feel free to embroil them in Sanctuary's tumultuous predicament.

UNCONTROLLED ZONES

These stretches of territory are no-man's land. By default, they fall to the prince, but in truth, anyone can claim them. The characters can move freely through these zones, though you may throw a few odd encounters with NPCs to prod along the development of the plot, perhaps directing the PCs to a key location or important NPC. For side-track ideas, check out the interludes described in *Murder at the Vulgar Unicorn*.

FACTIONS

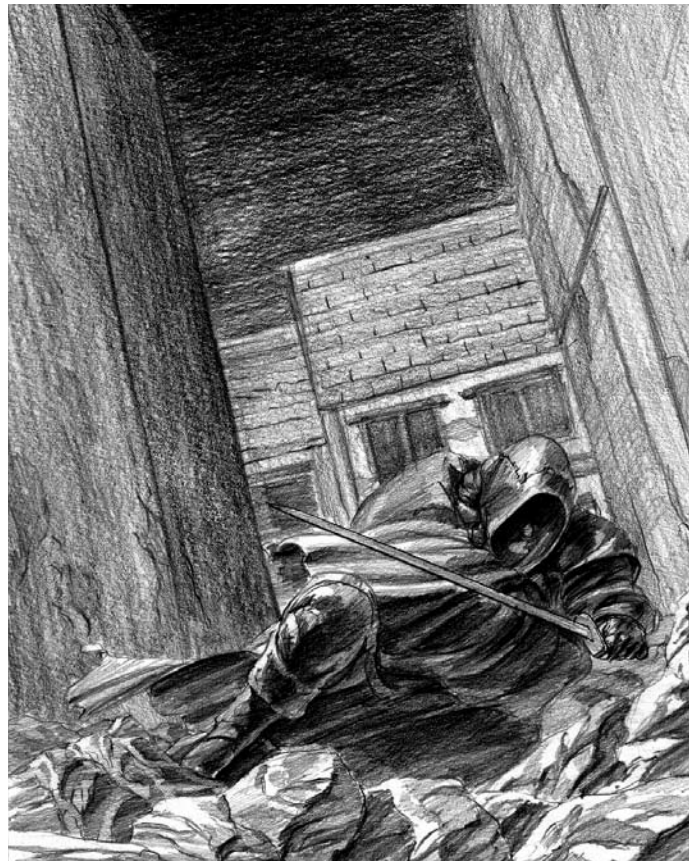
As the characters follow up on their own leads, speak with their contacts, and search for the missing girl, they must move through the occupied sections of the city, forced to sneak past checkpoints, fight their way through vicious gangs, or negotiate passage through the more reasonable areas. As they do, they may be able to pick up important clues about the missing girl, Jenna, and who abducted her. The following entries describe the character of the areas held by the various factions and possible encounters the PCs might have there. In addition, each faction entry includes a side-track with enough information to get you started on spinning out a small scenario, offering the basic plot and rewards. If you don't have the time or the inclination to develop these further, skip them and focus on the adventure at hand.

3RD COMMANDO

For the last couple of years, the Emperor Abakithis has dealt with the repercussions of instigating a war against the Nisibisi and the Mygdonian Alliance. This ill-advised conflict has been costly in terms of lives, money, and more than anything, confidence in the Emperor. Soon after the beginning of the war, it became clear the Rankan Empire was in no way equipped to deal with the threat, and after appalling military defeats, Abakithis turned to mercenary companies to buttress his flagging soldiers. Even with Tempus and his Stepsons, it was not enough. The Nisibisi Witches used foul magic to press the Rankan legions, shattering their ranks with hordes of demons and twisted creature, malformed by sorcerous energies. Tempus was forced to look to other techniques to combat the witches, so the 3rd Commando was formed.

This mercenary force has earned a reputation for doing whatever it takes, no matter how unsavory, to get the job done. Filled with assassins, murderers, and terrorists, this group changed the tenor of the war and crushed the witches in their foul towers. Unfortunately, neither Tempus nor the 3rd Commando anticipated what would happen next.

The witches scattered, abandoning their mountain redoubts, and slipped away to infest the crumbling empire. There, the witches waged their own campaign of terror, destroying their hated foes from within. In each city, there were cells of Nisibisi spies and agents who strove to turn the tables once more. Roxane, a brutal



REPUTATION

The characters are likely to come across a variety of different factions while exploring Sanctuary. Some groups may allow the PCs to cross, while others are likely to interfere or even attack the characters. Each time the player characters enter a faction-controlled area, they have to contend with the forces in control there. Some factions may take up hidden positions, ambushing those who trespass, while others might set up checkpoints, charging travelers a fee to move through the neighborhood.

Whenever a character or characters enter a new area, have the players select one character in the group and have the guards or important NPC present make a DC 25 Reputation check. (*Note:* A reputation check is 1d20 + the Reputation modifier + the guard's Int modifier + circumstantial modifiers.) If a PC is not recognized, the members of the faction in control of the zone are indifferent or unfriendly. If the PCs are recognized, the faction's attitude changes to one appropriate to the PCs' perceived affiliation. For example, if they are known to consort with Hell Hounds (perhaps by having a Hell Hound contact), the PCs are considered allied with the city garrison.

In addition, any time the characters improve a faction's attitude to helpful, the PCs are considered to be members of that faction for the remainder of the night. Should characters have reputations that link them to multiple factions at once, they use the best attitude if recognized.

witch and queen of the Nisibisi, wound up in Sanctuary, where she has embroiled herself in all sorts of vile plots. Hot on her heels was the 3rd Commando, who would not give up, nor surrender, and vowed to destroy the witch.

Now, after months of fighting her death squads, the 3rd Commando has been distracted from their mission, drawn into Sanctuary's civil war. Having compromised their purpose with devil's bargains made with the PFLS and various crime lords, there's little to distinguish them from the other groups in the city.

ADVERSARIES

For every block or portion of a block held by the 3rd Commando, there are 1d6 commandos. In addition, there's a 10% chance per controlled block for an officer to be present. There's a 1% chance per block that Kama is present as well.

TYPICAL 3RD COMMANDO

CR 3

Male or female Rankan mercenary assassin 3; CR 3; Medium humanoid (human); HD 3d6+3; hp 13; MDT 16; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+2 Dex, +3 armor, +1 shield), touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grap +4; Atk +5 melee (1d6+2/19–20, masterwork short sword) or +5 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow); Full Atk +5 melee (1d6+2/19–20, masterwork short sword) or +5 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow); SA poison (DC 17, 1d6 Str/1d6 Str), sneak attack +1d6; SQ mercenary traits; SV Fort +4 (+6 against poison), Ref +5, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Craft (poison) +2, Hide +8, Intimidate +6, Listen +7, Move Silently +11, Sense Motive +3, Speak Language (Nisibisi, Sanctan), Spot +7; Dodge, Improved Initiative^B, Mobility, Skill Focus (Move Silently)^B.

Languages: Nisibisi (S), Rankene (S/W), Sanctan (S)

Reputation +0; *Contacts* information 1

Mercenary Traits: 3rd Commandos gain a +2 bonus to Constitution checks made to continue running, to avoid nonlethal damage from a forced march, to avoid nonlethal damage from starvation or thirst, and to Fortitude saves to avoid nonlethal damage from hot or cold environments.

Possessions: masterwork studded leather, masterwork buckler, masterwork short sword, masterwork light crossbow with 20 bolts, 3 doses of Large scorpion venom, *potion of convert moderate wounds*, 1d20 *sb*

3RD COMMANDO OFFICER

CR 6

Male or female Rankan mercenary assassin 3, fighter 3; CR 6; Medium humanoid (human); HD 3d6+3 plus 3d10+3; hp 35; MDT 16; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (+3 Dex, +3 armor, +1 shield), touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +5; Grap +7; Atk +8 melee (1d6+3/19–20, +1 *short sword*) or +9 ranged (1d8/19–20 plus poison, masterwork light crossbow); Full Atk +8 melee (1d6+3/19–20, +1 *short sword*) or +9 ranged (1d8/19–20 plus poison, masterwork light crossbow); SA poison (DC 17, 1d6 Str/1d6 Str), sneak attack +1d6; SQ mercenary traits; SV Fort +8 (+10 against poison), Ref +8, Will +4; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Craft (poison) +2, Hide +9, Intimidate +9, Listen +7, Move Silently +12, Sense Motive +6, Speak Language (Nisibisi, Sanctan), Spot +7; Cleave, Dodge, Improved Initiative^B, Mobility, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Move Silently)^B, Spring Attack^B.

Languages: Nisibisi (S), Rankene (S/W), Sanctan (S)

Reputation +1; *Contacts* Information 1/Influence 1

Mercenary Traits: 3rd Commandos gain a +2 bonus to Constitution checks made to continue running, to avoid nonlethal damage from a forced march, to avoid nonlethal damage from starvation or thirst, and to Fortitude saves to avoid nonlethal damage from hot or cold environments.

Possessions: masterwork studded leather, masterwork buckler, +1 *short sword*, masterwork light crossbow with 20 bolts, *potion of convert moderate wounds*, *cloak of resistance +1*, 3 doses of Large scorpion venom, 1d20 *sh*.

ENCOUNTERING THE 3RD COMMANDO

Unless the PCs are recognized as members of a death squad or the PFLS, they can move through the area by purchasing a red armband. An armband costs 1d3 padpols, though if a character succeeds on a DC 25 Bluff or Diplomacy check, they can reduce the price by 1 (minimum 0).

3RD COMMANDO STARTING ATTITUDES

Attitude	Faction
Helpful	3rd Commando
Friendly	Stepsons
Indifferent	City garrison, gladiators, most other nationalities
Unfriendly	Minor gang, crime lords, beggars, Wriggles, Beysibs, PFLS
Hostile	Death squad, undead

The commandos don't waste time talking to player characters unless their attitudes can be improved to friendly. Unfortunately, none of these teams knows anything about the missing girl or her family. The commandos give the characters a gentle warning, suggesting that they find whores and lay low until dawn. If the PCs have information about Nisibisi agents, the commandos are grateful and offer to help them out. If the information is of quality, the PCs gain a +2 circumstance bonus to Charisma-based skill checks when interacting with members of the 3rd Commando.

If the characters manage to improve their attitudes to helpful, one of them offers to escort the PCs to their next destination—this can be a boon or a hindrance as the characters make their way through the city, since the PCs are henceforth recognized as being affiliated with the 3rd Commando.

KAMA

Kama plays a dangerous game. Although she's committed to finding and destroying Roxane, she treats with the movers and shakers in the city, forging and breaking alliances with disturbing ease. She knows her mission and she's ruthless in its pursuit. Roxane must be stopped, no matter the cost. For more information on Kama, including her statistics, see *SGtS*, page 108.

If Kama is present when the PCs enter a zone controlled by the 3rd Commando, have her make a Reputation check to see if she recognizes any of the characters. If so, she may talk to them personally depending on their affiliations, if any. Like her men, she knows nothing about the kidnapping, nor, frankly, does she care. However, if the PCs can improve her attitude to friendly, she is willing to help. She can put them in touch with Zip—the leader of the PFLS (see entry later in this chapter). While she



doesn't know where he is, she knows people who can connect the PCs to this terrorist. Kama explains that he, through his contacts, may know something. This grants the PCs a +4 circumstance bonus on their next Gather Information check to locate the terrorist leader. This check is a DC 25.

Characters that recognize Kama and succeed by 5 or more know that she's the daughter of Tempus and that she has warned the beds of some of the more influential people in Sanctuary, including none other than Molin Torchholder. Characters gain a +4 circumstance bonus to Charisma-based skill checks made to influence Kama if they mention and show proof that they're working for Molin. This bonus doubles if they also prove they are connected in some way to Tempus, such as being members of the Stepsons, for example. If the PCs can improve her attitude to helpful, she escorts the PCs through 1d6 zones.

BEYSIB

Despite the ties of affection between Kadakithis and Shupansea, the Beysib have not had an easy time in Sanctuary. The first days of their occupation began well enough, but resentment and bigotry turned what was an amicable relationship between the Sanctans and the refugees into a sour one. The blame lies squarely at the feet of the piffles, who organized to liberate the city from those they deemed as harsh oppressors. From their inception, the PFLS have waged a brutal war, murdering Beysib civilians,

ACT II: SANCTUARY BY NIGHT

destroying their ships, and intimidating anyone who attempts to coexist with these people. To protect themselves, the Beysib have largely withdrawn to the Palace, their ships, or friendly estates that stand above the city. Those few Beysibs willing to brave the city at night do so to get revenge on the scum that murder their kin. Gathering in small groups, they prowl Sanctuary's streets in search of PFLS, or anyone really, who gets in their way.

ADVERSARIES

For every block or portion of a block held by the Beysib, there are 1d4+1 warriors. There's a 30% chance per warrior present that he is in fact a she and a Harka Bey assassin. This is bad news indeed for PCs who have no love for the Fish-Eyed Folk from Beyond the Sea. Such encounters should teach them a lesson about having care about picking unnecessary fights.

TYPICAL BEYSIB TOUGHS

CR 4

Male Beysib thug warrior 5; CR 4; Medium humanoid (human); HD 5d8+5; hp 27; MDT 17; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (+1 Dex, +5 armor, +1 shield), touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +5; Grap +6; Atk +7 melee (1d8+1/19–20, masterwork longsword) or +6 ranged (1d4+1, dart); Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+1/19–20, masterwork longsword) or +6 ranged (1d4+1, dart); SV Fort +5 (+9 against poison), Ref +4, Will +0 (+8 against vision-based effects); Str 13, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.



Skills and Feats: Climb +6, Intimidate +7, Listen +1, Speak Language (Trade Tongue, Wrigglie), Spot +1, Swim +12; Alertness, Lightning Reflexes^B, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Languages: Beysib (S), Trade Tongue (S), Wrigglie (S)

Reputation +0; *Contacts* Influence 1/Skill 1

Possessions: chain shirt, buckler, masterwork longsword, 6 darts, *potion of convert moderate wounds*, 1d20 *sb*.

HARKA BEY

CR 12

Female Beysib acolyte assassin 6/fighter 2/initiate 1/Harka Bey assassin 3; CR 12; Medium humanoid (human); HD 6d6+12 plus 2d10+4 plus 1d6+2 plus 3d8+6; hp 79; MDT 20; Init +8; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20 (+4 Dex, +5 armor, +1 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +9; Grap +11; Atk +13 melee (1d8+3/17–20, *Harka Bey sword*); Full Atk +11/+11/+6 melee (1d8+3/17–20, *Harka Bey sword*) and +10/+5 melee (1d6+2/19–20, +1 *short sword*); SA killing strike (DC 16), poison (DC 24, 1d6 Str/2d6 Str), poison blood (DC 13, 1d6 Dex/2d6 Con), sneak attack +3d6; SQ immune to poison, acolyte trait, beynit bond (see *SGtS*, p. 126), eclectic sorcery, poison use; SV Fort +12, Ref +15, Will +6 (+8 against vision-based effects); Str 14, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +1 (+3 Craft), Balance +12, Climb +4, Concentration +6, Craft (poison) +12, Hide +18, Jump +12, Knowledge (religion) +5, Listen +9, Move Silently +18, Search +0, Speak Language (Sanctan), Spellcraft +5, Spot +6, Swim +10, Tumble +12; Combat Expertise^B, Dodge, Improved Initiative^B, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Lightning Reflexes^B, Mobility, Spring Attack, Two-Weapon Defense^B, Two-Weapon Fighting^B, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Languages: Beysib (S/W), Sanctan (S)

Reputation +2; *Contacts* Information 1/Influence 2/Skill 1

Acolyte Trait: Once per day, as an immediate action, a Harka Bey assassin can call upon her deity to gain a +1 insight bonus on any single roll of a d20.

Eclectic Sorcery: The Harka Bey assassins select spells from the mage spell lists. Whenever they attempt to use a spell-completion or spell-trigger item, they must treat the item as an Unknown spell.

Spellcasting +1; Ritualcasting +1; CL 1st

Known Spells Prepared (4): 1st (MT 20; price 1)—*expeditious retreat*, *obscuring mist*, *shield*, *true strike*

Familiar Spells Prepared (1): 1st (prep 1 standard; MT 20; price 1)—*jump*

Possessions: +2 *studded leather*, *Harka Bey sword* (see *SGtS*, page 238), +1 *short sword*, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *gloves of Dexterity* +2, *shadow cloak*, *silent boots*, 2 doses of sea worm poison, 2 *potions of convert moderate wounds*

ENCOUNTERING THE BEYSIB

Beysib warriors look for trouble. They attack anyone they suspect of being a part of any groups with which they are hostile. If a Harka Bey assassin is present, she keeps the other Beysibs in check until they can determine the nature of the PCs. If the characters are peaceful or not affiliated with any of their hated factions, she allows the PCs to move on unmolested.

BEYSIB STARTING ATTITUDES

Attitude	Faction
Helpful	Beysibs
Friendly	City garrison
Indifferent	3rd Commando, any other nationality
Unfriendly	Death squad, Stepsons, Wrigglies
Hostile	Beggars, crime lord, gladiators, minor gang, PFLS, undead

Improving their attitudes to friendly allows the PCs to talk with this group. (Beysib PCs gain a +8 circumstance bonus to these checks, while half-Beysibs gain a +2 bonus.) The Beysibs have little to share, but they do recall seeing a young woman matching the girl's description somewhere in the city (pick the location—it can be anywhere, since the girl's no longer there). They offer a bit more if their attitude is improved to helpful: they relate she was in the company of an attractive young man. If the PCs have the portrait, the Beysibs can confirm that this was the man. After midnight, the Beysibs report that they spotted the girl heading off in the direction of the Downwind.

SIDE-TRACK

Fed up with the piffles and their campaign to drive the Beysibs from Sanctuary, a pair of Harka Bey assassins move under the cover of darkness, killing Wrigglies for revenge. These killers are fed up with Kadakithis's impotence and believe the only way to protect themselves and their people is to slaughter the natives like the animals they resemble. While they seek out members of the PFLS, they kill first and identify their victims later.

CRIME LORD

With the collapse of the hawk-masks and Jubal's subsequent defeat, the criminal organizations slipped into chaos. Petty crooks and minor operations suddenly found themselves free of Jubal's yoke. In his absence, these ambitious criminals staked their claims on the shattered remnants of Jubal's underworld empire and set themselves up as his heirs. None of them has the know-how or the talent to properly fill his shoes. Thus, much of their dealings are at the ends of swords, staking their claims by killing off their competition.

Not only do they have to fight each other, they have to deal with the other groups fighting for Sanctuary. Their efforts to extort, murder, and thieve are all countered by the Stepsons

TABLE 2-4: CRIME LORD POWER

Roll	Result
01–50	<i>Petty</i> : Crime Lord (7th-level), 1d4+2 thugs
51–75	<i>Minor</i> : Crime Lord (9th-level), 1d4 bodyguards, 1d8+1 thugs
76–90	<i>Moderate</i> : lieutenant (as minor crime lord), 1d6 bodyguards, 2d6+2 thugs
91–00	<i>Major</i> : lieutenant (as minor crime lord), 1d8 bodyguards, 3d6+3 thugs

who strive for control, by the 3rd Commando who make little distinction between the criminals and the other human detritus they combat, and by Walegrin's rag-tag city guards. The shops they might "protect" find themselves destroyed by piffle incendiaries or claimed by rivals. In short, these organizations find themselves drawn into the complex and ever-shifting tapestry of violence that defines Sanctuary in these dark times.

Zones controlled by crime lords can range from small crews of thieves and murderers led by a charismatic criminal to reinforced strongholds held by teams loyal to one of the more powerful crime lords. Whenever the PCs enter such an area, roll or choose a result from **Table 2-4: Crime Lord Power**.

Alternatively, any of these crime lords could be puppets of Jubal, who, though defeated and weakened, is still a considerable force in the city. At your option, Jubal might involve himself in these events in the hopes of advancing his position and restoring himself fully to power.

ADVERSARIES

The numbers and types of adversaries encountered depend on the crime lord's power as described on the corresponding table. For thugs, use statistics presented on page 215 of *SG&S*. Major and moderate crime lords are powerful enough that they don't have to put themselves in the thick of the dangerous street wars plaguing the city. Instead, they rely on their lieutenants to represent their interests in the city.

PETTY CRIME LORD

CR 7

Male or female Wrigglie pirate thief 6/kingpin 1; CR 7; Medium humanoid (human); HD 6d6 plus 1d6; hp 24; MDT 14; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18 (+2 Dex, +4 armor, +2 shield), touch 12, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +4; Grap +3; Atk +4 melee (1d6/19–20, +1 *short sword*) or +7 ranged (1d4/19–20, masterwork hand crossbow); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6/19–20, +1 *short sword*) or +7 ranged (1d4/19–20, masterwork hand crossbow); SA sneak attack +3d6; SQ evasion, trap sense +2, trapfinding, uncanny dodge; SV Fort +3, Ref +10, Will +9; Str 8, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 14.

ACT II: SANCTUARY BY NIGHT

Skills and Feats: Balance +11, Bluff +12, Climb +3 (+5 rigging), Diplomacy +5, Disguise +2 (+4 acting), Escape Artist +3, Gamble +12, Gather Information +13, Intimidate +16, Jump +10, Knowledge (local) +12, Listen +3, Sleight of Hand +9, Spot +3, Swim +5, Tumble +13; Combat Expertise, Iron Will, Leadership, Maze Savvy^B.

Languages: Rankene (S), Sanctan (S), Trade Tongue (S)

Reputation +2 (+5 in one district); *Contacts* Information 1/Influence 1

Possessions: +1 studded leather, +1 buckler, +1 short sword, masterwork hand crossbow with 20 bolts, *cloak of resistance* +1, *elixir of fire breath*, 2 *potions of convert light wounds*.

MINOR CRIMELORD/LIEUTENANT

CR 9

Male or female Ilsigi criminal assassin 7/crime lord 2; CR 9; Medium humanoid (human); HD 7d6-7 plus 2d6-2; hp 29; MDT 12; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+2 Dex, +4 armor), touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +6; Grap +8; Atk +9 melee (1d8+3/19-20, +1 *longsword*) or +9 ranged (1d8+2/×3 plus poison, +1 *composite [Str +2] longbow*); Full Atk +9/+4 melee (1d8+3/19-20, +1 *longsword*) or +9/+4 ranged (1d8+2/×3 plus poison, +1 *composite [Str +2] longbow*); SA killing strike, poison (deathblade, DC 20, 1d6 Con/2d6 Con), poison (spider venom, DC 14, 1d4 Str/1d4 Str), poison (shadow essence, DC 17, 1 Str drain/2d6 Str), sneak attack +2d6; SQ alternate identity

(Ilsigi merchant), poison expert, streetwise +5; SV Fort +4 (+8 poison), Ref +10, Will +7; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 8, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +7, Bluff +17, Diplomacy +9, Disguise +15 (+17 acting), Gamble +2, Gather Information +14, Hide +17, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (local) +11, Knowledge (nobility) +3, Listen +5, Move Silently +12, Ride +4, Spot +5 (+7 thievery); Dodge, Improved Initiative^B, Iron Will^B, Leadership, Low Profile^B, Mobility, Spring Attack.

Languages: Ilsigi (S), Sanctan (S)

Reputation +2; *Contacts* Information 1/Influence 1/Skill 1

Killing Strike (Ex): When this assassin deals damage enough with a sneak attack to force the target to save against massive damage, the target must succeed on a DC 16 Fortitude save or die.

Poison Expert (Ex): This assassin is never at risk of poisoning himself when applying poison to a weapon.

Possessions: +1 studded leather, +1 *longsword*, +1 *composite longbow* (Strength +2) with 40 arrows, *cloak of hiding*, 1 dose of deathblade, 1 dose of Medium spider venom, 1 dose of shadow essence, 2 *potions of convert moderate wounds*

CRIME LORD BODYGUARDS

CR 4

Male or female Wrigglic mercenary fighter 4; CR 4; Medium humanoid (human); HD 4d10+8; hp 30; MDT 21; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 20 (+0 Dex, +7 armor, +3 shield), touch 10, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +4; Grap +7; Atk +9 melee (1d8+5/19-20, masterwork longsword) or +6 ranged (1d10/19-20, masterwork heavy crossbow); Full Atk +9 melee (1d8+5/19-20, masterwork longsword) or +6 ranged (1d10/19-20, masterwork heavy crossbow); SQ mercenary traits; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +10, Diplomacy +1, Intimidate +8, Listen +1, Sense Motive +10, Spot +3; Dodge^B, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Intimidate)^B, Weapon Focus (longsword)^B, Weapon Specialization (longsword)^B.

Languages: Sanctan (S)

Reputation +1; *Contacts* Information 1/ Skill 1

Mercenary Traits: Mercenaries hearty training allows them to gain a +2 bonus to Constitution checks made to continue running, to avoid nonlethal damage from a forced march, to avoid nonlethal damage from starvation or thirst, and on Fortitude saves to avoid nonlethal damage from hot or cold environments.

Possessions: +1 *splint mail*, +1 *heavy wooden shield*, masterwork longsword, masterwork heavy crossbows with 10 bolts, 1d6 padpols.



ENCOUNTERING CRIME LORDS

Crime lords have plenty of reasons for participating in the violence. They may be drawn by the desire to destroy their rivals or to loot the buildings and people living in the area under their control. Crime lords may be vicious, thoroughly evil, or just pragmatic. The particulars of an individual crime lord do not matter unless you intend to develop this faction further. Crime lords come and go in these trying times, and a man or woman in power one day may vanish the next. Thus, so long as the PCs pay a fee of 1d6 padpols each to gain an armband of the lord's color, they may move through these zones without fear of molestation. A DC 20 Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check allows the PCs to reduce the price by 2 padpols (minimum 0).

TYPICAL CRIME LORD STARTING ATTITUDES

Attitude	Faction
Indifferent	Minor gang, most nationalities, PFLS, Wriggles
Unfriendly	3rd Commando, Beysibs, crime lord, gladiators
Hostile	City garrison, death squad, Morruth's beggars, Stepsons, undead

While crime lords are cutthroat bastards who happily exploit their fellow citizens, they do have their finger on the pulse of the city. Most criminals have a good idea what's going on and are well aware of the Nisibisi that are behind much of the city's troubles. Characters recognized as roaches (*e.g.* thieves) might be able to garner some information about the missing girl and her captors. Any given crime lord zone may contain a kernel of information. There's a chance equal to half the number rolled on **Table 2–4** that the group knows something of worth. (For example, if you had rolled a 33 to determine the strength of the faction, there would be a 16% chance for the group to know anything about the girl and her family.) Even if the group doesn't know anything about the PCs' mission, they can certainly provide information about Sanctuary itself—Gather Information checks gain a +2 circumstance bonus.

Should it turn out that the group does have information, they impart nothing unless the PCs sufficiently bribe the leader 1 padpol per level of the leader and improve his attitude to friendly. Only then does the leader confide with the PCs. He knows that the SaVell family is quite wealthy and known for their extensive connections with Ranke's military engine. It's believed that Kitty-cat, or someone in his entourage, invited the family to come to Sanctuary in the hopes of securing martial assistance in quelling the uprisings. If the NPC's attitude is improved to helpful, he also relates that Raiden SaVell, the girl's father, is notorious for his addiction to *krrf*, and some suspect he was lured to the city with promises of gold and cheap drugs. The prince, of course, would never soil himself with such promises, so it appears the noble must have been duped.

As the night progresses, reports of terrifying murders bubble up in the Maze and Westside. Crime lord factions can relate that a number of mutilated bodies seem to be turning up in that part of the city. No one knows who's behind these vile acts, but many crime lords are keen to see the culprit apprehended, since a good many of the victims are men and women in their employ.

SIDE-TRACK

A particularly cruel and sadistic crime-lord (or lieutenant) has claimed this section of the city to sate his disturbing lusts. Under the pretense of protecting the zone, half of the thugs move through the homes and apartments to round up the prettiest young women to serve the sick whims of their leader and endure his unspeakable attentions. The acts have disturbed his rivals, and a few of them might pay a premium price to see him removed altogether.

DEATH SQUAD

The successes gained by the 3rd Commando against the Nisibisi in the northern wars drove many witches to leave their mountain homes, descending from their accursed peaks to take the battle directly to the Empire. Slipping into the cities they formed terrorist cells, and wage a campaign of terror in the hopes of shattering the infrastructure that kept the bloated nation intact. In Sanctuary these villains rank up into death squads, and each night they sweep through the city, dragging people from their homes and if they don't kill them, they rape and assault them, leaving them for dead.

ADVERSARIES

The Nisibisi couldn't care less about lining their pockets with coin: they want to kill, maim, and destroy. Their zones are deathtraps, littered with the corpses of those who had the misfortune to stumble into their areas of control. All of the buildings that face these streets are booby-trapped with alarms and incendiary explosions, and gory corpses choke the interiors. For each block controlled, there are 1d4+1 death squad soldiers, 1 Nisibisi warlock, and 1 soulsniffer fiend, conjured to combat the undead that shuffle through the streets. There's also a 10% chance for one guardian per block to be present (see **Act IV** for statistics).

ALARM TRAP	CR 1
Search DC 20; Type Mechanical; Reset repair	
Init –	
Trigger Touch (opening the door)	
AC 4, touch 4 (–1 size, –5 Dex)	
hp 5 (1 HD); Hardness 5	
Effect Creates a loud noise audible to all creatures within 120 ft.	
Disarm Disable Device DC 20	

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INCENDIARY TRAP

CR 3

Search DC 26; **Type** Mechanical; **Reset** Repair
Init –
Trigger Touch (opening the door)

AC 4, touch 4 (–1 size, –5 Dex)
hp 5 (1 HD); **Hardness** 5

Targets All creatures within 15 feet
Effect 5d4 points of fire damage; DC 20 Reflex save for half

Disarm Disable Device DC 26; **Bypass** Search DC 26

DEATH SQUAD SOLDIER

CR 4

Male Nisibisi terrorist ranger 4; CR 4; Medium humanoid (human); HD 4d8+8; hp 26; MDT 18; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+2 Dex, +4 armor), touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +4; Grap +6; Atk +7 melee (1d6+2/18–20, masterwork scimitar) or +7 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow); Full Atk +7 melee (1d6+2/18–20, masterwork scimitar) or +7 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow); SA poison (DC 18, 1d6 Str/1d6 Str); SQ favored environment (mountains) +2, trap sense +1; SV Fort +7, Ref +9, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +1, Climb +9, Craft (trap) +6, Hide +11, Listen +5, Move Silently +11, Spot +4; Dodge, Endurance^B, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes^B, Mobility^B, Track^B.

Languages: Nisi (S)

Reputation +1; **Contacts** Information 1/ Skill 1

Possessions: +1 studded leather, masterwork scimitar, masterwork light crossbow with 10 bolts, *cloak of resistance* +1, dose of scorpion venom, *potion of convert moderate wounds*.

NISIBISI WARLOCK

CR 8

Male Nisibisi aristocrat witch 8; CR 8; Medium humanoid (human); HD 8d4+16; hp 44; MDT 18; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+0 Dex, +1 armor, +1 deflection), touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +4; Grap +3; Atk +4 melee (1d4–1/19–20, masterwork dagger); Full Atk +4 melee (1d4–1/19–20, masterwork dagger); SQ force of personality, unnatural vitality; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +8; Str 8, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +19, Concentration +13, Diplomacy +10, Disguise +8 (+10 acting), Intimidate +24, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Listen +2, Sense Motive +4, Spellcraft +14, Spot +2; Extra Spells, Improved Damage Threshold, Ritual Emphasis, Witchblooded^B.

Languages: Nisi (S/W), Sanctan (S), Trade Tongue (S)

Reputation +2; **Contacts** Information 1/ Skill 1

Force of Personality (Ex): This Nisibisi warlock doubles his ability bonus on Charisma and Charisma-based skill checks.

Spellcasting +11; **Ritualcasting** +11; **CL** 8th

Known Spells Prepared (10): 4th (price 4, MT 50)—*blink*; 3rd (price 3, MT 40)—*hold person* (DC 17), *silence*; 2nd (price 2, MT 30)—*expeditious retreat*, *lesser confusion* (DC 16); 1st (price 1, MT 20)—*convert light wounds*, *daze* (DC 15), *faerie fire*, *produce flame* (ranged touch +4); 0 (price 0/1, MT 10)—*resistance*

Familiar Spells Prepared (18): 4th (prep 4, price 4, MT 50)—*air walk*, *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *invisibility sphere*, *summon monster IV*; 3rd (prep 3, price 3, MT 40)—*locate object*, *plant growth*, *spike growth* (DC 17), *summon monster III*, *whispering wind*; 2nd (prep 2, price 2, MT 30)—*barkskin*, *magic mouth*, *spider climb*, *summon monster II*, *warp wood* (DC 16); 1st— (prep 1, price 1, MT 20)—*calm animals* (DC 15), *circle of protection*, *endure elements*, *obscuring mist*

Possessions: masterwork dagger +1 *spell focus*, *ring of protection* +1, *bracers of armor* +1, *cloak of Charisma* +2, 2 *potions of convert light wounds*.

SOULSNIFFER

CR 5

CR 5; Medium outsider (devil, extraplanar); HD 7d8+14; hp 45; MDT 19 Init +5; Spd 50 ft.; AC 20 (+5 Dex, +5 natural), touch 15, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +7; Grap +10; Atk +10 melee (1d6+3, claw); Full Atk +10 melee (1d6+3, 2 claws); SA ghost bane, ghost touch, sneak attack +3d6, soulsuck, spell-like abilities; SQ blindsight 120 ft., change shape, damage reduction 5/silver, immune to fire and poison, resistance to acid 10 and cold 10, soulsniff, spell resistance 16, telepathy 100 ft.; SV Fort +7, Ref +10, Will +5; Str 17, Dex 20, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Balance +17, Climb +13, Escape Artist +15, Hide +15, Jump +5, Listen +12, Move Silently +15, Search +12, Spot +12, Tumble +15, Survival +5 (+12 follow tracks*), Use Rope +5 (+7 bindings); Alertness, Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm, Track^B.

Languages: Celestial (S/W), Draconic (S/W), Infernal (S/W), Sanctan (S)

Reputation +0; **Contacts** none

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*detect law*; 3/day—*color spray* (DC 12), *freedom of movement* (self only); CL 8th

Soulsniff (Su): A soulsniffer may make Survival checks to track incorporeal creatures. The DC for a fresh trail is 20.

Ghost Bane (Su): A soulsniffer gains a +5 bonus to damage rolls made against creatures with the incorporeal subtype.

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Ghost Touch (Su): A soulsniffer's natural attacks can hit and deal damage normally against creatures with the incorporeal subtype.

Change Shape (Su): Once per day, a soulsniffer can change its shape into that of any humanoid creature. It may remain in this form indefinitely. See the *MM* for details.

Soulsuck (Su): The round in which an incorporeal creature has been reduced to 0 or fewer hit points, the soulsniffer may, as an immediate action, pull the shattered essence into itself. The creature remains trapped with the soulsniffer until such time that it is safely back in Hell, at which time the soulsniffer disgorges the contents of its being. A soulsniffer may hold up to six souls at a time. Should it be slain, all captive souls are immediately freed.

*A soulsniffer gains a +5 racial bonus to all Survival checks made to track its prey.



ENCOUNTERING THE DEATH SQUAD

Unless a trespasser is identified as a Nisibisi, the death squad attacks mercilessly. While their intent is clear, they aren't fools, and they won't expose themselves to undue danger if they are significantly outnumbered. If they recognize any characters as being affiliated with any groups with whom they are hostile, the Nisibisi may follow, using concealed positions to strike at the PCs when they are at their weakest.

NISIBISI STARTING ATTITUDES

Attitude	Faction
Helpful	Death Squad
Friendly	Undead
Indifferent	Any other nationality, beggars, crime lord
Unfriendly	Beysibs, minor gangs, PFLS, Wrigglies
Hostile	3rd Commando, city garrison, gladiators, Rankan, Stepsons

If the characters can capture a Nisibisi alive, they can tease critical information to shed light on their investigation. A successful Intimidate check gets a Nisibisi terrorist to reveal that this night is the eve of the Black Snake Dawn. On this momentous day, the heavenly bodies are in conjunction, making it the ideal time to perform foul rituals and terrible sacrifices to their demonic gods. The terrorists are not aware of the girl or who stole her.

The warlock, on the other hand, is privy to this information. A successful Intimidate check made with a -4 penalty (he's a fanatic after all) forces him to reveal Jenna SaVell is to be sacrificed at dawn to complete a rite that will unleash a cataclysmic plague to sweep across the Rankan Empire and

destroy it for once and for all. None of the warlocks knows where or when this event is to take place, claiming none can know the mind of Death's Queen. Characters succeeding on the Intimidate check by 5 or more also learn that the sacrifice must be willing, portending that perhaps Jenna is not what she seems to be.

SIDE-TRACK

A death squad controls this area, protecting four warlocks who loot an old house in search of some lost writings in which they believe lie a number of rare and potent Ur-words. Should these villains find what they are looking for, the results could be disastrous, giving Roxane a potent edge in her campaign of destruction. The PCs may learn this information from the terrorists they defeat, and may venture into the house to thwart the warlocks. However, the Nisibisi have safeguarded themselves with a number of other minions to ensure that they are not disturbed.

GARRISON SOLDIERS

The Hell Hounds have seen better days. When they first came to Sanctuary as the personal guard of Prince Kadakithis, they were feared and hated, reviled for the egalitarian changes enacted by the naïve prince. In time, the Hell Hounds earned respect from the Sanctans, seen as dispensers of justice and above the petty concerns and intrigues of the previous lords and their cronies. They commanded the watch and the garrison and were the law personified. This, of course, would not last.

Accompanying the Hell Hounds was a disruptive member who operated outside of the rigid hierarchy that the team embraced. This man was Tempus. While nominally under the control of Zalbar, Tempus did what he wanted, and because he had the ear

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of Kadakithis—to say nothing of the influence of Vashanka—there was nothing Zalbar could do. With his authority waning and Tempus’s waxing, the Hell Hounds influence gradually diminished until finally, when the Beysib arrived, they were relegated to little more than palace guards.

Now, the Hell Hounds are simply one more component in the city garrison. Those who have not left the city or succumbed to the many temptations Sanctuary has to offer are now under Walegrin’s command (see *SGtS*, p. 129). To contain the upheavals of the city, Walegrin assigned the remaining Hell Hounds to different zones to hopefully lend their presence as a stabilizing factor.

ADVERSARIES

All zones under the city garrison’s control are nominally under the command of the prince. For every city block, there are 1d6+1 watchmen and 1 watchman sergeant plus 1 Hell Hound (see *SGtS* pages 210-211 for statistics). There’s a flat 10% chance for Zalbar to be present in any given zone controlled by this faction. Likewise, there’s a 5% chance for Walegrin to present. See *SGtS* for statistics.

ENCOUNTERING THE GARRISON

Understandably, the city garrison is suspicious of anyone traveling the city under the cover of night. With all the violence swirling around them, they are quick to use force rather than put themselves at risk. They do not charge for passage through their zones, but they interrogate everyone who enters their area of control, looking for anyone who might be affiliated with a criminal organization, the Nisibisi, or anyone else with whom they are hostile.

GARRISON STARTING ATTITUDES

Attitude	Faction
Helpful	City garrison
Friendly	Wrigglies
Indifferent	Beysibs, 3rd Commando, gladiators, any other nationality
Unfriendly	Stepsons
Hostile	Beggars, crime lord, death squad, minor gang, PFLS, undead

PCs interacting with a city garrison zone who prove they are working for Molin may move through these areas without trouble—the guards let them pass. Characters that manage to improve the guard’s attitudes to friendly may also acquire some useful information. There’s a 20% chance for each zone to have spotted the errant SaVell at one point in the evening. The guards, if properly befriended, relate she was in the company of a young man (Treight, which can be confirmed if the PCs have the portrait). Later in the evening, the guards also relate that there has been a rash of vicious murders in the Westside and the Maze, though they have yet to investigate these matters.

If either Walegrin or Zalbar are present, they know about the missing girl. Walegrin, if friendly, offers to escort the PCs to the bazaar (see **Act III**) to talk to his sister. Zalbar, on the other hand, has little to offer the PCs, except to accompany them on their mission. He believes he can somehow prove his worth if he can recover the young woman before it’s too late. Zalbar stays with the PCs for 1d4 zones before being pulled away by an explosion, sounds of fighting, or some other random trouble that requires his attention.

SIDE-TRACK

When the PCs come upon this particular zone, they find the soldiers here fighting for their lives against a group of piffle terrorists (see **PFLS** for numbers and statistics). Treat the area as a contested zone. If the PCs aid the Hell Hound and watch against the piffles, the Hell Hound turns out to be Quag, the oldest and most experienced of the Hell Hounds. He accompanies the PCs through the rest of the adventure (use Hell Hound statistics in *SGtS*).

GLADIATORS

Chenaya’s gladiators are relative newcomers to the struggles for Sanctuary. Having followed their leader from Ranke, these veteran fighters committed themselves to the reckless noblewoman. Chenaya’s ability to instill fierce loyalty in her followers enables her to exert some influence in the city, despite the gladiators’ rather small numbers and the disdain with which the other factions vying for control over greet them.

When not training in the grounds of the Vigeles estate, the gladiators patrol the upper class areas in the city. They have little interest in claiming sections of the city, but instead undertake missions to restore Kadakithis’s power. While few of the gladiators have any particular love for the prince, they recognize Chenaya’s desire to place the young lord on the imperial throne, and so long as they serve their mistress, they do their part to fulfill her plans.

ADVERSARIES

In all, there are just 12 gladiators plus Chenaya and Daphne. They do not hold their zones with force, but instead they are there for some other purpose. Treat all zones held by gladiators as uncontrolled zones. For every block or portion of a block, one typical gladiator is present. There is a 10% chance per block controlled for an important gladiator to be present as well. Roll once for each block. If so, roll for each on **Table 2-5: Important Gladiators**, ignoring duplicate results.

DAPHNE

Before taking up with Chenaya, Daphne was a well-born noblewoman who had the bad luck to marry Kadakithis. Soon after arriving in Sanctuary, she came to be with child, giving Kadakithis the heir he needed. When the Beysib came, Molin

TABLE 2–5: IMPORTANT GLADIATORS

Roll	Result
01–20	Chenaya (see <i>SGtS</i> , p. 91)
21–30	Daphne
30–60	Dayrne
61–00	Dismas and Gestus

Torchholder sent her away to safety, but before they reached a secure destination bandits attacked the caravan, killing the men and assaulting the women, selling them as slaves to the pirates of Scavenger’s Island.

Daphne endured a great many horrors during her captivity and presumably lost her baby while in the grip of these vile men. She suffered greatly, being the plaything of her captors until Chenaya rescued her. Upon returning to Sanctuary, she was appalled to learn that her husband made no effort to find her, no effort to free her from the hell she to which she was consigned. To make matters worse, it seemed he had forgotten about her, blinded by the eerie beauty of Shupanse.

No longer married, Daphne has resolved to learn the ways of fighting so that no man will ever touch her again without her consent. She has an irreverent streak and is more than a little mad, but she is loyal to Chenaya, despite the disagreements the two often have—usually over Kadakithis.

Daphne is a small woman that would be pretty if not for the hardened eyes and the scars she bears from her time in captivity. She has abandoned nearly all of the trappings of her noble birth in favor of the hard life of a trained warrior.

DAPHNE

CR 7

Female Rankan aristocrat noble 4/fighter 2/gladiator 1; CR 7; Medium humanoid (human); HD 4d6+4 plus 2d10+2 plus 1d10+1; hp 35; MDT 17; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (+3 Dex, +1 class, +4 armor, +1 deflection), touch 15, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +6; Grap +8; Atk +10 melee (1d8+3/19–20, +1 *longsword*) or +9 ranged (entangle, net); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (1d8+3/19–20, +1 *longsword*) or +8/+3 melee (1d8+3/19–20, +1 *longsword*) and +7 melee (1d4+1/18–20, masterwork kukri) or +9 ranged (entangle, net); SA inspiration (competence, courage), organize +3; SV Fort +9, Ref +8, Will +4; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 9, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +10, Diplomacy +18, Disguise +3 (+5 acting), Intimidate +14, Jump +3, Gamble +1, Knowledge (nobility) +9, Listen –1, Perform (sing) +11, Ride +5, Sense Motive +7, Spot –1, Tumble +5; Combat Reflexes^B, Dodge^B, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (net)^B, Mobility, Negotiator^B, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (longsword)^B.



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Languages: Rankene (S/W), Sanctan (S).

Reputation +1; *Contacts* Influence 2

Inspiration: Six times per day, Daphne can inspire those within 30 feet of her and who can hear her as a full-round action. This is a language-dependant, mind-affecting ability.

Competence: Grant an ally a +2 competence bonus on skill checks to any one ally within range that can clearly see or hear Daphne. This ability lasts for as long as Daphne concentrates up to a maximum of 2 minutes.

Courage: All allies within range gain a +1 morale bonus to saves against charm and fear and a +1 morale bonus to attack and weapon damage rolls for 2 rounds.

Organize: Whenever two or more characters use the aid another action to improve a skill check, Daphne may make the same check to grant a +3 bonus on the lead character's check.

Possessions: +1 studded leather armor, +1 longsword, masterwork kukri, net, ring of protection +1, potion of convert moderate wounds, cloak of resistance +1

DAYRNE

CR 13

Male Rankan prizefighter fighter 4/gladiator 9; CR 13; Medium humanoid (human); HD 4d10+12 plus 9d10+27; hp 119; MDT 23; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 27 (+3 Dex, +2 class, +7 armor, +3 shield, +2 natural), touch 15, flat-footed 24; Base Atk +13; Grap +17; Atk +21 melee (1d8+8/19–20, +2 longsword) or +17 ranged (entangle, +1 net); Full Atk +21/+16/+11 melee (1d8+8/19–20, +2 longsword) or +17 ranged (entangle, +1 net); SA howls of lust and fury, nullify critical hit, retributive strike; SQ damage reduction 2/—, prizefighter; SV Fort +13, Ref +10, Will +5; Str 18, Dex 17, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Balance +16, Climb +11, Intimidate +18, Jump +22, Listen +1, Perform (gladiator) +17, Spot +2, Tumble +19; Cleave, Combat Expertise^B, Dodge^B, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (net)^B, Greater Weapon Focus (longsword), Improved Initiative^B, Improved Sunder, Improved Trip^B, Mobility^B, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Perform: gladiator)^B, Spring Attack, Toughness (×2)^B, Weapon Focus (longsword)^B, Weapon Specialization (longsword)^B.

Languages: Rankene (S/W), Sanctan (S), Trade Tongue (S)

Reputation +5; *Contacts* Information 1/Influence 2/Skill 2

Howls of Lust and Fury (Ex): When fighting in a public arena, Dayrne gains a morale bonus to damage rolls and saving throws. He gains a +2 bonus when fighting in front of 50 to 250 people, +3 when in front of 251 to 1,000 people, and +4 when fighting in front of 1,001 or more.

Nullify Critical Hit (Ex): If Dayrne succeeds on a Fortitude save against a DC equal to the modified attack roll, he takes only normal damage from the critical hit.

Retributive Strike (Ex): Once per day, when Dayrne is struck by a melee attack and is at less than half his total hit points, he may apply the amount of damage he took from any single melee attack within the past round as a bonus divided between his next attack and damage roll. He must allocate these bonuses prior to making the attack. The entire bonus can be applied to his attack roll, his damage roll, or divided up between the two. The retributive strike must be against the target that struck him on the previous round.

Prizefighter: While wearing light armor, Dayrne may designate one opponent and gain a +1 bonus to AC from all attacks made by that opponent.

Possessions: +3 chain shirt, +2 light steel shield, +2 longsword, +1 net, amulet of natural armor +2.

DISMAS AND GESTUS

This pair of gladiators spent their youth as thieves, but after their capture and consignment to the fighting pits in Ranke, they made names for themselves as warriors. Lovers, they share a bond that rivals that held between the Sacred Banders, but even with their strong affection, they place their loyalty to Chenaya above all other consideration. Both have a similar appearance, having sandy hair, short beards, and powerfully built bodies.

DISMAS AND GESTUS

CR 12

Male Rankan criminal thief 3/fighter 4/gladiator 5; CR 12; Medium humanoid (human); HD 3d6+6 plus 4d10+8 plus 5d10+10; hp 87; MDT 20; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 22 (+3 Dex, +1 class, +6 armor, +2 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +11; Grap +13; Atk +15 melee (1d6+5/17–20, +1 short sword) or +14 ranged (entangle, +1 net); Full Atk +15/+10/+5 melee (1d6+5/17–20, +1 short sword) or +14 ranged (entangle, +1 net); SA howls of lust and fury, retributive strike, sneak attack +2d6; SQ evasion, trap sense +1, trapfinding; SV Fort +12, Ref +12, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 9, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Balance +5, Bluff +14, Diplomacy +3, Disguise +1 (+3 acting), Escape Artist +8, Gather Information +7, Gamble +1, Hide +12, Intimidate +18, Jump +9, Listen +5, Move Silently +11, Open Lock +11, Perform (gladiator) +7, Sleight of Hand +13, Spot +7 (+9 notice thievery), Tumble +10, Use Rope +3 (+5 bindings); Combat Expertise^B, Dodge^B, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (net)^B, Improved Critical (short sword), Improved Disarm, Improved Feint, Mobility^B, Skill Focus (Hide)^B, Spring Attack^B, Weapon Focus (short sword), Weapon Specialization (short sword), Whirlwind Attack^B, Toughness^B.

Languages: Rankene (S/W), Sanctan (S)

ACT II: SANCTUARY BY NIGHT

Reputation +3; *Contacts Information* 2/Skill 2

Howls of Lust and Fury (Ex): When fighting in a public arena, Dismas and Gestus gain a morale bonus to damage rolls and saving throws. They gain a +1 bonus when fighting in front of 50 to 500 people, and +2 when fighting in front of 501 or more people.

Retributive Strike (Ex): Once per day, when struck by a melee attack and at less than half their total hit points, Dismas and Gestus may apply the amount of damage they took from any single melee attack within the past round as a bonus divided between their next attack damage rolls against the target that struck them on the previous round.

Possessions: +3 studded leather armor, +1 short sword, +1 net, amulet of natural armor +2, cloak of resistance +1.

TYPICAL GLADIATOR

There are several other gladiators in Chenaya's service. For the purposes of encounters dealing with these men and women, they use the same statistics. They are muscled and dangerous, their bodies crisscrossed with scars. These gladiators include some of the more well-known members of Chenaya's troupe. While Dendur is known for his excellence in the arena, he remains somewhat distant from the rest. Leyn and Oujien, however, enjoy a close friendship with Chenaya and are part of the gladiators' inner circle. Leyn is a beautiful man with a sculpted body, bright blue eyes, and curly blond hair. Oujien is young, with a solid build. He wears his dark hair in a single braid that hangs over his shoulder. Dendur is a muscular warrior with dark hair and matching eyes, with coarse features and a nose that has been broken on more than one occasion.

TYPICAL GLADIATOR

CR 6

Male or female Rankan prizefighter fighter 4/gladiator 2; CR 6; Medium humanoid (human); HD 4d10+8 plus 2d10+4; hp 45; Init +5; MDT 19; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (+1 Dex, +1 class, +5 armor, +2 shield), touch 12, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +6; Grap +9; Atk +11 melee (1d6+6/19–20, +1 short sword) or +9 melee (1d3+3, light shield) or +7 ranged (entangle, net); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d6+6/19–20, +1 short sword) or +9/+4 melee (1d3+3, light shield) or +7 ranged (entangle, net); SQ prizefighter; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Balance +3, Bluff +3, Climb +4, Intimidate +13, Jump +10, Listen +0, Perform (gladiator) +4, Sense Motive +4, Spot +0, Tumble +12; Combat Expertise^B, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (net)^B, Improved Feint, Improved Initiative, Improved Shield Bash^B, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Intimidate)^B, Weapon Focus (short sword)^B, Weapon Specialization (short sword)^B.

Languages: Rankene (S/W), Sanctan (S)

Reputation +2; *Contacts Information* 1/Influence 1

Prizefighter: While wearing light armor, a gladiator may designate one opponent and gain a +1 bonus to AC from all attacks made by that opponent.

Possessions: +1 chain shirt, +1 light steel shield, +1 short sword, net, *potions of convert moderate wounds*.

ENCOUNTERING THE GLADIATORS

When encountered, the gladiators are likely on a mission. They do not charge other people to move through their districts, however, if they recognize someone they oppose or who is affiliated with someone they oppose, they are likely to attack first and ask questions later.

GLADIATOR STARTING ATTITUDES

Attitude	Faction
Helpful	Gladiators
Friendly	City garrison
Indifferent	Any nationality, Stepsons, Wrigglies
Unfriendly	3rd Commando, beggars, Beysib, crime lord
Hostile	Death squad, minor gang, PFLS, undead

The gladiators can be of great help if the PCs manage to improve their attitudes to helpful. Like the PCs, they are keeping their eyes out for the missing girl, since it's important to Chenaya that she be found. Chenaya fears the abduction will worsen Kadakithis's standing and therefore ruin her plans to place her cousin on the throne. Characters explaining they are looking for Jenna gain a +4 circumstance bonus to Diplomacy checks, but if they drop Molin's name, they take the bonus as a penalty instead. Chenaya would rather go it alone than to help her nemesis.

The gladiators have come to suspect the girl was not in fact kidnapped, but actually left of her own volition. Their investigation suggests she had a lover and left with him or her, though they don't know the person's identity. If the gladiators are encountered after midnight, they also relate that the last time the girl was seen, she was headed toward Downwind.

Despite their willingness to share information, the gladiators do not accompany the PCs. They await Chenaya's orders. If the Vigeles daughter is present, she interrogates the PCs for any information they might have. Should the PCs reveal their suspicions and any evidence that points toward Roxane and the Swamp of Night Secrets, Chenaya and her allies inform the PCs that they will handle it and tell them to "go back to their whores and beds." At this point, if the PCs still want their reward, they need to move quickly before the gladiators steal their thunder.

Should the PCs give up on finding the girl, the gladiators may seek them out later to gain their help. See **Act IV** for details.

SIDE-TRACK

The gladiators prepare to ambush a team of piffles to stop an attack against an important warehouse. If the PCs improve the

gladiators' attitudes to friendly, they try to rope the PCs into the operation. They don't take no for an answer, and if the PCs refuse to help, they take a -4 circumstance penalty to all future Charisma-based skill checks with the gladiators, and may face future reprisals for their cravenness. Exactly what the mission entails is up to you and may be as straightforward as a battle for control over a district or an entire adventure in itself.

MINOR GANG

Sanctuary has never been a safe city; crime and violence are expected. When not freelancing or joining up with the various crime syndicates, Sanctuary's youth often collect in gangs, for the power such groups offer as well as the protection they afford. Some gangs serve as training grounds for later work under the crime lords, while some gang members go on to become crime lords themselves.

The present conflict has given the gangs of Sanctuary license to cause no shortage of trouble, and like the other factions, the gangs have staked out their territory, laying claim to sections of the city. As part of their occupation, they charge the people living there for protection, and charge a fee from those passing through. Those who don't pay are taught a nasty lesson, and those who still hold out are made examples for the rest.

ADVERSARIES

A zone controlled by a gang has 1d6+2 thugs and 1 average roach (see *SGtS*, p. 215 for both) for every block under their control.

ENCOUNTERING GANGS

While there are a great many gangs, each with different quirks and interests, they are all more or less the same. They exult in the petty power they have and exploit the weak and feeble for the few coins and other treasures they have. Beneath their hardened exteriors lie the hearts of cowards, though, and when confronted with any significant opposition, they flee.

GANG STARTING ATTITUDES

Attitude	Faction
Indifferent	3rd Commando, Beggars, any other nationality, Wrigglies
Unfriendly	Beysib, garrison soldiers, minor gang, PFLS
Hostile	Death squad, Stepsons, crime lord, gladiators, undead

SIDE-TRACK

Amuuth, a Wrigglie gang leader noted for his particularly cruel disposition, placed his followers in this zone to rob and murder anyone who appears to have wealth, or kidnap anyone clearly of status. When the PCs approach this zone, depending on their status (and if recognized), they may be accosted or the

gang members may even try to capture them. Should the PCs succeed in defeating the thugs and thieves, and if they take the time to interrogate them, they learn these men and women have been nabbing people from the streets all night. They claim to have captured someone matching SaVell's description, though in truth, they merely captured someone who looked like her. The PCs undoubtedly will want to follow up this lead, which is a great time-waster. This could be a journey into the Maze, an exploration of the wharfs, or anywhere else you'd like them to go. Amuuth should not appear in the adventure since the assassin Cade eventually murders him.

MORUTH'S BEGGARS

One of Sanctuary's biggest and most effective industries is begging. The shiftless, homeless masses take to the streets each day, calling for spare change from passers-by. Many have legitimate ailments, suffering from plague, missing limbs, or other physical maladies, but by and large, these individuals are professional actors. They make themselves appear to be afflicted when in truth they are hale and healthy.

For years, the beggars operated peacefully, united by their charismatic and mysterious leader Moruth, and they subsisted by selling information to Jubal's hawk-masks and other criminal elements. This all changed when Jubal's mercenaries, acting under orders, executed a young beggar boy to make an example of why these people should remain loyal. This act sparked a secret war. Unprepared for the violence and wrath that resulted, the hawk-masks turned from the most feared of bravos to a scattered group of frightened men and women.

Having won the war with Jubal's mercenaries, the beggars emerged as one of the more important powers in the city, and it's clear they are not about to go back to their peaceful ways. Like other factions, they stake out their territory to ensure they are not crossed or abused. Zones controlled by these individuals may not appear to be occupied, but the beggars lurk in shadows, sharp knives ready to bleed their enemies dry.

ADVERSARIES

A zone controlled by this faction contains 1d8+4 of Moruth's beggars (see *SGtS*, p. 206) as well as one leader. There's a 1% chance per block that Mor-am (see *SGtS*, p. 116) is here as well.

BEGGAR LEADER

CR 4

Male or female Wrigglie beggar thief 4; CR 4; Medium humanoid (human); HD 4d6+8; hp 22; MDT 15; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+3 Dex, +1 armor), touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +3; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d6+1/19-20, short sword) or +6 ranged (1d4+1/19-20, throwing dagger); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+1/19-20, short sword) or +6 ranged (1d4+1/19-20, throwing dagger); SA sneak attack +2d6; SQ beggar trait, evasion, trap sense +1, trapfinding, uncanny

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dodge; SV Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 13, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +3, Bluff +6, Diplomacy +1, Disguise +4 (+6 acting), Gather Information +6, Hide +10, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (local) +5, Listen +7, Move Silently +12, Search +5, Sleight of Hand +10, Spot +6, Survival +3 (+5 following tracks); Dodge, Maze Savvy^B, Stealthy.

Languages: Sanctan (S), Trade Tongue (S).

Reputation +1; *Contacts* Information 2

Beggar Traits: A beggar leader gains a +3 bonus to Constitution checks made to resist the effects of starvation.

Possessions: leather, short sword, 3 throwing daggers, *elixir of hiding*, *elixir of sneaking*, 1d10 shaboozh.

ENCOUNTERING THE BEGGARS

The beggars are content to wait, watch, and assess the characters when they stumble into beggar-controlled territory. One beggar might step from the shadows, beggar bowl in hand. Should the characters deposit at least 2 shaboozh, they are free to move along. Otherwise, the rest of the beggars emerge from the darkness to strip the PCs of anything of worth. The beggars automatically attack anyone that they deem as affiliated with a death squad, gang, or known ex-hawk-masks.

Killing half of the beggars drives the rest away, but for the remainder of the night, the beggars dog the PCs' steps, awaiting the proper time to strike. At the most inopportune moments, 1d8+2 beggars and a beggar leader attack. If at any time the PCs fight the death squads, the beggars give up their chase and let the characters live.

BEGGARS' STARTING ATTITUDES

Attitude	Faction
Helpful	Beggars
Friendly	Wrigglies
Indifferent	3rd Commando, Beysibs, gladiators, PFLS, undead, any other nationality
Unfriendly	City garrison, crime lord, Stepsons
Hostile	Death squad, minor gang

SIDE-TRACK

If the PCs are having a hard time tracking down the girl, they might gain the information they need from the beggars. At a time of your choosing, preferably after midnight, the PCs enter a zone controlled by the beggars. Instead of attacking or begging coins off the PCs, the band encircles the PCs and states "You have been granted a great honor. The beggar king wishes to see you." The group then escorts the PCs into the Downwind to a nondescript building. Through the cavernous door, the beggars



take the characters into a labyrinth of corridors until they are deposited in Moruth's audience chambers.

Moruth (see *SGtS*, page 118) is keenly interested in the recent developments involving the SaVell family. Since his people are on the streets, they have a good idea about what's going on. He questions the PCs to see what they know, the nature of their mission, and what, if any, success they have had. Since this meeting only occurs if the PCs have not had much luck in their investigation, they shouldn't know much at this point. Should any PC be disruptive, crass, or rude, the beggars drag the offending character out of the audience chamber to meet whatever fate you decide—typically a bit of torture followed by an unceremonious dumping at the edge of the Swamp of Night Secrets.

Showing the beggar king his proper respect gives the characters a hand up. Moruth gladly points them in the right direction. He explains his eyes and ears have discovered that "the girl was not in fact kidnapped, but left of her own accord. It appears she has a Nisibisi lover and plans to sacrifice herself to whatever foul demons those northern fools worship." He goes on to explain that the girl was last seen entering the swamp shortly after midnight, in the company of four black-robed men with a decidedly reptilian appearance.

In exchange for this assistance, Moruth expects the PCs to aid him at some unspecified time in the future. The nature of this task is up to you to decide, but it should be dangerous, morally ambiguous, and costly to the PCs in terms of reputation, wealth, and perhaps status. Armed with this information, the PCs can proceed toward the adventure's conclusion.

PFLS

Next to the Nisibisi, the greatest threat to Sanctuary is the PFLS. Organized and led by Zip, a young man with bold ambitions, they wage a campaign of terror, murdering Beysib folk and their sympathizers, destroying property, kidnapping to get ransoms for funding, and committing all sorts of violent acts to force anyone they don't like from the city. They haven't drifted far from their original purpose, which was to get the Beysib out of the city, but the more deals Zip makes, the more their purpose becomes muddy, and the breadth of their intolerance and hatred has spread to nearly all foreigners. Disturbingly, despite the carnage wrought by Zip's organization, they have many sympathizers in the city, and there seems to be no shortage of fools willing to hitch their wagons to Zip's proverbial horse.

ADVERSARIES

A zone controlled by the PFLS consists of 1 crowd of commoners, 1d4+2 terrorists, and 1 terrorist leader. There is a 5% chance per block that Zip is present (see *SGtS*, p. 132).

CROWD OF COMMONERS

CR 6

Male and female Wrigglic peasant commoner 1; CR 6; Huge humanoid (human, crowd); HD 20d4; hp 90; MDT 15; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 8 (-2 size, +0 Dex), touch 8, flat-footed 8; Base Atk +10; Grp +22; Space/Reach 15 ft./0 ft.; SA crowd 4d6, distraction, tangle up; SQ crowd immunities, crowd traits; SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +7; Str 19, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 4, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Craft (varies) +2, Handle Animal +1, Jump +5, Listen +3, Profession (varies) +5, Ride +1, Spot +3, Swim +5; Alertness^B, Endurance, Low-Profile^B.

Languages: Sanctan (S).

Reputation +0; *Contacts* —

Distraction (Ex): Any living creature that begins its turn with a crowd in its square is nauseated for 1 round unless it makes a DC 22 Fortitude save. Spellcasting or concentrating on effects within the area requires a Concentration check against a DC 20 + spell level. Using skills that involve patience and concentration require a DC 20 Concentration check.

Tangle Up (Ex): A crowd may forgo the damage it ordinarily deals and instead force those within its area to make a DC 24 Strength or Escape Artist check or become entangled for 1 round. Since moving inside a crowd already reduces speed to half speed, opponents that become tangled up move at one-quarter speed.

Crowd Traits: Crowds are immune to critical hits and flanking. If reduced to 0 hit points, the crowd breaks up and flees. Likewise, a crowd rendered unconscious by nonlethal damage becomes disorganized and disperses and does not

reform until its hit points exceed its nonlethal damage. Crowds are never staggered or reduced to a dying state by damage. They cannot be tripped, grappled, or bull rushed.

Crowds are immune to any spell or effect that targets a specific number of creatures (including single-target spells such as *disintegrate*), with the exception of mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects). A crowd takes half again as much damage from spells or effects that affect an area, such as splash weapons and most evocation spells.

Crowds are an impediment to individual creatures moving through them. Large, Medium, Small, and Tiny creatures move at half speed while in a crowd. Diminutive and smaller creatures, Huge and larger creatures, and creatures with the swarm subtype are not affected.

Possessions: clubs.

PFLS TERRORIST

CR 3

Male or female Wrigglic terrorist survivor 3; CR 3; Medium humanoid (human); HD 3d10+3; hp 19; MDT 18; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+0 Dex, +3 armor), touch 10, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +4 melee (1d6+1, masterwork club) or +3 melee (1d6+1 nonlethal, unarmed) or +3 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+1, masterwork club) or +3 melee (1d6+1 nonlethal, unarmed) or +3 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow); SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +4; Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +2, Climb +7, Gather Information +1, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (local) +5, Listen +8, Spot +8, Survival +8; Alertness^B, Endurance^B, Improved Damage Threshold^B, Improved Initiative, Rapid Reload (light crossbow).

Languages: Sanctan (S).

Reputation +0; *Contacts* Information 1

Possessions: masterwork studded leather, masterwork club, masterwork light crossbow with 10 bolts, 1d20 shaboozh.

PFLS LEADER

CR 7

Male or female Wrigglic terrorist thief 4, survivor 3; CR 7; Medium humanoid (human); HD 4d6+8 plus 3d10+6; hp 44; MDT 21; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (+3 Dex, +4 armor, +2 shield), touch 13, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +5; Grp +6; Atk +7 melee (1d6+1/19–20, masterwork short sword) or +6 melee (1d6+1 nonlethal, unarmed strike) or +9 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow); Full Atk +7 melee (1d6+1/19–20, masterwork short sword) or +6 melee (1d6+1 nonlethal, unarmed strike) or +9 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow); SA sneak attack +2d6; SQ evasion, trap sense +1, trapfinding, uncanny dodge; SV Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +4; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 13.

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Skills and Feats: Bluff +9, Diplomacy +10, Disguise +8 (+10 acting), Escape Artist +10, Gather Information +10, Hide +10, Knowledge (local) +8, Listen +5, Move Silently +9, Sleight of Hand +12, Spot +4, Use Rope +3 (+5 bindings); Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Endurance^B, Improved Damage Threshold^B, Improved Initiative, Maze Savvy^B.

Languages: Rankene (S), Sanctan (S)

Reputation +1; *Contacts* Influence 1/Information 1

Possessions: +1 studded leather armor, +1 buckler, masterwork short sword, masterwork light crossbow with 10 bolts, gauntlets of Strength +2, potion of convert moderate wounds.

ENCOUNTERING THE PFLS

The PFLS demand 5 shaboohz from anyone traveling through their zone. A successful Intimidate check gets them to reduce the price to 5 padpols. If there are Beysib among the PCs, the PFLS attack and fight until either the crowd is dispersed or their leader is slain. If Zip is present, he fights as long as the crowd is intact, after which point he flees to one of his many hideouts.

PFLS'S STARTING ATTITUDES

Attitude	Faction
Helpful	PFLS
Friendly	Wrigglies
Indifferent	Beggars, crime lord, minor gang, any other nationality
Unfriendly	3rd Commando, city garrison, gladiators, Rankan, Stepsons
Hostile	Beysibs, death squad, undead

SIDE-TRACK

A group of disaffected piffles occupies this zone. Tired of the bloodshed and frightened by the indefatigable death squads, they want out. When the PCs happen by, these men and women see them as the means to get out of the city. Should the PCs refuse to help them, the piffles flee into the city. Angry, they seek out the other members of their group and mount an attack to get revenge. To make matters worse, they spread horrible rumors about the PCs, and as each hour passes the PC gain a +1 circumstance bonus to their Reputations. If identified, attitudes shift automatically to hostile. The PCs can rid themselves of their unsavory reputations by successfully improve the attitudes of two faction-held zones to friendly.

STEPSONS

When Tempus's adopted son Abarsis arrived in Sanctuary, the city would never be the same. Leading a band of mercenaries to swear service to the Riddler, Abarsis changed the city's course, introducing a new military faction that would eventually shape

the future of not only Sanctuary, but also the Known World. The Stepsons are those Sacred Banders, mercenaries who fight in pairs, who give their lives to Tempus.

At this point, Tempus and most of the Stepsons are still in the north fighting the Nisibisi and the Mygdonian Alliance. Though the war is dying down with the crushing defeat of the witches there, the Sacred Banders are slow to return. Straton and a handful of others represent the Stepson interests in Sanctuary, though their efforts, of late, have come to be colored by Ischade's manipulation.

ADVERSARIES

The Stepsons have impressed many of the local soldiers and watchmen into their service whether the Hell Hounds or the Prince likes it or not. While not full-fledged members of the mercenary outfit, they are held to the same standards and have the same duties as other sacred banders. In time, it's expected these warriors will join the band. Each block in the zone holds 1d6+2 soldiers (use stats for palace guards as described on page 211 of *SGtS*) and 1d2+1 stepsons (see *SGtS*, p. 213). There's a 10% chance per block that Straton (see *SGtS*, p. 126) is present as well.

ENCOUNTERING THE STEPSONS

The Stepsons are under orders to monitor movement through their zone and keep an eye out for piffles, death squads, or other dangerous groups. So long as they don't recognize the PCs as being in league with an enemy group, the PCs are free to pass.



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STEPSONS STARTING ATTITUDES

Attitude	Faction
Helpful	Stepsons
Friendly	Rankan
Indifferent	Beysibs, city garrison, 3rd Commando, any other nationality, Wrigglies
Unfriendly	Beggars, crime lord, gladiators, minor gang
Hostile	Death squads, PFLS, undead

The PCs may approach Strat to enlist his aid. At this point, Straton knows nothing about the missing girl, nor does he have time to spare to find her. His attitude changes, though, if the characters reveal that they suspect Roxane's involvement. He knows full-well Roxane's power and decides to take matters into his own hands. Rather than let the PCs mess things up, he has them arrested for their own good. Unless the PCs can convince him otherwise, such as by making a DC 20 Diplomacy or Bluff check, they had better run away or fight their way out of the zone lest they be stuck in a cell for the rest of the night. How the PCs get out of this predicament is up to them, but allow any reasonable idea to work. Even if the characters are imprisoned, it shouldn't take much for them to get away.

SIDE-TRACK

The Stepsons in this zone have just learned there is a force of piffles moving toward the Avenue of Temples. They've just received orders from Strat to stop the group before they reach their destination. The PCs, as they move into the area, are pressed into service, for the good of the city. If they refuse, the Stepsons suggest they are in league with the PFLS and try to arrest them. For the rest of the night, attempts by Stepsons to recognize the PCs are made with a +4 bonus, and on a successful check, the Stepsons are automatically hostile.

UNDEAD

The undead are not so much a faction as a menace, an affliction brought upon the city by the reckless use of sorcery and bending of reality in the ongoing war between Ischade and Roxane. The majority of the undead in the city are zombies, shuffling remnants powered by fell magic. A few, though, are wispy spirits, trapped between two worlds. Most of the time, the undead are content to keep to themselves and avoid the living, but a few organize into mobs of rotting flesh, driven to scour the city to feast on blood and flesh.

ADVERSARIES

When the PCs encounter a zone infested with undead, they can find any number of horrible things lurking there, from raging spectres to mobs of unruly zombies. The following encounter

is the most common, but you should feel free to introduce other undead adversaries to mix up the assortment as you see fit, especially if the PCs are spending a great deal of time in or near Westside.

CROWD OF ZOMBIES

CR 9

CR 9; Huge undead (augmented humanoid, crowd); HD 40d12+3; hp 263; MDT —; Init -1; Spd 30 ft. (can't run); AC 9 (-2 size, -1 Dex, +2 natural), touch 7, flat-footed 9; Base Atk +20; Grap +32; Space/Reach 15 ft./0 ft.; SA crowd (7d6), distraction, tangle up; SQ crowd traits, damage reduction 5/slashing, darkvision 60 ft., single actions only, undead immunities; SV Fort +12, Ref +11, Will +22; Str 20, Dex 8, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Listen +0, Spot +0; Toughness.

Languages: —

Reputation +0; *Contacts* —

Distraction (Ex): Any living creature that begins its turn with a crowd in its square is nauseated for 1 round unless it makes a DC 30 Fortitude save. Spellcasting or concentrating on effects within the area requires a Concentration check against a DC 20 + spell level. Using skills that involve patience and concentration require a DC 20 Concentration check.

Tangle Up (Ex): A crowd may forgo the damage it ordinarily deals and instead force those within its area to make a DC 25 Strength or Escape Artist check or become entangled for 1 round. Since moving inside a crowd already reduces speed to half speed, opponents that become tangled up move at one-quarter speed.

Crowd Traits: Crowds are immune to critical hits and flanking. If reduced to 0 hit points, the crowd breaks up and flees. Likewise, a crowd rendered unconscious by nonlethal damage becomes disorganized and disperses and does not reform until its hit points exceed its nonlethal damage. Crowds are never staggered or reduced to a dying state by damage. They cannot be tripped, grappled, or bull rushed.

Crowds are immune to any spell or effect that targets a specific number of creatures (including single-target spells such as *disintegrate*), with the exception of mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects). A crowd takes half again as much damage from spells or effects that affect an area, such as splash weapons and most evocation spells.

Crowds are an impediment to the movement of individual creatures moving through them. Large, Medium, Small, and Tiny creatures move at half speed while in a crowd. Diminutive and smaller creatures, Huge and larger creatures, and creatures with the swarm subtype are not affected.



ACT III: THE INVESTIGATION

Armed with a few key pieces of information, the adventurers are ready to investigate the conspiracy to destroy not only Sanctuary, but also the whole of the Empire. During this phase, the characters must explore Sanctuary, get in touch with their contacts, interact with the movers and shakers of the city, avoid being drawn into a brutal conflict with the factions, and find out what's really going on before it's too late. This said, there is no correct way to run this part. The pacing, order, and feel of this section depend on the choices the players make, the questions they ask, and ultimately, the conclusions they draw. You can use this chapter as an excellent opportunity to showcase the major characters in the city, presenting the PCs with key figures like Illyra and Enas Yorl, or you could reduce this chapter down to a few dice rolls, moving swiftly forward until the players have the facts they need to lead them to the Swamp of Night Secrets.

Rather than presenting the information in a flowchart, this chapter presents the facts as they stand and offers suggestions for how the characters might acquire this information. Given the format, you should read up on the various NPC entries presented in *Shadowspawn's Guide to Sanctuary*, so you can best portray the various people the characters might seek out as they look for Jenna. Since the characters can split up, talk to their contacts, and go wherever they like in the city, this chapter is especially challenging to run. Throughout this part, stick to the facts as presented and allow the players to determine how things unfold. Players, being players, will come up with all sorts of convoluted ways of doing things, possibly following false lines

of reasoning, drawing faulty conclusions, or worse, becoming stymied by the task at hand. As GM, you should nudge them when needed, using the factions described in **Act II** to offer additional information where necessary, or exploiting the PCs' contacts to prod them in the right direction. Have no fear, the characters should have plenty of places to start based on their findings in the Golden Oasis, so it's merely a matter of figuring out what the clues mean. And if they don't have any ideas, they may just have to go back to the scene of the crime to snoop around a bit more.

Over the course of this investigation, the characters should learn some or all of the following clues to get them where they need to be. With this information, they can head toward the adventure's conclusion as described in the following chapter.

- Tonight is the eve of the Black Snake Dawn, a particularly gruesome day the Nisibisi celebrate to exalt the awful presence of the vile demon-god Mathrax, lord of one thousand pleasures and pains. The Nisibisi offer living sacrifices to the god to acquire his diseased attentions and to enact even fouler rituals. The PCs should gain this information by investigating the idol.
- Prior to coming to Sanctuary, Jenna SaVell found herself ensconced in this sick religion after being seduced by Treight, a nobleman with Nisibisi blood and loyalties. So entrenched is she in this religion, she arranged matters to journey to Sanctuary so she could offer herself up to Death's Queen, whom she sees as the mortal manifestation of this dark god.

While this information is probably not revealed during the investigation, it should be implied by the clues the characters find.

- She and Treight slipped out of the Golden Oasis the night she disappeared to sample Sanctuary's more perverse diversions in preparation for the ritual that is to take place on the following dawn. The PCs should figure this out by examining Jenna's rooms.
- Around 11 o'clock, Jenna tires of her lover and murders him in an alley somewhere in Westside. Two guardians show up moments later and escort her to Downwind. This clue is revealed when the PCs are exploring West Side.
- After midnight, Jenna and her escorts leave Downwind and enter the Swamp of Night Secrets. There, they join Roxane. The characters discover this either by magic or at the start of Act IV.

USING CONTACTS

All characters have a number of contacts. (See *TWPM*, p. 129) They may be influence, information, or skill contacts. Canny players should make extensive use of them during the adventure. However, as each contact is tailored to each particular character, the results will depend on the contact's areas of expertise and their placement in the city. Before running this adventure, you ought to identify which contacts are important, what information they know, and how useful they are to the PCs.

INFLUENCE CONTACTS

The extent to which influence contacts can aid the PCs depends on what kind of doors they can open. These contacts have two primary benefits to player characters. First, they can get the PCs past a zone controlled by a faction with whom the contact has influence. And second, they may be able to arrange meetings with key NPCs who might have the information they need to put everything together.

INFORMATION CONTACTS

Information contacts are perhaps a bit handier. As informants, their function is to watch for useful goings-on in the city. They may be tied to a particular neighborhood or even a person. In game terms, an information contact allows a player character to make a single Gather Information check without having to spend the required 1d4+1 hours.

SKILL CONTACTS

Skill contacts are especially useful to characters as they expand the skills available to a particular PC. A thief may be the expert on pilfering valuables, but he might have to rely on a contact to appraise the goods he nicked. As well, skill contacts can also serve as colleagues who can give PCs another chance at identifying an object, assessing its relative value, or determining any important facts about it. For this chapter, skill contacts are especially useful, since they offer characters ways to learn critical clues from the evidence they find.



USING KEY NPCs

The upheavals during the time *Black Snake Dawn* takes place mark one of Sanctuary's most dynamic times, with some of the most heated and dangerous intrigues between many of the city's iconic characters. At this time, Hakiem can be found in the Vulgar Unicorn or in the Palace serving as Shupansea's advisor. Straton patrols the streets on his undead steed, while Ischade feeds on the young and virile. Sanctuary has so many great characters that it may be tempting to use some of them in this adventure. It's perfectly fine to show a few faces, allow the characters to encounter these NPCs as contacts or even adversaries. But the more time and emphasis you place on folks like Chenaya or Ischade, the less this adventure has to do with the player characters. Use the iconic characters sparingly.

To slow the characters' progress, and if you're not using the pre-generated characters presented in the Appendix, you can use Niko, Haught, or even Mradhon Vis to slow or confuse the PCs' investigation. Each of these characters has a variety of motivations for slowing or helping the characters, and should they involve themselves in the plot, things can easily go from bad to worse.

USING MAGIC

As this adventure is largely an investigation, and given this chapter relies on moving through the city and following up on the various clues the PCs acquire as they search for the missing girl, certain spells, magical effects from items, and even class features could allow the characters to circumvent much or even all of the footwork. As threatening and possibly frustrating as this sounds, these spells *should* be used! Characters who invest in divination-oriented Known or Familiar spells give up opportunities to invest in other potent spells. Bypassing or reducing the effects of divination magic unfairly restricts players who chose to design characters with these talents. Instead, these avenues are expected and even encouraged, such that PCs who don't have access to these abilities probably ought to locate characters in Sanctuary who do. In fact, locating such characters is probably preferred since the taxing effects of using magic in *Thieves' World* could unduly hamper the PCs when they confront Roxane in her lair in the final chapter.

The following entries describe the various effects these spells have on the investigation, while also offering guidance for resolving queries when the PCs inevitably fall back on these methods.

AUGURY AND DIVINATION

Of limited use in the characters' efforts, *augury* is only in service when predicting outcomes for actions that have repercussions up to 30 minutes into the future. Since it takes a good deal of time to get anywhere in the city, *augury* is nearly useless when cast to determine where to go, instead helping characters clarify

what questions they should ask. *Divination*, on the other hand, enables characters to refine their search and ignore the various red herrings or faulty reasoning that could mislead them and eat too much into their allotted time. In both cases, a failed roll can lead the PCs into all sorts of trouble and potentially derail the entire investigation.

SCRYING SPELLS

Clairvoyance/clairaudience is particularly handy in scouting out known locations, but is generally worthless when used to locate a person the PCs have never met. Even later, when the adventurers have determined where the girl is being held, the spell's range means the PCs will likely have to be within 1,000 feet to scout the site of the ritual.

Scrying and *greater scrying* are far more useful in tracking down some of the villains, however both Treight and Jenna should have a +5 bonus to their Will saves to resist the spell since the PCs have only heard of them and not met them personally. Incorporating any of Jenna or Treight's clothing into the spell reduces this bonus to +1, while utilizing the wastes in the chamber pot actually imposes a -5 penalty to their save. These spells may allow the PCs to get a sense of what they're up to, but unless they cast the spell after midnight, they won't get a sense of where they are. After 11 o'clock, Treight is dead, and after midnight, Jenna is in the Swamp of Night Secrets—which should be revealed by her surroundings as she moves over the fetid landscape.

COMMUNE

Commune is one of the most useful tools the PCs may have—so long as they know the right questions to ask. Since each casting costs 100 XP, the PCs may be reluctant to rely on this spell too much, but may use it to confirm their suspicions later. If the characters seek out a priest to cast this spell on their behalf, not only is the casting expensive (about 1,000 shaboohz), but also it requires the caster to diminish his own resources and thus the PCs will have to make a good case for their need and likely pay far more than the normal asking price.

COMMUNE WITH NATURE

This spell has little benefit in the city, but it is extremely useful in locating the site of the ritual described in **Act IV**. The only drawback is the time it takes to cast. If the PCs are late in determining that Roxane and the Nisibisi are behind the plot, the PCs may not have time to cast this spell, since it requires 10 minutes per casting roll.

CONTACT OTHER PLANE

Not as useful as *commune* and also a bit more dangerous in terms of cost—loss of Intelligence and Charisma can be devastating—*contact other plane* does provide a means to refine the characters' investigation. Again, the biggest problem is time: Each casting roll requires 10 minutes. However, with the right questions, the

characters can uncover the thrust of the conspiracy and locate the girl with little effort.

DISCERN LOCATION AND FIND THE PATH

Discern location is probably the surest way to find the girl, but only if the characters find an item that once belonged to the girl. The possessions in her room are all good options, but not the portrait or the idol, since both items belonged to Treight. Of course, these pieces are useful in finding her lover, but only while he lives.

When the PCs enter the Swamp of Night Secrets, *find the path* enables them to reach the site of the ritual with ease, allowing the characters to avoid many of the pitfalls and dangers that could await them in the large mire. Even with the shorter duration, 9th-level characters should reach the site of the ritual before the spell expires.

LOOKING FOR JENNA AND TREIGHT

Perhaps the most direct route in trying to track down the missing girl is to simply hit the streets and ask around. Unfortunately, Jenna does not want to be found and thus both she and her lover go to great lengths to avoid anyone who might be searching for them. Since they left the Golden Oasis, they have moved slowly toward Downwind, where it is expected that they will meet up with Roxane's minions and be escorted to the site of the ritual. They are not to meet the contacts until just before midnight, so the pair has most of the day and night to indulge in their perversions.

The pair starts slow, hitting a few dives to sample the delights of food and drink, and later experiment with other offerings Sanctuary can provide. In their wake, they leave a swath of corpses of used prostitutes of both genders, masses of flesh and blood left from their experiments with torture, and a whole host of broken lives. Jenna and Treight do their best to hide their evidence, but the bodies are eventually found.

As the party moves through the various zones, they are likely to encounter those who have had the misfortune to cross paths with the pair. Up until 11 o'clock, the two are active in the western part of the city, making trouble and causing mayhem. If the characters are armed with Treight's portrait, they may have luck in locating one or more of the scenes of their excess.

CRIME SCENES

Jenna and Treight can be as active or as inactive as you like. What's important is that you convey the pair as being utterly corrupt and thoroughly wicked. The player characters should get a sense that Jenna was not in fact kidnapped, but rather went voluntarily. Generate as many crime scenes as you need to get this point across. After one or two of these encounters, though, most PCs will actually start thinking twice about rescuing the girl and may think about killing her instead.

A typical crime scene should be set inside of one of the various inns, taverns, or alleys filling the poorer sections of the city. The locals discover the body of young man or woman stuffed in a closet or wardrobe or buried under a heap of trash in an alley. Victims are uniformly mutilated, carved with profane symbols and glyphs that suggest the victim died in excruciating pain. A character succeeding on a DC 20 Heal check can guess that the cuts were inflicted with a delicate blade—probably a dagger. A character who succeeds on a DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check can accurately identify the symbols as those used to venerate the demon-gods worshipped by the Nisibisi. Finally, those who succeed on this check by 5 or more also find a clear symbol of Marthax, lord of one thousand pleasures and pains. See the **Idol** for more details.

You should mix up the scenes, injecting whatever perverse elements you like to reinforce the idea that Jenna is anything but innocent. You need not have the characters track down each instance, though if you do, the PCs inevitably come upon Treight's corpse (see the following). Instead, the characters may hear reports of strange violence from DC 15 Gather Information checks, or when dealing with city garrison, gladiator, or Beysib factions that control zones in the West Side, Maze, or docks.

FINDING THE GIRL

It's possible, though slimly so, for the PCs to apprehend Jenna before she vanishes into the Swamp of Night Secrets. Perhaps through clever use of spells, talking with the right people, or through some early discoveries, the PCs manage to get to her and drag her back to the palace. While this is possible, neither Jenna nor the Nisibisi want this to happen and they spare no expense in getting her back.

If the PCs do manage to find the girl, Treight (if alive) immediately flees to warn Roxane. For his failures, Roxane executes him and has him raised as a dread wight. He and a death squad (see **Act II**) set out to retrieve the girl and manage to catch up with the PCs about an hour after they find her. While the characters fight for their lives, Jenna tries to get away. Roxane sends out another death squad each hour until the PCs deliver Jenna to the palace. Molin rewards the PCs as promised. However, in light of her father's death, and given the girl's misguided loyalties, Molin strangles the girl and has her body deposited in the Maze, where she's found by the gluemaker and rendered into adhesives. In short, the adventure is over, though it's likely Roxane will seek revenge...

TREIGHT (EL 7)

At 11 o'clock, at the edge of the West Side, Jenna finally has enough of her lover Treight. Filled with the awful hate and despicable character of the demon-god, she lures her lover into an alley. There, she cuts his throat, emasculates him, and covers him with her own excrement. Once she has finished, a pair of Roxane's servants appear at the mouth of the alley and escort her to Downwind, and, later, into the Swamp, leaving the defiled corpse for the rats to eat.

As the characters head for the Swamp of Night Secrets, they should pass by this alley, assuming they move through Westside. As they do, all of the characters should detect a particularly foul odor coming this side street. Those who succeed on DC 20 Spot checks notice a naked foot illuminated by the moonlight. Entering the alley allows the PCs to find the corpse, and if they have the portrait they can confirm that it is indeed Treight.

A search of the alley turns up nothing of value. After a minute, Treight's corpse stirs with unlife and moments later, he silently rises as an undead horror.

TREIGHT

CR 7

Male Nisibisi dread wight courtier witch 5; CR 7; Medium undead (augmented human); HD 5d12; hp 37; MDT —; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+2 Dex, +4 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (1d4+3 plus energy drain, slam); Full Atk +5 melee (1d4+3 plus energy drain, slam); SA command wights, create spawn, energy drain; SQ arcane endurance, blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft., turn resistance +4, undead immunities, unnatural vitality; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +7; Str 16, Dex 14, Con —, Int 14, Wis 17, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +14, Concentration +4, Craft (alchemy) +10, Diplomacy +6, Disguise +4 (+6 acting), Intimidate +9, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (nobility) +8, Knowledge (religion) +10, Listen +3, Move Silently +10, Spellcraft +12, Spot +3; Magical Aptitude^B, Ritual Emphasis, Touch the Otherworld.

Languages: Nisi (S), Rankene (S)

Reputation +1; *Contacts* Influence (Roxane, Raiden SaVell)

Energy Drain (Su): Anyone struck by Treight's slam attack gains one negative level. Victims may remove this negative level 24 hours after gaining it by making a DC 16 Fortitude save. Otherwise, the negative level is permanent.

Command Wights (Su): Treight can automatically command all normal wights within 30 feet as a free action. Wights do not attack Treight unless compelled.

Create Spawn (Su): Any creature killed by Treight's energy drain ability rises as a wight in 1d4 rounds. Newly created



wights are under Treight's command until either they or Treight are destroyed.

Arcane Endurance (Ex): Whenever Treight takes lethal damage from casting a spell or ritual, he reduces the damage by 2 (minimum 1 point of damage).

Spellcasting +7; Ritualcasting +8; CL 5th

Known Spells Prepared (8): 2nd (MT 30, price —)—*charm person* (DC 16), *fog cloud*, *lesser confusion* (DC 16), *summon monster II*; 1st (MT 20, price —)—*lullaby* (DC 15), *mage hand*, *produce flame* (see PH); 0 (MT 10, price —)—*resistance*.

Familiar Spells Prepared (9): 4th (MT 50, price 4 lethal, prep 4 standard)—*dispel magic*, *displacement*, *summon monster IV*; 3rd (MT 40, price 3 lethal, prep 3 standard)—*daze monster* (DC 17), *invisibility*, *whispering wind*; 2nd (MT 30, price —, prep 2 standard)—*heat metal* (DC 16), *spider climb*, *unseen servant*.

TACTICS

Treight awakens in undeath and lashes out at the closest living creature. For the first 1d3 rounds, he is enraged by his fate and slams anyone in reach. After, he fights more intelligently, casting spells to shore up his weaknesses. If reduced to 10 or fewer hit points, he flees into the night.

DEVELOPMENT

Once the PCs defeat him, or if he flees, the characters may be left wondering who is behind the murder and the animation. Characters can make DC 15 Knowledge (local) checks to learn that somehow the boundaries between the living and the dead have been thinned, and undead walk the streets of the city these days. Those who succeed by 5 or more know that the event has been attributed to the conflict between Roxane and Ischade.

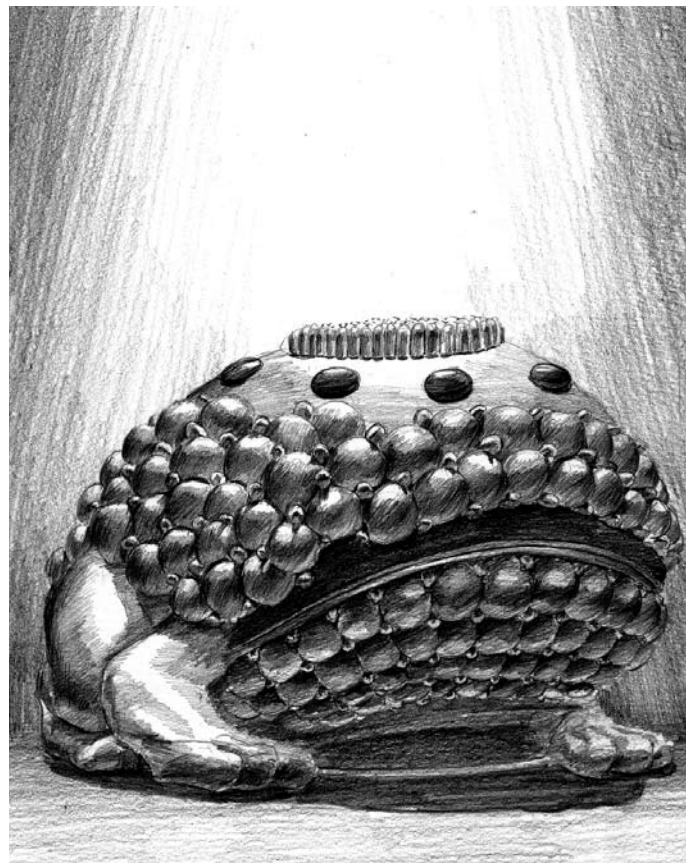
It should also be apparent that Jenna may now be alone. Characters with the Track feat who succeed on DC 20 Survival checks discover that a single set of bloody footprints leads out of the alley. At the mouth, the footprints are joined with two more pair. After a few feet, the tracks fade into the jumble of prints that mar the filthy road. It's clear, though, that the tracks are headed toward Downwind.

INVESTIGATING THE EVIDENCE

Aside from the information the PCs acquired from Jerome and possibly the maids, the PCs may leave the Golden Oasis with up to three items: a brick of *krrf*, an idol, and a portrait. Each of these items holds many secrets which if uncovered can be invaluable to piecing together the mystery.

THE KRRF

Of the three items, the *krrf* may appear to be the strongest bit of evidence, but in truth, it is something of a red herring. While



the drug is somewhat important in establishing the relationship between Treight and Raiden, it has nothing to do with Jenna's disappearance. Instead, this should be used to mislead the characters and eat up some time.

The *krrf*, a drug generally imported from distant Caronne, is wrapped in fine brown paper that is held in place with sturdy brown cord. Characters that succeed on a DC 10 Craft (alchemy) check can confirm what it is by its distinctive odor and the greasy stains on the wrapping. Those who beat a DC 20 or higher and remove the wrapping can tell this brick is very pure and is of high quality, worth at least 450 *sb*. The paper in which it's wrapped has no apparent markings but if held up to a light, a character can see a watermark. The markings are written in Caronnese and if read or deciphered, they declare the name of the guild that produced it—the Blood Men. Caronnese characters that succeed on a DC 25 Knowledge (local) check know the Blood Men are a sinister group noted for lending support to the Mygdonian Alliance in the war against Ranke.

CONTACTS

PCs may be able to use skill contacts to identify the quality of the substance and to estimate its value. In addition, skill contacts may also discover the watermark, though probably not its meaning. Characters with information contacts who are Caronnese in ethnicity can automatically identify the Blood Men and their role in the northern wars.

LEADS

The *krrf* ultimately hints at Nisibisi involvement, but it may mislead the PCs, suggesting perhaps the disappearance is somehow tied to the Blood Men, Caronne, or even about drugs. Should the PCs get this idea in their head, they may waste a lot of time searching for this syndicate, checking out the docks for recent arrivals from Caronne (there probably is at least one such ship), and maybe even explore the Maze in search of *krrf* dealers. While this can be an interesting side-track, it should eventually be clear that Caronne is not involved, the Blood Men don't have a presence in the city, and that *krrf* did not have anything to do with the girl's supposed abduction.

THE IDOL

The idol itself is very odd. Carved from jade, it depicts a squat toad-like creature studded with mammary glands and phalluses. It has seven eyes cut from onyx. It weighs about 10 pounds and feels warm to the touch. A DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check reveals it represents one of the countless demon-gods worshipped by the Nisibisi. A character who succeeds by 5 or more knows this god is Mathrax, the lord of one thousand pleasures and pains. It demands human sacrifices from its followers at the end of a depraved orgy of excess. A character who succeeds by 10 or more also knows Mathrax holds one day to be his most sacred—Black Snake Dawn, and that this day is on the morrow.

ACT III: THE INVESTIGATION

CONTACTS

Unless the characters successfully identify the idol, they may have to turn to an expert to deduce the god the idol represents. Characters with a skill contact specializing in religion may be able to identify the idol, as can a few of the more significant individuals in the city—namely Enas Yorl and Ischade, who can both reveal the statue is of Mathrax. In addition, a skill contact or knowledgeable NPC can also reveal that Mathrax has one particularly special day—the Black Snake Dawn.

WHAT THE CHARACTERS KNOW

PCs who ask if this night is particularly significant or those who hear of Black Snake Dawn may make a Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (the planes) check to see if they know anything in particular about the subject. When a character makes a check, reveal the information gained from the result as well as any information from lower results. Nisibisi characters gain a +5 circumstance bonus to the check.

KNOWLEDGE (ARCANA)

DC	Result
25	Black Snake Dawn is a sacred day to the Nisibisi people, particularly those who practice witchcraft.
30	The Nisibisi witches venerate a number of foul demon-gods with whom they make dreadful pacts to expand their temporal power. Black Snake Dawn is special because it is easier to contact these beings than at other times of the year.
35	Of all the Nisibisi gods, Mathrax, a minor prince of pleasure and pain, holds this day to be special as it marks the zenith of his influence. To commemorate this event, his servants offer up a living sacrifice of their most hated enemy. The sacrifice must be willing, making the sacrifice special indeed.

KNOWLEDGE (THE PLANES)

DC	Result
15	Among the many factors that influence the manipulation of mana, astrological phenomena are some of the most common and powerful. Eclipses, the appearance of strange bodies in the heavens, as well as the alignment of the spheres, can all affect the ease or difficulty of producing supernatural effects. Just as these visible manifestations can have a marked effect on magic, witchcraft, or even prayer, so too can the invisible world.
20	Many days that are featured prominently in religious practices are in fact days in which the flow of mana is easier or harder to manipulate, and are given religious significance because of the effect the phenomena has on the workings of magic.

ASKING AROUND

Once the characters have a name, they might think to ask around to see if there are any active cults in Sanctuary. Characters are not likely to have any luck, since such a group would be loath to advertise their deviance. The more the PCs ask around, though, the more likely it is that they attract the attention of a death squad. Each time the PCs make a query about the statuette, there's a cumulative 10% chance for a death squad to ambush them (see **Act II** for statistics). These villains show up after 1d20 minutes. They do not enter the abode of any significant NPC, but they invade inns or taverns, or wait for the PCs outside.

When a character makes a check, reveal the information gained from the result as well as any information from lower results. Characters gain a +2 circumstance bonus for every Nisibisi contact that they have. Note that each Gather Information check takes 1d4+1 hours.

GATHER INFORMATION

DC	Result
20	<i>"The Death Squads have been more active tonight than ever before."</i>
25	<i>"Old Shem said he heard one of 'em say something about black snakes, but I dunno anything about a dawn."</i>

FOLLOW UP

The fact that this night is the eve of Black Snake Dawn is easily the most important clue in the investigation, since it points toward the Nisibisi. Learning about this unholy day is an altogether different matter. The PCs are unlikely to be able to hit these skill checks by themselves and so they will have to seek out help from those figures in the know—namely Ischade or Enas Yorl. Allow the characters a little latitude in finding out about this fact as it gives them the reason to head out to the conclusion of the adventure.

THE PORTRAIT

The last item is the portrait. This is no simple painting; it is a *bleak portal*—a magical device used to communicate over long distances. The surface of this item bears Treight's portrait. He is an attractive young man with swarthy features, dark eyes, a slight smile, and a small scar on his left cheek. He seems to be sitting near an open window, looking out onto the bay. A gull is cracking open a small crab on the sill of the window. Characters that make a DC 20 Search check while examining the item notice that the image of the idol is reflected in his eyes—it's faint, but definitely there.

BLEAK PORTAL

Aura: Strong (DC 21) Divination

Bleak portals always come in pairs to allow the wielder of one portal to see and communicate with the bearer of the other.

LORE

Bleak portals are one more example of Nisibisi ingenuity when it comes to fashioning fabulous artifacts (Knowledge: arcana DC 20). Nisibisi witches used these devices to communicate with their minions in order to monitor the movements of their enemies (Knowledge: arcana DC 25). The process of constructing these items has been passed down through generations, going as far back as ancient Enlibar (Knowledge: arcana DC 30).

DESCRIPTION

A *bleak portal* is a flat circle of obsidian about a quarter of an inch thick and weighing about 10 pounds. To conceal their true nature, most devices are covered with paintings of people or pastoral scenes. This does not interfere with the item's usefulness, for when activated the image fades in swirling red light.

ACTIVATION

As a full-round action, you prick your finger and allow one drop of blood to fall onto the item. This action causes both *bleak portals*, the one you hold and its matching partner, to glow with a swirling red light. One drop of blood enables the item to function for up to 10 minutes. If the wielder that activated the item releases his grip at any time, the effect automatically ends.

EFFECT

A *bleak portal* allows two-way communication between those who hold either side of the device. You can only see the person on the opposite side or if not held, out to 5 feet from the surface before the image fades into crimson mist. The communication is telepathic and conversation cannot be heard unless the eavesdropper has a means of reading thoughts, such as by the *detect thoughts* spell or similar magic. A *bleak portal* can reach its mate anywhere on the same plane.

Using a *bleak portal* is dangerous. Once activated, the item taxes the mind, draining away sanity. When the duration expires or when you release the item, you must immediately make a Will save (DC 10 + 2 per full minute of use). On a failed save, the *bleak portal* drains 1 point of Wisdom.

Price: 8,000 gp; *Construction:* Requires CL 13th, Craft Wondrous Item, *clairaudience/clairvoyance, confusion*, 4,000 *sh*, 320 XP.

CONTACTS

Skill contacts are probably the best ones to use to identify the portrait's true nature. Such characters may be able to identify its magical aura and even activate it. Characters lacking in useful contacts in this area might turn to Enas Yorl or Ischade to identify the item, each of whom may make a Knowledge (arcana) check to uncover the item's lore.

THE MISSING PASSENGER

Based on their success at the Golden Oasis, the characters may learn there was another member of the SaVell party, and they

may believe she's behind Raiden SaVell's death. The house slave, Crezda, like Jenna, has vanished. If the characters thought to talk with the maids, with a little pressure the women revealed that Crezda fled into the city, looking for a way to return to her homeland in the kingdom of Ilsig. Unfortunately, Sanctuary is a great place to lose oneself and so finding her by any means short of magic is a considerable challenge. This said, the expense of time and money pay off as Crezda has a good idea about what's going on.

FINDING CREZDA

If the PCs extracted the information about Crezda from the maids, then they probably know she fled to the Maze. By its nature, though, the Maze is no easy place to find anyone—or anything—that isn't trouble. The Maze is easily the most dangerous place in the city, not only for the unsavory types that call it home, but also for the seemingly random layout of the place. The narrow streets have a tendency to twist and double back on themselves, making it virtually impossible to navigate unless one has spent his entire life there. Buildings tend to come and go, and familiar landmarks can be swallowed up by ramshackle buildings thrown up over night. It's for these reasons that exploring the Maze at random is a daunting task.

Rather than blindly stumbling into the Maze, which could easily lead to the party's demise by any of a great number of nasty people and things there, the characters would do well to do some preliminary investigation. Crezda is not a native of Sanctuary, so she is in as much trouble as anyone else when she steps into the Maze unprepared. Succeeding on a DC 25 Gather Information check or talking to an information contact associated with the Maze reveals Crezda did indeed enter the Maze, and that she's staying at the Vulgar Unicorn. You can extend this process for as long as you like, making the characters jump through a few hoops to learn this. Or, if the characters try the Unicorn first, then you should allow the players to roleplay with the colorful locals to learn that Crezda is in fact there.

Reaching the Unicorn is bad but not as bad as trying to find a more obscure place. The DC to find the Unicorn depends on the last time the PCs entered the Maze, as shown on page 23 of the *Thieves' World Player's Manual*. If this is the first time you've played in *Thieves' World*, then roll 1d12 to determine the number of days it has been since a character was last in the Maze.

VULGAR UNICORN

The Vulgar Unicorn is easily one of the most distinctive locations in *Thieves' World*, and its name and dark character loom large in the minds of Sanctans. Though the Vulgar Unicorn described in *Shadowspawn's Guide to Sanctuary* refers, mostly, to the tavern of the same name in the Irrune era, the layout and atmosphere is more or less the same. You should play up its disgusting nature and the electric air of danger that seems to fill the place. The characters, despite their power or prominence, should feel a bit smaller here.

Although the patrons of the Unicorn can and often do present a unified front to anyone they deem to be outsiders, everyone has a price. The PCs merely have to ask around, buy some drinks, spend a few coins, and eventually they will learn where Crezda is hiding—in one of the rooms upstairs. Make the players work for it. They should actively try to get into the clientele's good graces and may achieve this by performing for the crowd, exchanging information, making promises, or whatever else you decide. Should the PCs do something foolish like flash a lot of money or act like fools, the people of the Unicorn are just as happy to make the PCs disappear; in short, if it's a fight the PCs are after, a fight they should get.

The patrons should be a mix of people, using stats presented in **Chapter Seven: Common Characters** in *SGtS*. At your option, you can insert a few prominent characters, such as Hakiem or Cappen Vara, to help the characters out in their investigation.

CREZDA

A woman in her middle years (despite Jerome's claim to the contrary) she is fit and attractive, having long black hair, dusky features, and large brown eyes. Years of hard work have taken their toll, though, and her hands are calloused and rough. Worry lines crease the corners of her mouth and eyes. She wears a simple smock and skirt, but has no shoes.

With the help of the two maids from the Golden Oasis, Crezda fled to the Maze. The maids suggested she hole up in the Vulgar Unicorn until the SaVells returned to Ranke. Crezda agreed, but being new to the city and never having been in the Maze before, she got lost. It took her nearly the whole day to find the infamous inn and so she just beats the characters to the place by a few hours. Foolishly, she paid for her room with a gold coin, which naturally attracted the attention of a few killers. Fearing the cruel looks and lascivious stares, Crezda fled to her room, where she's been hiding ever since. The men who saw her pay for her room bide their time until the PCs arrive and then slip up the stairs to assault, murder, and rob the fugitive slave.

Once the PCs head upstairs to find her room, have them make DC 10 Listen checks. Those who succeed hear the sound of a door splintering open. When the characters rush up to see what's going on, they see hardened men entering the room. Those who delay hear a scream on the following round.

Killers (4): hp 27; MDT 17; use statistics for veteran assassins, *SGtS* p. 204.

Crezda: hp 4; MDT 11; noncombatant.

TACTICS

On the first round, two killers move to cut the fugitive slave's throat, while the other two begin their search for the coronations. They are not expecting interference, so if the PCs attack, they gain surprise. Once combat begins the killers abandon Crezda, who retreats to the far wall, and turn their attention to the characters. Should two killers fall, the others flee.

DEVELOPMENT

Hopefully, the PCs get here in time to rescue Crezda from her attackers. If not, she's dead and very likely useless to the PCs. If alive, she offers the characters all of her money (well most of it—she keeps a few coronations hidden in the hope of finding a way to Ilsig) if they spare her life. Despite her fear she is not hysterical, and keeps her cool throughout her interaction with the adventurers.

Whether the PCs take her coin or not, Crezda is aware that she can't go anywhere unless the PCs let her. If they prove somewhat heroic, she begs them to take her to the Wideway. She lies and says she is to meet her husband there. She drops all deceptions if the characters reveal the purpose of their visit. She answers whatever questions they ask, biding her time until she can escape.

She responds to any accusations that she was somehow behind Raiden's SaVell's murder with indignation. She angrily says she could have killed him, but it's not her way. She pulls out an amulet depicting the symbol of Meshpri, the goddess of healing. Characters that succeed on a DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check know she couldn't have murdered him, as doing so would be at odds with the tenants of her divine patron.

Crezda reveals she was indeed a slave and owned by the SaVell family, but she explains she was wrongly held. When she was a girl, a group of pirates attacked her village, claimed her as a slave, and sold her in a filthy flesh-market. She had several owners but eventually wound up with the SaVell family, at the hands of whom she has endured terrible hardship, suffering the lusty touch of her master and the leering stares of his son. She could tolerate much, but things grew too awful for her to ignore when Treight arrived.

Treight, she explains, was an artist that Raiden offered to sponsor. The master allowed this man to come into his home, and fed and clothed him, in exchange for ownership over the artist's works. It didn't take long, though, before Raiden fell under Treight's thrall. The young artist dealt in *krff* and kept the master in a stupor, draining away his fortunes. To make matters worse, Treight seduced Jenna, who was always a willful and cruel child, and made her his creature. The two would retreat to their chambers and commit unspeakable acts. Over the following months, the situation worsened until Raiden received an invitation to come to Sanctuary to negotiate a business deal. Crezda cannot imagine what Raiden would have to offer the prince since he was nearly penniless, and his mercenaries, the source of his wealth, were decimated by the war against the Alliance.

Treight insisted that both he and Jenna accompany Raiden to Sanctuary, and though Raiden protested, he eventually relented. Crezda believes it was the threat of losing access to his *krff*. In any event, Raiden brought his children and Treight, and herself to see to their needs.

As soon as she reached Sanctuary, Crezda looked for a way to escape. She befriended the maids, who were also of Ilsigi

ACT III: THE INVESTIGATION

extraction, and begged them for their help. The night before she fled, she happened to pass by Jenna and Treight's room—which in itself is utterly scandalous, and she heard the young man speaking in some foul language. Crezda peered into the chambers and saw Treight standing on the floor over some diagram, in the center of which lay Jenna. Floating above her was a ghostly thing of pure malevolence. Crezda attempted to leave, but before she did, the ghostly thing turned and fixed her with amber eyes filled with hate. Crezda ran away, mocking laughter dogging her steps, and when she reached her chambers, she made ready to flee.

The next morning, she slipped into her master's room while he argued with the city watch about his daughter's disappearance, and took some of his coins to pay for her way back to Isligi City. She left the Oasis with the two maids, who left her at the edge of the Maze with the promise that they would return once it was safe to do so.

Crezda correctly believes Treight is a witch, and given Ranke's struggle against the Mygdonian Alliance, she naturally believes he's Nisibisi. She doesn't think Jenna was kidnapped. She suspects that the demon killed her, though she doesn't know for sure.

Once Crezda tells her story, her part in this adventure is over. The PCs are free to drag her back to Jerome or help her escape the city. If they return her to the SaVell family, Jerome has her publicly flogged along with the two maids who helped her. Crezda succumbs to her injuries 1d3 days later. Alternatively, if they escort her to the docks, she eventually finds passage and



escapes the city on the following day. Sadly, her ship goes down in a storm, and she drowns along with all the other passengers.

THE SEA HAG

The player characters might head to the docks to investigate the ship the SaVell family used. The journey to the docks can be as eventful or uneventful as you like, but even this area is not free from the factions, and gangs, thugs, and worse haunt the foggy wharfs. Finding the ship requires some snooping around (you can resolve this through roleplaying or with a DC 10 Gather Information check), but eventually the characters come upon the ship.

The *Sea Hag* is a sleek caravel that has seen better days. The planks are worn and the sails are ragged. It's clear the passage was cheap and offered few amenities. At any hour after dusk, only a few sailors are on hand to stand watch over the vessel and none of them are interested in chatting (use Pirate statistics on page 213 of *SG&S*). If the PCs can improve their attitudes from unfriendly to friendly, the men do speak up. Characters gain a +2 bonus for every 4 padpols they offer as bribes.

The guards confirm they ferried the SaVell family from Ranke to Sanctuary and the family bought a round trip passage. The captain has no intention of waiting on the family and plans to set sail in a few days after he's attended to his business in the city. The sailors admit that the girl was a bit free with her advances and many of the men had a few sweaty moments with her in the hull. Although they took advantage of her offers, they felt it was strange that the SaVell patron seemed not to notice or care.

The sailors only let the PCs onto the ship if the characters have improved their attitudes to helpful. A search of the ship turns up little, but if the characters examine the SaVell family's quarters and succeed on a DC 20 Search check, they find a diagram hidden beneath a rug. Characters that succeed on Knowledge (arcana) checks can identify the diagram as a component used in summoning otherworldly creatures.

The sailors can direct the PCs to their captain, a man named Amos Trent, but the characters have little luck in finding him since he's dead. Trent foolishly ventured into the Maze to broker a smuggling deal at Sly's Place. He never made it. Jenna and Treight got to him first and mutilated him beyond recognition. A few scrawny dogs later ate his corpse.

KEY NPCs

The player characters may seek out the major NPCs of the setting for their assistance in finding the girl. To do so, the characters should make Gather Information or Knowledge (local) checks (or get their contacts to do so). Based on the results of these checks, the PCs may be able to find someone who can supply them with additional information. While such iconic NPCs can be useful, they may complicate matters. An NPC may make disturbing demands, charge an outrageous price, or even get in

the way of the investigation. Furthermore, finding the NPC is no guarantee of their help. Most of these characters have little to gain by helping the PCs, so some careful negotiations (or Diplomacy checks) may be needed to convince these individuals to help. In general, NPCs will not assist the PCs unless their attitudes are improved to at least friendly.

The following characters are just a sample of the kinds of folks one might find in Sanctuary. Other characters described in *Shadowspawn's Guide to Sanctuary* may be present, and may even have useful information as you decide. Generally, these characters are the most likely ones to be of use to the PCs and those exempted may be dead, absent from the city, or have little to offer the PCs in terms of assistance. Note that some NPCs are described in **Act II** and if encountered while the PCs move through the city, they may become foils or allies depending on the circumstances of the meeting.

For statistics and more character information, check out their respective entries in **Act IV: Faces of Sanctuary, Rankan Era** in *Shadowspawn's Guide to Sanctuary*. Finally, some of the iconic NPCs are presented in the **Appendix** for use as pre-generated characters. If not used by the players, they can serve as sources of additional information instead.

LOCATING NPCs

While these characters may be familiar to longtime fans of *Thieves' World*, they may or may not be known to the characters. Few people advertise their dirty secrets, especially in this city, and while rumor and legend can play a part—everyone knows about Shadowspawn, for example—the characters will have to do some snooping if they intend to locate these characters.

To handle the process of contacting or even knowing about these characters, this adventure uses the Reputation system. If the PCs are trying to think of someone who might know something about *krrf*, for example, have them make a reputation check to see if they know about one of these potential contacts. A reputation check is 1d20 + the NPC's reputation modifier + the player character's Intelligence or Knowledge (local) modifier rolled against a DC 25.

Example: *Patrick is playing Moria from the Appendix. Having located the portrait, Patrick decides to look for somebody who might know something about it. Lalo immediately comes to mind. He has a reputation of +5. So, Patrick rolls 1d20 and adds 5 (Lalo's reputation) and 12 (Moria's Knowledge (local) modifier) to the roll. He gets a 13, for a total of 30, which beats a DC 25 by a fair margin. The GM informs Patrick about Lalo and because the roll was 5 more than he needed, he also tells Patrick where the artist might be found.*

In some cases, characters might ask around a bit, using Gather Information to dredge up useful information. Handle this as a normal DC 25 Gather Information check, but grant the character a bonus equal to the NPC's reputation modifier.

ALTEN STULWIG (REPUTATION +5)

Location: West Side

Starting Attitude: Indifferent

Alten Stulwig is a respected apothecary and physician. Talented in his craft, he has made a good life for himself in the city, ensuring his continued fortunes by catering to the needs of people from all occupations. As a healer, he lends his talents to alleviating the suffering of the sick and injured, but as an apothecary, he sometimes deals in poisons and drugs.

USING ALTEN

While Alten certainly takes money, he has a particular weakness for women. He gladly exchanges his services for the pleasures of the flesh, and in fact, he sometimes makes poor bargains to sate his lusts. He could care less about Jenna or her disappearance, but if it is revealed that she is a pretty Rankan noble with a lusty streak, Alten could be convinced (DC 20 Bluff check) to help for free. Otherwise, Alten charges 1d12+6 shaboozh per visit, though, as mentioned, he will accept other forms of payment.

Alten can attest to the purity of the *krrf*, but little more. He does not notice the watermark unless it's pointed out to him, and even then, he has no idea what it means.

AMOLI (REPUTATION +3)

Location: Street of Red Lanterns

Starting Attitude: Unfriendly

Amoli is the second most powerful and influential Madame on the Street of Red Lanterns. As owner and operator of the Lily Garden, she languishes under the shadow of Myrtis's more successful Aphrodisia House. The *krrf* she uses helps her to find her center, but it also gnaws on her profits like a cancer. Thanks to her regular use of the stuff, she has gained a number of useful and influential criminal contacts that allow her to monitor developments in the city with uncanny precision.

USING AMOLI

Two things motivate Amoli: *krrf* and crushing Myrtis. She will do anything that supplies her with either. Characters that help in some way can gain a useful ally. As a regular user, Amoli can testify to the *krrf*'s quality. She offers to purchase the block from the PCs for 400 *sh*, and if so, she is friendly to the PCs the next time she meets them. She can also set up a meeting with one of her information or influence contacts. The quality and identity of these contacts is up to you.

CAPPEN VARRA (REPUTATION +5)

Location: Absent (or Vulgar Unicorn)

Starting Attitude: Indifferent

Cappen Varra is a wandering performer and he tends to drift to places that promise money and a little excitement. Sanctuary, at

this time, promises plenty of excitement, but little in the way of money, and the danger certainly outweighs its more entertaining aspects. Thus, Cappen Varra, in all likelihood, has left the city. Still, if the PCs are stumped or hung up on a certain clue, they might meet Varra when they track down Crezda at the Vulgar Unicorn.

USING CAPPEN VARRA

A true rogue, Cappen Varra responds to money, drink, and even women. PCs that cater to his palate stand the best chance to develop a rapport. Cappen can identify the drug for what it is and even reveal that most *krrf* comes from Caronne. He notices the watermark on the paper right away, and identifies the Blood Men and their dealings with the Nisibisi. He says that this group does not tend to deal with the Empire, not even its backwater cities like this one. So, he concludes, a Nisibisi must have brought this brick to Sanctuary.

ENAS YORL (REPUTATION +10)

Location: Pyrtanis Street
Starting Attitude: Indifferent

As one of the world's most powerful mages, it is no small thing that he chose Sanctuary as the city of his residence. Saddled with a devastating curse that compels his body to undergo random and pronounced changes at the most inopportune times, and since these forms are rarely pleasing, Yorl keeps to himself, lurking in the confines of his great mansion on Pyrtanis Street. Despite his reclusive lifestyle, he does have an interest in the city and takes action if supernatural agencies threaten it.

USING ENAS YORL

The archmage is a *deus ex machina*. Should the characters become stumped, trapped, or thwarted, you can use Enas Yorl to extract them from their predicament, reveal elements of the mystery, or cast spells on their behalf. Since Roxane's efforts directly threaten the city, and therefore Yorl, it's not out of the question for the Great Wizard to take a direct hand in this adventure. You should realize, though, he outstrips the PCs greatly in terms of power and status and using this character does indeed diminish the PCs' role in the adventure. Instead, keep Yorl as a remote figure. The PCs might see a shadowy figure moving through the streets, may catch sight of gleaming red eyes, or any number of other signs such as hastily written notes, additional clues, and so on. Entering his mansion should be a last resort, for doing so is far beyond the scope of this adventure.

HAKIEM (REPUTATION +2)

Location: Vulgar Unicorn
Starting Attitude: Indifferent

Hakiem made his living as a rumormonger and thief. He made his home in the Maze and elsewhere, selling tales for coins, stealing when there were no listeners. He knows more about Sanctuary

than anyone else in the city and is a veritable font of information. In recent months, however, he has taken service with Shupansea to serve as her advisor. While he enjoys the comforts, he misses his life on the streets and so he sneaks out of the palace to spend his evenings swapping lies and truths in the Vulgar Unicorn, rubbing elbows with Sanctuary's most dangerous citizens.

USING HAKIEM

Hakiem spends most of his coin on the thin, sour wine sold at the Unicorn. He lives for stories and watches and listens while affecting a front of a doddering drunkard. Characters can endear themselves to Hakiem if they ply him with drinks and tales. Hakiem's time on Sanctuary's streets have made him familiar with *krrf* and those who bring it into the city. He can confirm that the Blood Men do not operate in the city and that this particular blend of drug has not been seen in the city as far as he knows.

ILLYRA (REPUTATION +1)

Location: Bazaar
Starting Attitude: Indifferent

Of all the characters the PCs might seek out, Illyra is likely to be the most helpful. While Illyra knows next to nothing about the Nisibisi, the death squads, the SaVell family, or anyone else connected with the mystery, she is a seer of considerable skill and can reveal much about the situation by examining her cards and casting out her senses to read the currents of destiny.

USING ILLYRA

At this point, Zip has not yet murdered Illyra's child, so the fortuneteller will help the player characters. However, while available to the PCs, she does not yet have the cards Lalo will one day paint for her. Should the PCs find her place in the bazaar, they will have to do some fast talking to convince the mighty smith to let them talk with the seer. Dubro is unfriendly and unless the PCs can improve his attitude to friendly, he tells them to be off. Characters using violence to get to Illyra are in for trouble. Illyra readily curses the PCs if they threaten her or her husband (see *Thieves' World Player's Manual* page 148 for details on curses).

If the PCs manage to get past Dubro, Illyra offers to help them, just this once "because it's clear your need is dire." Illyra has a number of potent abilities that can help the PCs in incredible ways. She can use her greater sight ability to cast *divination*, but more importantly, she can use her read object ability to learn more information about the clues found at the Golden Oasis. The object reading ability can reveal a great deal of information, but Illyra's talents are not inexhaustible. To use read object, Illyra must expend her focus. Attaining her focus requires a DC 15 Concentration check. Each time after the first that she attunes her focus, the DC increases by +2. If she fails to attain her focus, she cannot use this ability any further until she rests 8 hours. Furthermore, concentrating on an object is taxing. The first minute of concentration requires a DC 15 Concentration check

and each minute thereafter requires another check at the same DC +2 per each minute spent in concentration. If she fails the concentration check, she must start all over again. Therefore, the characters should have Illyra identify the items that they deem are most important first. Before she will do so, however, she charges the characters 1d4 shaboozh per item. Note, the highest roll Illyra can attain is a DC 28.

IDENTIFYING THE KRRF

Illyra scowls at the drug, but will do her best to identify the block. Each minute she successfully concentrates she reveals the following information.

First Minute (DC 15): The last owner was Nisibisi.

Second Minute (DC 17): The last owner was male.

Third Minute (DC 19): He was about 20 years old.

Fourth Minute (DC 21): He was an artist.

Fifth Minute (DC 23): He acquired this substance from one of his countrymen in a large city, but he left the item behind in haste.

Sixth Minute (DC 25): The previous owner was also a Nisibisi.

Seventh Minute (DC 27): But that owner was a woman.

IDENTIFYING THE IDOL

Illyra is uncomfortable around the idol, exclaiming that it is surrounded with a foul aura. Each minute she successfully concentrates, she reveals the following information.

First Minute (DC 15): The last owner was Nisibisi.

Second Minute (DC 17): The last owner was male.

Third Minute (DC 19): He was about 20 years old.

Fourth Minute (DC 21): He was an artist.

Fifth Minute (DC 23): He acquired the idol from a beautiful ageless woman in a mountainous region. He left the item behind in his haste.

Sixth Minute (DC 25): The previous owner was also a Nisibisi.

Seventh Minute (DC 27): But that owner was a woman.

IDENTIFYING THE PORTRAIT

The true nature of the portrait is not immediately obvious to Illyra, but it becomes so as she studies (1d4 minutes in). This surprises her and she loses her concentration.

Each minute she successfully concentrates she reveals the following information.

First Minute (DC 15): The last owner was Nisibisi.

Second minute (DC 17): The last owner was male.

Third minute (DC 19): He was about 20 years old.

Fourth minute (DC 21): He was an artist.



ISCHADE (REPUTATION +3)

Location: Anywhere (Ischade has a house near the White-Foal River, but is more likely to stalk the streets in search of prey—she’s probably in Shambles or on the Wideway looking for drunken sailors.)

Starting Attitude: Indifferent

Ischade has only recently come to Sanctuary. Grippled by a foul curse that kills anyone with whom she has a physical encounter, she stalks the night streets to slake her carnal appetite. While she does so unapologetically, she trains her attention on the scum of the city, picking rapists, murderers, and other undesirables. Unfortunately, she has fallen in love with Straton, and the two are having a torrid love affair. It isn’t certain why Strat has not succumbed to the necromant’s curse, but it’s likely that his love and their affair is a curse in its own right.

USING ISCHADE

Ischade despises Roxane. Ischade came to Sanctuary to be left alone, to escape the woes of the world and endure the horror of her curse. However, when Roxane came to the city and discovered another witch in residence (and a witch outside of the Nisibisi traditions), Death’s Queen set out to destroy her rival. This act roused Ischade from her increasing apathy and has given her life a new purpose.

Ischade is quick to help any who would thwart Death’s Queen’s plot, though make no mistake, Ischade cares nothing for the

missing girl. At this time, Ischade will not physically involve herself, but she might lend her *spell focus* to the PCs, cast spells on their behalf, and so on. Ischade can correctly identify the portrait and she will experiment with it to find its partner. When she does, she catches a glimpse of Roxane, who shatters her mirror with a loud curse, causing the one Ischade holds to break as well. While this item is lost, it does point to Death's Queen as the culprit.

There is danger in dealing with the necromant. If any of the PCs are clearly villainous, without a shred of decency, Ischade moves to claim the character. Once she has helped the PCs, Ischade tells the rest to leave, giving her time with her chosen victim. She attempts to seduce the character using honest means, but falls back to *charm person* if she must. Should the character consent, the character must succeed on a DC 30 Will save or die in 1d6 rounds as a series of misfortunes wrack his body. Players of such characters are encouraged to roll up new characters or play one of the pre-generated characters included in the **Appendix**.

LALO (REPUTATION +5)

Location: Maze

Starting Attitude: Indifferent

Lalo is a curious case. A famous artist empowered by a curse leveled on him by Enas Yorl, he has unique talents to make that which he creates real. His talents began with an uncanny ability to illustrate the souls of those he painted, but he eventually gained the ability to paint life itself. Lalo is timid and a bit confused by his uncanny abilities, but he tries to use his talents for the good.

USING LALO

Lalo is likely at the Vulgar Unicorn, so if the PCs go there to find Crezda, they could speak with the artist while they are there. He's reluctant to get involved, but if convinced (made friendly) he does his best. He peers into the painting, clucking about the poor skills of the artist, and drops it in surprise. He reveals that this is no ordinary painting and to prove his point, he pulls one of his scalpels and scrapes some of the paint away to reveal the smoky glass beneath. He's not sure what it is, but that the painting disguises its purpose.

THE NISIBISI

All of the clues the PCs accumulate point toward one group: the Nisibisi. From the idol, to the portrait, to even Black Snake Dawn, ultimately, the characters should settle on these individuals as the culprits. The last questions the PCs need to ask are how does Jenna figure into the Black Snake Dawn and where is she being held? From information acquired about the idol and the worship of this demon-god, the PCs should have an idea that Jenna is to be sacrificed at dawn, though how this figures into the Nisibisi's plans, the PCs probably don't yet know.

Learning more about the Nisibisi should be easy; the empire is at war with these people, after all. Every character should know that the Nisibisi are witches from the Wizardwall Mountains far to the north. They are believed to be demon-worshippers and traffickers with devils. Utterly wicked, they enslave other races for foul experiments and to use as sacrifices for their fouler rituals. Character with ranks in Knowledge (geography), Knowledge (history), or Knowledge (local) may know a bit more. A character gets the information based on his check result, plus all the information from lower results. As with any other information, the characters can also use their skill and information contacts or key NPCs to find out any of this information.

KNOWLEDGE (GEOGRAPHY)

DC	Result
15	The Nisibisi are part of the Mygdonian Alliance and are the cement that unites the fractious people beyond Wizardwall.

KNOWLEDGE (HISTORY)

DC	Result
15	They and their Northron allies are utterly committed to crushing the Rankan Empire and have fought a brutal bloody war that has defined much of Emperor Abakithis's reign.
20	Their animosity stems from Ranke's efforts to expand their influence into these barbaric lands. Having no interest in becoming yet another vassal to the bloated Empire, the Mygdonian Alliance has successfully held off the aggressor's legions.
25	Unfortunately, the bloody character of this war has forced both sides to commit atrocities, but the Nisibisi are unmatched in their cruelty and inventiveness.
30	The arrival of the Stepsons has turned the tide of the war and it seems the Mygdonian Alliance has been crushed. Unwilling to admit defeat, the witches of that far-flung land have bled into the Empire to sow discord and destroy it from within.

KNOWLEDGE (LOCAL)

DC	Result
10	Death's Queen is the principle force behind the death squads that roam Sanctuary's streets.
15	This leader is Roxane, one of the most powerful witches in all of the Mygdonian Alliance. Vowing revenge for her husband's death, she has come to Sanctuary to destroy it.
20	Rumor holds that she lairs in the heart of the Swamp of Night Secrets, from which she sends out her foot soldiers on their campaign of death.



Once the PCs have learned Jenna left the Golden Oasis of her own volition to offer herself as a sacrifice to the Nisibisi for the completion of the Black Snake Dawn ritual, the characters have little time to waste in stopping the ritual. From here, they must cross the city and venture into the Swamp of Night Secrets. There they must find the site where Roxane works foul witchcraft to unleash a fearsome plague that will sweep through the city and beyond. However, to reach the swamp the PCs must first pass through Downwind.

GETTING THE PCs TO THE END

It's possible that the investigation does not go as planned. Upon finding out that Jenna gave herself up to the witches, to say nothing of her crimes in the city, the PCs may feel justified in letting the girl find whatever end she seeks. While they are justified in doing so, inaction doesn't stop the ritual and it doesn't pluck Sanctuary, or the Empire for that matter, out of danger. To get the characters into the swamp, you can use any of the following hooks.

GLADIATORS

If the PCs met the gladiators while exploring the city, they may have forged an alliance with these individuals. Chenaya is loath to entrust stopping Roxane with a group of motley adventurers, but she also understands the danger the ritual poses to Sanctuary and to everyone in it. Chenaya eventually seeks out the PCs wherever they hole up, and ask them to accompany her and her

gladiators into the swamp. She explains that this night is the eve of Black Snake Dawn, and her sources indicate Roxane intends to complete a vile ritual that would devastate the city. She urges the PCs to help. If they agree, they can head out to Downwind. There, several death squads ambush them. In the thick of the fight, Chenaya screams at the PCs to head for the Swamp, while she and the gladiators finish off the killers.

THE STEPSONS

Encountering the Stepsons can produce results similar to arranging a deal with the Gladiators. If the PCs show their hand to Straton early on, he may attempt to hold them until his men can find out what's going on. Should the PCs not attempt to escape, Strat returns, having discussed matters with Ischade. He explains what's at stake and asks for the PCs' help against Death's Queen. Assuming they agree, Straton, his soldiers, and the PCs invade the Swamp of Night Secrets before dawn. While the Stepsons and soldiers fight the serpent men and agents of Roxane's Death Squads in a bloody engagement, it falls to the PCs to rescue Jenna and interrupt the ritual.

ISCHADE

Characters that met and used Ischade as a source of information are likely indebted to the necromant. Should the PCs give up and leave Jenna to an end she deserves, Ischade comes to the party and calls in her favor. She explains what will happen if Roxane succeeds and urges the PCs to go into the Swamp and snatch the girl.

ENAS YORL

If all else fails, Enas Yorl can nudge the party in the proper direction. This is very much an exercise in railroading and your players will probably resent it, so only use this if you must. Enas Yorl approaches the characters at some point in the night, to enlist their aid in stopping Roxane. He explains he can stop the ritual, but he cannot do that and fight off her minions. He pressgangs the PCs into helping him.

JUST ENDING HERE

If none of these options appeal to you and the players are hell-bent in letting the girl die, you can just wrap up the adventure here. Perhaps the gladiators, Stepsons, or even Enas Yorl manage to interrupt the ritual. Then again, maybe not. Maybe Roxane succeeds and releases the dreadful contagion. In a matter of days, half the city succumbs to the sickness and soon after, it spreads through the Grey Wastes and into the Empire. Such an event would change the face of the Known World, re-writing the events that follow in a dramatic way. From this, you could forge ahead into uncharted territory, exploring a world shattered by the Nisibisi, redefining it to fit your imagination.

INTO DOWNWIND

Downwind is a desperate and dangerous district. Though not technically part of the city, it festers just outside, like a cancer,



eating away at Sanctuary. Most of Downwind consists of hastily erected lean-tos and hovels, though larger rundown buildings do exist here and there. Muddy paths wend their way through this wretched place, leading to dead-ends and such sights of utter suffering that to merely witness them leaves a person forever unclean. Just as this rundown section of the city is rife with despair, it also breeds violence and appalling crime. Nothing is sacred here and everything and everyone is for sale. Gangs dispense a fickle brand of justice, killing at their discretion while elevating those with the very worst traits to positions of power.

CREATURES (EL 8)

Entering this place by day is dangerous enough, but by night, it's positively suicidal. Characters are in grave danger from the gangers and thugs that see in them easy prey. As the PCs walk down the muddy streets, they should get glimpses of ragged men with gaunt features and trembling hands, driven to deplorable acts out of madness, starvation, or deprivation. Whether or not these groups manifest as a force to combat the PCs depends entirely on you. Gauge the party's resources. If they're still fresh, an encounter with a dozen or so thugs might impart a valuable lesson. Otherwise, convey the sense that the PCs could be attacked at any time by having them make frequent Spot and Listen checks to detect the sights and sounds of movement.

DOWNWINDERS (12)

CR 1

Male Wriggle thug warrior 2; CR 1; Medium humanoid (human); HD 2d8; hp 9; MDT 14; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10 (-1 Dex, +1 armor), touch 9, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d6+1, club) or +1 ranged (1d4+1/19-20, throwing dagger); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+1, club) or +1 ranged (1d4+1/19-20, throwing dagger); SA diseased, thug trait; SV Fort +3, Ref -1, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 9, Con 10, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Gather Information +1, Knowledge (local) +6, Intimidate +6, Listen +2, Spot +2; Alertness^B, Improved Damage Threshold.

Languages: Sanctan (S).

Reputation +0; *Contacts* Information 1

Diseased (Ex): All of the Downwinders carry some foul or loathsome contagion. Characters injured by a Downwinder must succeed on DC 15 Fortitude save or contract boils. After 1 day, the victim must make another Fortitude save or take 1d2 points of Dexterity and Constitution damage. This continues each day until the character makes three consecutive saves.

Thug Trait (Ex): Downwinders can use Intimidate to demoralize foes as a move action instead of a standard action.

Possessions: padded armor, club, 2 throwing daggers.

TACTICS

The Downwinders are careless and desperate. Having little strategic ability, they fan out to attack the entire party at once. Every 2 rounds, 1d4 more gangers show up until a total of 24 have appeared. The gangers flee if ever half their numbers have fallen.

DEVELOPMENT

Should the PCs manage to capture one of the Downwinders alive, they may be able to get useful information out of their prisoner. A successful Intimidate check is all that's required to get the wretch to spill out anything he knows. The captured Downwinder reveals he saw a girl matching Jenna's description entering the swamp. She wasn't alone; two large men wearing heavy dark cloaks went with her. He recalls that the girl had wild, insane eyes and she gripped a bloody dagger in a white-knuckled hand.

If the characters use Diplomacy rather than Intimidate, they may gain a bit more information if the Downwinder's attitude is improved to friendly from hostile. He tells everything mentioned with Intimidate, plus he offers to lead the PCs to Death's Queen in the Swamp. Characters that offer food and water gain a +8 circumstance bonus to their Diplomacy checks.

PICKING UP THE TRAIL

While it should be apparent to the characters that Jenna and her escorts entered the Swamp, where they entered remains hidden. Luckily, the Swamp is navigable by the various paths that wind through the mire, though where they lead is anyone's guess. There are a number of ways, though, for the characters to pick up the trail.

ASKING AROUND

Downwinders survive because they constantly keep an eye out on their surroundings. Thus, the appearance of a well-bred Rankan girl flanked by two suspicious men in cloaks is bound to attract some attention. Anyone the PCs encounter near the edge of the Swamp knows anything that a captured Downwinder would reveal, as described in the preceding section.

MAGIC

It's possible for the characters to have access to some potent magic to help them out. Spells like *locate creature*, *find the path*, and *screaming* can all be of use in locating Jenna. Allow any reasonable spell suggestion to work.

TRACKING

A few locals make their livings by plying the swamps for treasures, but largely people leave the swamp alone. Therefore, Jenna and her companions leave enough imprints to let a skilled tracker follow them all the way to the site of the ritual. A character with the Track feat needs to make only one DC 15 Survival check to pick up their trail.

INTO THE SWAMP

The Swamp of Night Secrets is a forlorn place, rich with wildlife, but cursed with a foul reputation. Hidden in the shadows cast by the gnarled and twisted trees are ancient secrets, lost treasures, and awful abominations so foul that they cannot bear the touch of the sun. Those with courage and strong stomachs can uncover any number of curious relics and artifacts, though there are few with the resolve to do so for long. Crisscrossed with game trails, patches of dry earth, and pathways, the Swamp seems to be navigable, but for the uninitiated, it is a veritable labyrinth. Many venture into this place for the secrets it hides, but never return—the sounds of their cries echo for days and then abruptly fall silent.

Once inside the swamp, the characters should not have any encounters, since they need to be at full strength when they confront Roxane and her minions. This said, you should describe their journey in ominous ways, suggesting that things lurk just beyond their vision. The moon illuminates the foliage, dead from the wintry season, and shines upon the cold still waters of the mire. Strange sounds disturb the croaks of frogs and chirps of insects, casting a pall that lasts for minutes before nature's chorus resumes its song.

It should take the PCs about an hour to reach the site where Roxane performs the blasphemous ritual. After about 45 minutes of travel, the landscape starts to change. Tendrils of fog curl up from the damp soil and the sounds of wildlife fall silent. A bit further in, the PCs see rotting heads and dismembered body parts hanging from the trees or impaled on stakes. Hanging from the low-lying branches are dark serpents that regard the PCs with baleful eyes. Finally, at the end of the hour, the characters see firelight about 60 feet ahead. Undergrowth and trees abound to mask the PCs presence, and in Roxane's arrogance, she has not posted any sentries beyond the extent of the clearing. (Note: if the Stepsons accompany the PCs then the Swamp is alive with her death squads who move to engage the sacred banders, leaving Roxane, Jenna, and the guardians to the PCs.)

As the PCs draw closer, many of the details become clear. The trees give way to a large clearing, easily 40 feet in diameter. Wooden poles scattered around the perimeter hold skulls. A bonfire burns with wicked purple flames in the center of the clearing and arranged around it are six figures who wear heavy black cloaks. Affixed to a cross hangs Jenna, her naked, bleeding body thrashing against the rope bindings. At her feet, a stiletto stands stuck in the moist earth, surrounded by writhing vipers awakened from their winter slumber. Finally, moving around the bonfire in a counter-clockwise fashion is Roxane. She is a vision to behold, hauntingly beautiful and thoroughly repellent at the same time. Her long black hair frames a regal face. Death's Queen is also nude, but for a necklace of teeth that hang around her slender neck. In her hands, a ball of spinning light rotates, casting beams of multicolored hues into the clearing. The Nisibisi witch's eyes reflect this light, assuming the brightness and color cast by the rotating orb.

What happens next depends on the PCs. Should they cross over into the clearing the guardians around the bonfire stir and surge forward to attack. They also attack if any PCs attempt ranged attacks at Roxane, Jenna, or the guardians. In any event, whenever the PCs finally approach, time seems to shift and the first rays of dawn paint the sky a bloody red. Whatever they do, they have to act fast.

CREATURES (EL 9 OR 16)

Until they enter the clearing (or shoot into it), no one inside it pays the PCs any heed. If gladiators, Stepsons, or others accompany the characters, those involved in the ritual are undeterred by the sounds of fighting emanating from the swamp around them. The player characters may act as they wish, but as soon as they cross into the clearing, the cloaked figures cast off their coverings revealing the horrific flesh of their altered forms. Standing in the forms of men, these creatures have the appearance of snakes. In truth, they are snakes, altered by Nisibisi sorcery to look like men. They surge forward to prevent the PCs from interfering with the ritual.

Roxane: hp 110; MDT 20; see *SGtS*, p. 123 for statistics.

JENNA

CR 4

Female Rankan aristocrat noble 4; CR 4; Medium humanoid (human); HD 4d8+4; hp 22; MDT 13; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex), touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +3; Grp +4; Atk +5 melee (1d3+1 nonlethal, unarmed strike) or +6 melee (1d4+1/19–20, masterwork dagger); Full Atk +5 melee (1d3+1 nonlethal, unarmed strike) or +6 melee (1d4+1/19–20, masterwork dagger); SA inspiration (competence, courage), organize +3; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +5; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +10, Diplomacy +12, Disguise +3 (+5 acting), Intimidate +12, Knowledge (history) +4, Listen –1, Spellcraft +5, Spot –1, Use Magic Device +8; Iron Will, Magical Aptitude^B, Weapon Finesse.

Languages: Caronnese (S), Nisi (S), Rankene (S/W)

Reputation +1; *Contacts* Influence 1 (Roxane)

Inspiration: Seven times per day, as a full-round action, Jenna can inspire those within 30 feet and who can hear her speak. This is a language-dependant, mind-affecting ability.

Competence: Jenna may grant one ally within range and who can clearly see or hear her a +2 competence bonus on skill checks. This ability lasts for as long as Jenna concentrates, up to a maximum of 2 minutes.

Courage: All allies within range gain a +1 morale bonus to saves against charm and fear spells and effects and a +1 morale bonus to attack and weapon damage rolls for 2 rounds.

Organize: Whenever two or more characters use the aid another action to improve a skill check, Jenna may make

the same check to grant a +3 bonus on the lead character's check.

Possessions: masterwork dagger.

RAGING GUARDIANS

CR 4

manimal Medium viper snake barbarian 3; CR 4; Medium monstrous humanoid (augmented animal); HD 2d8 plus 3d12; hp 28; MDT 14; Init +7; Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 16 (+3 Dex, +3 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +4; Grap +3; Atk +7 melee (1d4–1 plus poison, bite) or +3 melee (2d6–1/19–20, greatsword); Full Atk +7 melee (1d4–1 plus poison, bite) or +3 melee (2d6–1/19–20, greatsword); SA poison (DC 12, initial and secondary damage 1d6 Con), rage 1/day; SQ animal blood, scent, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; SV Fort +4, Ref +8, Will +6; Str 8, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Balance +11, Climb +11, Hide +12, Intimidate +1, Listen +8, Spot +5, Survival +4, Swim +7; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse^B.

Languages: Nisibisi (S)

Animal Blood (Ex) A guardian counts as both an animal and a monstrous humanoid for the purpose of spells, abilities, and effects that specifically affect animals.

Possessions: greatsword.

TACTICS

The characters have exactly 10 rounds from the moment combat breaks out until the ritual is complete, so they had better act quickly. The guardians immediately enter their rages and fan out to prevent the characters from interfering. They focus their attacks against a single opponent at a time, directing their attacks against the target of their Dodge feat. The guardians fight to the death.

Jenna, meanwhile, uses her inspire courage ability to augment the guardians' combat abilities. She's helpless in her current predicament, so she aids her allies in whatever way she can. If approached, she bites at anyone who tries to free her, though she has no chance of injuring anyone.

Roxane, on the other hand, is utterly engrossed with the magic she wields. She is completely aware of what is happening around her, but cannot react lest the ritual go horribly awry. Therefore, she takes no part in the combat and continues her path around the bonfire until she completes the ritual. Roxane works to maintain her concentration, so if she takes damage, she must make a Concentration check against a DC 10 + the damage dealt. Alternatively, the ritual automatically fails if the PCs pull Jenna from the clearing and into the woods. Should Roxane fail the Concentration check or if Jenna is removed or slain, the globe flares brightly and then dims, while time seems to freeze for a moment, snapping back into place with a jarring wrench. All living creatures within 120 feet of Roxane take 1d6 points of Wisdom damage and must succeed on DC 20 Will saves or

become confused for 1d8 rounds. The mana level decreases to low mana, which increases the chance for miscasting spells.

If Roxane is confused or if her hit points are reduced to 70 or less she flees. Otherwise, she turns her dreadful witchcraft against the player characters. She makes extensive use of her known spells, casting *waves of exhaustion*, *dominate person*, and *insect plague*. Note that she gains a +10 insight bonus to spellcasting checks because she carries with her the *Nisibisi power globe*.

DEVELOPMENT

Once the PCs interrupt the ritual, Roxane's minions begin to pour into the clearing. Starting 3 rounds after the ritual ends, 1d4 death squad soldiers show up each round until a total of 12 arrive (see page 28 for statistics). These additional foes are meant to drive the PCs away, not to butcher them where they stand. If Jenna is dead or freed, there's no reason for the adventurers to remain and they should beat a hasty retreat from the site. If they stick around, don't pull your punches—kill them until they do run away. The Nisibisi don't pursue.

WRAPPING UP

The exact effects of Roxane's failed ritual are up to you. At the very least, the circumstances surrounding her failure could weaken the witch's hold on the death squads, and embolden her enemies. Or, it might actually result in a curse that enables Ischade and others to finally imprison the witch's essence in the townhouse and ultimately allow Enas Yorl to cast her and the house into another plane of existence. Whatever you decide, Roxane and her minions should fall quiet for a few days while they consider the best ways to get revenge on the fools who sought to thwart her.

If Jenna survives the night, she is hostile and vicious. She takes every opportunity to curse and bite the PCs. Should they try to talk to her, she spits in their faces and howls with rage when they try to move her. To get her to the palace, the characters will have to bind, gag, and carry her.

The trip back into the city should be far more peaceful since it is dawn and the nocturnal fighting has died down. The factions still control their zones, but any results that turn up Stepsons or gladiators should be treated as uncontrolled instead. Since the PCs are likely weakened, they should be able to make their way back to the palace with little trouble.

At the palace, Molin greets them and pays the promised fee. He asks a few questions to confirm his suspicions, and sends the characters on their way. Fearing that the girl will pose



future problems, he executes her and dumps her body in the Maze. To cover his tracks, he blames the girl's death on piffle terrorists and plants a few seeds that link her death to the PCs. How and if this affects the PCs is up to you.

When word reaches Jerome about her fate, he wastes little time in leaving. His father had the decency to die, and his sister, toward whom his attitude had soured, is now also dead. Armed with the remains of his father's fortunes, he returns to Aurveshan and lives a quiet though thoroughly debauched life.

Characters surviving the adventure should gain enough experience points to advance one level. Aside from the gains in power, PCs also gain a bit more notoriety. For their part in the investigation, if recognized by a Rankan, the characters gain a +2 circumstance bonus to Charisma checks and Charisma-based skill checks. However, they now have the enmity of the Nisibisi, and so they take a -2 penalty to such checks made against these characters. As well, the characters may have gained useful allies during the adventure, forging connections with some of the most important characters. All of this should prove to be fertile ground for making new adventures in *Thieves' World*.



APPENDIX: ICONIC CHARACTERS

Aside from several decades, what separates the Rankan Era from the Irrune Era is power. During the Rankan Era, gods fought in the skies and powerful witches worked foul magic to do battle with empires, while ordinary men gained such fabulous power they could change the world with a brushstroke. Although this adventure is intended for use with characters generated by the players, it can be run using the iconic characters from the anthologies.

This Appendix includes modified statistics for six characters to undertake *Black Snake Dawn*. Given their involvement in the plots surrounding Roxane and Ischade, they are especially suited to be player characters for this adventure. If you choose to use these characters, you may wish to modify the hook that involves the PCs. Rather than being rounded up by Molin Torchholder, Ischade herself calls on the characters to investigate what she believes is one more of Roxane's heinous plots to annihilate the city. Ischade catches wind of the missing girl and sends the PCs to investigate. Since these characters generally work with Ischade or have in the past, monetary recompense for their service is not necessary. As well, given their place in the setting and the familiarity they have with one another, you need not allot time for the PCs to get to know one another.

Alternatively, all of these characters can be used to further flesh out *Black Snake Dawn*, providing a rival party to help or hinder the PCs as they work to solve the mystery. Each character has connections to the principal NPCs, and they might supply the characters with some key clues, while obscuring others.

Perhaps the best way to involve these characters as NPCs is to have them be sent out by Ischade as already described. These characters function as a rival team, investigating Jenna's disappearance at the same time as the PCs. Since they are unlikely to stick too closely together, they may be encountered singly or as a group. This allows the PCs to exchange information, get access to other characters, and perhaps even join forces to overcome certain obstacles. Once it becomes clear that Roxane is involved, things take a turn for the worse. Mradhon Vis vanishes, abandoning the investigation to report his findings to a death squad. Mor-am decides that he'd risk pissing off Ischade and so he slips away into the city to drink away his sorrows. This leaves Haught, Moria, Stilcho, and Niko.

Since his capture, Niko has had mixed emotions about Roxane, and there is still something of a bond. This drives him to do something reckless. He and his three companions head into the swamp to free the girl. Before they get there, though, Haught double-crosses them and sells them out to the witch. Unfortunately for him, Mradhon Vis beat him to it and now the four would-be heroes are firmly in the witch's hands. Now, not only do the PCs have to rescue Jenna, but they also have to free Niko and company.

All of the following stat blocks provide you with the basic information you need to run these characters. Rather than regurgitating what's already in *Shadowspawn's Guide to Sanctuary*, each character entry includes a short description and tips on using him or her. For more information, be sure to check out their respective entries in the city book.

HAUGHT

A former slave, dancer, and concubine, Haught has struggled to find his place in the world since being freed by Ischade. As a consequence of his liberation, Haught has resolved to never let another claim ownership of him. To ensure that he remains free, he has turned to the dark magic of his heritage, unlocking the power within him. Ruled by his ambition, he serves various masters, gauging his loyalty based on what others can do for him. Although he is nominally Ischade's apprentice, he has been toying with the idea of aligning himself with Roxane. If an opportunity to get in her good graces appears, he's likely to take it.

HAUGHT

CR 9

Male Nisibisi slave initiate 4/witch 5

Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Listen +1, Spot +1

Languages Ilsig (S), Nis (S), Rankene (S), Sanctan (S)

Reputation +2; **Contacts** Influence 1/Skill 2

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13 (+1 Dex, +2 armor, +1 deflection, +1 natural)

hp 34 (9 HD); **MDT** 17

Fort +5, **Ref** +7, **Will** +10

Spd 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee mwk dagger +7 (1d4+1/19–20)

Ranged mwk dagger +7 (1d4+1/19–20)

Base Atk +5; **Grp** +6

Atk Options Witchblooded, ability surge, poison (bloodroot, DC 12, 0/1d4 Con plus 1d3 Wis), poison (greenblood, DC 13, 1 Con/1d2 Con), poison (scorpion venom, DC 18, 1d6 Str/1d6 Str)

Combat Gear dose of bloodroot poison, dose of greenblood oil, dose of scorpion venom, *potion of convert moderate wounds*
Spellcasting +9; **Ritualcasting** +7; **CL** 9th

Known Initiate Spells (5):

 2nd (MT 30, price 2)—*command undead* (DC 15)

 1st (MT 20, price 1)—*cause fear* (DC 14), *charm person* (DC 14)

 0 (MT 10, price 0/1)—*daze* (DC 13), *touch of fatigue* (melee touch +6, DC 13)

Familiar Initiate Spells (2):

2nd (MT 30, price 2, prep 2)—*detect thoughts* (DC 15)

1st (MT 20, price 1, prep 1)—*mage armor*

Known Witch Spells (9): +6

2nd (MT 30, price 2)—*bear's endurance*, *bull's strength*, *disguise self*, *flaming blade* (touch +6)

1st (MT 20, price 1)—*calm animals* (DC 14), *entangle* (DC 14), *faerie fire*, *produce flame* (see PH)

0 (MT 10, price 0/1)—*convert minor wounds*

Familiar Witch Spells (9):

4th (MT 50, price 4 lethal, prep 4)—*deep slumber* (DC 17), *invisibility sphere*

3rd (MT 40, price 4 lethal, prep 3)—*scare* (DC 16)

2nd (MT 30, price 2, prep 2)—*hypnotism* (DC 15), *lesser confusion* (DC 15), *silent image* (DC 15)

1st (MT 20, price 1)—*ghost sound* (DC 14), *message*, *summon monster I*

Abilities Str 13, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 17, Wis 12, Cha 16

SQ eclectic sorcery (Charisma), force of personality, slave traits

Feats Empower Spell, Interrupted Spellcasting, Magical Aptitude^B, Ritual Emphasis, Rushed Casting, Witchblooded^B

Skills Bluff +20, Concentration +14, Diplomacy +21, Disguise +6 (+8 acting), Hide +3, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Listen +1, Move Silently +2, Perform (dance) +15, Sense Motive +8, Sleight of Hand +10, Spellcraft +19 (+21 identify scrolls), Spot +1, Use Magic Device +15 (+17 scrolls)

Possessions combat gear plus 2 masterwork daggers, *ring of protection* +1, *ring spell focus* +1, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *bracers of armor* +2, *cloak of resistance* +1, 15 *sh*

Ability Surge (Su) Twice per day, Haught can grant himself a +2 enhancement bonus on any single ability score as a swift action. This boost lasts for 5 minutes.

Eclectic Sorcery (Ex) Haught treats any spell-completion item or spell-trigger item that contains a spell that is neither on the witch list, nor among Haught's known or familiar initiate spells, as an unknown spell.

Force of Personality (Ex) Haught adds twice his Charisma bonus to Charisma checks and Charisma-based skill checks. This benefit is already included in his skills.

Slave Traits (Ex) Haught only takes a -1 penalty on Strength and Dexterity when fatigued, and overcomes fatigue after only 6 hours instead of the customary 8 hours.

USING HAUGHT

Haught is an opportunist—if he catches wind of the disappearance, he becomes intrigued by the opportunities that surely exist. If he's a party member, he will lend his magical aid to assist the PCs, but while he does, he's bound to be looking for opportunities to benefit himself, even if that means betraying his companions.

MOR-AM

When Mor-am was a hawk-mask, he exulted in his status, using the organization's fearsome reputation to exploit Sanctans and get away with whatever he wanted. However, when Jubal enraged the beggars, Mor-am and his twin sister Moria, like many others, went underground to wait out the fighting, lest they join the hawk-mask corpses choking Sanctuary's alleys. Unaccustomed to showing any sort of restraint, Mor-am had a hard time remaining a low profile. It wasn't long before his excursions to taverns and brothels got him caught by Moruth's killers. He was viciously tortured, his good looks ruined, and his left arm paralyzed. He's a broken man who lives to dull the pain he still suffers.

MOR-AM

CR 9

Male Wrigglie mercenary fighter 3/thief 6

Medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; **Senses** Listen +5, Spot +6

Languages Rankene (S), Sanctan (S)

Reputation -1; **Contacts** Influence 1/Information 1/Skill 1

AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 19; Dodge, Mobility, uncanny dodge (+3 Dex, +4 armor, +2 shield)

hp 33 (9 HD); **MDT** 12

Resist evasion

Fort +4, **Ref** +9, **Will** +3

Spd 30 ft. (6 squares); Spring Attack

Melee +1 *longsword* +11/+6 (1d8+3/19-20)

Ranged +1 *light crossbow* +11 (1d8+1/19-20)

Base Atk +7; **Grp** +9

Atk Options Combat Expertise, sneak attack +3d6

Combat Gear *elixir of hiding*, *elixir of sneaking*, 2 *potions of convert light wounds*

Abilities Str 15, Dex 17, Con 8, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 6

SQ trap sense +2, trapfinding

Feats Alertness^B, Combat Expertise, Dodge^B, Low-Profile, Mobility, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (*longsword*)^B

Skills Bluff +4, Climb +8, Diplomacy +2, Disguise -2 (+0 acting), Disable Device +9, Gamble +5, Hide +9, Intimidate +8, Jump +8, Listen +5, Move Silently +9, Open Locks +11, Search +7, Sense Motive +7, Sleight of Hand +11, Spot +6, Survival -1 (+1 follow tracks)

Possessions combat gear plus +1 *studded leather*, +1 *buckler*, +1 *longsword*, +1 *light crossbow* with 20 bolts, *gloves of Dexterity* +2, masterwork thieves' tools, brick of *krrf*, 6 *sh*

Mercenary Traits Mor-am gains a +2 bonus to Constitution checks made to continue running, to avoid nonlethal damage from a forced march, to avoid nonlethal damage from starvation or thirst, and to Fortitude saves to avoid nonlethal damage from hot or cold environments.

USING MOR-AM

Mor-am was never reliable, but now his condition and desperation make him even less so. Serving anyone who can keep him plied with numbing drugs or anything else to alleviate his agony, he's developing a reputation for being treacherous and unpredictable. He's served Morruth, Jubal, Ischade, and even Zip. So long as the price is right, he's for sale.

MORIA

Even though she was a member of one of Sanctuary's most dangerous organizations, Moria was never as confident about her skills as a warrior. More of a thief than a warrior, she scraped by, trying not to draw too much attention to herself. So when the hawk-masks collapsed under the flashing knives of the beggars, Moria had the wherewithal to keep her head, lay low, and avoid getting killed. She may have had the good sense to avoid her brother Mor-am's fate, but she found herself in unsavory company, joining up with the killer Mradhon Vis and the ex-slave Haught.

Once she was in Ischade's employ, the witch cloistered her away in a rich man's house, left to herself and abandoned by her lover Haught. It wasn't until the former slave came to her and used potent magic to alter her appearance that she regained the confidence to survive in this dangerous city.

MORIA	CR 9
Female Wriggie mercenary survivor 3, thief 4, noble 2 Medium humanoid (human)	
Init +7; Senses Listen +11, Spot +11	
Languages Rankene (S), Sanctan (S), Trade Tongue (S)	
Reputation +2; Contacts Information 2/Skill 1	
AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 20; uncanny dodge (+3 Dex, +1 class, +4 armor, +2 shield)	
hp 53 (9 HD); MDT 20	
Resist evasion	
Fort +8, Ref +11, Will +10	
Spd 30 ft. (6 squares)	
Melee mwk short sword +9/+4 (1d6+2/19–20) or	
Melee unarmed strike +8/+3 (1d3+2)	
Ranged mwk throwing dagger +10/+5 (1d4+2/19–20) or	
Ranged +1 composite shortbow (Str +2) +10/+5 (1d6+3/×3)	
Base Atk +6; Grp +8	
Atk Options Combat Expertise, sneak attack +2d6	
Special Actions inspiration (courage)	
Combat Gear 2 <i>potions of convert light wounds</i>	
Abilities Str 14, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 18	
SQ mercenary traits, trap sense +1, trapfinding	
Feats Combat Expertise, Endurance ^B , Improved Damage Threshold ^B , Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Maze-Savvy ^B , Negotiator ^B , Streetwise	
Skills Appraise +6, Balance +9, Bluff +12, Climb +8, Diplomacy +16, Disguise +4 (+6 acting), Escape Artist +4, Gamble +6,	

Gather Information +10, Hide +7, Intimidate +22, Jump +10, Knowledge (local) +12, Knowledge (nobility) +4, Listen +11, Ride +5, Sense Motive +13, Sleight of Hand +9, Spot +11, Survival +7, Tumble +15

Possessions combat gear plus +1 *studded leather*, +1 *buckler*, masterwork short sword, 3 masterwork throwing daggers, +1 *composite shortbow* (Strength +2) with 30 arrows, *cloak of Charisma* +2, *hawk-mask* (SGtS, p. 107), 12 *sb*

Inspiration Five times per day, as a full-round action, Moria can inspire those within 30 feet and who can hear her speak. This is a language-dependant, mind-affecting ability.

Courage All allies within range gain a +1 morale bonus to saves against charm and fear and a +1 morale bonus to attack and weapon damage rolls for 2 rounds.

Organize Whenever two or more characters use the aid another action to improve a skill check, Moria may make the same check to grant a +3 bonus on the lead character's check.

Mercenary Traits Moria gains a +2 bonus to Constitution checks made to continue running, to avoid nonlethal damage from a forced march, to avoid nonlethal damage from starvation or thirst, and to Fortitude saves to avoid nonlethal damage from hot or cold environments.

USING MORIA

Since the fall of the hawk-masks, Moria has been used, exploited, and abandoned, and she's more than a little sick of it. She serves Ischade out of fear, nothing else. The love she once had for Haught is fading as he becomes more and more obsessed with power. If she has one constant ally, it seems to be the revenant Stilcho. In him, she sees a kindred spirit, an individual who suffers the whims of others.

MRADHON VIS

Mradhon Vis is many things: He's a killer, a mercenary, and a spy. When he arrived in the city, he made the mistake of saving Ischade from a would-be rapist and ever since, he's lived a life on the precipice of disaster. In his time in Thieves' World, he's served many masters and has betrayed and been betrayed by all of them.

MRADHON VIS	CR 9
Male Mygdonian mercenary fighter 3/assassin 4/Nisibisi spy 2 Medium humanoid (human)	
Init +8; Senses Listen +9, Spot +9	
Languages Ilsig (S), Nisi (S/W), Rankene (S/W), Sanctan (S)	
Reputation +0; Contacts Influence 1/ Information 1/Skill 1	
AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 16; Dodge, Mobility (+4 Dex, +4 armor, +1 shield, +1 natural)	
hp 55 (9 HD); MDT 18	
Resist evasion	
Fort +12 (+14 against poison), Ref +13, Will +6	

Spd 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +1 *longsword* +12/+7 (1d8+4/19–20) or

Melee mwk kukri +11/+6 (1d4+3/18–20)

Ranged +1 *composite longbow* (*Str* +2) +12/+7 (1d8+3/×3) or

Ranged +1 *composite longbow* (*Str* +2) +10/+10/+5 (1d8+3/×3) with Rapid Shot

Base Atk +7; **Grp** +10

Atk Options Combat Expertise, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, sneak attack +2d6

Spell-like Abilities (CL 2nd): At will—*detect magic*

Abilities Str 16, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 20, Wis 16, Cha 13

SQ mercenary traits, poison use

Feats Combat Expertise^B, Dodge, Improved Initiative^B, Magical Aptitude^B, Mobility, Point Blank Shot^B, Rapid Shot, Stealthy, Weapon Focus (*longsword*)^B

Skills Balance +6, Climb +8, Concentration +3, Craft (poison) +7, Disguise +5, Escape Artist +7, Gather Information +7, Hide +18, Intimidate +12, Jump +8, Listen +9, Move Silently +18, Ride +10, Search +8, Sense Motive +5, Spellcraft +8 (+10 decipher scrolls), Spot +9, Swim +7, Tumble +8, Use Magic Device +10

Possessions masterwork chain shirt, masterwork buckler, +1 *longsword*, masterwork kukri, +1 *composite longbow* (*Strength* +2) with 20 arrows, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *cloak of resistance* +1, *gauntlets of Strength* +2

Mercenary Traits Mradhon Vis gains a +2 bonus to Constitution checks made to continue running, to avoid nonlethal damage from a forced march, to avoid nonlethal damage from starvation or thirst, and to Fortitude saves to avoid nonlethal damage from hot or cold environments.

USING MRADHON

At heart, Mradhon is a mercenary. He goes where the coin is. He's learned his lesson about letting his morals guide him. Given that he regularly sells information he picks up about the city, he's bound to know something about what's going on in Sanctuary, making him an ideal person to contact when the PCs are stumped.

NIKO

Niko has known Roxane for many years, and it seems that in many ways their destinies are linked. They met when bandits sold Niko to Roxane's lover, the notorious Nisibisi witch Datan. What transpired between Roxane and Niko during this time is unknown, but it formed the foundation for their relationship. They separated when Tempus and the Stepsons rescued the young man and killed Roxane's lover, gaining the witch's eternal enmity in the process. Niko wound up in Sanctuary, became Roxane's prisoner, lover, and finally her enemy in truth. Though he is completely committed to destroying her, their complex relationship colors his outlook and adds to his often-impulsive behavior.

NIKO, A.K.A. STEALTH

CR 9

Male Azehuran acolyte ranger 4, Bandaran adept 3, sacred bander 2

Medium humanoid (human)

Init +10; **Senses** Listen +13, Spot +14

Languages Azehurite (S), Ilsig (S), Rankene (S), Sanctan (S)

Reputation +2; **Contacts** Influence 1/Information 1/ Skill 1

AC 26, touch 16, flat-footed 20 (+2 Dex, +4 class, +7 armor, +3 shield)

hp 73 (9 HD); **MDT** 22

SR 13

Fort +13, **Ref** +9, **Will** +8; +2 against enchantment spells and effects

Spd 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +1 *longsword* +10/+5 (1d8+2/19–20) or

Melee unarmed strike +9 (1d3+1) or

Melee +1 *longsword* +6/+1 (1d8+2/19–20) and

Melee heavy shield +6 (1d4+2)

Ranged +1 *heavy crossbow* +11 (1d10+1/19–20)

Base Atk +8; **Grp** +9

Atk Options coordinated offense, courage of spirit, *maat* 7, preternatural defense

Special Actions *see magical residue*

Abilities Str 13, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 17, Wis 18, Cha 12

SQ favored environment (mountains), sacred bond, trap sense +1

Feats Endurance^B, Improved Initiative, Improved Shield Bash, Improved Unarmed Strike, Self-Sufficient^B, Skill Focus (Concentration), Track^B, Two-Weapon Fighting^B

Skills Balance +5, Climb +8, Concentration +15, Diplomacy +3, Handle Animal +8, Heal +9, Intimidate +3, Jump +11, Knowledge (geography) +10, Knowledge (nature) +8, Listen +13, Move Silently +9, Ride +8, Search +4, Spot +14, Survival +13 (+15 avoid natural hazards), Swim +5, Tumble +7

Possessions *dreamforged cuirass* (*SGtS*, p. 120), +1 *heavy steel shield*, +1 *longsword*, +1 *heavy crossbow* with 10 bolts

Coordinated Offense (Ex) When his partner is present in combat, both act on the higher initiative count. Niko does not have a partner at this time.

Courage of the Spirit (Ex) When within 10 feet of his partner, Niko gains a +2 bonus on Will saves. Niko does not have a partner at this time.

Maat (Ex) Niko may spend points from his *maat* pool to power other abilities.

Preternatural Defense (Ex) Niko may spend a point of *maat* to gain an additional +4 bonus to his AC and initiative checks as a swift action. These bonuses remain for 1 minute.

See Magical Residue (Sp) As *detect magic* cast by a 3rd level caster, but Niko must spend one point of *maat* to use this ability as a swift action.

Favored Terrain (Ex) Whenever Niko is in mountainous terrain, he gains a +2 bonus on Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Search, Spot, and Survival checks. He also gains a +2 bonus to any Knowledge checks relating to mountains.

Sacred Bond (Ex) When Niko gains a partner, as long as he is within 10 feet of him, each knows the other's current hit point totals and any ongoing effects. In addition, a sacred bander can accurately pinpoint his partner at any distance.

USING NIKO

Niko willingly involves himself in any mission he can that will destroy Death's Queen and avenge the deaths of the Stepsons who died trying to rescue him. Therefore, he readily accepts Ischade's mission and does his best to find the missing girl. His eagerness to defeat the witch makes him reckless, landing him in all sorts of trouble.

STILCHO

Stilcho was among the many Sanctuary natives who stepped in to fill the void left by the departing Stepsons. His stint was brief, though, for Morruth's beggars eventually captured and killed him. This might have been the end of his story, but Ischade called his spirit back from the underworld and granted him unlife as a revenant. Her thrall, Stilcho exists in a living hell, for he can know no peace, no rest, and should he be slain, his mistress just pulls his soul back from the land of the dead.

STILCHO

CR 8

Male undead fighter 6, ex-sacred bander 1, level adjustment +2
Medium undead (augmented human)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +3, Spot +3

Aura unnatural

Languages Sanctan (S)

Reputation +1; **Contacts** Influence 1/Skill 1

AC 19, touch 10, flat-footed 19 (+0 Dex, +5 armor, +2 shield, +2 natural)

hp 48 (7 HD); **MDT** —

Immune undead immunities

Fort +8, **Ref** +3, **Will** +5

Spd 20 ft. (4 squares) in breastplate; base speed 30 ft.; can't run

Melee +1 *bastard sword* +13/+8 (1d10+7/19–20) or

Melee slam +11 (1d6+4)

Ranged +1 *light crossbow* +8/+3 (1d8+1/19–20)

Base Atk +7; **Grp** +11

Atk Options Cleave, Great Cleave, Power Attack

Abilities Str 19, Dex 10, Con —, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 8

SQ cursed, turn resistance +2

Feats Cleave, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword)^B, Great Cleave^B, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Rapid Reload (light crossbow)^B, Toughness^B, Weapon Focus (bastard sword)^B, Weapon Specialization (bastard sword)^B

Skills Climb +7, Handle Animal +8, Intimidate +2, Listen +3, Ride +13, Spot +3

Possessions +1 *breastplate*, heavy steel shield, +1 *bastard sword*, +1 *light crossbow* with 20 bolts, *cloak of resistance* +1

Unnatural Aura (Su) All animals within 30 feet automatically become panicked and remain so as long as they are within 30 feet.

Cursed (Su) Stilcho's spirit was called up from Hell to languish, trapped in the rotten remains of his body. Since Ischade has complete mastery over him, anytime he is slain, the necromant can call his spirit back after 1d4 minutes.

USING STILCHO

Trapped between life and death, Stilcho is a tortured soul. Whenever he sleeps, his mind drifts back to the torments of the underworld. When awake, he exists in a pitiable state, his senses dulled, desperate for the rest of the dead. He serves Ischade because he must. He is her thrall. And when she showers him with her attentions, the results are always the same: death, and rebirth into unlife.



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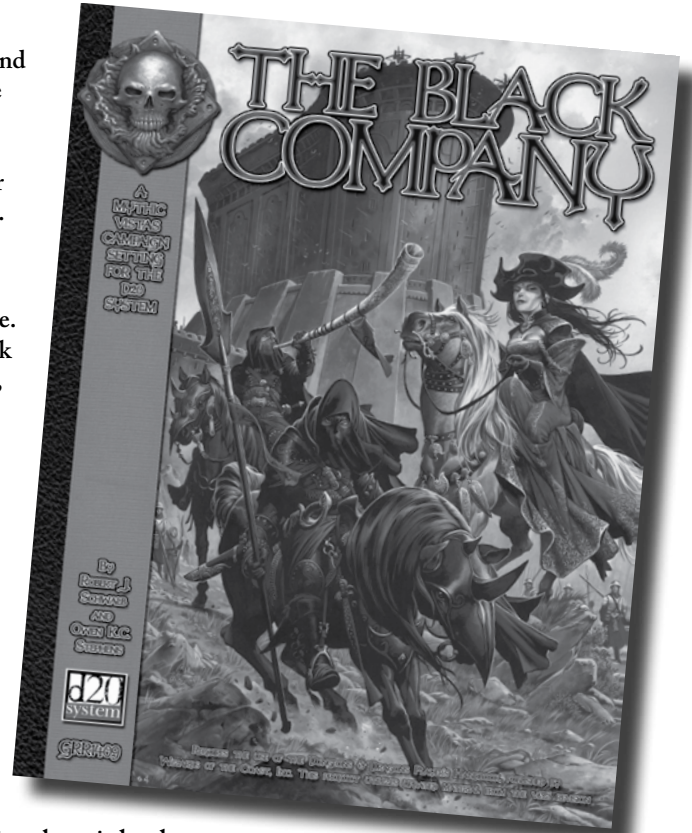
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