

COR5-09



GATEWAY TO THE BRIGHT SANDS

A One-Round D&D[®] LIVING GREYHAWK[™] Core Adventure

Version 1

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Hardby, City of the Scorned, was for centuries a bastion of independence and female rule, but that changed when it fell under Greyhawk's control in 582 CY. Now the word is out that Despotrix Ilena, the city's nominal leader, is dying. Many factions—both within and without—have begun to vie for the right to fill her influential position. Surely a city so fraught with intrigue is a fertile ground for adventure. . . An event set in Hardby for APLs 2-8. Part 2 of the "Blight on Bright Sands" series.

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

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RPGA SANCTIONED PLAY

Most likely you ordered this adventure as part of an RPGA even from the RPGA website, or you received it from your senior gamemaster. To play this adventure as part of the LIVING GREYHAWK™ campaign—a worldwide, ongoing D&D campaign set in the GREYHAWK setting—you must sanction it as part of an RPGA event. This event could be as elaborate as a big convention, or as simple as a group of friends meeting at the DM's house.

To sanction an RPGA event, you must be at least a HERALD-LEVEL gamemaster. The person who sanctions the event is called the senior gamemaster, and is in charge of making sure the event is sanctioned before play, runs smoothly on the date sanctioned, and then reported back to the RPGA in a timely manner. The person who runs the game is called the table Dungeon Master (or usually just DM). Sometimes (and almost all the time in the cases of home events) the senior gamemaster is also the table DM. You don't have to be a HERALD-LEVEL GM to run this adventure if you are not the senior GM.

By sanctioning and reporting this adventure you accomplish a couple of things. First it is an official game, and you can use the AR to advance your LIVING GREYHAWK character. Second player and DMs gain rewards for sanctioned RPGA play if they are members of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS REWARDS program. Playing this adventure is worth two (2) points.

This adventure retires from RPGA-sanctioned play on December 31, 2006.

To learn more about the LIVING GREYHAWK character creation and development, RPGA event sanctioning, and DUNGEONS & DRAGONS REWARDS, visit the RPGA website at www.rpga.com.

PLAYERS READ NO FARTHER

If you are planning on playing this adventure, stop reading now. The rest of the information in this adventure is for the DM only. If you read farther than this section, you'll know too much about its challenges, which kills the fun. Also, if you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, reading beyond this point makes you ineligible to do so.

PREPARING FOR PLAY

To get the most out of this adventure, you need copies of the following D&D books: *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*.

Throughout this adventure, text in ***bold italics*** provides player information for you to paraphrase or read aloud when appropriate. Sidebars contain important information for you, including special instruction on running the adventure. Information on non-player characters (NPCs) and monsters appear in abbreviated form in the adventure text. Full

information on NPCs and monsters are given in Appendix 1.

Along with this adventure you'll find a RPGA Table Tracking sheet. If you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, complete and turn in this sheet to your senior GM directly after play. You'll also find a LIVING GREYHAWK Adventure Record (AR).

LIVING GREYHAWK LEVELS OF PLAY

Because players bring their own characters to LIVING GREYHAWK games, this adventure's challenges are proportionate to the modified average character level of the PCs participating in the adventure. To determine this modified Average Party Level (APL) follow the steps below:

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

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

APL also affects the amount of experience and gold a PC can gain at the end of the adventure. If a player character is three character levels or more either higher or lower than the APL at which this adventure is being played, that character receives only one-half of the experience points and gold for the adventure. This simulates the fact that either the PC was not challenged as much as normal or relied on help by higher-level characters to reach the objectives.

Furthermore, a PC who is four or more levels higher than the highest APL supported by the adventure may not play the adventure.

LIVING GREYHAWK adventures are designed for APL 2 and higher. Four or five 1st-level characters may find the challenge of an APL 2 adventure difficult.

Suggest the following to these groups to help increase their chances of success:

1. Enlist a sixth player.
2. Advise characters to buy riding dogs to help protect them, and fight for them.

TIME UNITS AND UPKEEP

This is a standard one-round Core adventure set in the Domain of Greyhawk. All characters pay two Time Units for this adventure.

Adventurer's Standard Upkeep costs 12gp per Time Unit. Rich Upkeep costs 50gp per Time Unit. Luxury Upkeep costs 100gp per Time Unit. Characters that fail to pay at least Standard Upkeep will retain temporary ability damage until the next adventure, must buy new spell component pouches and healer's kits, and may suffer other in-game penalties (or possibly gain in-game benefits) as may be detailed in this scenario.

A character that does not pay for at least Standard Upkeep may also avoid the above-described penalties by living off the wild. If the character possesses four or more ranks in the Survival skill and succeeds at a Survival check (DC 20), the character will heal temporary ability damage as if he or she paid for Standard Upkeep, may refill spell component pouches and healer's kits, and may restock up to 20 arrows or bolts if the character has at least four ranks in Craft (bowmaking). The player is allowed to Take 10 on this roll.

More information about Lifestyle and Upkeep can be found in the "Lifestyle and Upkeep" section of Chapter 3 of the *LIVING GREYHAWK Campaign Sourcebook*.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

If you have access to the article "Hardby: City of the Scorned" in the *Polyhedron* section of *Dungeon* #92 then reading it prior to running this adventure is recommended, especially if this is being run as a home game and you want to flesh out the city a bit more. Appendix 4 details and updates some of this material. A listing of important NPCs and factions is included after the "Recent Events" section below.

The basic history of Hardby is known to PCs on a DC 15 Knowledge (history) check. Details about the way Hardby's governance and social structure are set up require a DC 15 Knowledge (local - core) check. Consult Appendix 3 for details on these.

A BRIEF EXPLANATION OF COMMON TERMS

In this adventure gynarch refers to a member of the ruling body of women in Hardby, which is called the Gynarchy. When used as a title, gynarch refers to the original title for the leader of Hardby, which was later replaced with despotrix. Didatrix refers to a woman

who serves as a personal secretary, annalist, and herald to a gynarch, a job that commonly serves as a stepping-stone to becoming a gynarch.

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

This scenario is part two of the *Blight on Bright Sands* series. Previously, the paladin Karistayne has sent adventurers out to escort back to her castle an agent who was exploring rumors of an old dragon inhabiting Dagger Rock, a rock formation deep in the Bright Desert. During that mission the adventurers ran across a battle between Rary's minions and unconquered nomads.

It is not necessary to have played part one of the series as alternate introductions are provided to cover both eventualities.

SPECIAL NOTE

Any PC who claims the Bright Lands as his home region gains a +2 circumstance bonus on all Knowledge (history) and bardic knowledge checks in this adventure concerning ancient Sulf. A desert centaur PC gains an additional +2 bonus.

RECENT EVENTS IN HARDBY

Current Despotrix Ilena Norbelos, who has held the title since 566 CY, is deeply displeased with Hardby being under the thumb of Greyhawk. She is also dying, but seeks to hold out for a few more years while her staunchly anti-Greyhawk granddaughter Aleeta (her preferred successor) gains experience and wisdom. Because of this she has made a secret pact with Rary the Traitor. In exchange for his assistance in staying alive and opposing Greyhawk, Ilena has agreed to channel valuable information and occasional resources to Rary. She is not aware of Rary's true agenda, nor does she care, for her concerns do not extend beyond the affairs of Hardby.

Recently the Despotrix's agents have learned that a local tattoo artist named Danigar, who was formerly an apprentice to the brother of Chief Justicar Deidre Longland, has made some intriguing discoveries in his research into magical tattoos and ancient Flan ritual markings. Rary had told her to keep an eye out for any developments concerning ancient Flan magic and rituals, so Ilena reported on Danigar's findings to Rary. He quickly became convinced that Danigar had unwittingly made a major breakthrough that would provide answers to some vexing questions about both an important ceremony and how to gain access to some of the crucial components needed for the ceremony. What he realized, but Danigar himself has not yet realized, is that certain magical Flannae tattoos could serve as keys for entering ancient Flannae sites, while others could be used to channel power or mimic certain necessary traits for performing ceremonies.

Intrigued by Danigar's research, Rary asked the Despotrix to arrange for Danigar to meet directly with one of his agents and explain what he had discovered.

Ilena has long been aware that Messalina, the Throne Knight who secretly serves as her magical advisor, is a servant of Rary, so she planned to covertly arrange for Danigar to meet with Messalina. She is aware that other factions in town are monitoring the activities of her known servants, though, and is also aware that even her loyal didatrix, Javka Gerneskir, is also an ally of Tenser, so she cannot go through normal channels to arrange such a meeting. This is where the PCs will come into the picture.

Danigar's discoveries are, indeed, important, but they have not come without problems. His use of Flan ritual markings for new tattoo designs has inadvertently released two potentially detrimental effects. One is the spirit of a long-dead Sulmite wizard named Gana. He attached his essence to a particular design in a desperate attempt to avoid the activation of the *Scorpion Crown*, an artifact that ruined the ancient Flannae kingdom of Sulm, transformed its lands into the Bright Desert, and turned most of his countrymen into manscorpions. His spirit remained dormant until Danigar tattooed the design onto the arm of a sailor. Soon afterwards the spirit possessed the sailor and started causing trouble down in the dock district because it was confused about what had happened to it and where it was now.

Danigar has been frustrated in his efforts to deal with the possessed sailor, but his bigger concern right now is that his combining of ancient designs accidentally caused a living spell (an artificial creature type which Sulmite wizards had been experimenting with before the downfall of their nation) to manifest and wreak havoc in his workshop. Now it prevents him from getting to his spellbooks, a matter that has depressed Danigar so much that he has been driven to drink more excessively than usual. By the time the PCs get on the scene his drunkenness has induced him to pick a fight in a dockside inn, which has landed him in jail.

Danigar's problems are not the PCs' only concerns, however. Some parties suspect that the Despotrix has been in communication with Rary, while others (most notably Retep Mandel, secretary to the Military Governor) are concerned about her opposition to Greyhawk's authority. Both elements are going to take a keen interest in what the PCs are doing.

Just as important is the failing health of the Despotrix. Ilena has been in ill health since participating in the Striking of the *Crook of Rao* in 586 CY, and for the last two years only complex spells arranged by Rary have been keeping her alive. The effects of even such strong magical treatments are now failing, however, and it is now clear to everyone that Ilena has, at most, only a few months left. Speculation has begun to run rampant about who her replacement might be, and amongst the gynarchs three distinct factions have formed; these are detailed in the "Hardby Factions" section, below. Many outside powers, who have a stake in determining who next takes up the technically powerless but very influential post of

Despotrix, have been secretly active in supporting their preferred candidates for some time now, but now some of them are starting to make their moves. The PCs may get caught up in this as well.

IMPORTANT INDIVIDUALS

❖ **Ilena Norbelos** (NG female human Wiz13): Current Despotrix.

❖ **Aleeta Nobelos** (NE female human Wiz7): 26-year-old granddaughter of the Despotrix and a leading candidate to succeed her grandmother, Aleeta has very strong anti-Greyhawk sentiments. She is being trained in magic by Messalina.

❖ **Messalina** (LN female human Wiz15): The secret magical advisor to the Despotrix and a devoted ally of Rary, Messalina is currently training Aleeta in magic.

❖ **Deirdre Longland** (LG female human Ftr8/Cav4): The Justicar of Hardby, Judge of the Law Courts, and a leading candidate to succeed the current Despotrix, 35-year-old Deirdre is a devoted follower of Mayaheine. She favors working with Greyhawk to oppose threats from the Pomarj and the Bright Lands, although she also fiercely advocates retaining Hardby's long-standing criminal code rather than adopting Greyhawk's.

❖ **Bridara Nobelos** (N female human Wiz9): The oldest living gynarch, she has spent her life assiduously avoiding politics, although politics have not always assiduously avoided her.

❖ **Javka Gerneskir** (NG female human Rog3/Clr3—Lirr): Javka is the Didatrix to Ilena and the current real power behind the *Throne of Wood*. She is loyal to Ilena and has no political ambitions, but she is also an ally of Tenser.

❖ **Wilbren Carister** (LN male human Ftr 9): The Greyhawk-appointed Military Governor of Hardby, Wilbren is a former Trade Council member who betrayed them to gain his new position. He leaves the day-to-day business to Retep Mandel so he can concentrate more on military escapades.

❖ **Retep Mandel** (LE male human Rog5/Asn4): Although nominally the secretary to Wilbren, he is a Greyhawk Assassin's Guild agent and the man who really runs things in Hardby.

❖ **Mirlan Rinshad** (LN male human Rog10): The local Factor of the Royal Guild of Merchants of Aerdy, he also seeks to sow strife with Greyhawk.

❖ **Perav Hulvir** (LN male human Exp8): A former longshoreman made good who is the head of the Merchant's Alliance and a drinking partner of Mirlan.

❖ **Harvan Lhoral** (N male human Exp9): The Guildmaster of the Shipwright's Guild, he is so strongly anti-Greyhawk that he is willing to set up conflict against Greyhawk's Directing Oligarchy. He seeks to strengthen the Merchant's Alliance and is looking to relocate his Guild's activities out of the city.

IMPORTANT FACTIONS

Longland Faction: These are supporters of Deirdre Longland. Although she has the advantage of age, title, and experience, she lacks the magical ability traditionally expected of a Despotrix. She has earned the respect of Wilbren Carister for her military acumen and is the preferred candidate of the Ruling Oligarchy, which means that she also has the covert (if not necessarily welcomed) support of Retep Mandel. She has the support of the faithful of Mayaheine and some elements of the Church of Pelor.

Norbelos Faction: These are supporters of Aleeta Norbelos. She is Despotrix Ilena's preferred choice because of her staunchly anti-Greyhawk stance, though Ilena feels that, at age 26, she is still too young and unseasoned. Rary (and thus Messalina) favor her, as do the Slave Lords, with whom she has secretly made a pact. She also has the open support of the Church of Wee Jas and Mirlan Rinshad. Unbeknownst to Aleeta, her Slave Lord allies are arranging an assassination of Deidre Longland.

Compromise Faction: This group is composed primarily of a small number of gynarchs who seek a compromise candidate who has both age and arcane ability and can work with Greyhawk without being too friendly or accommodating. Although this faction has pursued Bridara Norbelos as a candidate in the past, they are now looking for a new choice given Bridara's refusal to get involved in politics.

Merchant Alliance Faction: Led by Perav Hulvir and Harvan Lhoral and comprised primarily of Trade Council members, this group would just as soon see the Gynarchy collapse and eliminate the position of Despotrix. They are an anti-Greyhawk group but are not allied with the Norbelos Faction.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

This scenario is not entirely linear, so some encounters may not happen in order (or at all) depending on what the PCs do.

In **Encounter 1** the PCs meet with Despotrix Ilena and are given both their mission and a chance to question her, while **Encounter 2** gives them a chance to gather information on various topics. **Encounter 3** concerns an agent of Tenser speaking anonymously to one of the PCs at night about finding out what the Despotrix is up to. **Encounter 4** takes the PCs to Danigar's Pen, where they meet his assistant Gormadoc and learn that Danigar isn't home, and so go to find him at the Spotted Cow Inn in **Encounter 5**. There they meet up with his wife Hlozapatan (pronounced LOTZ-a-pa-tan) and find out that Danigar was arrested earlier, so they must go to the Law Courts in **Encounter 6** to bail him out and talk to him, at which time they learn about his troubles.

In **Encounter 7** the PCs go back to Danigar's Pen, this time with Danigar and his wife, and deal with the living spell running rampant in his workshop, while in **Encounter 8** they must track down the possessed

sailor—an encounter which can be talked out or fought out depending on how the PCs approach it. With both of those matters resolved, Danigar agrees to go with the PCs to meet Messalina and talk about his research. In **Encounter 9**, though, the PCs find out that the path there is not a safe one, as they have been targeted by a Slave Lords strike force who believes they and Danigar could interfere with their plans.

QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?

Contact the writer at theronm4@comcast.net.

PLAYER INTRODUCTION

PCs that have played *COR5-06 Blood on Bright Sands* get Introduction 1; all other PCs get Introduction 2.

Introduction 1

Following the advice of the paladin Karistayne, you have traveled to Hardby, City of the Scorned, a port city on the Woolly Bay. She suggested that here you might pick up some information about how groups outside of the Bright Lands regard what is going on in the Bright Lands and what they intend to do about it. Karistayne also pointed out that since Hardby is the nearest major port to the Bright Lands, it has strategic significance to those who both oppose and support Rary the Traitor, so knowing what is going on there could also be valuable.

Introduction 2

Your travels about the Flanaess have once again led you to Hardby, City of the Scorned. For some of you this was to be just a layover on a trip to other destinations, while others came seeking a path to adventure or news about the happenings in the Bright Lands. Many are the interesting stories that abound from sailors and other travelers.

At this point have all PCs make a DC 10 Gather Information check. Those who succeed get one of the rumors given in Player's Handout 1a-h. Anyone who beats the DC by 5 or more gets an additional rumor for every 5 points over 10 on the check. Assign rumors at random, but *make sure that rumors E, F, and H are amongst those given out if not all are used*. Some of these rumors concern recent events in Hardby, while others are preludes to later adventures in the *Blight on Bright Sands* series, so encourage players to record and keep them.

Regardless of your reasons for being here, after a day or so each of you finds occasion to be of assistance to a young woman in distress. In one case it's chasing down a pickpocket who stole her purse, in others it's assisting her in dealing with a sailor who's gotten a little too friendly or helping out with a carriage which broke down in the middle of the street. In each case the well-dressed woman invites you to join her for

dinner at the Mistress of the Coach Inn at her expense. She indicates that formal attire will be required and armaments are not allowed, but that those agreeing to meet her will receive an offer that may be "well worth your while to hear."

Find out which PCs plan to attend and how they plan to be attired. Anyone who opts not to attend is done for the scenario unless the PC normally travels with another who will be attending. Those who do not have formal attire but wish to purchase such clothing can do so for 30 gp—although they are also advised that they should also wear jewelry with it if they do not already have some. Magic rings, brooches, necklaces, amulets, and so on count, otherwise a minimum of 50 gp must be spent if the PC wants to be fully "decked out."

Once any necessary clothing purchases have been made, go on to Encounter 1.

ENCOUNTER 1: AT THE MISTRESS OF THE COACH

The inn the woman specified is an extravagant building located outside the city wall in one of the more pleasant and well-paved parts of the city. Two burly men in formal uniforms stand at the door, each armed with a longsword.

These men bar entry to anyone who wears armor, carries obvious weapons, has animals with them, and/or is not formally attired. Those who have obviously not bathed or show other signs of having "lived off the wild" are also denied admittance. Desert centaur PCs are also denied admittance. In this situation treat the maitre'd as unfriendly. Thus a DC 25 Diplomacy check is required to make him friendly towards the PCs. If the maitre'd becomes friendly to the PCs he will allow a centaur PC access to the inn as long as he is well dressed. Those who are properly attired are allowed entrance without question.

Upon giving your names to the maitre d' you are led to a private parlor where the short, solidly built woman with dark, wavy hair awaits. She wears a stylish, elegant gown that accentuates a modest figure and features that, while attractive, are not especially remarkable. Most prominent amongst her jewelry is a medallion that bears the symbol of an illustrated book.

Any worshiper of Lirr or a PC who makes a DC 10 Knowledge (religion) check can identify the medallion as a holy symbol of Lirr, Oeridian goddess of poetry, literature, and art.

The woman introduces herself as Javka Gerneskir and settles down to join you for a sumptuous meal. She engages only in small talk during the meal, casually deflecting any questions about why she asked you here. Once the meal is complete and the plates have

been cleared away by servants she cocks her head as if listening to something, then stands and curtsies to all of you.

"My apology for this deception," she says pleasantly, "but my mistress is the one you are really here to meet. She wishes, for various reasons, to keep this meeting a secret, thus the arrangements which have been made. She will arrive momentarily, so I will take my leave now." With that she turns and exits the room.

Allow the PCs a round to react if they wish, then continue:

A moment later an old woman suddenly appears in one of the room's fine padded chairs. She has long, straight white hair, piercing blue eyes, and a charming smile that suggests that she might have been quite the head-turner back in her youth. Now, though, she looks so thin and frail that you doubt she could stand up without assistance. Though dressed simply compared to the other woman, the circlet about her forehead sparkles, lending her an air of magnetism and command.

"Greetings," she says in a soft, thready voice, "I am Ilena Norbelos, Despotrix of Hardby. I have arranged for this meeting because I have a task to request of you, which may entail an adventurer's strength and skill. Now that you know who you will really be working for, are you willing to proceed further under a promise of confidentiality?"

That the Despotrix is the nominal leader of Hardby is known to any PC on a Knowledge (local - core) or Intelligence DC 10 check. Once the PCs agree, Ilena continues. If any PC does not agree, that PC is dismissed, curtly so if the PC is male.

"The task I have for you is one that seems simple on the surface but may entail some risks," the Despotrix continues. "There is a wizard living and working in the Dock District, a tattoo artist by the name of Danigar who operates a business called Danigar's Pen. He is also a wizard, but uses his trade to support himself while he does research. Recently my agents have learned that he has made an important breakthrough in his research that may be of particular interest to an associate of mine.

"I would like you to contact this man Danigar, convince him to meet with my associate, and then safely escort him to the wizard Messalina, who resides in a castle a few miles into the hills to the east of town. Above all, I need this done discreetly. No one but Danigar himself—not even my didatrix Javka—needs to know that you are working for me in this task."

Ilena entertains questions from the PCs about specific details. Use the following as a guideline for her responses; her answers do not have to be read verbatim. While roleplaying Ilena keep in mind that

she is very intelligent and has a wicked, sardonic wit, so she is quick on the uptake and not above being a little colorful in her choice of words. She is also a militant feminist, so she speaks down to male PCs as if they are children (unless the male PC is extremely flattering, say, on the level of a DC 25 Diplomacy check) but treats female PCs as adults.

Why did you pick us for this task?

"I didn't pick you; Javka did. She does her best to keep track of which adventurers are passing through town and what their reputations are. One never knows when a few might come in handy."

Why not use your own people for this task/Why the need for such discretion?

"This city is becoming factionalized, especially since word that I am in ill health has leaked out to the public. There are also outsiders with interests in the well being of my city. Because of that, I have reason to believe that all my normal agents are being monitored, and I'd rather that this business with Danigar be kept from prying eyes and ears. Also, some muscle may need to be applied if someone else has gotten to Danigar first. Adventurers are quite handy for that." If burly male PCs are present, she adds, "that's one of the few things men are good for."

And we are disposable and give you deniability.

Ilena chuckles and slaps her thigh. "But of course! That's the best way to handle sensitive business, isn't it?"

What factions should we be concerned about?

"There are two main factions. One supports my granddaughter Aleeta to succeed me, while the other supports the Chief Justicar, Deirdre Longland. Either side might seek to use Danigar's discoveries to their own end if they find out about it. There may also be Circle of Eight spies or those from Greyhawk's leaders tramping about." She makes a distasteful face as she mentions the last two. "I don't want anyone besides myself and Messalina having access to Danigar's discoveries, though." This is not an entirely truthful statement if the PCs are using Sense Motive or some form of magical lie detection.

What about Javka/your Didatrix?

"I don't want her involved in this. Though she has been intensely loyal to me, I think someone outside Hardby may hold her heart."

What has Danigar discovered?

"I don't know, exactly, but according to my agents he's been crowing lately about having come to some kind of breakthrough in his research into ancient ritual body markings. He's had a reputation the last couple of years for being able to produce magical tattoos, so likely it has something to do with that."

What threats can we expect?

"Honestly I have no idea. That's another reason why I want to employ adventurers for this."

How will we be compensated for our efforts?

"There will be a significant fee paid for completing this task. I also tend to be generous in bestowing favors upon those who work well for me." She sighs. "I may not get around much anymore, but I still have a lot of influence. (If there are clear wizards amongst the PCs, add "and access to a substantial library of spells.") If the PCs insist on knowing totals, they will receive 100 gp at APL 2, 150 gp at APL 4, 200 gp at APL 6, and 250 gp at APL 8."

We need directions to Danigar's place.

"I don't know where he lives. His place of business should be easy enough to find if you just ask around a little."

How long do we have?

"There is no set time limit, but I would prefer if this matter were to be taken care of as soon as possible."

Why are you in such poor health?

"My health has been in decline ever since I participated in the striking of the *crook of Rao*. No one is sure why, but the condition seems to be incurable."

Is there anything we can do to help?

"Beyond what I have asked of you, no."

What is your relationship with Rary?

"Whether or not I have a relationship with Rary is none of your business."

Ilena only tolerates a few minutes of questioning before cutting the discussion short. Once things are settled, Ilena informs the PCs that they should not try to contact her about this unless an insurmountable problem comes up, but in such cases they can reach Javka (who can reach her) by leaving a message at the Palace of the Gynarchs; in this situation though the PCs should give as little information as possible to Javka.

Once business is concluded Ilena *teleports* away.

It is about 8 p.m. in the evening when the PCs finish their meal and meeting with Ilena. They have several options at this point:

When the PCs decide to gather information, go to Encounter 2.

When the PCs decide to visit Danigar's, go to Encounter 4.

When the PCs decide to retire for the evening, go to Encounter 3.

ALL APLS:

♣ **Ilena Nobelos, Despotrix of Hardby:** Female human Wiz13.

 **Javka Gerneskir:** Female human Clr3 - Lirr/Rog3.

ENCOUNTER 2: GATHERING INFORMATION

This encounter may happen more than once and at any time during the adventure, depending on what exactly the PCs do. Each independent Gather Information check attempted here takes 2 hours and costs 2d4 gp. PCs can “take 20” on these checks, but that requires 8 hours and costs 8d4 gp. Multiple checks by the same person are possible, but each must be done in a different part of the city (Northend, Dock District, Fishtown, Tradetown, Ebbfields). Certain locations have modifiers to the DCs depending on the subject.

Each Gather Information check beyond the first about the same topic has a 25% cumulative chance of attracting unwanted attention; “take 20” checks automatically attract unwanted attention. Should this happen, all PCs get the Attracted Attention notation on their ARs.

Danigar

If PCs ask around about Danigar in Northend or Tradetown, increase the DCs on the Gather Information check by 5. If they do it in the Ebbfields, increase the DCs by 10.

What the PCs can learn from a Gather Information check depends on the DC achieved:

- **DC 10:** “Yeah, that Danigar fellow operates a tattoo parlor down in the Dock District called Danigar’s Pen.” (Gives directions to Danigar’s Pen.)
- **DC 12:** “Danigar’s a wizard as well as a tattoo artist. Even seen him cast spells myself.”
- **DC 15:** “Danigar isn’t the best tattoo artist in town, but he uses designs no one else does and has got some spell that can get rid of tattoos you don’t like. He can even do magical tattoos, what can allow a person to use a spell. Kind of pricey, though.”
- **DC 18:** “Danigar’s a bit of a boozier. Seen him a lot at the Spotted Cow Inn.”
- **DC 20:** “Danigar’s got an Olman wife he brought back with him after some expedition to the far south a couple o’ years back. She’s the one what actually does them magical tattoos.”
- **DC 25:** “Heard Danigar got himself into some kind of trouble there earlier today/yesterday (the former if the PCs are asking at night, the latter in the morning). Some ruckus with some sailor who must have been an unhappy customer. Think he might have been arrested.”
- **DC 30:** “Yeah, Danigar got hauled off to jail for starting a fight with that sailor in the

Spotted Cow. The sailor slipped away when the Guard tried to arrest him, too, though.” Also: “You know, Danigar was the apprentice to the brother of the Chief Justicar, so he might get off easy.”

- **DC 35:** “That sailor? Yeah, he was a short, burly Oeridian guy with this strange tattoo on one side of his face. Looked like a ghostly hawk or eagle. Last I heard, he was seen wandering around in Fishtown. Think his name is Corval.”

Corval

PCs can only learn about Corval by asking around in Fishtown or the Dock District.

- **DC 10:** “Corval? Yeah, he’s an expert helmsman with a reputation for knowing all the tricks of Woolly Bay. Something of an independent contractor, I hear, seeing as how he’s done jobs for the military and merchant ships.”
- **DC 15:** “He’s been in town for a week or so now on layover. Shacks up with this floozy barmaid named Genestra who works at the Sign of the Tarnished Idol in the Dock District.”
- **DC 20:** “You know, Corval’s been acting odd the last 3 or 4 days, ever since he got that new tattoo. (If this check happens during the day, add: “Saw him wandering around in the Bonded Barrel Ghetto just a little while ago, mumbling to himself.”)

ENCOUNTER 3: THE AGENT

This encounter takes place when the PCs retire for the evening. Scrimongishaz (Scor for shot), the pseudodragon familiar of one of Tenser’s apprentices, pays a visit to one or more of the PCs. Tenser has long suspected that Despotrix Ilena has had dealings with Rary, so when Javka reported to him the secretive nature of Ilena’s meeting with the PCs (Ilena doesn’t normally keep secrets from her, or so Javka thought) Tenser became suspicious and asked one of his acolytes to look into the matter further.

Choose the good-aligned PC who is closest to lawful god in alignment and take that player aside. If there is more than one lawful good PC, preference is given to arcane spellcasters, with any addition ties broken by random determination. If there are no good-aligned PCs then this encounter does not happen.

If the PC in question has a familiar or animal companion in the room with her then the familiar/companion wakes the PC when Scor enters the room. If the PC in question is keeping watch, then Scor enters when that PC is on watch and completely ignores any other PC on watch. Otherwise Scor wakes up the PC by nudging her with his snout.

Adjust the following description accordingly if the PC was already awake:

Upon being awoken from your pleasant sleep/reverie you find that one aspect of your recent dream was not just a figment of your imagination: you really are looking at a tiny reddish dragon, one about the size of a house cat. It wears a gem-studded blue collar.

"Hello," a voice says in Common in your head as the little dragon gestures with its wing. "Been sent to talk to you by my master. He'd like to find out what the Despotrix asked you to do that even her didatrix can't be trusted to know."

On a DC 12 Knowledge (arcana) check the PC identifies Scor as a pseudodragon and knows that such creatures are sometimes familiars to powerful wizards and sorcerers. On a DC 17 check the PC knows that a pseudodragon only serves a good-aligned master.

Scor is a laid-back, good-natured critter; playing him as a hippie would not be out of line. He is here to find out what the PCs were asked to do by the Despotrix. If the PC is not forthcoming, he tries to convince the PC by promising that he and his master aren't here to hurt anyone; they're just concerned that the Despotrix might be dealing with something—and someone—who is dangerous and, well, evil. Neither he nor his master is going to spread around anything that he's told. He won't reveal who exactly he's working for other than to say he's a "good man" who "works for another individual who's very interested in protecting the peace and security of the land." If asked about the "evil" that the Despotrix might be dealing with, he only says that it's someone who might be trying to influence the Despotrix for his own selfish ends. If the name Rary is brought up, Scor neither confirms nor denies this suspicion—officially, of course.

If the PC tells Scor what they're up to, whether the PC is truthful about it or not, Scor appears thoughtful (actually he knows his master is *scrying* him and he's waiting for a reply). He soon after replies:

"Hmmm. My master thinks it's entirely possible that what the Despotrix is up to is innocent, but he kind of doubts it. We'd very much like to know what you learn on this matter once it is done, so my master can determine whether or not evil is afoot which must be confronted."

The little dragon deposits a small blue stone in your hand. "Put that little thing in your mouth and speak your report and me and my master will hear it."

"Now I must be off. Good evening!"

If the PC refuses to tell Scor anything, he sighs and gives the PC the blue stone anyway, telling the PC to contact him using the stone (by placing it in her mouth and calling for him) should she have a change of heart. He then departs.

If any mention of a reward for this service is made, Scor looks offended but promises that the PC will be rewarded for her efforts in this matter. If the stone is checked out, it detects as strong evocation magic (it is

imbued with a *sending* spell cast at 13th level which activates when the stone is placed in a person's mouth). The stone dissolves into a minty-tasting powder once used.

If Scor is treated hostilely at any point, he uses an ability to *dimension door* once per day (gained from a *wish* spell given to him by Tenser) to depart.

Should a PC use the stone to call on Scor at any point prior to the Conclusion, Scor shows up an hour later to take the PC's report. He takes in all of the details offered and then informs the PC(s) that he has spoken to before that they will be contacted again in the future. If the PCs simply make a report, the one doing so gets a mental message back a moment later informing her that the message was received. The PC(s) involved get the "Worked With Scor" designation on their ARs.

ALL APLS

✦ **Scorimongishaz, pseudodragon familiar:** hp 23; see Appendix 1.

ENCOUNTER 4: DANIGAR'S PEN

Danigar's Pen is located on one of the main streets heading east from the docks (location 8 on The City of Hardby map). It is housed in a small two-story wood structure whose upper floor serves as living quarters for Danigar and his wife, while two basement rooms serve as his workshop and lab. A shingle hanging on the outside, which is illuminated by a magical light in the evening, bears the name of the shop and the slogan, "Exotic Tattoos Are Our Specialty!"

If the PCs come here in the evening after meeting Ilena, they find the shop closed up for the evening with a "Closed" sign hung on the door. No lights can be seen in the windows of the room above, as Danigar is in jail right now and his wife Hlozapatan is either at the Spotted Cow Inn (if it is before 1 a.m.) or asleep upstairs (after 1 a.m.). The window to the store on the main floor is shuttered and barred on the inside. If the PCs insist on breaking in, the front door is a Strong door (DC 23 break) with a Good lock (DC 30 Open Locks); there is no back door. This is a well-traveled and well-patrolled area, though, so the PCs will have to resort to extraordinary measures to break in undiscovered. If they still persist and don't get caught at it then refer to the "Danigar's Pen Locations" subsection, below.

If the PCs come here during the day, read the following:

On the inside Danigar's Pen consists of a ten by fifteen foot room with a curtained doorway directly opposite the entrance. To the right are a few chairs and a small table on which rests a large, heavy book. To the left is a short counter behind which a very fat halfling with heavily tattooed arms reclines on a high chair,

snacking on some pastries. On the wall to the immediate left of the curtained doorway a flaming torch is set in a sconce, while to the right is a plaque bearing prices for various kinds of tattoos ranging from 1 to 50 gp depending on size and complexity; the entry "Magical Tattoos—ask about price" catches your attention in particular. The rest of the walls are scattered with an assortment of colorful pictures, some of them of a very exotic style which resembles nothing commonly found in the central Flanaess.

"Greetings!?" says the halfling in a gravelly voice. "Can I help you with something?"

The exotic paintings are of Olman design, which is obvious to any Olman PC or any other PC who makes an Appraise DC 20 check. The torch is a *continual flame* torch. The pastries are somewhat sticky and very tasty.

The halfling is Gormadoc, Danigar's assistant and a double agent for both the Slavelords of the Pomarj and the Thieves' Guild of Greyhawk (though he obviously won't let on to the PCs about that). He is very streetwise and has a distinct "street" accent in a voice lower-pitched than normal for a halfling. Use the following responses as guidelines for the PCs dealing with Gormadoc.

Are you Danigar?

The halfling laughs. "Nah, he'd be my boss. I'm Gormadoc, his assistant."

We're here to see Danigar.

"Sorry, he and his missus are both out right now. I can do you if you want a simple design, but anything complicated and you'll have to wait until they get back.

We're here to get a tattoo.

"Well, just take a gander through that book over there and pick out something you like." Gormadoc points to the book mentioned in the boxed text, which (if glanced through) contains dozens of tattoo designs ranging from simple to very complex. "If you want something complicated, you'll have to wait until the master gets back, but I can do the simple ones myself."

We want to get a magical tattoo.

"Ah, heh, well, only the master's missus can do them, and she isn't around right now. Have to come back later."

When will Danigar/his wife be back?

"No telling on the master, 'cause he's out on one of his drinking binges and they can last all day." He looks at the PCs shrewdly. "If it's something important I can take a message for him."

Where can we find Danigar? It's important.

"Well, now, I don't know if it's rightfully my place to be revealing my master's private business. What do you need to see him for so badly?"

Has he had any problems lately—like a fight with a customer?

"Oh, heh, you heard about that, did you? Well, yeah, he had a big problem with a customer a couple of days ago and it got kind of ugly, I hear. Probably be out of jail in a day or two."

If Gormadoc would reasonably get the sense that the PCs want to see Danigar about something other than getting a tattoo (you can have him make a Sense Motive check), he tries to ply the PCs to find out what they want Danigar for. If bribed with good food or at least 5xAPL gp (he hits up wealthier-looking PCs for more money) or intimidated on a DC 22 Intimidate check, he'll tell the PCs that Danigar normally does his drinking down at the Spotted Cow Inn and that his wife was with him last he knew. Only if the PCs specifically bring up the issue of Danigar getting into trouble does he mention that Danigar is probably still in jail from that fight since his wife didn't bail him out this time.

If the PCs should, for some reason, decide to attack Gormadoc then he touches the tattoo of a ghost on one arm, activating an *invisibility* spell at 10th level and attempting to flee. If that doesn't work then he fights back to the best of his ability. Remember, though, that he hasn't done anything illegal at this point, so the Guard is more likely to arrest the PCs for assault than Gormadoc if they try to "bring him to justice."

ALL APLS

♣ **Gormadoc:** male halfling Rog9; hp 50; see Appendix 1.

Development: If Gormadoc does get some idea that the PCs want to speak to Danigar about his research then he promptly reports this to both his Thieves' Guild buddies and his Slave Lord buddies. This qualifies for the PCs getting the Attracted Attention entry on the ARs.

Danigar's Pen Locations

Back Room: This room has the staircase to the second floor, a trapdoor (currently latched, locked, and partly covered with a heavy box) down to Danigar's lab, a reclining chair which looks something like a dentist's chair, and an assortment of inks, needles, and other supplies associated with tattoo-making on various shelves. A second *continual flame* torch (the one in the front room also is one) lights this area.

Danigar's Apartment: This three-room apartment has a main/dining room, a bedroom, and a small kitchen. Most furnishings are basic and utilitarian, with the only noteworthy features being a collection of books on art and ancient history and an armoire containing clothes of a very exotic fashion; a PC who is Olman or makes an Appraise DC 20 check can identify them as being of traditional Olman design. Hidden

away in the armoire (DC 25 Search check) is a secret compartment containing a pouch of coins totaling 100 gp—but taking this would be stealing.

Danigar's Lab: See Encounter 7 for details on this location.

Danigar's Workshop: Here Danigar keeps his spellbooks and sketchbooks as well as various reference books and scrolls on ancient Flannae ritual markings. This room is also lit by a *continual flame* torch. A PC who takes at least two hours to study the books and papers and makes a DC 20 Knowledge (history) or bardic knowledge check can determine that Danigar was very deep into a study of the way ancient Flannae tribes used ritual markings for a variety of purposes. If the reviewer also makes a DC 25 Knowledge (arcane) check then he can determine that some of these ritual markings mentioned in the notes, if imbued properly with magic, would be of great benefit to the completion of certain ceremonies and/or might be used to gain access to certain locations from which an unmarked person might be barred. A PC who makes both checks also realizes that some of those markings could be used to summon creatures, possess creatures, or create other magical effects if used correctly. If only the Knowledge (arcane) check was made then the PC only understands that Danigar was delving into how certain symbols were a key part of magical ceremonies for the ancient Flan.

ENCOUNTER 5: SPOTTED COW

The description of the Spotted Cow Inn remains the same regardless of whether the PCs get here at day or night:

The bovine-shaped cow skin sign clearly marks the location of the Spotted Cow Inn, situated right off the docks near Fishtown. The inside looks like any ordinary dockside inn, except that this one is packed with sailors, longshoremen, and fishermen, including a good number of half-orcs. The place is so crowded that a person in heavy armor would have difficulty moving around in here; you have to admire the skill of the two waitresses as they expertly slip through tight spaces without spilling their trays of drinks and food.

Although most of the people in the inn's dining room are a generic-looking lot, one does stick out, both because she's obviously Olman and because she's sitting alone at a corner table in this otherwise-crowded place.

A PC in heavy armor is going to have a tough time maneuvering through the crowd, but it can be done at 1/3 normal speed. Large-sized desert centaur PCs can only move through the inn at 5 ft. per round due to the crush. Other PCs can move at half normal speed in this place should they need to move quickly. Tumbling checks are at a -5 penalty due to the lack of space. The

food and drinks, if ordered, are all better-than-average quality, though not tremendously so.

If the PCs ask around about Danigar in the inn, have them make a Gather Information check. They can also learn any of the following by just going up to Oremal Thelk, the bartender, and either sweet-talking him with a DC 15 Diplomacy check by a female PC or by spending at least 5 gp on drinks (he's rather busy and doesn't have time to deal with non-paying customers):

- **DC 10:** "You mean the wizard tattoo artist? Yeah, he's a regular here but he's not here now—but that's his wife over there in the corner."
- **DC 15:** "He hasn't been around since getting hauled off to jail for being involved in that brawl with a sailor yesterday. Got the impression his missus was so disgusted with him that she hasn't bothered to bail him out yet."
- **DC 15 and PCs specifically ask about Danigar's wife:** "Yeah, her name's Haloza or something like that. One of them southern jungle-dwellers that Danigar brought back home with him a couple of years ago. Doesn't speak Common well, but she knows some kind of magic and has a special way with tattoos. Not a lady I'd want mad at me; it's said she can hex people."
- **DC 20:** "Danigar really got into it with Corval, this helmsman that sometimes hangs out here between jobs. Think it might have been over a bad tattoo job. Corval had been acting kind of funny right before that, though, and he did get away."
- **DC 25—**"Yeah, last I heard Corval was wandering around the Bonded Barrel Ghetto mumbling to himself. Or you might try talking to Genestra over at the Sign of the Tarnished Idol. That's his lady."

At some point the PCs are likely to go over and talk to Hlozapatan, Danigar's wife. She is a sturdily built woman who looks to be in her early 20s and is mildly attractive by the standards of her people. She is drinking alone right now and in a foul mood because she's thoroughly upset over the mess Danigar has caused lately. Because of this, a Diplomacy check of DC 15 at APLs 2-4 or DC 18 at APLs 6-8 is required to get much of anything out of her. Offering to buy her a drink earns a +2 circumstance bonus on the check, while an Olman PC also gets a +2 circumstance bonus. Speaking to her in Olman (she only partly understands Common, although Danigar has been teaching her) earns an additional +4 circumstance bonus on the check. If the PCs do convince her to talk to them and did not speak in Olman when doing so, Hlozapatan reaches into a pouch at her belt and flicks a bit of salt and soot at the PC while tapping the speaker on the

forehead and speaking an arcane word—an action which can be recognized as casting a *comprehend languages* spell on a DC 16 Spellcraft check. “There,” she then says, “can understand you now.”

Unless the PCs have made it clear that they can understand Olman, Hlozapatan speaks only in halting, broken, and thickly accented Common and does not recognize any fancy words. Either way her disgust for her husband should be evident in her tone and her manner of speaking should suggest a very spiritual outlook. Depending on what the PCs talk to her about, she can tell them any of the following:

- She was a wise woman of her tribe (despite her relative youth for such a position) before coming here to live with Danigar.
- She met Danigar three years ago when he visited her homeland in the Amedio Jungle.
- Even though he could also work magic, she wasn’t especially impressed with Danigar at first. She had received a prophetic vision shortly before his arrival indicating that she would find her True Purpose in civilized northern lands, though, so joining Danigar as his wife seemed the most convenient path. And who is she to deny the will of the spirits?
- Danigar’s been okay as a husband, she supposes, and she really doesn’t mind the tattoo work since that was her specialty in her tribe anyway. And she has gotten used to city life, though that took a while.
- Does she love him? She can usually tolerate him, and let’s leave it at that.
- Danigar’s been a heavy drinker as long as she’s known him, but it’s been much worse the last couple of days because of some problems he’s had.
- There’s been two major incidents the last couple of days. In one of them he gave this sailor a “spirit tattoo” design even though she warned him not to. Sure enough, the sailor became possessed by some evil spirit not long after that. He got into a big fight with the sailor when the sailor confronted him while they were drinking here yesterday and got arrested.
- The other incident? Oh, he wasn’t being careful enough while working with some new designs in his underground workshop and released some kind of nasty otherworldly spirit-creature (she isn’t sure how to describe it) which has since been tearing up his workshop. It’s contained for now but he can’t get to his books while it’s down there, which is why he was here drinking yesterday.
- Before all that happened Danigar seemed quite happy about some discovery he’d made about the kind of body markings used by ancestors of a people he called the Flan. He used the name “Sulmite” but she didn’t understand what he meant. (On a DC 20 Knowledge (history) or bardic lore check a PC can identify “Sulmite” as a reference to the kingdom of Sulm, a Flannae

nation which existed a thousand years ago in the area now known as the Bright Desert. Their nation was obliterated in the catastrophe that created the Bright Desert. With a DC 25 Knowledge (history) check the PC also knows that an artifact known as the *Scorpion Crown* was allegedly responsible for the catastrophe and the creation of the manscorpions which now plagues that land.)

- Danigar’s been sentenced to two days in jail and a fine, though she could get him out a day early if she were willing to pay an extra fine. She decided to let Danigar sit in jail for the extra day because of how annoyed she is about his recent behavior and carelessness. The PCs are welcome to get him out today if they need to talk to him, though.
- Yes, she can make magical tattoos which can, when used, allow a person to understand other languages, protect them from evil influences, make them stronger or more durable, cure them of injury, even hide them from sight. She is willing to make them for PCs if they help solve Danigar’s problems.

Development: If the PCs do agree to free Danigar, Hlozapatan tells them to bring him back to the shop and she’ll meet them there. Go to Encounter 6.

ALL APLS

♣ **Hlozapatan:** female human Adp10; hp 45; see Appendix 1.

ENCOUNTER 6: RETRIEVING DANIGAR

To get Danigar out of jail the PCs must go to the Law Courts, where Danigar is being held on charges of Brawling and Disturbing the Peace. The punishment for these charges for Danigar (fines in Hardby are dependent on the convict’s estimated net worth) is two nights in jail and a 50 gp fine, though the second night will be waived in lieu of a doubled fine since Danigar has a connection to the High Justicar.

Long Version: If this event is being run as a home game or has run quickly so far (remember, the combats are still to come), feel free to act out the whole scene, which plays like this:

1. The PCs go into the Law Courts and declare to a clerk that they want to bail out Danigar.
2. Danigar is brought before a female magistrate in the Sundries court and formally charged.
3. The magistrate asks if any present are willing to pay the man’s fine. This is the time for the PCs to step forward.
4. Once the fine is paid, Danigar is released into the PCs’ custody.

Short Version: The PCs go into the Law Courts, say that they want to bail out Danigar, and he is released into their custody after a 100 gp total fine is paid.

The PCs Are Cheapskates: If the PCs aren't willing to pay the doubled fine then they must wait until tomorrow to get him out or speak to him. No exceptions.

Once Danigar has been released, continue with the following. Danigar's speech patterns should suggest that he is well educated but in a foul mood.

The man brought to you is a short, scruffy-looking man of mixed Oeridian-Flan heritage who definitely looks like he's seen his better days. His clothing is stained and torn in places and he has a few distinct bruises about his face and neck. A belt of what looks like spell component pouches, a wand, and a quarterstaff are returned to him upon his release.

"I suppose I have you to thank for getting me out of there," he says somewhat grumpily. "Hloz has some explaining to do about leaving me in there."

If the PCs make comments about Hlozapatan deliberately leaving him in there, Danigar makes some remark about "that damned temperamental woman" before progressing on to business. He's very curious about who the PCs are and why they got him out since he doesn't know any of them, so he insists that they introduce themselves before conducting any business. Once that's out of the way, he listens to what the PCs have to say.

Take careful note of exactly what the PCs say and where/how they are saying it. If they are not taking precautions and have previously done something to "Attract Attention" then a roguish human is listening in. He's blending into the crowd, so a DC 20+½ APL Spot check is required to notice him and a DC 20 Sense Motive check is required to figure out what he's doing. If noticed and approached the young man darts off through the crowd/out of the building and around a corner.

Unless PCs can stop him immediately with a spell with a range of at least 60 feet, he gets away, as he knows the city much better than the PCs. If he is somehow stopped and questioned, he admits only that he works for the Thieves Guild and was assigned to keep track of the PCs—he doesn't know why. No amount of coercion will allow PCs to determine that the young man actually works for Retep Mandel, though a *detect thoughts* spell might reveal that fact.

Danigar is very flattered that the Despotrix has taken an interest in his work (even though he admits to having political differences with her—he's a member of the Longland Faction) and would be happy to discuss what he's learned with Messalina, who has quite the reputation in the magical community as a Throne Knight and former member of the Greyhawk University of Magical Arts. But:

"I don't know what all Hloz might have told you about my recent problems," Danigar says, "but I have two matters which have to be dealt with before I can do

this, and I need your help with both. One problem is this strange creature that somehow got released when I was experimenting with some new designs in my lab a couple of nights ago. I managed to confine it to my lab, but my workshop is off my lab and that's where my spellbooks and research notes are, so I am sure you can see my dilemma there.

"The other problem is this sailor named Corval, who came in a few days ago asking for some kind of really unique tattoo design. I gave him a really striking design I had discovered in an old book, and he seemed happy with it at first, but he came back a couple of days later spouting off about how he'd been having weird dreams ever since he got the tattoo, so he wanted it taken off. I tried to remove it with a modified erase spell, which is how I normally remove tattoos, but it didn't work and he stormed off in a fit. Then just yesterday we cross paths in the Spotted Cow Inn and he starts spouting off at me about how I'd been stupid enough put the picture on such a lunkard, only now he's doing it in Ancient Flan! Fortunately I know Ancient Flan, but I wasn't in a mood to be accused, what with the creature in my lab and all, so we kind of got into a fight." Danigar shakes his head and rubs his jaw. "One of these days I have to remember that I don't know how to fight too well.

"Anyway, I think that sailor may be possessed. If he is, then it's my fault so I need to deal with it. He's a pretty tough guy, though, and I have never been much of a combat mage, so I need a strong party to rein him in so I can work out how to get rid of the problem."

If the PCs ask for specifics about the creature, Danigar tells them that it's a creature of pure magic, which acts like some spell that's come alive. He's never seen or even heard of anything like it before, but given the symbols and designs he was working with when it manifested, it must be a creation of ancient Sulm wizards. PCs who make a DC 30 Knowledge (arcana) or bardic knowledge check knows that the theoretical possibility of creating a "living spell" was raised in ancient texts but the idea was thought to have never been seriously pursued. If the PCs ask what it looks like, refer to the descriptions for the appropriate APL in Encounter 7. At APL 2 and 4 he and his wife can provide some assistance to the PCs towards fighting this creature, while at APL 6 and 8 neither he nor his wife have appropriate spells ready to help the PCs.

If the PCs bring up the issue that Hlozapatan had warned Danigar about using the "spirit tattoo," Danigar flatly denies having heard her say that, although a DC 20 Sense Motive check reveals that he isn't too confident in his denial. (He was actually ignoring her at that point over a minor tiff they'd had that morning.) If the PCs want to know what the tattoo looks like, Danigar tells them that it looks like a ghostly bird of prey ascending with a miniature person in its claws. He insists that the PCs don't do anything worse to Corval than knock him out and then bring him back to

the shop, or maybe one of the local temples—but then, of course, they'd have to pay to get him exorcised.

If asked about the nature of his discovery or breakthrough, Danigar's response depends on whether or not there is an obvious wizard or scholarly-looking PC in the party. If there isn't, Danigar insists (in an elitist tone) that it's rather complicated and would probably go over the PCs' heads. If there is an apparent wizard or scholar, Danigar expounds at great length over the technical aspects of his discovery that certain types of ancient Flan ritual markings could be used to channel magical power and grant the bearer special kinds of affinities necessary for certain ceremonies. A PC who listens to his explanations and makes a DC 25 Knowledge (arcana) check (this is pretty advanced theory) understands that a spellcaster with the proper markings could tremendously augment her power or duplicate traits that she does not normally have, such as allowing a human to pass for an elf in cases of magical items or effects being specifically attuned to elven blood. A PC who fails the check or has no ranks in Knowledge (arcana) can't make any sense of it all.

Development: If the PCs want to go after Corval right away, go to Encounter 8. If they want to confront the living spell first, go to Encounter 7.

ALL APLS

☛ **Danigar:** Human male Wiz7; hp 10 currently and no spells beyond *erase* and *minor creation* prepared; otherwise see Appendix 1.

☛ **Agent:** Human male Rog2; hp 8; Will +1.

ENCOUNTER 7: THE LIVING SPELL

Hlozapatan is waiting for the PCs and Danigar when they get back to Danigar's Pen. Gormadoc is not around, regardless of the time of day and whether he was treated roughly or not; he is out on dinner break if Hlozapatan is asked about it. Though clearly still angry at Danigar, she fusses over him and heals him with *cure serious wounds* if he has not already been healed by PCs.

If the PCs wish to get a peek at what they're facing before they actually fight it, Danigar uncovers and unlocks the trap door long enough for the PCs to take a look. He can tell the PCs that the creature generates a sonic effect (at APL 2), a fire effect (at APL 4), a grappling effect (at APL 6), or a slashing damage effect (at APL 8) on contact. At APLs 2 and 4 Danigar and his wife are willing to lend the PCs their *+1 quarterstaff* and *+1 dagger* if it seems like the PCs have no magic weapons or *magic weapon* spells available to them, or one of them if the PCs have at least one such item/spell amongst them, since he is reasonably sure that magic weapons are going to be required to harm it. If the party seems weak for their APL, Hlozapatan offers *resist energy* at APL 4 and a *bull's strength* at all other APLs. (If the party is obviously strong for the APL then

no spell assistance is offered.) Hlozapatan can also cast *cure serious wounds* on a PC seriously wounded during the fight if she did not have to use it on Danigar.

If the PCs want to rest the night and change spells before tackling the living spell, that's fine with Danigar, though he suggests going after Corval first (if they haven't already) in that case.

When the PCs look into the lab below, read the following. (The description assumes that the PCs are shining a light source down into the lab, as the living spell has consumed the *continual flame* torch that was down there. If they are not, edit the description accordingly.)

The room below is a 15-foot by 25-foot chamber with one closed door off the left-hand wall. (At APL 2 add: "and a narrow wooden staircase leading down from the trap door.") The chamber is a mess of wood scraps and parchments (add "scorched" at APL 4), no doubt caused by the strange creature on the opposite side of the room:

APL 2 (EL 4)

☛ **Bard burst:** hp 46; see Appendix 2.

... *A thick, vibrating translucent mist which crawls across the ground towards you.*

APL 4 (EL 6)

☛ **Glitterfire:** hp 54; see Appendix 2.

... *A low cloud of bright, crackling motes of light which moves along the floor, causing tiny explosions in its wake.*

This one is visible even if no light source is present.

APL 6 (EL 8)

☛ **Black tentacles:** hp 76; see Appendix 2.

... *A writhing mass of black, rubbery tentacles which uses them to pull itself across the ground towards you.*

APL 8 (EL 11)

☛ **Living blades:** hp 118; see Appendix 2.

... *A whirling mass of blades of energy, which drifts across the ground towards you.*

Note 1: The wooden staircase marked on the map is only present at APL 2; at higher APLs it has been destroyed by the living spell, but its debris lies in the indicated squares. Treat the drop down to the lab floor as a 10-foot drop.

Note 2: The EL of this encounter has been lowered by one to reflect the fact that the PCs have full opportunity to prepare specifically for this fight and know (more or less) what exactly they're facing.

Tactics: Living spells are unintelligent creatures, so their tactics are straightforward and brutal. At APL 2 and 4 they try slamming attacks first, then trying to engulf if that doesn't work. At APLs 6 and 8 they lead with slam attacks if faced with one foe but try to engulf if they could get two or more PCs at the same time. At all APLs they relentlessly fight until their destruction or all foes are dead.

Close Quarters Fighting against Engulf Attacks: Because an engulf attempt already allows an attack of opportunity, the Close Quarters Fighting feat is redundant. A successful attack of opportunity by someone with this feat does not affect the living spell's ability to automatically grapple a PC on a successful engulf because it is not actually a grapple attack.

Development: Once the living spell is defeated, Danigar can get into his workshop, relearn his spells, and collect his notes. If Corval has already been dealt with in Encounter 8 then Danigar is willing to go with the PCs to Messalina's castle first thing the next morning. Go to Encounter 9 in such a case. Otherwise he encourages the PCs to go track him down before he can cause too much mischief.

ENCOUNTER 8: CORVAL AND THE SPIRIT TATTOO

If the PCs decide to gather information on Corval, refer to Encounter 2. If they decide to go to the Sign of the Tarnished Idol to speak to Genestra or go directly to the Bonded Barrel Ghetto to look for Corval, refer to the appropriate section below.

SIGN OF THE TARNISHED IDOL

This seedy, run-down keg house is located on a back alley close to the waterfront. The floor is littered with rotting straw, while makeshift tables and chairs spot the main room and the pungent smells of pipe weed, beer, and unwashed bodies fills the air. All-in-all it looks like any of a number of dives you've seen in various cities, with one exception: a tarnished green idol of a batlike creature sits above what passes for a bar.

Only Poor meals and cheap beer are available here, as this place caters to the low-end denizens of Hardby. A PC who looks closely at the idol and makes a DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check can identify it as an idol to Camazotz, the evil lesser bat-god of the Olman underworld. Rughra, the uncouth female half-orc proprietor, is actually a cleric of "Zotz" (as she calls him) but does not make this common knowledge nor does she wear an obvious holy symbol—though she does make her customers pay homage to the idol at midnight. The PCs are not here to deal with her, though, and she has not technically done anything illegal (at least that anyone knows about), so the PCs have no legal grounds to deal with her in this adventure even if they do figure out her affiliation.

If the PCs ask for Genestra, they are told to have a table and she'll get to them. When she meets the PCs she looks like a stereotypical human serving wench (long, curly brown hair, very low-cut dress, etc.). She isn't the brightest of people, but if asked about Corval she can tell the PCs the following:

- Yes, Corval rooms with her whenever he's in town—but he didn't come back to her place last night.
- He has been acting very strange the last few days. He talks in his sleep in some language Genestra can't understand and walks around like he's in a daze. Sometimes he seems to be carrying on a conversation with someone he calls Gana, even though no one else is around.
- Last she heard, some squatters said they saw him wandering around in the Bonded Barrel Ghetto. She can give the PCs directions, but warns them that it can be a dangerous place for strangers.

ALL APLS:

🐉 **Rughra:** Female half-orc Clr5-Camazotz; hp 23; AL CE.

🐉 **Genestra:** Female human Com1; hp 4.

BONDED BARREL GHETTO

A map is not provided for this encounter. Should one be needed for a combat, draw a random mazelike pattern with 5-foot wide walls.

The directions given to you have led you to a warren of warehouses located in the heart of Fishtown, near the city wall. The insides of the warehouses are crammed with tiny huts and shanties; some stacked precariously on top of one another, which creates a teeming indoor slum riddled with narrow, twisting crawl spaces and perilous gantries and bridges.

PCs cannot move more than single-file anywhere in this ghetto, although you can allow PCs who get creative with Climb and Tumble checks a bit more freedom of movement at your discretion. Any area effect spells used here which do more than 5 points of fire damage have a chance to set things on fire; spells which strike only a 5 foot radius have a 25% chance, those which strike a 10 foot radius (or 15 foot cone) have a 50% chance, and spells which strike a 20 ft or larger radius or a cone longer than 15 feet have a 100% chance. (There is an equal chance that innocent bystanders will be caught in any area effect spell, whether fire or not.) Any fire so started quickly spreads throughout the ghetto unless PCs immediately take substantial actions to put it out. You can have any PC spellcaster sporting fire-based spells make an Intelligence DC 10 check to realize the risk factors involved here.

PCs who ask around in the ghetto and make a Gather Information DC 15 check can track down Corval after only an hour of searching; if the PCs fail

the check or don't ask around, it takes them three hours of searching to find Corval. He is wandering around near the back of one of the ghettos, mumbling to himself with a glazed look on his face, when the PCs find him.

Corval is partly possessed by the spirit of Gana, a Sulmite wizard whose essence is tied to the "spirit tattoo" Corval received from Danigar. Gana has been dormant so long that he does not have the strength to outright control Corval, but he can influence Corval's actions and has been trying to get him to do some research for him so he can find out where—and when—he is and what ultimately happened to his people. Gana is getting frustrated because Corval is not compatible; he's not Flan, or an arcane spellcaster, or even a scholarly type. Corval, meanwhile, does not understand what's going on, so he thinks the tattoo is driving him insane. This has made him rather irritable.

If the PCs decide to subdue Corval, refer to the Tactics section below on how he responds. If the PCs try to talk to him instead, his responses sound like those of an angry, belligerent drunk. He rambles on about the voice in his head that won't give him any peace and gets irate with the PCs if they mention Danigar's name. If the PCs can't calm him down (a *calm emotions* spell would do it, as would soothing words and a Diplomacy check DC 15 at APLs 2-4 or DC 18 at APLs 6-8), he warns them to back off and leave him alone. If they don't do so he starts a fight. Even if the PCs can keep him from starting a fight, it requires a Diplomacy check of DC 25 at APL 2-4 or DC 28 at APL 6-8 to convince him that the PCs can help get rid of his problem and that he should go with them.

The PCs do have other options here, however. A *protection from (alignment)* spell cast on Corval, or bringing him into the area of effect of any *magic circle against (alignment)* neutralizes Gana's ability to influence Corval, which makes him fully lucid. While in this state he'll actually listen to the PCs and only a DC 15 at APL 2-4, DC 18 at APL 6-8 Diplomacy check is required to get him to return to Danigar with the PCs.

The PCs can also try to appeal to Gana's spirit. Any attempt to do so cause Corval to suddenly go rigid and start talking in Ancient Flan. (If it is clear that the PCs cannot understand Flan, Gana resorts to pantomime and a few scattered Common words to try to get his point across.) Gana speaks through Corval in a very cultured tone and focuses his attention on an obvious wizard or scholarly-looking PC - preferably a Flan PC, but he's no longer too picky. He tries to relay the following points:

- He doesn't know where he is or when it is, but his name is Gana.
- He's stuck in the body of this "lout" and would rather not be.
- Since he doesn't have a body anymore, he needs to share a body with someone—but preferably someone who actually knows the ways of magic and spells.

- Any assistance the PC he's speaking to could lend him would be greatly appreciated. And their help would mean he wouldn't be bothering this fool anymore. . .

If the PCs explain that Gana is in Hardby, he does not recognize the name, nor does he recognize Greyhawk, as both were founded well after his time. If the PCs ask Gana directly about who he is, he explains that he was one of the leading research wizards of the kingdom of Sulm. If the PCs do not recognize this name (see Encounter 5 for the appropriate checks), Gana explains that his nation comprised the Abbor-Alz hills and the lands south of it until the sea. A PC can identify this area as now being the Bright Desert on a DC 10 Knowledge (geography) check. Gana is alarmed if told this, and asks what the current date is. He does not recognize a "CY" date, so he asks for the date by the Flannae or Suloise calendar, which a PC who makes a Knowledge (history) or bardic knowledge DC 15 check can give. Should he be informed of both the Bright Desert's existence and the date:

The sailor's expression darkens. "A thousand years," he mutters, "all that time has past and still the calamity brought about by that idiot Shattados lingers. Damn him for going through with it."

A PC who makes a Knowledge (history) or bardic lore DC 20 check recognizes the name Shattados as the last king of the long-dead Sulm kingdom. If the *Scorpion Crown* has already come up, that check also allows the PC to know that Shattados was the one responsible for using the *Scorpion Crown* to cause the calamity.

If the PCs ask Gana to explain:

"Shattados was the sorcerer-king of Sulm in my day," the sailor says. "Our kingdom was wracked by civil unrest in conquered territories, so he called upon a powerful evil deity to grant him a boon to help deal with the problem. That "boon" was the dread Scorpion Crown.

I begged Shattados not to use it, but when it seemed like he would not listen to my advice I decided to take measures to protect myself. I created a special marking to which my spirit would be anchored should my body be corrupted." He looks thoughtful. "Apparently my body was corrupted if I am here now. I wonder what happened to my countrymen."

A PC who made the previous Knowledge or bardic lore check knows that Gana's countrymen were turned into manscorpions.

Gana believes that his essence can be transferred to someone else by repeating the "spirit tattoo" on another person and then erasing it from Corval. He offers to be cooperative with the PCs if one of them (a wizard or scholarly type, with a Flan preferred over a non-Flan) will take on his tattoo and agree to help him research what exactly happened to his people and what

has gone on in the world since that time—he is a scholar, after all. In exchange, he agrees to assist the bearer of his mark in whatever manner he can.

APL 2 (EL 3)

☛ **Corval:** Male human Swashbuckler3; hp 24; see Appendix 1.

APL 4 (EL 5)

☛ **Corval:** Male human Swashbuckler5; hp 40; see Appendix 1.

APL 6 (EL 7)

☛ **Corval:** Male human Swashbuckler7; hp 56; see Appendix 1.

APL 8 (EL 8)

☛ **Corval:** Male human Swashbuckler7/Ftr1; hp 64; see Appendix 1.

Tactics: Corval is very familiar with fighting in cramped places, so he positions himself so that only one PC can easily attack him at a time. If he must face more than two PCs in melee, and is not clearly stronger than them, then he retreats, tumbling as necessary. He always uses a two-weapon fighting style but does not do anything more than render PCs unconscious; he is a brawler, not a killer.

Development: if PCs carry a subdued Corval back to Danigar the City Guard questions them unless they somehow do it inconspicuously.

When Corval is brought back to Danigar's Pen, Danigar soon realizes that he can remove the spirit tattoo using his *erase* spell while a *protection from evil* is cast upon Corval. If the PCs explain about Gana and his situation, Danigar is fascinated. He offers to take the spirit tattoo onto himself if none of the PCs are amenable. If one of them is, then he imprints the spirit tattoo on the side of the PC's neck and face, a process which takes an hour. Otherwise he has Hlozapatan do the tattoo on himself. Should one of the PCs take the spirit tattoo, that PC gets the Spirit Tattoo entry on the AR. Only one PC may get this AR entry.

If Corval is brought back while still conscious and the PCs have not spoken to Gana, Danigar suggests that it might be interesting to find out about the spirit that possesses Corval first. If the PCs agree, play this out as described above, with Danigar offering to translate if none of the PCs understand Ancient Flan.

If Corval was convinced to come back and have the tattoo removed, he is grateful for the assistance in ridding him of the tattoo. PCs get access to the *ring of swimming* (and at higher APLs the *improved ring of swimming*) on the AR in this case. If he was taken by force, he stalks off in a huff after waking up, with a threat to both the PCs and Danigar that there will be trouble if their paths ever cross again.

If the problem with the living spell in Encounter 7 has not already been dealt with at this point, then go to Encounter 7. Otherwise go on to Encounter 9.

ENCOUNTER 9: PARTISAN POLITICS

Danigar is satisfied to wait until the next morning to head out to Minaryn Castle, where Messalina can be found, if the PCs want to rest and recover spells. (This also gives him a chance to study up on his spells.) He can tell the PCs that the journey would be a half-day's travel by horseback or nearly a full day by foot. If all of the PCs are going to be mounted then he prepares and uses two *mount* spells for himself and his wife instead of his two *erase* spells. He also changes out his *minor creation* for a *summon monster IV* but otherwise prepares his standard spell list. Hlozapatan also prepares a standard spell list except that she takes *lightning bolt* in place of *bestow curse*.

By one means or another, the PCs' actions have attracted attention. Agents of the Slave Lords have been plotting an assassination attempt on Chief Justicar Deirdre Longland in an effort to shape Hardby politics in the favor of Aleeta. Since Danigar once was the apprentice of Deirdre's brother, they have come to the mistaken impression that Danigar's recent discoveries have something to do with them, an impression further reinforced by adventurers asking around about him and bailing him out of jail. When they get wind that Danigar is being escorted out of town, they decided not to take any chances and send a strike team out to kill Danigar before he can tell anyone of import something threatening to them.

The circumstances described below assume that the PCs set out with Danigar and his wife first thing in the morning. If they headed out the same day instead, then adjust the description accordingly and keep in mind that Danigar has no spells prepared.

THE ATTACK

The Slave Lords strike squad catches up to the PCs at some point prior to them entering the Abbor-Alz hills, unless the PCs are moving faster than a 60 base speed.

To determine the encounter distance, have all the PCs make Spot or Listen checks (whichever is better) and compare the best one to the chart below. PCs or familiars with at least 50 feet of elevation have a +4 circumstance modifier to this check.

Spot/Listen DC	Encounter Distance
30+	1,200 feet
25	1,000 feet
20	800 feet
15 or lower	600 feet

Travel down the dirt road towards Minaryn Castle has, so far, been uneventful on this pleasantly warm, overcast day. But now the most sharp-eyed and sharp-

heard amongst you detect the approach of several riders from the southwest.

The riders wear no heraldry and Khergoz (if present) wears a helmet, so their exact nature cannot be identified until they come within 300 feet. Should the PCs wait for them, the riders approach at a speed of 240 feet per round (full gallop) until they reach less than 300 foot distance, at which point they slow to 120 feet per round (double-move). If the PCs decide to make a run for it, keep in mind that the riders can eventually catch them unless the slowest PC has a speed of at least 60 feet. Unless the PCs act hostilely at a greater range, the riders do not attack until they reach a range of 110 feet (within one range increment for the archers).

Notes About Mounted Combat: Mounted combatants can make a ranged attack at a -4 penalty while the mount is double moving and at a -8 penalty while the mount is running. (Combatants possessing the Mounted Archery feat, as the horse archers here do, instead take a -2 and -4 penalty, respectively.) A full attack with a ranged weapon can be made while the mount is moving, and all shots while double moving or running happen at the middle of the move. If a combatant casts a spell in the middle of a mount's double move then a Concentration check at DC 10 + spell level must be made; in the middle of a run the check is DC 15+spell level. Moving only before or after casting the spell does not require a Concentration check.

APL 2

➤ **Horse archers (3):** Male half-orc Ftr2; hp 18 each; see Appendix 1.

➤ **Varemut:** Male human Brd4; hp 21; see Appendix 1.

➤ **Light War Horses (4):** hp 22 each, see *Monster Manual* page 273.

APL 4 (EL 7)

➤ **Horse archers (3):** Male half-orc Ftr3; hp 27 each; see Appendix 3.

➤ **Varemut:** Male human Brd4; hp 21; see Appendix 3.

➤ **Khergoz:** Male orc Clr4 (Gruumsh); hp 27; see Appendix 1.

➤ **Light War Horses (5):** hp 22 each, see *Monster Manual* page 273.

APL 6 (EL 9)

➤ **Horse archers (4):** Male half-orc Ftr5; hp 45 each; see Appendix 1.

➤ **Varemut:** Male human Brd5; hp 26; see Appendix 1.

➤ **Khergoz:** Male orc Clr5 (Gruumsh); hp 33; see Appendix 1.

➤ **Light War Horses (5):** hp 22 each, see *Monster Manual* page 273.

APL 8 (EL 11)

➤ **Horse archers (4):** Male half-orc Ftr7; hp 63 each; see Appendix 1.

➤ **Varemut:** Male human Brd7; hp 36; see Appendix 1.

➤ **Khergoz:** Male orc Clr7 (Gruumsh); hp 46; see Appendix 1.

➤ **Light War Horses (5):** hp 22 each, see *Monster Manual* page 273.

Various circumstance modifiers have been figured in here, including the help of friendly NPCs and a setting favoring the enemy NPCs, resulting in a net EL reduction of 2 (at APLs 2 and 4) or 1 (at APLs 6 and 8).

Tactics-Friendly NPCs: Danigar and his wife always cast protection spells on themselves first (*mage armor* for Danigar, *protection from evil* for Hlozapatan) before assisting PCs with offensive spells, buffing spells, and Danigar's *wand of magic missiles*. How much they get involved depends on how weak or strong the party is for their APL (less if the party is strong, more if the party is weak) but they should never dominate the fight.

Tactics-Unfriendly NPCs: The half-orcs take advantage of their mobility by spreading out and always taking shots while double-moving past PCs and never finishing a move closer than 60 feet to the PCs if they can avoid it. They are archers first and foremost, so they only resort to melee if disarmed or continuing archery is not feasible. In melee they draw sword and shield and auto-make the DC 10 Ride check to be able to fight while mounted. They do not hesitate to target Danigar and Hlozapatan if they are viable targets. They do not flee unless they have taken substantial casualties, both Khergoz and Varemut have been struck down, and they haven't been able to strike down an equal number of PCs.

Varemut, the leader of the strike team, always begins with singing to inspire courage (+1 morale bonus on attack, damage rolls, and Will saves, or +2 each at APL 8 with use of his wand), which due to his Lingering Song feat lasts for 1 minute after he stops. After that he uses spells to hamper PCs as best as possible, though he won't use *cause fear* or *daze* above APL 4. If PCs get in close he draws his whip and uses it to disarm them, but otherwise he avoids melee if possible. He does not try to get his horse to attack in melee. If severely pressed, he either flees (if still mounted) or surrenders (if not).

Prior to the combat starting Khergoz has cast *magic weapon* on his spear (assume 2 minutes have passed since he cast it) and *magic vestment* on his armor; these have been figured into his stat block. He burns all of his ranged spells before closing and always casts buff-up spells before striding into melee. His Divine Metamagic (once at APLs 4 and 6, twice at APL 8) is usually used on a *spiritual weapon* spell. (If you don't want to do the math, treat it as a 1d12+2 attack at

APLs 4 and 6 and 1d12+3 at APL 8.) He, like Varemud, is not good at attacking while his horse does, so he doesn't try to have his horse attack.

Development: Those taken alive only talk under magical compulsion or duress (DC 12+HD Intimidate). The archers and Khergoz all know that they are doing a job for someone under orders from Turrosh Mak, despot of the Pomarj, but don't know who. They also know that they had orders to incapacitate or kill everyone and take survivors back to be sold as slaves. Only Varemud knows that the strike team is actually in the employ of the Slave Lords. If convinced to talk, he can tell the PCs that Danigar's death was ordered because of concern that he was taking actions that would interfere with their plans to influence the selection of the next Despotrix. He does not know who the Slave Lords are supporting, or why, but he does know that Danigar was believed to be part of the faction the Slave Lords opposed. Danigar, if questioned, professes to not be involved in local politics. The only thing he can think of is that his former magical tutor is the brother of the Chief Justicar.

If one or more of the enemy combatants escape, the PCs earn the Attracted Attention designation on their ARs.

Once this encounter has been resolved, regardless of how it turns out, go to the Conclusion.

Treasure:

APL 2: Loot 171 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: *+1 vest of resistance* (1,000 gp, 83 gp per PC), *wand of grease* (1st level; 750 gp, 63 gp per PC).

APL 4: Loot 204 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: *+1 vest of resistance* (1,000 gp, 83 gp per PC), *wand of grease* (1st level; 750 gp, 63 gp per PC), *brooch of shielding* (1,500 gp, 125 gp per PC).

APL 6: Loot 305 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: *+1 vest of resistance* (1,000 gp, 83 gp per PC), *wand of grease* (1st level; 750 gp, 63 gp per PC), *brooch of shielding* (1,500 gp, 125 gp per PC), *tunic of steady spellcasting* (2,500 gp, 208 gp per PC).

APL 8: Loot 338 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: *+2 vest of resistance* (4,000 gp, 333 gp per PC), *wand of grease* (1st level; 750 gp, 63 gp per PC), *brooch of shielding* (1,500 gp, 125 gp per PC), *tunic of steady spellcasting* (2,500 gp, 208 gp per PC), *wand of inspirational boost* (750 gp, 63 gp per PC).

Detect Magic Results: *Vest of resistance* (Faint Abjuration), *wand of grease* (Faint Conjuration), *brooch of shielding* (Faint Abjuration), *tunic of steady spellcasting* (Faint Transmutation), *wand of inspirational boost* (Faint Enchantment)

CONCLUSION

PCs Captured By Slavers

Should the PCs not win through Encounter 9, any that are not killed are sold into slavery. In this case surviving PCs earn the Captured by Slavers

designation on their ARs. Danigar and Hlozopatan are killed.

PCs Get Danigar to Messalina Alive

The description below assumes the PCs were riding to Minaryn Castle. If they were walking instead, adjust the time factors accordingly.

The rest of the trip to Minaryn Castle is uneventful. Upon your arrival you are admitted immediately by guardsmen and conducted to rooms where you have an opportunity to refresh yourselves. A short while later you are greeted by a medium-height, dark-haired woman in her mid to late 40s whose robes bear an emblem resembling a wooden throne.

"Welcome to my home," she says with a smile. "I am Messalina." She turns to Danigar. "I am pleased to see that you and your wife were conducted here safely. I am eager to hear about your discoveries."

Danigar must have been eager to talk about them, for he is sequestered with Messalina until late in the evening. Just as you are thinking about retiring, Messalina emerges from the back rooms.

"Danigar's discoveries are fascinating," she says enthusiastically. "It will take a while to sort out all the implications, but I think they will prove quite valuable indeed."

"I will pay all of you the sum designated by the Despotrix plus an additional bonus. It is also quite possible that I may need to call on you in the future to pursue some related matters. Can I count on you should the occasion arise?"

Any PCs who say "yes" receive the Favor of the Despotrix on the AR.

Two other issues must be resolved. If any PC(s) agreed to work with Scorimongishaz and has not already contacted him, ask those PCs if they contact and report to Scor at some point. If they do, then those PCs get the Worked for Scor designation on their ARs. (If knowledge of Scor was shared with the party and the party as a whole agrees to share information with Scor, then all PCs get that designation.)

Before the PCs depart, Danigar thanks them for helping him bring his research to an interested party and cleaning up the mess he created. PCs get access to the magical tattoos designated on the AR. In addition, Danigar offers to give each of them, free of charge, a special non-magical design he recently discovered. The design looks somewhat like a stylized scorpion, and Danigar is convinced that it has something to do with holy sites in ancient Sulm. If his research is right, it could be of some value in the future should the PCs decide to go adventuring in the Bright Desert. Any PC who accepts this tattoo gets the Sulm Tattoo designation on the AR. The PC must specify exactly where they are getting the tattoo done, though! If one of the PCs accepted the spirit tattoo, then that PC recognizes the scorpion tattoo design as being a sort of key, though to what Gana cannot recall at this time.

PCs Get Danigar to Messalina Dead

Messalina is displeased with the PCs but says she can arrange to have Danigar *raised*. This ending earns the PCs their originally agreed-upon pay but they lose the Favor of the Despotrix, access to the Sulm tattoo, and access to all magical tattoos.

PCs Attracted Attention

If the PCs earned this designation at any point during the scenario then they get the Attracted Attention designation on their ARs.

PCs Were Diplomatic With Corval

As described in Encounter 8, they get access to the magical rings on the AR. Otherwise cross off this access.

EXPERIENCE POINT SUMMARY

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

Encounter 7: The Living Spell

Defeated the living spell

APL 2	120 XP
APL 4	180 XP
APL 6	240 XP
APL 8	330 XP

Encounter 8: Corval and the Spirit Tattoo

Subdued Corval

OR

Convinced Corval to return peaceably
(give only ½ x.p. if Corval is slain)

APL 2	90 XP
APL 4	150 XP
APL 6	210 XP
APL 8	240 XP

Encounter 9: Partisan Politics

Defeated Slave Lord agents

APL 2	150 XP
APL 4	210 XP
APL 6	270 XP
APL 8	330 XP

Story Award

Danigar reaches Messalina alive and well

APL 2	45 XP
APL 4	60 XP
APL 6	75 XP
APL 8	90 XP

Discretionary Award

PCs made a significant effort to use skills and role-playing, rather than just brute force, to complete their mission.

APL 2	45 XP
APL 4	75 XP
APL 6	105 XP
APL 8	135 XP

Total Possible Experience:

APL 2	450 XP
APL 4	675 XP
APL 6	900 XP
APL 8	1,125 XP

TREASURE SUMMARY

During an adventure, characters encounter treasure, usually finding it in the possession of their foes. Every encounter that features treasure has a "treasure" section

within the encounter description, giving information about the loot, coins, and magic items that make up the encounter's treasure.

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

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

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

Once you have subtracted the value for unclaimed treasure from each encounter add it up and that is the number of gold pieces a characters total and coin value increase at the end of the adventure. Write the total in the GP Gained field of the adventure certificate. Because this is a Regional scenario, characters may spend additional Time Units to practice professions or create items immediately after the adventure so this total may be modified by other circumstances.

Loot = Looted gear from enemy; Coin = Coin, Gems, Jewelry, and other valuables; Magic = Magic Items.

Encounter 9: Partisan Politics

APL 2: Loot: 171 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 146 gp

APL 4: Loot: 204 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: +1 *vest of resistance* (1,000 gp, 83 gp per PC), *wand of grease* (1st level; 750 gp, 63 gp per PC), *brooch of shielding* (1,500 gp, 125 per PC).

APL 6: Loot: 305 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: +1 *vest of resistance* (1,000 gp, 83 gp per PC), *wand of grease* (1st level; 750 gp, 63 gp per PC), *brooch of shielding* (1,500 gp, 125 per PC), *tunic of steady spellcasting* (2,500 gp, 208 per PC).

APL 8: Loot: 338 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: +2 *vest of resistance* (4,000 gp, 333 gp per PC), *wand of grease* (1st level; 750 gp, 63 gp per PC), *brooch of shielding* (1,500 gp, 125 gp per PC), *tunic of steady spellcasting* (2,500 gp, 208 gp per PC), *wand of inspirational boost* (750 gp, 63 gp per PC).

Conclusion—Danigar is alive

APL 2: Loot: 0 gp; Coin: 150 gp; Magic: 0 gp
APL 4: Loot: 0 gp; Coin: 200 gp; Magic: 0 gp
APL 6: Loot: 0 gp; Coin: 250 gp; Magic: 0 gp
APL 8: Loot: 0 gp; Coin: 300 gp; Magic: 0 gp

Conclusion—Danigar is dead

APL 2: Loot: 0 gp; Coin: 100 gp; Magic: 0 gp
APL 4: Loot: 0 gp; Coin: 150 gp; Magic: 0 gp
APL 6: Loot: 0 gp; Coin: 200 gp; Magic: 0 gp
APL 8: Loot: 0 gp; Coin: 250 gp; Magic: 0 gp

Total Possible Treasure

APL 2: Loot: 171 gp; Coin: 150 gp; Magic: 146 gp - Total: 450 gp
APL 4: Loot: 204 gp; Coin: 200 gp; Magic: 271 gp - Total: 650 gp
APL 6: Loot: 305 gp; Coin: 250 gp; Magic: 479 gp - Total: 900 gp
APL 8: Loot: 338 gp; Coin: 300 gp; Magic: 792 gp - Total: 1,300 gp

Special

☛ **Favor of Despotrix Ilena:** Any male PC can use this favor once for a +1 enhancement upgrade to any weapon, shield, armor, *cloak of resistance* or *ring of protection* (maximum of +3) OR the imprinting of two spells from any Core source of up to 4th level in a wizard's spell book. The PC is still responsible for all normal costs. Indicate below when this favor is used. Female PCs may use this favor twice.

Favor used AR # _____ and AR # _____.

☛ **Sulm Tattoo:** The PC has been given a special scorpion-like tattoo by Danigar. It is not magical.

☛ **Attracted Attention:** The PC has been noticed by certain parties in Hardby. This may come into play in future adventures.

☛ **Worked for Scor:** The PC helped out Scor, a pseudodragon, who may call again in the future. . .

☛ **Magical Tattoo:** The PC can purchase magical tattoos from Hlozapatan at a discount rate. These tattoos are activated by touch, which requires a standard action and does not provoke an attack of opportunity. Each is usable once to generate the indicated spell effect at 10th level, though the tattoo remains after the magic is expended. The tattoo takes up a magic item slot appropriate to the part of the body on which it is placed, which must be indicated when the tattoo is chosen. The exact design is left up to the PC.

☛ **Spirit Tattoo:** This special tattoo depicts a ghostly bird of prey on one side of the PC's face. A PC bearing this tattoo is imbued with the spirit of Gana, an ancient Sulmite wizard. The PC must spend one extra TU on

any *Blight on Bright Sands* adventure (including this one) doing research for Gana but gains the following benefits:

- +2 insight bonus on all Spellcraft, Knowledge: Arcana, and Knowledge: Planes checks.
- +2 insight bonus on Knowledge: History and bardic knowledge checks regarding ancient history. (Increase the bonus to +6 if the check concerns the Sulm Empire). The Knowledge: History checks can be made untrained, but only in these cases.
- Immunity to possession.

The PC and the tattoo both radiate strong (16th level) necromancy magic. Only one PC per table may take this tattoo.

☛ **Captured by Slavers:** Captured by slavers, this PC was transported to, and imprisoned in, Highport for a time. While incarcerated the PC was often whipped and as a consequence his back is criss-crossed with a web of scars. During his capture the PC lost all his equipment and possessions. During this escape however he managed to accumulate wealth equal to half his pre-captured wealth total.

ITEM ACCESS

APL 2

+1 vest of resistance (Adventure, CL 5th, CV)
wand of grease (Adventure, CL 1st)
ring of swimming (Core, CL 2nd, 2,500 gp, DMG)
comprehend languages tattoo (Adventure, CL 10th, 250 gp, see above)
protection from evil tattoo (Adventure, CL 10th, 250 gp, see above)

APL 4 (All of APL 2 plus the following)

brooch of shielding (Adventure, CL 1st, 1,000 gp, DMG)
bull's strength tattoo (Adventure, CL 10th, 500 gp, see above)
invisibility tattoo (Adventure, CL 10th, 500 gp, see above)
resist energy tattoo (Adventure, CL 10th, 500 gp, see above)

APL 6 (All of APLs 2-4 plus the following)

tunic of steady spellcasting (Adventure, CL 3rd, CV)
cure serious wounds tattoo (Adventure, CL 10th, 750 gp, see above)
neutralize poison tattoo (Adventure, CL 10th, 750 gp, see above)

APL 8 (All of APLs 2-6 plus the following)

+2 vest of resistance (Adventure, CL 6th, 4,000 gp, CV)
wand of inspirational boost (Adventure, CL 1st, 750 gp, CV)
improved ring of swimming (Core, CL 7th, 10,000 gp, DMG)

APPENDIX 1: NPCS AND MONSTERS

All APLs

☛ **Scorimongishaz, pseudodragon familiar:** Tiny dragon; HD 13d12+13; hp 23; Init +2; Spd 15 ft., fly 60 ft. (good); AC 25, touch 14, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +6; Grp -4; Atk +10 melee (1d3-2 + poison, sting); Full Atk +10 melee (1d3-2 + poison, sting) and +5 melee (, bite) Space/Reach 2.5 ft./0 ft. (5 ft. with tail); SA poison; SQ blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft., immunity to *sleep* and paralysis, low-light vision, telepathy 60 ft., improved evasion, empathic link with master, deliver touch spells with master, share spells with master (not applicable here), *dimension door* 1/day at 23rd level; SR 19; AL NG;; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +9; Str 6, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Diplomacy +2, Hide +20 (+28 in forests or overgrown areas), Listen +7, Search +6, Sense Motive +7, Spot +7, Survival +1 (+3 following tracks); Weapon Finesse.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 14, initial damage sleep for 1 minute, secondary damage sleep for 1d3 hours. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +2 racial bonus.

Blindsight (Ex): A pseudodragon can locate creatures within 60 feet by nonvisual means. Opponents the pseudodragon can't actually see still have total concealment against the pseudodragon.

Telepathy (Su): Pseudodragons can communicate telepathically with any creature within 60 feet who speaks Common or Sylvan.

Improved Evasion (Ex): Take only half damage from spells with a Reflex save, or none if the save is successful.

☛ **Gormadoc:** male halfling Rog9; Small humanoid (halfling); HD 9d6+18; hp 50; Init +3; Spd 20 ft; AC 16, touch 16, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +6; Grp +3; Atk +11 melee (1d4+2/18-20, +1 rapier); Full Atk +9/+9 melee (1d4+2/18-20, +1 rapier) and +4 melee (1d3+1/19-20, +1 dagger); SA sneak attack +5d6, +1 on attack rolls with slings and thrown weapons; SQ evasion, improved uncanny dodge, trapfinding, trap sense +3, +2 morale bonus on saves against fear; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +10, Will +5; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +13, Bluff +12, Craft (tattoo) +7, Diplomacy +6, Gather Information +6, Knowledge (local – core) +7, Hide +15, Listen +9, Move Silently +15, Sense Motive +13, Spot +7, Tumble +15; Endurance, Two-Weapon Fighting, Two-Weapon Defense, Weapon Finesse.

Evasion (Ex): Takes no damage on successful Reflex saves.

Improved Uncanny Dodge (Ex): Can only be flanked by a 13th level or higher rogue, retains Dex bonus to AC if caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible opponent.

Trapfinding: Can find and disable traps that are magical or have a DC higher than 20.

Trap Sense (Ex): +3 dodge bonus to AC and +3 Reflex save vs. traps

Possessions: +1 rapier, +1 dagger, +1 ring of protection, tattoo of *invisibility* (one-shot, as spell at 10th level)

☛ **Hlozapatan:** Female human (Olman) Adp10; Medium humanoid (human); HD 10d6+10; hp 45; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +5, Grp +5; Atk and Full Atk +6 melee (1d4+1/19-20, +1 dagger); SA spells; SQ spells; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +10; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 17, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +14, Craft (painting) +14, Heal +12, Knowledge (local – Amedio Jungle) +6, Knowledge: Nature +6, Spellcraft +6, Survival +8; Brew Potion, Eschew Materials, Skill Focus (Craft: painting) Tattoo Magic*, Track

Spells Prepared (3/4/3/2; base DC = 13 + spell level): 0 level—*light*, *purify food and drink*, *mending*, 1st—*burning hands*, *comprehend languages*, *cause fear*, *protection from evil*, 2nd—*bull's strength*, *invisibility*, *resist energy*; 3rd—*bestow curse*, *cure serious wounds*

Possessions: +1 dagger, holy symbol, spell components

Description: Hlozapatan is a 25-year-old Olman woman who stands 5 feet 5 inches tall and weighs 140 pounds. She has dark brown skin, dark eyes, and straight black hair currently bound in braids. She has a high, sloping forehead that would be considered beautiful amongst her people but is less appealing by the standards of northern lands.

☛ **Danigar:** Male half-elf Wiz7; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 7d4+7; hp 25; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +3; Grp +3; Atk and Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+1, +1 quarterstaff) or +4 ranged (ray); SA spells; SQ low-light vision, immunity to *sleep* and similar effects, +2 racial bonus vs. enchantments; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +6; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 17, Wis 12, Cha 12. Height 5 ft. 6 in. Weight 145 lb.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +11, Craft (tattoo) +16, Decipher Script +9, Knowledge: Arcane +11, Knowledge: History +11, Speak Languages (Ancient Flan), Spellcraft +9; Craft Wondrous Item, Eschew Materials, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus: Craft (Tattoo), Spell Mastery (*erase*, *locate object*, *expeditious retreat*).

Spells Prepared (4/5/4/3/1; base DC = 13 + spell level): 0—*detect magic*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*; 1st—*erase* (2) or *mount* (2; see text), *mage armor*, *expeditious retreat*, *Tenser's floating disk*; 2nd—*resist energy*, *locate object*, *scorching ray*, *levitate*; 3rd—*arcane sight*, *dispel magic*, *clairvoyance*, 4th—*minor creation* or *summon monster IV* (see text)

Possessions: +2 ring of protection, +1 quarterstaff, wand of magic missiles (3rd level), spell components

ENCOUNTER 8

☛ **Corval:** male human Swashbuckler 3; CR 3; Medium humanoid (human); HD 3d10+3; hp 24; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk +6 melee (1d6+3/18-20, rapier); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+3/18-20, rapier) and +3 melee (1d6+2 nonlethal, sap); SA insightful strike; SQ grace +1 (included in saving throws); AL CN; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Balance +6, Climb +7, Jump +6, Knowledge: Geography +2, Profession (sailor) +7, Swim +8, Tumble +7, Use Rope +7; Two-Weapon Fighting, Two-Weapon Defense, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier).

Insightful Strike (Ex): Intelligence bonus is applied as a bonus on damage rolls with light weapons and any other weapon that can be used with Weapon Finesse (included above). Targets immune to sneak attacks or critical hits are immune to the swashbuckler's insightful strike.

Possessions: masterwork studded leather armor, rapier, sap.

ENCOUNTER 9

☛ **Horse Archers:** Male half-orc Ftr2; CR 2; Medium humanoid (orc); HD 2d10+4; hp 18 each; Init +3; Spd 30 ft., 60 ft while mounted; AC 16 or 17, touch 13, flat-footed 13 or 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk or Full Atk +4 melee (longsword, 1d8+2/19-20, longsword) or +6 ranged (1d8+2/x3, composite longbow); SA +1 on attacks and damage with bows when at 30 feet or less range; SQ 60 ft darkvision; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Handle Animal +4, Ride +9; Mounted Combat, Mounted Archery, Point-Blank Shot.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, composite longbow (+2), light wooden shield, quiver with 20 masterwork arrows, longsword.

☛ **Varemut:** Male human Brd4; CR 4; Medium humanoid (human); HD 4d6+4; hp 21; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +3; Atk or Full Atk +3 melee (1d6/18-20, rapier) or +10 ranged (disarm, whip); SA *fascinate*; SQ spells, bardic knowledge, countersong, inspire courage +1, inspire competence; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +8, Concentrate +8, Diplomacy +10, Disguise +10 (+12), Gather Information +10, Knowledge: Local (core) +6, Perform (sing) +10, Ride +1, Sleight of Hand +10, Tumble +9; Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm, Lingering Song*

Inspire Courage(Su): +1 morale bonus on attack and damage rolls and saves vs. charm and fear effects.

Spells Known (3/3/1; base DC = 13+ spell level): 0—*daze, light, mage hand, message, prestidigitation, read*

magic; 1st—*cause fear, grease, Tasha's hideous laughter*; 2nd—*silence, suggestion*

Possessions: masterwork whip, rapier, masterwork chain shirt, +1 vest of resistance, wand of grease (1st level, 50 charges)

ENCOUNTER 8

☛ **Corval:** male human Swashbuckler 5; CR 5; Medium humanoid (human); HD 5d10+5; hp 40; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +5; Grp +7; Atk +9 melee (1d6+3/18-20, masterwork rapier); Full Atk +7 melee (1d6+3/18-20, masterwork rapier) and +6 melee (1d6+2 nonlethal, sap); SA insightful strike; SQ grace +1 (included in saving throws), Dodge bonus +1; AL CN; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Balance +8, Climb +10, Jump +9, Knowledge: Geography +2; Profession: Sailor +9, Swim +8, Tumble +10, Use Rope +8; Two-Weapon Fighting, Two-Weapon Defense, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier).

Insightful Strike (Ex): Int bonus is applied as a bonus on damage rolls with light weapons and any other weapon that can be used with Weapon Finesse (included above). Targets immune to sneak attacks or critical hits are immune to the swashbuckler's insightful strike.

Dodge Bonus (Ex): As per Dodge feat.

Possessions: masterwork studded leather armor, masterwork rapier, sap, 20 gp.

ENCOUNTER 9

☛ **Horse Archers:** Male half-orc Ftr3; CR 3; Medium humanoid (orc); HD 3d10+6; hp 27 each; Init +3; Spd 30 ft., 60 ft while mounted; AC 16 or 17, touch 13, flat-footed 13 or 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (1d8+2/19-20, longsword) or +7 ranged (1d8+2/x3, composite longbow); Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+2/19-20, longsword) or +5/+5 ranged (1d8+2/x3, composite longbow); SA +1 on attacks and damage with bows when at 30 feet or less range; SQ 60 ft darkvision; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Handle Animal +5, Ride +10; Mounted Combat, Mounted Archery, Point-Blank Shot, Rapid Shot.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, composite longbow (+2 Str), light wooden shield, quiver with 20 masterwork arrows, sap, longsword.

☛ **Varemut:** Male human Brd4; CR 4; Medium humanoid (human); HD 4d6+4; hp 21; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +3; Grp +3; Atk and Full Atk +3 melee (1d6/18-20, rapier) or +10 ranged (whip, disarm); SA *fascinate*; SQ spells, bardic knowledge, countersong, inspire courage +1, inspire competence; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +8, Concentrate +8, Diplomacy +10, Disguise +10 (+12), Gather Information +10, Knowledge: Local (core) +6, Perform (sing) +10, Ride +1,

Sleight of Hand +10, Tumble +9; Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm, Lingering Song*

Spells Available (3/3/1; base DC = 13+ spell level): 0—*daze, light, mage hand, message, prestidigitation, read magic*; 1st—*cause fear, grease, Tasha's hideous laughter*; 2nd—*silence, suggestion*

Possessions: masterwork whip, rapier, chain shirt, +1 vest of resistance, wand of grease (1st level, 50 charges)

☛ **Khergoz:** Male orc Clr4 (Gruumsh); CR 4; Medium humanoid (orc); HD 4d8+4; hp 27; Init +1; Spd 20 ft., 60 ft. mounted; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk and Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+4/x3, spear) or +5 ranged (1d8+1/x3, *spiritual weapons*); SA rebuke undead; SQ spells, spontaneous casting, 60 ft. darkvision, light sensitivity; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +6; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +8, Heal +4, Knowledge: Religion +5, Ride +1; Empower Spell, Divine Metamagic (Empower Spell)*; Weapon Focus (spear)

Rebuke Undead (Su): Can rebuke or command 2d6+3 HD of undead 3/day.

Spontaneous Casting: Can convert any spell to an *inflict* spell of the same level.

Feat of Strength (Su): Once per day as a free action gain a +4 enhancement bonus to Strength for 1 round.

Light Sensitivity (Ex): Dazzled in sunlight or the area of effect of a *daylight* spell.

Spells Known (5/4+1/3+1; base DC = 12 + spell level): 0 lvl—*create water, detect magic, detect poison, guidance, resistance*; 1st—*command, cure light wounds, divine favor, enlarge person***~~, magic weapon~~; 2nd lvl—*sound burst, shatter, spiritual weapon* (2)**

Possessions: masterwork spear with *magic weapon*, chain shirt, holy symbol of Gruumsh, *brooch of shielding*

APL 6

ENCOUNTER 8

☛ **Corval:** male human Swashbuckler 7; CR 7; Medium humanoid (human); HD 7d10+7; hp 56; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +7; Grp +9; Atk +11 melee (1d6+4/18-20, rapier); Full Atk +9/+4 melee (1d6+4/18-20, rapier) and +8 melee (1d6+2 nonlethal, sap); SA insightful strike, acrobatic charge; SQ grace +1 (included in saving throws), Dodge bonus +1; AL CN; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Balance +10, Climb +10, Jump +11, Knowledge: Geography +3; Profession: Sailor +11, Swim +8, Tumble +12, Use Rope +10; Close-Quarters Fighting*, Two-Weapon Fighting, Two-Weapon Defense, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier).

Insightful Strike (Ex): Int bonus is applied as a bonus on damage rolls with light weapons and any other weapon that can be used with Weapon Finesse (included above). Targets immune to sneak attacks or critical hits are immune to the swashbuckler's insightful strike.

Dodge Bonus (Ex): As per the Dodge feat.

Acrobatic Charge (Ex): Can charge over difficult terrain that normally slows movement or allies blocking his path.

Possessions: masterwork studded leather armor, +1 rapier, sap.

ENCOUNTER 9

☛ **Horse Archers:** Male half-orc Ftr5; CR 5; Medium humanoid (orc); HD 5d10+10; hp 45 each; Init +3; Spd 30 ft., 60 ft while mounted; AC 17 or 18, touch 13, flat-footed 14 or 15; Base Atk +5; Grp +7; Atk +7 melee (1d8+2/19-20, longsword) or +9 ranged (1d8+2/x3, composite longbow); Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+2/19-20, longsword) or +7/+7 ranged (1d8+2/x3, composite longbow); SA +1 on attacks and damage with bows when at 30 feet or less range; SQ 60 ft darkvision; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Handle Animal +5, Jump +4, Ride +12; Mounted Combat, Mounted Archery, Point-Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Precise Shot.

Possessions: masterwork chain shirt, composite long bow (+2 Str), light wooden shield, quiver with 20 masterwork arrows, long sword

☛ **Varemut:** Male human Brd5; Medium humanoid (orc); HD 5d6+5; hp 26; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3; Grp +3; Atk/Full Atk +3 melee (1d6/18-20, rapier) or +9 ranged (disarm, whip); SA *fascinate*; SQ spells, bardic knowledge, countersong, inspire courage +1, inspire competence; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +11, Concentrate +9, Diplomacy +11, Disguise +10 (+12), Gather Information +11, Knowledge: Local (core) +6, Perform (sing) +11, Ride

+2, Sleight of Hand +9, Tumble +9; Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm, Lingering Song*

Spells Known (3/4/2; base DC = 13+ spell level): 0—*daze, light, mage hand, message, prestidigitation, read magic*; 1st—*cause fear, charm person, grease, Tasha's hideous laughter*; 2nd—*silence, suggestion, glitterdust*

Possessions: masterwork whip, rapier, +1 chain shirt, vest of resistance +1, wand of grease (1st level)

☛ **Khergoz:** Male orc Clr5 (Gruumsh); CR 5; Medium (orc); HD 5d8+5; hp 33; Init +1; Spd 20 ft., 60 ft. mounted; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +3; Grapple +5; Atk and Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+4/x3, spear) or +5 ranged (1d8+1/x3, *spiritual weapon*) or +6 ranged touch (*searing light*); SA rebuke undead; SQ spells, spontaneous casting, 60 ft. darkvision, light sensitivity; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +6; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +14, Heal +5, Knowledge: Religion +5, Ride +1; Empower Spell, Divine Metamagic (Empower Spell)*; Weapon Focus (spear)

Rebuke Undead (Su): Can rebuke or command 2d6+3 HD of undead 3/day.

Spontaneous Casting: Can convert any spell to an *inflict* spell of the same level.

Feat of Strength (Su): Once per day as a free action gain a +5 enhancement bonus to Strength for 1 round.

Light Sensitivity (Ex): Dazzled in sunlight or the area of effect of a *daylight* spell.

Spells Available (5/4+1/3+1/1+1; base DC = 12+ spell level): 0 lvl—*create water, detect magic, detect poison, guidance, resistance*; 1st—*command, cure light wounds, divine favor, enlarge person***~~, *magic weapon*~~; 2nd—*sound burst, shatter, spiritual weapon(x2)***~~, *searing light, magic vestment*~~** (on armor)

Possessions: holy symbol of Gruumsh, masterwork spear (with *magic weapon*), masterwork breastplate (with *magic vestments*), *brooch of shielding, tunic of steady spellcasting* (+5 competency bonus on Concentration checks)

ENCOUNTER 8

☛ **Corval:** male human Ftr1/Swashbuckler 7; CR 7; Medium humanoid (human); HD 8d10+8; hp 64; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +8; Grp +10; Atk +13 melee (1d6+4/18-20, *+1 rapier*); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d6+4/18-20, *+1 rapier*) and +10 melee (1d6+2 nonlethal, sap); SA insightful strike, acrobatic charge; SQ grace +1 (included in saving throws), dodge bonus +1; AL CN; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Balance +10, Climb +10, Jump +9, Knowledge: Geography +3; Profession: Sailor +10, Swim +9, Tumble +12, Use Rope +10; Close-Quarters Fighting*, Combat Reflexes, Two-Weapon Fighting, Two-Weapon Defense, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier).

Insightful Strike (Ex): Int bonus is applied as a bonus on damage rolls with light weapons and any other weapon that can be used with Weapon Finesse (included above). Targets immune to sneak attacks or critical hits are immune to the swashbuckler's insightful strike.

Dodge Bonus (Ex): As per the Dodge feat.

Acrobatic Charge (Ex): Can charge over difficult terrain that normally slows movement or allies blocking his path.

Possessions: *+1 studded leather armor, +1 rapier*, sap, 20 gp.

ENCOUNTER 9

☛ **Horse Archers:** Male half-orc Ftr7; CR 7; Medium humanoid (orc); HD 7d10+14; hp 63 each; Init +3; Spd 20 ft., 60 ft while mounted; AC 18 or 19, touch 13, flat-footed 15 or 16; Base Atk +7; Grp +9; Atk +9 melee (1d8+2/19-20, longsword) or +12 ranged (1d8+2/x3, composite longbow); Full Atk +9/+4 melee (longsword, 1d8+2/19-20, longsword) or +10/+10/+5 ranged (1d8+4/x3, longbow); SA +1 on attacks and damage with bows when at 30 feet or less range; SQ 60 ft darkvision; AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Handle Animal +5, Jump +6, Ride +14; Mounted Combat, Mounted Archery, Point-Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (long bow), Weapon Specialization (longbow)

Possessions: masterwork breastplate, longsword, composite long bow (+2 Str), light wooden shield, quiver with 20 masterwork arrows

☛ **Varemut:** Male human Brd7; CR 7; Medium humanoid (human); HD 7d6+7; hp 36; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +5; Grp +5; Atk and Full Atk +5 melee (1d6/18-20, rapier) or +11 ranged (disarm, whip); SA *fascinate*; SQ spells, bardic knowledge, countersong, inspire courage +1, inspire competence; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +9, Will +7; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +12, Concentrate +11, Diplomacy +12, Disguise +12 (+14), Gather Information +12, Knowledge: Local (core) +7, Perform (sing) +13, Ride +3, Sleight of Hand +11, Tumble +11; Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm, Lingering Song*, Spell Focus (Enchantment)

Spells Available (3/4/3/1; base DC = 13+ spell level or 14+ spell level for **enchantments**): 0 lvl-*daze, light, mage hand, message, prestidigitation, read magic*; 1st level-*cause fear, charm person, grease, Tasha's hideous laughter*, 2nd lvl-*silence, suggestion, glitterdust, mirror image*; 3rd lvl-*confusion, slow*

Possessions: masterwork whip, rapier, *+1 chain shirt, +2 vest of resistance, wand of grease* (1st level, 50 charges), *wand of inspirational boost* (1st level, 50 charges)

☛ **Khergoz:** Male orc Clr7 (Gruumsh); CR 7; Medium humanoid (orc); HD 7d8+7; hp 46; Init +1; Spd 20 ft., 60 ft. mounted; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +5; Grp +7; Atk and Full Atk +9 melee (1d8+4/x3, spear) or +7 ranged (1d12+3/x3, empowered *spiritual weapon*) or +6 ranged touch (*searing light*); SA rebuke undead; SQ spells, spontaneous casting, 60 ft. darkvision, light sensitivity; AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +8; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +16, Heal +5, Knowledge: Religion +5, Ride +2; Divine Metamagic (Empower Spell)*, Empower Spell, Extra Turning, Weapon Focus (spear)

Rebuke Undead (Su): Can rebuke or command 2d6+3 HD of undead 6/day.

Spontaneous Casting: Can convert any spell to an *inflict* spell of the same level.

Feat of Strength (Su): Once per day as a free action gain a +5 enhancement bonus to Strength for 1 round.

Light Sensitivity (Ex): Dazzled in sunlight or the area of effect of a *daylight* spell

Spells Prepared (5/5+1/4+1/2+1/1+1; base DC = 12+ spell level): 0—*create water, detect magic, detect poison, guidance, resistance*; 1st—*command, cure light wounds, divine favor, enlarge person***, ~~*magic weapon*~~, *shield of faith*; 2nd—*bull's strength, sound burst, shatter, spiritual weapon* (2)**; 3rd—*searing light* (2), ~~*magic vestment*~~** (on armor); 4th—*air walk, divine power***

Possessions: holy symbol of Gruumsh, masterwork spear (with *magic weapon*), masterwork breastplate (with *magic vestments*), *brooch of shielding, tunic of steady spellcasting* (+5 competency bonus on Concentration checks)

APPENDIX 2: NEW RULES

LIVING SPELL

[Paraphrased from *Monster Manual III* page 91]

A living spell appears similar to a normal spell effect except that—even in the case of an instantaneous spell, such as *fireball*—the magical energy lingers, writhing and moving with definite purpose. They haunt places blasted by magic, apparently subsisting on ambient magical energy. They seem to kill only for pleasure, not out of any need to feed.

CREATING A LIVING SPELL

“Living spell” is an unusual template, in that it is applied to an arcane or divine spell effect (or in some cases, a group of spell effects) and not a creature. The characteristics of a living spell are determined by the nature of the spell(s), including the caster level of the spells. The template can be applied to any spell that creates an area or effect (not targeted spells), but not a spell whose effect is already a creature (such as a *summon monster* spell).

A living spell composed of more than one spell uses the caster level of its highest-level spell for all its spell effects.

Size and Type: A living spell's size depends on its caster level: 1st-6th is Medium, 7th-12th is Large, 13th or higher is Huge. Its type is ooze.

Hit Dice: A living spell has Hit Dice equal to its caster level. Its Hit Dice are D10s.

Speed: A living spell's speed depends on the spell's range: A spell with a range of Close has a speed of 20 feet, a spell with a range of Medium has a speed of 40 feet, and a spell with a range of Long has a speed of 60 feet. A spell with any other range has a speed of 20 feet. If two spells with different ranges combine to make a living spell, the living spell's speed is based on the range of the slower of the two parent spells.

Armor Class: A living spell has a deflection bonus to its AC equal to its spell level.

Attack: A living spell gains a slam attack it can use once per round. The slam attack deals damage based on the living spell's size (see below), plus its Strength bonus x1.5. A successful slam attack also affects the target as though it were within the spell effect or area (see Special Attacks, below).

Living Spell Size	Slam Damage
Medium	1d4
Large	1d6
Huge	1d8

Special Attacks: A living spell has two special attacks.

Spell Effect (Su): A creature hit by a living spell's slam attack is subjected to the normal effect of the spell or spells making up the creature, as if it were within the

area or effect of the spell itself. Saves apply as normal for the spell; the DC is 10 + spell level + Cha modifier.

Engulf (Ex): A living spell can flow around creatures that fit within its space as a standard action. It cannot make a slam attack during a round in which it engulfs. The living spell merely has to move over the opponents, affecting as many as it can cover. Opponents can make attacks of opportunity against the living spell, but if they do so they are not entitled to a saving throw. Those who do not attempt attacks of opportunity must succeed on a Reflex save (DC 10 + spell level + Cha modifier) or be engulfed; on a success, they are pushed back or aside (opponent's choice) as the spell moves forward. Engulfed creatures are subject to the full normal effects of the spell(s) each round on the living spell's turn, and are considered to be grappled.

Special Qualities: A living spell has ooze traits, damage reduction 10/magic, and spell resistance equal to 10 + its caster level.

Saves: A living spell has normal saves for a creature of the ooze type (no good saves). It gains a resistance bonus on all saves equal to the spell level of the highest-level spell upon which it is based.

Abilities: A living spell has Strength, Constitution, and Charisma scores equal to 10 + its spell level. Its Dexterity and Wisdom scores are equal to 7 + its spell level. It is mindless, and has no Intelligence score.

Skills and Feats: Living spells, being mindless, have no skills or feats.

Environment: Any land. Living spells are found in areas blasted by magic.

Organization: Solitary.

Challenge Rating: A living spell's Challenge Rating is equal to the spell level of the highest-level spell upon which it is based, plus one-half its caster level, rounded down (minimum CR 1). If the living spell is based on multiple spells, increase the CR by one-half the sum of the additional spell levels (minimum increase +1).

Treasure: None.

Alignment: Always neutral. If the original spell had an alignment, the living spell adds that alignment to its neutral alignment.

Advancement: –

Level Adjustment: –

BARD BURST

Medium Ooze (6th level caster)

Hit Dice: 6d10+6 (46 hp)

Initiative: -1

Speed: 20 ft

Armor Class: 11 (-1 Dex, +2 deflection), touch 11, flat-footed 11

Base Attack/Grapple: +4/+5

Attack: slam +5 melee (1d4+1 and spell effect)

Full Attack: slam +5 melee (1d4+1 and spell effect)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Sound burst, engulf

Special Qualities: Blindsight 60 feet, damage reduction 10/magic, ooze traits, spell resistance 14
Saves: Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +3
Abilities: Str 12; Dex 9; Con 12; Int –; Wis 9; Chr 12.
Skills: –
Feats: –
Environment: Any
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 5
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: –
Level Adjustment: –

A thick, vibrating translucent mist crawls across the ground towards you.

Bard burst is the lingering resonance of a bard's magical attack from an age long past. It crawls across the ground and other flat surfaces, seeking new victims to incapacitate with its stunning resonance.

Combat

A bard burst attacks by slamming into prey with its body or engulfing foes.

Engulf (Ex): A bard burst can flow around creatures that fit within its space as a standard action. It cannot make a slam attack during a round in which it engulfs. A bard burst merely needs to move over the opponents, affecting as many as it can cover. Opponents can make attacks of opportunity against the bard burst, but if they do so they are not entitled to a saving throw. Those who do not attempt attacks of opportunity must succeed on a DC 13 Reflex save or be engulfed; on a success, they are pushed back or aside (opponent's choice) as the bard burst moves forward. Engulfed creatures are subject to the full normal effect of the sound burst effects each round on the bard burst's turn, and are considered to be grappled.

Sound Burst (Su): A creature hit by a bard burst's slam attack or engulfed by it takes 1d8 sonic damage and must make a DC 13 Fortitude save or be stunned for one round. A silence spell prevents both effects.

GLITTERFIRE

[modified from *Monster Manual III* page 92]

Medium Ooze (7th level caster)

Hit Dice: 7d10+7 (54 hp)

Initiative: +0

Speed: 40 ft

Armor Class: 13 (+3 deflection), touch 13, flat-footed 13

Base Attack/Grapple: +5/+7

Attack: slam +6 melee (1d4+1 plus 5d6 fire and *glitterdust*)

Full Attack: slam +6 melee (1d4+1 plus 5d6 fire and *glitterdust*)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Engulf, *fireball*, *glitterdust*

Special Qualities: Blindsight 60 feet, damage reduction 10/magic, ooze traits, spell resistance 15
Saves: Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +5
Abilities: Str 13; Dex 10; Con 13; Int –; Wis 10; Cha 13.
Skills: –
Feats: –
Environment: Any
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 7
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: –
Level Adjustment: –

A low cloud of bright, crackling motes of light moves along the ground, causing tiny explosions in its wake.

Glitterfire is a living combination of two spells commonly employed in ancient battles—*glitterdust* and *fireball*. These two energies merged into a single dangerous form that seeks out creatures and annihilates them in a gout of flame

Glitterfire floats a few inches above the ground, much like a fog.

Combat

Being unintelligent, a glitterfire simply approaches any living creature, lighting it up and blinding it with *glitterdust* while erupting in tiny, but dangerous, explosions.

Engulf (Ex): A glitterfire can flow around creatures that fit within its space as a standard action. It cannot make a slam attack during a round in which it engulfs. A glitterfire merely needs to move over the opponents, affecting as many as it can cover. Opponents can make attacks of opportunity against the bard burst, but if they do so they are not entitled to a saving throw. Those who do not attempt attacks of opportunity must succeed on a DC 14 Reflex save or be engulfed; on a success, they are pushed back or aside (opponent's choice) as the glitterfire moves forward. Engulfed creatures are subject to the full normal effect of the *fireball* and *glitterdust* effects each round on the glitterdust's turn, and are considered to be grappled.

Fireball (Su): A creature hit by a glitterfire's slam attack or engulfed by it takes 5d6 points of fire damage (Reflex save DC 14 for half damage). This spell effect is at 5th level for purposes of SR checks.

Glitterdust (Su): A creature hit by a glitterfire's slam attack or engulf by it is blinded (Will save DC 13 negates) and covered in dust for 5 rounds, rendering it visible (if invisible) and applying a -40 penalty on Hide checks. This spell effect is at 7th level for purposes of SR and dispel checks.

BLACK TENTACLES

Large Ooze (9th level caster)

Hit Dice: 9d10+18 (76 hp)

Initiative: +0
Speed: 40 ft
Armor Class: 13 (-1 Size, +4 deflection), touch 13, flat-footed 13
Base Attack/Grapple: +6/+16
Attack: slam +10 melee (1d6+4 and spell effect)
Full Attack: slam +10 melee (1d6+4 and spell effect)
Space/Reach: 10 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: engulf, ray of enfeeblement, Evard's black tentacles
Special Qualities: Blindsight 60 feet, damage reduction 10/magic, ooze traits, spell resistance 17
Saves: Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +7
Abilities: Str 19; Dex 11; Con 14; Int –; Wis 11; Chr 14.
Skills: –
Feats: –
Environment: Any
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 9
Treasure: none
Alignment: always neutral
Advancement: –
Level Adjustment: –

A writhing mass of black, rubbery tentacles pulls itself across the ground towards you.

Black tentacles is a mass of *Evard's black tentacles* which combined with a *ray of enfeeblement* to form a new creature. It crawls along on some of its tentacles, seeking living creatures to wrap up and crush to death.

Combat

A black tentacles attacks by slamming into prey with its body or engulfing foes.

Engulf (Ex): A bard burst can flow around creatures that fit within its space as a standard action. It cannot make a slam attack during a round in which it engulfs. A bard burst merely needs to move over the opponents, affecting as many as it can cover. Opponents can make attacks of opportunity against the bard burst, but if they do so they are not entitled to a saving throw. Those who do not attempt attacks of opportunity must succeed on a DC 16 Reflex save or be engulfed; on a success, they are pushed back or aside (opponent's choice) as the black tentacles moves forward. Engulfed creatures are considered to be grappled by a tentacle and are subject to the *ray of enfeeblement* effect.

Ray of Enfeeblement (Su): A creature hit by a black tentacle's slam attack or engulfed by it takes 1d6 Strength damage for 1 minute. Multiple hits are not cumulative and a subject's strength may never drop below 1.

Evard's Black Tentacles (Su): A black tentacles initiates a grapple attack anytime it engulfs an opponent or hits with its slam attack; this does not provoke an attack of opportunity. It can grapple up to four Medium-sized or smaller opponents or one Large-sized or larger opponent at a time without penalty and does not lose its Dexterity bonus or ability to threaten surrounding

squares while grappling. Each round that it successfully grapples an opponent it inflicts 1d4+4 damage.

LIVING BLADES

Large Ooze (13th level caster)

Hit Dice: 13d10+39 (118 hp)
Initiative: +1
Speed: 40 ft
Armor Class: 16 (-1 Size, +1 Dex, +6 deflection), touch 16, flat-footed 15
Base Attack/Grapple: +9/+12
Attack: slam +12 melee (1d6+3 and spell effect)
Full Attack: slam +12 melee (1d6+3 and spell effect)
Space/Reach: 10 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: engulf, blade barrier
Special Qualities: Blindsight 60 feet, damage reduction 10/magic, ooze traits, spell resistance 21
Saves: Fort +13, Ref +11, Will +11
Abilities: Str 16; Dex 13; Con 16; Int –; Wis 13; Chr 16.
Skills: –
Feats: –
Environment: Any
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 12
Treasure: none
Alignment: always neutral
Advancement: –
Level Adjustment: –

A whirling mass of blades of energy drifts across the ground towards you.

Living blades is a *blade barrier* spell from an age long past which has achieved a form of life. It whirls around vertically, always seeking to chop up living creatures.

Combat

A living blades attacks by slamming against an opponent or attempting to engulf foes with its body.

Engulf (Ex): A living blades can flow around creatures that fit within its space as a standard action. It cannot make a slam attack during a round in which it engulfs. A living blades merely needs to move over the opponents, affecting as many as it can cover. Opponents can make attacks of opportunity against the living blades, but if they do so they are not entitled to a saving throw. Those who do not attempt attacks of opportunity must succeed on a DC 19 Reflex save or be engulfed; on a success, they are pushed back or aside (opponent's choice) as the living blades moves forward. Engulfed creatures are subject to the full normal effect of the blade barrier each round on the living blades' turn, and are considered to be grappled.

Blade Barrier (Su): A living blades' slam and engulf attacks subject the victim to 13d6 damage (Reflex save DC 19 for half damage) from the living blades' force blades.

TATTOO MAGIC [Item Creation]

(As originally appeared in *Forgotten Realms: Lords of Darkness* and reprinted in "Hardby: City of the Scorned" in *Dungeon* #92)

You can create tattoos that store spells.

Prerequisite: Craft (calligraphy) or Craft (painting) skill, spellcaster level 3rd +.

Benefit: You can create single-use magical tattoos of any spell of 3rd level or lower that you know and that targets a creature or creatures. Creating a tattoo takes 1 hour, and it must be inked onto a creature with a corporeal body. When you create a tattoo, you set the caster level, which must be sufficient to cast the spell in question and no higher than your own level. The base price of a tattoo is the spell level x its caster level x 50 gp. To create a tattoo, you must spend $\frac{1}{25}$ of this base price in XP and use up raw materials costing half of this base price. Any tattoo that stores a spell with a costly material component or an XP cost also carries a commensurate cost which must be paid in addition to the base price when creating the tattoo.

When you create a tattoo, you make any choices that you would normally make when casting the spell. The bearer of the tattoo is the only one who can activate it and is always the target of the spell. Activating a tattoo is a standard action which does not draw an attack of opportunity and requires the creature to touch the tattoo with either hand (which need not be empty).

Normally a magic tattoo uses a magic item space on the creature's body. For example, a creature with a tattoo on one of its hands could not gain the benefits from a magical glove on that hand. In effect, the magical tattoo is always the first item "worn" on that part of the body, negating the effects of all other items. A tattoo can be created which does not take up a magic item space, but the base price of such a tattoo is double the normal value.

A magical tattoo can be erased with an *erase* spell as if it were magical writing. Failing to erase the tattoo does not activate it.

LINGERING SONG [General]

(As presented in *Complete Adventurer*)

Your inspirational bardic music stays with listeners long after the last note has died away.

Prerequisite: Bardic music.

Benefit: If you use your bardic music to inspire courage, inspire greatness, or inspire heroics, the effect lasts for 1 minute after an inspired ally stops hearing you play.

Normal: Inspire courage, inspire greatness, and inspire heroics last as long as an ally hears the bard sing plus an additional 5 rounds.

DIVINE METAMAGIC [DIVINE]

(As presented in *Complete Divine*, including errata)

You channel energy into some of your divine spells to make them more powerful

Prerequisite: Ability to turn or rebuke undead, metamagic feat

Benefit: When you take this feat, choose a metamagic feat that you already possess. This feat applies only to that metamagic feat. As a free action, you can take the energy from turning or rebuking undead and use it to apply a metamagic feat to spells that you know. You must spend one turn or rebuke attempt, plus an additional attempt for each level increase in the metamagic feat you're using. For example, Jozan the cleric could sacrifice three turn attempts to empower a *holy smite* he's casting. Because you're using positive or negative energy to augment your spells, the spell slot for the spell doesn't change.

Special: This feat may be taken multiple times. Each time you take this feat, choose a different metamagic feat to which to apply it.

CLOSE-QUARTERS FIGHTING[General]

(As presented in *Complete Warrior*)

You are skilled at fighting at close range and resisting grapple attempts

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +3.

Benefit: You gain an attack of opportunity whenever an enemy attempts to grapple you, even if the enemy has a feat or special ability that would normally bypass the attack. If you deal damage with this attack, the enemy fails to start the grapple unless it has the Improved Grapple feat or a special ability such as improved grab. If the enemy has such an ability, you may add the damage you deal as a bonus on your opposed check to resist being grappled. This feat does not give you extra attacks of opportunity during a round or allow you to make an attack of opportunity when you would be denied one for being surprised, helpless, or in a similar situation.

Normal: Creatures with Improved Grapple, improved grab, or similar feats or special abilities do not provoke attacks of opportunity when they attempt to start a grapple.

Special: A fighter may select Close-Quarters Fighting as one of his fighter bonus feats.

INSPIRATIONAL BOOST

(As presented in *Complete Adventurer*)

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting, Sonic]

Level: Bard 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 swift action

Range: Personal

Targets: You

Duration: 1 round or special; see text

When you play your instrument, sing your song, recite your epic poem, or speak your words of encouragement, you fill your allies with greater confidence than normal. While this spell is in effect, the morale bonus granted by your inspire courage bardic music increases by 1.

The effect lasts until your inspire courage effect ends. If you don't begin to use your inspire courage ability before the beginning of your next turn, the spell's effect ends.

SWASHBUCKLER

(As presented in *Complete Warrior*, only material relevant to this adventure is listed)

The swashbuckler embodies the concepts of daring and panache. Favoring agility and wit over brute force, the swashbuckler excels both in combat situations and social interactions, making her a versatile character indeed.

GAME RULE INFORMATION

Swashbucklers have the following game statistics.

Abilities: The lightly armored swashbuckler depends on high Dexterity for her Armor Class, as well as for many class skills. High Intelligence and Charisma scores are also hallmarks of a successful swashbuckler. Strength is not as important for a swashbuckler as it is for other classes.

Alignment: Any.

Hit Dice: d10.

Class Skills

The swashbuckler's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Jump (Str), Profession (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Swim (Str), Tumble (Dex), and Use Rope (Dex). See Chapter 4 in the *Player's Handbook* for skill descriptions.

Skill Points at 1st level: (4 + Int modifier) x4

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier

Table 1-4: The Swashbuckler

Level	BAB	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1 st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Weapon Finesse
2 nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Grace +1
3 rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Insightful strike
4 th	+4	+4	+1	+1	
5 th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Dodge +1
6 th	+6/+1	+5	+2	+2	
7 th	+7/+2	+5	+2	+2	Acrobatic charge

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the swashbuckler.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Swashbucklers are proficient with all simple and martial weapons, and with light armor. Some of the swashbuckler's class features, as noted below, rely on her being no more than lightly armored and unencumbered.

Weapon Finesse (Ex): A swashbuckler gains Weapon Finesse as a bonus feat at 1st level even if she does not qualify for the feat.

Grace (Ex): A swashbuckler gains a +1 competence bonus on Reflex saves at 2nd level. A swashbuckler loses this bonus when wearing medium or heavy armor or when carrying a medium or heavy load.

Insightful Strike (Ex): At 3rd level, a swashbuckler becomes able to place her finesse attacks where they deal greater damage. She applies her Intelligence bonus (if any) as a bonus on damage rolls (in addition to any Strength bonus she may have) with any light weapon, as well as any other weapon that can be used with Weapon Finesse, such as a rapier, whip, or spiked chain. Targets immune to sneak attacks or critical hits are immune to the swashbuckler's insightful strike. A swashbuckler cannot use this ability when wearing medium or heavy armor or when carrying a medium or heavy load.

Dodge Bonus (Ex): A swashbuckler is trained at focusing her defense on a single opponent in melee. During her action, she may designate an opponent and receive a +1 dodge bonus to Armor Class against melee attacks from that opponent. She can select a new opponent on any action. This bonus increases by +1 every 5 levels after 5th. A swashbuckler loses this bonus when wearing medium or heavy armor or when carrying a medium or heavy load.

If the swashbuckler also has the Dodge feat, she need not designate the same target for this ability as for the Dodge feat. (If she designates the same target, the bonuses stack.)

Acrobatic Charge (Ex): A swashbuckler of 7th level or higher can charge in situations where others cannot. She may charge over difficult terrain that normally slows movement or allies blocking her path. The ability enables her to run down steep stairs, leap down from a balcony, or tumble over tables to get to her targets. Depending on circumstances, she may still need to make appropriate checks (Jump or Tumble checks, in particular) to successfully move over the terrain.

APPENDIX 3: THE CITY OF HARDBY

Much of this material is adapted from the “Hardby: City of the Scorned” article by Paul Looby in *Dungeon* #92.

Hardby (small city): Conventional; AL LN; 15,000 gp; Assets 3,825,000 gp; Population 5,100 mixed (human 72%, half-orc 22%, halfling 2%, dwarf 1%, gnome 1%, half-elf 1%, elf 1%).

Temples: Ehlonna (forests, woodlands), Joramy (fire, volcanoes, wrath), Lirr (literature, art), Mayaheine (protection, justice, valor), Myhriss (love, beauty), Norebo (luck, gambling), Osprem (sea, voyages, sailors), Pelor (sun, light, healing, protection), Procan (seas, navigation), St. Cuthbert (common sense, wisdom, discipline), Wee Jas (magic, death, vanity), Xerbo (seaborne trade), Zilchus (power, money).

A BRIEF SOCIAL HISTORY OF HARDBY

The settlement that would become the city of Hardby was founded in -278 CY by the Suel mage Ena Norbe on the northeastern coast of the Woolly Bay. Believing that it was the folly of men that led to the fall of the Suel Imperium, Ena declared herself as Gynarch and established that only women would rule Hardby. Her daughters became the progenitors of the Six Great Families of Hardby and the core of the Gynarchy, from which future leaders and officials would be chosen. With one exception, Hardby remained under the rule of women until 517 CY, when the Merchant's Alliance in Hardby seized power in a bloodless coup. Marriage with Trade Council members and behind-the-scenes actions allowed effective rule of Hardby to remain in the hands of the Gynarchy during this period, however. Even after Greyhawk took control of the city during the Greyhawk Wars and established a Military Governor to rule the city, the Despotrix continued to maintain considerable influence—a reality that still greatly concerns the Directing Oligarchy of Greyhawk.

Unlike Greyhawk and most other areas of the central Flanaess, Hardby has a sizable half-orc population that is not only tolerated but welcomed. Some half-orc families, who primarily live in the Dock District and Fishtown, have been in the city for generations now, and half-orc sailors, soldiers, and dockworkers are regulars amongst dockside taverns and businesses. Prejudice against half-orcs is widely frowned upon and discouraged.

MERCHANT'S ALLIANCE

The Hardby Merchant's Alliance was formed by refugees from the Pomarj who found themselves excluded from governance and belittled by Hardby's famously independent-minded women. The Alliance created a Trade Council of six merchants and six “rivermen” (dock workers, pilots or military officers, and one judge), all of whom were elected at regular intervals. Although the Trade Council officially governed Hardby, it generally ended up answering to the wishes of the Despotrix. Since Greyhawk took control, though, the rivermen councilors

have been military officers loyal to the Directing Oligarchy. The Council is now subordinate to the Military Governor and confined strictly to discussion of commercial matters. Naturally the Merchant's Alliance is unhappy with this current state of affairs.

DISTRICTS OF HARDBY

Northend—A crowded district on the north side of the docks which includes the Palace of the Gynarchs, the Law Courts, and the city's primary military and naval barracks. The High Chapel, a prominent temple to Pelor, can also be found here.

Dock District—A cobbled quay which runs the length of the waterfront, it is a warren of boisterous taverns, inns, hostels, and other less reputable places. The streets are narrow and back alleys are dangerous after dark, while drunken brawls are not uncommon.

Fish Town—This area of warehouses and business related to fishing and sailing reeks of fish and is populated by hordes of cats (which are considered lucky) and seagulls (which are not). It is also the poorest section of Hardby, though it is not as bad as the slums in most other major cities.

Tradetown—Located outside the Great Wall, this crowded and bustling quarter is the heart of commerce in the city and home to most of its merchants and artisans. Exotic items from the four corners of the Flanaess can be found here.

The Ebbfields—Originally the upper-class section of town, it now houses Hardby's middle class and a spill-over of its poorer elements. Older parts are pleasant with broad, well-paved, leafy streets.

PLAYER'S HANDOUT 1A

Rumor has it that the dreaded Slave Lords have arisen again and are working with Turrosh Mak, Despot of the Pomarj. Some say they're spreading their influence throughout the cities of the Wild Coast and maybe even as far as Hardby herself!

PLAYER'S HANDOUT 1B

By all accounts the leading candidates to replace the Despotrix when she kicks the bucket are her granddaughter Aleeta and Deidre Longland, the Chief Justicar. Even money right now on who it'll be, but their supporters are already jockeying for position.

PLAYER'S HANDOUT 1C

The Despotrix is dying because of that business in Veluna with the Crook of Rao that banished the fiends. Supposedly, the Velunite priests that took part are dropping like flies from strange and similarly incurable ailments.

PLAYER'S HANDOUT 1D

Rary the Traitor wants to take over Hardby to use as a shield against the vengeance of the Circle of Eight. His agents are everywhere, snooping around in town, looking for weaknesses they can exploit.

PLAYER'S HANDOUT 1E

Rary the Traitor is up to something out in the Bright Lands, that's for sure. He's got the manscorpions all stirred up, and the nomads say he's looking for something and paying big money to any who find it for him. A dangerous place to be right now, even compared to normal, unless you're looking to cut a deal with The Traitor.

PLAYER'S HANDOUT 1F

There's a big, old dragon who lairs in Dagger Rock, out in the Bright Lands. He's worshiped by kobolds, who protect that area quite tenaciously.

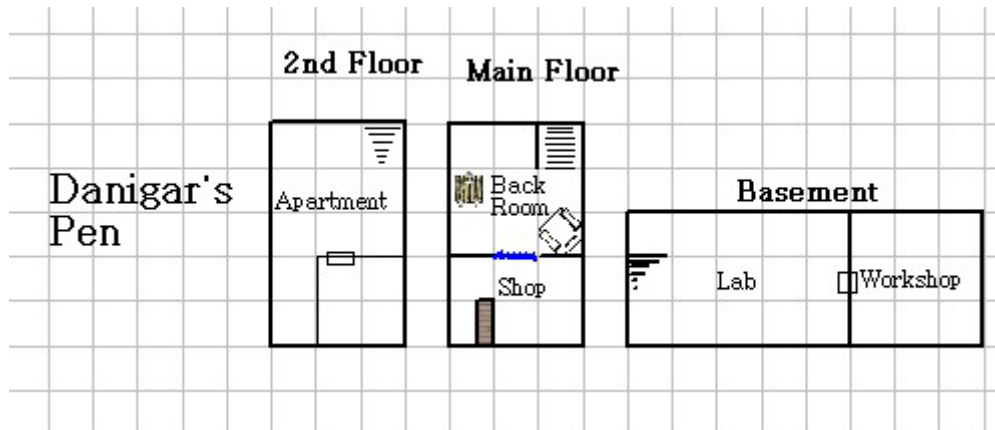
PLAYER'S HANDOUT 1G

Although that traitor Wilbrem Carister is the Military Governor appointed by Greyhawk, rumor has it that his flunky Retep Mandel is the one really running the show. He's not a man to cross. Said to have Guild connections too if you take my meaning. Might explain why so many Greyhawker Thieves have been skulking around town lately.

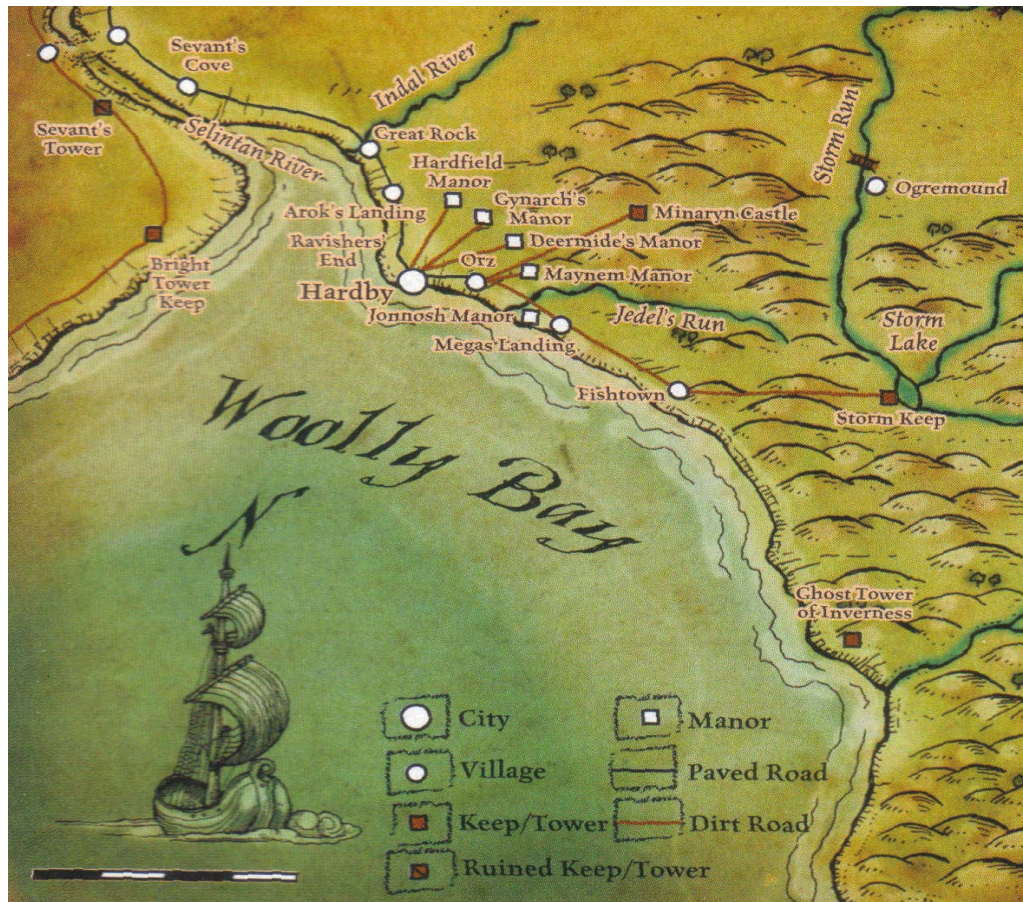
PLAYER'S HANDOUT 1H

For the past couple of months vessels bearing no identifiable flags or markings have been moored on a particularly desolate stretch of the Bright Land's coast. Crumbling ruins dot the steep cliffs there. Divers have been observed amongst the breakers close to the cliffs. Who is searching and for what is unknown.

DM'S MAPS



HARDBY HINTERLANDS



HARDBY



GATEWAY TO THE BRIGHT SANDS

CRITICAL EVENT SUMMARY—ORIGINS 2005 USE ONLY

Please return this page to the marshal or RPGA HQ once you have completed your last DMing assignment for this adventure.

DM's Name: _____

Total # Of Tables Judged For This Event: _____

Of Tables Where PCs Reported to Scrimongishaz: _____

Of Tables Where PCs Attracted Attention: _____

Of Tables Where A PC Took The Spirit Tattoo: _____

Of Tables Where Danigar Was Killed: _____

Total # of PC Deaths: _____

Anything Unusual Happen? (e.g. PCs were taken as slaves, set fire to the Bonded Barrel Ghetto, assaulted Rughra or Gormadoc, etc)

OTHER COMMENTS: