LEGENDS & LAIRS

INSTANT ADVENTURE

d20 system

Daggers at Midnight

by Mike Mearls

Requires the use of the Dungeons & Dragons® Player's Handbook, Third Edition, published by Wizards of the Coast®

Series III

Number 4

How to Use This Product

This adventure is specifically designed to be easily incorporated into any existing D&D campaign. Feel free to alter the names of places and characters and customize the details of the adventure to fit your own world.

You should be able to run this adventure in a single game session. You should read it through at least once and study those sections you will need to know well. In particular, you should familiarize yourself with the features and capabilities of any new monsters, spells, and magic items introduced in the adventure.

You can get the adventure started quickly and easily by reading the intro on the back cover to your players. You may also wish to photocopy the map on pages 8 and 9, both for your own reference and to show to the players, if appropriate.

Dungeons & Dragons®

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DAGGERS AT MIDNIGHT

By Mike Mearls

DM BACKGROUND

Cassatta Devers is a woman on a mission. A loyal acolyte of a vengeful deity of storms and sea travel, she feels that the merchants who sail into port have too much money on their hands and too little respect for her lord in their hearts. To correct this inequity, she hatched a plan to inspire piety in the merchant captains while simultaneously diverting funds from their coffers to her own. Using a *horn of tsunamis*, she hopes to create a series of maritime disasters that will damage, but not cripple, the city's shipping industry. She then plans to open a dockside shrine and attract worshippers to her deity's banner, carefully insuring that those who regularly attend services and contribute generous donations to her church's coffers avoid falling victim to the disasters that she and her cronies perpetrate.

Unfortunately for Cassatta, she discovered that those willing to participate in such a dastardly scheme often prove to be less than trustworthy business partners. She managed to track down a *horn* in the treasure hoard of a minor wizard and sent two thieves, Madarius and Gregor, to retrieve it. The two managed to pluck the item from beneath the wizard's nose. All went according to plan until, on the night the thieves were supposed to transfer the *horn* to Cassatta, Madarius failed to show up. Enraged, Cassatta let Gregor live only because he promised on threat of ten thousand horrid curses to track down Madarius and return the *horn*. In addition, the cleric has bid her half-orc ally, Krell, to launch his own search for Madarius while keeping a close eye on Gregor's activities.

Unfortunately for the characters, one of them looks almost exactly like Madarius. A relaxing stay in the heart of civilization is about to become very dangerous.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Daggers at Midnight is a d20 System adventure designed for a party of 3rd- to 5th-level player characters. Much of the plot hinges on a PC's startling resemblance to a missing thief named Madarius. The details on Madarius are deliberately vague, allowing you to select a PC lookalike without worrying about matching any particular physical characteristics, including gender. Three different groups currently seek the missing rogue and all are willing to go to any lengths to find and apprehend the thief. Luckily for the PCs, none of the three groups trusts each other. With some smart plan-

ning, the characters can turn the groups against each other and prevent an evil cult from gaining a strong foothold in the city.

ADAPTING THE ADVENTURE

Daggers at Midnight takes place in a port city. By modifying the introductory text from the back cover, you can easily fit this adventure into an urban-based campaign simply by ignoring the first paragraph. Reworking the adventure to take place in a landlocked city is a little trickier. By changing Cassatta's deity to a patron of commerce, travel, luck, or any other unscrupulous, neutral deity, you can modify her background without rendering it nonsensical. In addition, Cassatta could be after a *horn of blasting* or any other magic item that could do tremendous damage to a caravan in a short amount of time and without exposing its user to too much risk. A major part of her scheme involves creating the appearance of natural disasters rather than attacks or anything else easily traced back to her.

This adventure is designed to work in two modes. You could run this adventure as a one shot or an evening's diversion by simply following the timeline of events. Or, you can weave this adventure into an existing campaign, having Gregor, Krell, and Cassatta show up at different times to drag the characters into their schemes. There is enough information on each villain's personality and plans that it shouldn't be difficult to use the cast of this story in an extended campaign.

GETTING STARTED

The first order of business for the PCs is most likely to thoroughly question the urchin who delivered the note. Madarius's partner in crime, Gregor, is the first to "recognize" Madarius and passes the note along to the lookalike in hopes of setting up an ambush. Gregor assumes that Madarius must be in dire straits to openly return to the city and believes that his associates (the other PCs) must be powerful allies. Thus, rather than directly confront Madarius he attempts to lure him into an ambush before Krell or Cassatta can track him down.

Of course, the urchin knows nothing about what's going on. Gregor passed him a few silvers and asked him to deliver the note. The urchin, an eight-year-old boy named Stefos, can provide the characters with the following information:

The man who gave him the note stopped him on the street two blocks away, just outside a grocer. (The location has no special meaning; Gregor just stopped the first beggar he saw after writing the note.)

The man was very short and had thin blond hair and blue eyes. His skin was very pale, he walked with a cane, and he kept coughing into a handkerchief. (Cassatta has repeatedly cast *contagion* on poor Gregor both to vent her anger and to punish him for Madarius's indiscretion.)

While Stefos is young, he's both cunning and greedy. If the PCs seem desperate for information, he may spin a wild tale, embellishing details and adding more to his story if the PCs hand him cash or offer to get him a hot meal. Feel free to have Stefos drop hooks that lead PCs to areas of the city where you have other

side adventures or encounters planned. If pressed, Stefos plays on his frailty and poverty, hoping to use either pity or the PCs' desire to know more about their mysterious contact in order to extract cash from them.

INVESTIGATION

Scouring the city for clues can turn up a few useful leads, if the PCs search in the right places. Stories of Madarius's disappearance have circulated through the city's underworld and discrete inquiries there can turn up some useful information.

CONTACTING THE GUARD

Unless the PCs have serious leverage with the local guard, they find themselves spending a lot of time and learning little of use from the constabulary. As far as the town guard is concerned, the note is harmless and there are far more important matters to deal with. A Gather Information check (DC 20) or a 5 gp bribe reveals that Madarius is a known thief who dropped out of sight a few weeks ago and often associated with a con artist named Gregor. The guards assume they are dead or have skipped town. The names "Cassatta" and "Krell" ring no bells with the guard.

SEARCHING FOR GREGOR

Scouring the immediate area for the mysterious messenger turns up little information. Gregor took a coach back to his quarters above a store not far from the Blue Ox and from there to the abode of his ally Pharadale the Grim. A few bystanders noticed the sickly Gregor stumbling into the coach, but none know where the coach was headed or how to track the coachman down.

CRIMINAL CONTACTS

A conversation with contacts in the thieves' guild or any effort to ask around the seedier parts of town yields a bit of information. With a Gather Information check (DC 15) the PCs can learn that Krell is a tough mercenary fighter who works for some unknown but well-funded patron. He used to associate with Madarius and Gregor, a pair of thieves. When the PCs speak with anyone who knows of Krell or Madarius, their contact mentions the similarity between the PC you have chosen and Madarius.

COMPLICATIONS

While the PCs do their footwork, if any, the half-orc Krell does some investigative work of his own. Charged by Cassatta with keeping an eye on Gregor, Krell hopes to curry favor with Cassatta (and earn a few more coins from her) by tracking down Madarius himself. Krell keeps careful watch over Gregor and hopes that after the thief finds Madarius, the chance arises for Krell to beat him to the punch. The half-orc is aware of Gregor's contact with the party, and he believes that the lookalike PC is indeed Madarius returned with a few new allies. Krell stages an ambush in order to capture Madarius.

Krell plans to lure the characters into an alleyway and leap from hiding, either by paying someone to lure them there or by ordering one of his own men to grab a PC's belt pouch and run toward the alley. If possible, Krell prepares the alleyway beforehand by setting up stacks of moldy old hay behind which he and his thugs can hide (Spot DC 20 to notice them). Pushing aside the concealing hay is a move-equivalent action for Krell and his men, who wait with their crossbows loaded. Krell moves to block the exit from the alley and strikes to kill anyone but the Madarius lookalike. He ignores the lookalike in melee, hoping to overwhelm him once his allies are down. Krell flees if reduced to less than 10 hit points, while his thugs flee after losing half of their hit points.

If the PCs do not actively seek out information on Madarius or Cassatta, Krell keeps a careful eye on them and attempts an ambush at the first convenient opportunity. He prefers a scheme similar to the one described above. In general, Krell is unimaginative but not stupid. He doesn't simply charge the PCs and begin hacking, but he can't come up with much beyond a simple ambush. If the PCs do not fall for his bait, he continues to watch them and more than likely becomes involved with the events at the Blue Ox that evening. Krell tries to either use his plan described above or simply surround the alley behind the bar and attack both the PCs and Gregor's representatives.

If the PCs confront and defeat Krell, he flees town in order to avoid Cassatta's wrath. He saw what she did to Gregor and wants to avoid his fate. If the PCs capture him, he explains who Cassatta, Gregor, and Madarius are if he is offered a bribe of more than 50 gp and safe passage out of the city. He can also give the PCs directions to Cassatta's headquarters at Sunderham's Imports, a warehouse on the waterfront, and to Gregor's living quarters. As Krell has spent the day watching the PCs, he does not know that Gregor is staying with his friend Pharadale, as noted above.

Krell's thugs know only that they have been paid rather well to watch out for a person matching Madarius's description. If offered 10 gp and their freedom, they can direct the PCs to Gregor's home and know that Gregor and Madarius are somehow connected to Krell's patron. They know nothing of Cassatta or why Krell is so interested in Gregor and the PCs.

Gregor's quarters consist of a single dingy bedroom, empty save for a bed and a pair of wooden chairs. Gregor packed his belongings before heading over to Pharadale's. He suspected that Madarius would drop by his place and does not want to meet his ex-partner before the evening rendezvous. Sunderham's is described below.

THE BLUE OX

Located near the edge of the city's slums, the Blue Ox caters to laborers and other commoners who live and work in the city. A group such as the PCs is fairly out of place here. If the characters enter the inn dressed in full adventuring garb or armor, the patrons and the bartender, an obese, balding man named Grettle, are gruff and uncooperative. Furthermore, they learn nothing of use as neither Gregor or his men frequent the bar. Thirty minutes before the appointed meeting time, Pharadale and a group of four hired warriors make their way to the ally behind the Blue Ox, taking care to keep out of sight.

Pharadale's plan is simple. He claims to seek a parlay on behalf of Gregor. What happens next is dictated by the PCs. If they masquerade as Madarius, Pharadale uses *web* to trap them and sends the warriors forward to capture "Madarius" and bring him back to Pharadale's home, where Gregor awaits. However, Pharadale knows the full story of what's at stake, and though he hasn't met Madarius, if the PCs claim ignorance he weighs their words carefully. A Diplomacy check (DC 15) convinces Pharadale to escort the PCs to a meeting with Gregor. Otherwise, Pharadale uses *web* followed by *insect swarm* on any spellcasters in an attempt to grab "Madarius." Pharadale and any of the thugs flee if reduced to half their hit points or less. If captured, they offer to lead the PCs to Gregor if they are left unharmed and out of the hands of the law.

PHARADALE'S

The wizard Pharadale rents a room from a boarding house in a middle-class section of the city frequented by visiting traders and merchants. His quarters have two rooms: a study lined with books and a bedroom. Gregor awaits news of Madarius here. If the PCs arrive with Pharadale in peace, Gregor is willing to listen to their story and quickly realizes his mistake once he gets a clear look at the Madarius lookalike.

Gregor is in his early 30s, five feet tall, and has thinning, short blond hair. His face is covered with red blotches that he normally covers with makeup, his hands tremble constantly, and he is continually wracked by a loud, hacking cough. In revenge for Madarius's treachery, Cassatta has bestowed Gregor with several diseases via her *contagion* spell.

Whether approached peacefully or in anger, Gregor tries desperately to deflect any blame or suspicion away from him and towards Cassatta. Gregor sees the PCs as the perfect tool to rid himself of the cleric and he takes great pains to paint her as a diabolical fiend, offering up his own sorry state as prime evidence of what she is capable of doing. He isn't above hinting that his diseases are merely a preview of what Cassatta has in store for the city. In truth, Gregor knows nothing of Cassatta's extortion scheme and simply tries to come up with whatever story inspires the most hatred toward Cassatta in the PCs. However, Gregor does know the properties of the *horn* he and Madarius stole and with some prodding he may hazard a guess that Cassatta intends to use it to destroy the city's shipping industry.

If approached peacefully and treated with a modicum of respect and courtesy, Gregor tells the PCs of Cassatta's skill in manipulating water and warns them to avoid confronting her near the ocean. Otherwise, he does not warn them in hopes that the PCs and Cassatta will eliminate each other.

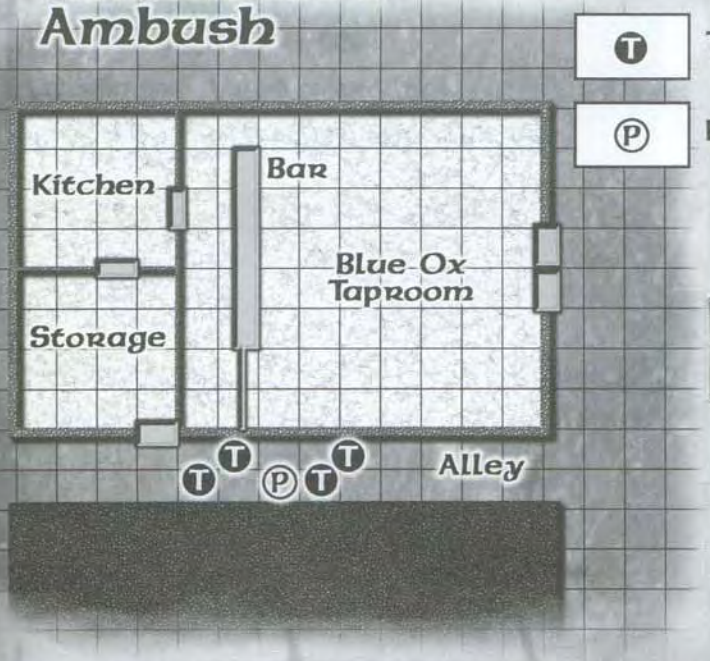
SUNDERHAM'S IMPORTS

This small wooden building is built directly on the docks and stands six feet above the harbor. The interior is divided into two rooms: a large storage area where incoming goods are kept before they are sold to the city's merchants and a small office where Cassatta and her followers sleep. A giant octopus, a pet granted to Cassatta by her deity, lurks in the waters beneath Sunderham's and watches out for intruders who approach via boat.

If approached during normal business hours, Emer and Trillia greet any PCs and act the part of a pair of merchants willing to sell to any eager bidder. Sunderham's is currently stocked with spices and silk garments from a distant port. Both Emer and Trillia normally keep their weapons and armor back at the office during the day, though both are fully armed at night. Cassatta and the rest of her gang spend their time in the back office, depending on Emer and Trillia to make supply runs to the local market. Cassatta is willing to spend two more weeks in the city before declaring this scheme a bust and moving on to something else.

An opportunist at her core, Cassatta is willing to listen to any offers of alliance from the PCs. She's desperate to get her hands on

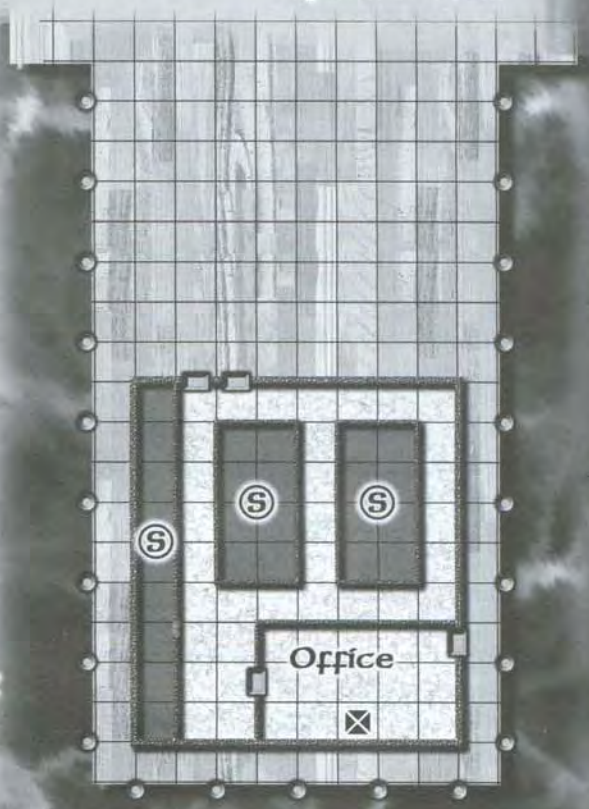
Pharadale's Ambush



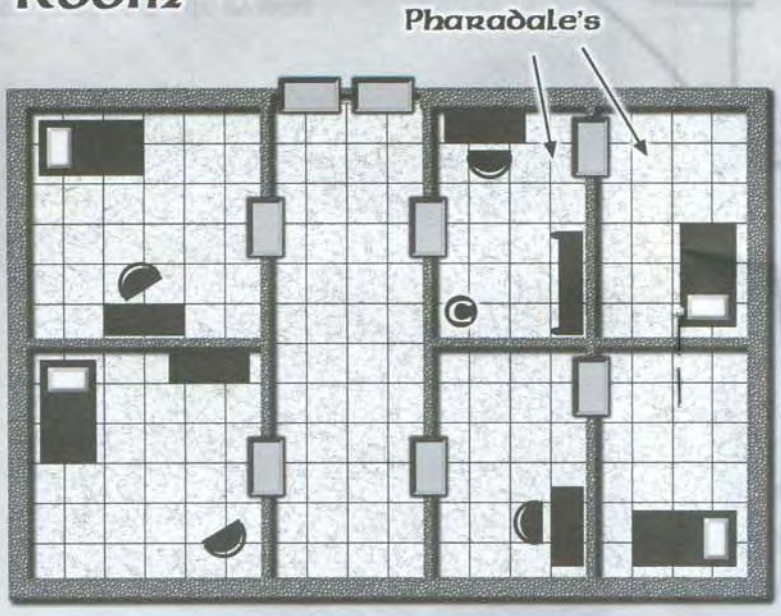
Scale: One Square Equals 5 Feet

Sunderham's Imports

Scale: One Square Equals 5 Feet



Pharadale's Room



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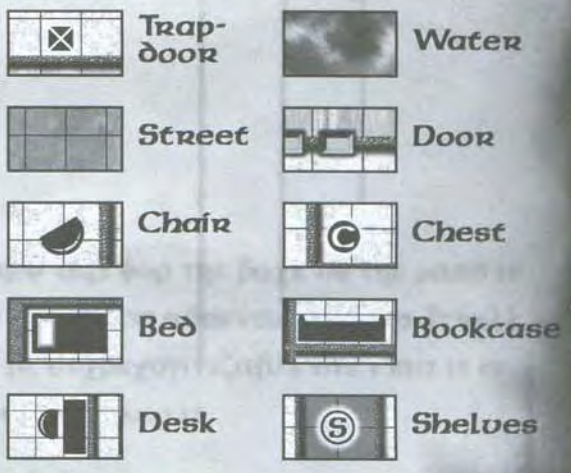

the *horn*. If the Madarius lookalike enters the store, Trillia quietly makes her way to the back to alert the others. Fernig leaves by the back door to block the exit, while the others launch an attack.

If attacked, the two flee to the back office where Cassatta, Fernig, and Gaudral spend their time. Those three confront the PCs while Emer and Trillia grab weapons and leap into the fray. Gaudral uses *burning hands* on any warrior types and saves *color spray* for a spellcaster. He also attempts to use *grease* to make it difficult to charge any defensive position he may occupy. He avoids melee at all costs and plays dead if struck by a tough-looking warrior. Fernig relies on brute force to carry the day, while Emer uses speed. Emer taunts his opponents, hoping to incite an irrational rage in them.

Cassatta, enraged that her plan has been discovered, concentrates on neutralizing spellcasters first before wading into melee with her *shock mace*. If the fight goes poorly, she uses *water breathing* then *control water* to make her escape, creating a 14-foot-high tidal surge that blasts through the floor and floods Sunderham's. Everyone in the building must make a Reflex save (DC 17) or be swept down into the harbor. Cassatta then uses *summon monster IV* to call a pack of infernal sharks to the area before swimming to safety, carried away by her octopus ally.

In addition to the items Cassatta and her gang carry, stashed in a locked (DC 25) wooden chest in the office are 600 pp, a golden conch shell worth 1,500 gp, six emeralds worth 150 gp each, a diamond encrusted tiara worth 1,000 gp, and a *figurine of wondrous power (serpentine owl)*.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Obviously, the plot and action in this adventure is somewhat fluid. It is impossible to predict what avenues the PCs will take and how the villains can react to their actions. Instead, listed below are quick snapshots of each NPC's personality and goals.

Gregor: Self-centered, scheming liar who wants to get rid of Cassatta.

Krell: Greedy but hardworking warrior willing to do anything for the right price.

Pharadale: Curious young wizard who owes Gregor a favor and wants to establish himself in the criminal underworld. Young, slender, with brown hair, simple clothes, goatee, and a calculating demeanor.

Cassatta: Scheming, ambitious cleric who wants to increase her wealth and temporal power but not at the cost of risking her life (though she sacrifices her allies readily enough). She is in her mid-30s with long black hair. Never makes a fair deal if she can help it.

Fernig: Simple brute who is both easily tricked and easily angered. Fernig has short, blond hair, a vacant expression, and speaks with simple words.

Emer: Arrogant, vain duelist out to prove he's better with a blade than anyone else. Has long brown hair, a waxed moustache, and talks conversationally with his foe in battle.

Trillia: Opportunistic rogue whose loyalty crumples in the face of hardship. A tall woman with curly blond hair and a slender build. Always keeps an escape route open and prefers talking and bargaining to fighting.

Gaudral Hooknose: Banished by his tutor for stealing a spellbook, Gaudral wants magical power at any price. Smitten with Cassatta, he does anything to win her approval and further his own skill, but at his heart he is a coward.

Gregor, Male Human Rog4: CR 4; Medium-size Humanoid; HD 3d6–6; hp 10; Init +4 (Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft.; AC 10; Atk +0 melee (1d4–3, dagger); AL CN; SV Fort –1, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 5 (11), Dex 10 (18), Con 6 (12), Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 6 (14).
Skills: Appraise +8, Bluff +5, Climb +4, Decipher Script +8, Diplomacy +5, Disguise +5, Escape Artist +7, Hide +7, Innuendo +5, Move Silently +7.
Feats: Improved Initiative, Run, Shield Proficiency.
Possessions: Dagger, 30 gp.
Note: The stats in parenthesis indicate Gregor's normal stats. He currently suffers from a wide variety of ailments bestowed upon him by Cassatta.

Pharadale the Grim, Male Human Wiz3: CR 3; Medium-size Humanoid; HD 3d4+9; hp 17; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12; Atk +2 melee (1d4, masterwork dagger), +4 ranged (1d8, masterwork light crossbow); SQ Spells; AL CN; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 11, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 9.
Spells (4/3/2): 0—*daze, detect magic, ray of frost, resistance;* 1st—*mage armor, magic missile (x2);* 2nd—*summon swarm, web.*
Skills: Concentration +8, Disable Device +5, Intimidate +2, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Open Lock +5, Spellcraft +9.
Feats: Dodge, Point Blank Shot, Scribe Scroll, Toughness.
Possessions: Masterwork dagger, masterwork light crossbow, 20 bolts, 50 gp.

Pharadale's Thugs, Male Human Ftr1 (4): CR 1; Medium-size Humanoid; HD 1d10+2; hp 10; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (+4 chain shirt, +2 shield, +1 Dex); Atk +4 melee (1d8, battleaxe), +2 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); AL CN; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 11.
Skills: Ride +5, Swim +6.
Feats: Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (battleaxe).
Possessions: Battleaxe, light crossbow, 10 bolts, large wooden shield, chain shirt, 10 gp.

Krell Blacktusk, Male Half-Orc Ftr4: CR 4; Medium-size Humanoid; HD 4d10+8; hp 35; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17 (+7 half-plate); Atk +10 melee (2d6+9, *+1 greatsword),* +4 ranged (1d6+4, throwing axe); AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 18, Dex 11, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 12.
Skills: Intimidate +4, Swim +5. *Feats:* Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatsword), Weapon Specialization (greatsword).
Possessions: Half-plate, *+1 greatsword*, throwing axe, 100 gp.

Krell's men, Male Half-Orc Rog1 (4): CR 1; Medium-size Humanoid; HD 1d6+2; hp 8; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+4 chain shirt); Atk +3 melee (1d8+4, longsword wielded two-handed), +1 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 16, Dex 11, Con 16, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 9.
Skills: Climb +7, Hide +4, Intimidate +3, Move Silently +4, Jump +7, Swim +7.
Feats: Point Blank Shot.
Possessions: Longsword, light crossbow, 10 bolts, chain shirt, 20 gp.

Cassatta, Female Human Clr7: CR 7; Medium-size Humanoid; HD 7d8+7; hp 54; Spd 20 ft.; AC 21; Atk +9 melee (1d8+1d6+3, *+1 heavy shock mace*), +6 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); SQ Rebuke undead, spells; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +8; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 17, Cha 15.
Spells (6/5+1/4+1/3+1/1+1): 0—*create water, cure minor wounds (x2), detect magic, resistance (x2);* 1st—*bless, cause fear, command, doom, obscuring mist, shield of faith*; 2nd—*death knell, hold person, shatter, silence, spiritual weapon*; 3rd—*cure serious wounds, searing light, water breathing, water walk*; 4th—*control water, summon monster IV.*
Domains: Destruction, Water.
Skills: Concentration +11, Healing +13, Knowledge (religion) +11, Spellcraft +11.
Feats: Blind-Fight, Combat Casting, Spell Focus (enchantment), Weapon Focus (heavy mace).
Possessions: Full plate, large wooden shield, *+1 heavy shock mace, potion of clairvoyance, potion of cure moderate wounds.*

Fernig, Male Human Ftr2: CR 2; Medium-Size Humanoid (6 ft. 7 in. tall); HD 2d10+2; hp 17; Init -1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16; Atk +6 melee (1d12+4, greataxe), +1 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref -1, Will -1; Str 16, Dex 9, Con 13, Int 7, Wis 8, Cha 11.
Skills: Swim –2.
Feats: Cleave, Power Attack, Sunder, Weapon Focus (greataxe).
Possessions: Half-plate, greataxe, light crossbow, 10 bolts, dagger, 40 gp.

Emer, Male Human Ftr2: CR 2; Medium-size Humanoid; HD 2d10+4; hp 20; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+3 Dex, +2 leather armor); Atk +4 melee (1d6+1, masterwork rapier) and +1 melee (1d6+1, shortsword), +5 ranged (1d4+1, dagger); AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 14.
Skills: Diplomacy +4, Hide +5, Jump +6, Move Silently +4, Ride +8, Swim +6.
Feats: Ambidexterity, Expertise, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse (rapier).
Possessions: Masterwork rapier, shortsword, daggers (2), leather armor, *potion of glibness, potion of clairvoyance,* 45 gp.

Trillia, Female Human Rog2: CR 2; Medium-size Humanoid; HD 2d6; hp 10; Init +8 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+4 Dex, +2 leather armor); Atk +2 melee (1d6+1, rapier), +6 ranged (1d8, masterwork light crossbow); AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +7, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 18, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills: Bluff +6, Disable Device +5, Hide +9, Forgery +5, Gather Information +6, Move Silently +9, Open Locks +9, Pick Pocket +9, Search +5.
Feats: Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot.
Possessions: Rapier, masterwork light crossbow, 10 bolts, leather armor, *potion of haste*, 30 gp.

Gaudral Hooknose, Male Human Wiz2: CR 2; Medium-size Humanoid; HD 2d4+8; hp 14; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (Dex); Atk +1 melee (1d6, staff), +2 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); AL CN; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 6.
Spells (4/3): 0—*dancing lights, detect magic, flare, resistance;* 1st—*burning hands, color spray, grease.*
Skills: Alchemy +8, Concentration +9, Craft (blacksmithing) +8, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Scry +8, Spellcraft +8.
Feats: Combat Casting, Dodge, Scribe Scroll.
Possessions: Staff, light crossbow, 10 bolts, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, 10 gp.

Giant Octopus: CR 8; Large Animal; HD 8d8+8; hp 44; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 20 ft., swim 30 ft.; AC 18 (–1 size, +3 Dex, +2 natural); Atk +10 melee (1d4+5, 8 tentacle rakes), +5 melee (1d8+2, bite); Face 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SA Constrict, improved grab; SQ Jet, ink cloud; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +3; Str 20, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 3.
Skills: Hide +11, Listen +4, Spot +4.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mike Mearls makes his home in the rustic wilds of New Hampshire. He has written material for a variety of games, including *Vampire: the Masquerade*, *Feng Shui*, and *Unknown Armies*. However, Mike's one true love has always been classic fantasy gaming. Mike's proud to note that while he actually does utilize his BA in geography as part of his job, he's managed to put it to use figuring out where to place lost ruins, ancient dwarf homes, and dragon lairs rather than strip malls and bookstores.

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As you make your way down the street, a ragged urchin runs up to you, clutching a piece of parchment in one hand.

"Hello there, you," he says, pointing at a member of your party. "A man gave me four silver to deliver this to you. He said you'd give me four more on delivery." He presses the parchment into your hand, eyeing your coin pouch as he waits expectantly for his payment.

The parchment reads: "I'm surprised you'd show up around here again, Madarius. If you keep flaunting your face around town, it's only a matter of time before Krell or Cassatta decides to smash it in. Gods, I'd have half a mind to do that myself if we didn't make such a good team. I'm willing to forgive your last double cross if you see fit to meet me in the alley behind the Blue Ox just before sundown today."

Madarius? Cassatta? Krell?

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