



DIVINE INSPIRATION

A One-Round DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Adventure for 1st- to 3rd-Level Characters

COVENANT OF LIGHT™ Faction Adventure 1 for the XEN'DRIK EXPEDITIONS™ Campaign

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Sources: *Eberron Campaign Setting* [Keith Baker, Bill Slavicsek, James Wyatt], *Expanded Psionics Handbook* [Bruce Cordell], *Player's Guide to Eberron* [James Wyatt, Keith Baker, Luke Johnson, Stan!], *Secrets of Xen'drik* [Keith Baker, Jason Bulmahn, Amber Scott]

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INTRODUCTION

Divine Inspiration is the first faction adventure for the Covenant of Light faction in the XEN'DRIK EXPEDITIONS campaign. It is optimized for 1st-level characters. This means that it's designed and balanced for a group of four to five 1st-level characters (PCs).

If your group deviates from this size and strength, each encounter features a section titled "Scaling the Encounter" so that you, the Dungeon Master (DM), can create a more enjoyable and better balanced adventure.

If there are only four of five PCs of the same level in your group, it's easy to use this section: just use the level entry that corresponds with the PCs' level (the optimized entry is given in the main adventure text). For groups of mixed levels and groups with six PCs, determine the average level of the PCs, and increase that average by one for groups of six PCs. Treat that level as the groups level. That said, as DM you have discretion when it comes to fitting the challenges of the adventure to your group. If your group finds the challenges too easy or too difficult, feel free to increase or decrease the level of challenge appropriately. The goal is to challenge the PCs and entertain the players, not to overwhelm or even underwhelm them. The most enjoyable D&D games are ones where failure and character death are possible, but success and reward are attainable through daring and smart play.

Divine Inspiration has been designed to be part of the RPGA DUNGEON & DRAGONS CAMPAIGNS: XEN'DRIK EXPEDITIONS program. Like all DUNGEONS & DRAGONS CAMPAIGNS adventures, it's recommended that PCs undertaking its challenges have at least one arcane spellcaster, a divine spellcaster (preferably a cleric), a strong warrior, and a rogue. Parties missing these valuable adventuring components may find *Divine Inspiration* very challenging, and the chances of character death higher. Please warn the players of this before play starts. DUNGEONS & DRAGONS CAMPAIGNS allow players to "take one for the team"; that is to play a fastplay wizard, fighter, rogue, or cleric in place of one of their characters, and gain experience point for their character. If the group lacks one of these vital four classes, suggest to your players to take advantage of this option.

RPGA-SANCTIONED PLAY

Most likely you ordered this adventure as part of an RPGA even from the RPGA website, or as part of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS CAMPAIGNS retail program. To play *Divine Inspiration* as part of the XEN'DRIK EXPEDITIONS campaign—a worldwide, ongoing D&D campaign set in EBERRON—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 DM (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 few things. First, it allows the PCs participating in play to accumulate experience points (XP) and gold pieces (gp) to advance their XEN'DRIK EXPEDITIONS characters. Second, it allows the RPGA to track and record what character did during the adventure, and future adventures a written with what the majority of player did in mind—in this way characters' action shape the future of the campaign. Lastly, player and DMs gain rewards for sanctioned RPGA play if they are members of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS REWARDS program. Playing this adventure is worth four (4) points.

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

To learn more about the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS CAMPAIGNS: XEN'DRIK EXPEDITIONS character creation and development, RPGA event sanctioning, and DUNGEONS & DRAGONS REWARDS, visit the RPGA website at www.rpga.com.

THIS IS A FACTION ADVENTURE

This is a faction adventure for the Covenant of Light. This means that the story is suited for that group, and can only be played by Covenant of Light characters. As the DM you should make sure that only member of this faction play in this adventure, as play of another faction's character could invalidate the entire session.



Covenant of Light Faction Symbol

PLAYERS READ NO FARTHER

If you are planning to play 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*, *Monster Manual*, and the *Eberron Campaign Setting*. It is also a good idea to have a copy of the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*, as it is possible that some character playing in this adventure will be kalashtar utilizing the psionics rules.

Throughout this adventure, blocks of *italicized* text provide player information for you to paraphrase or read aloud when appropriate. Sidebars contain important information for you, including special instruction on running or expanding the adventure. Information on nonplayer characters (NPCs) and monsters appear in abbreviated form in the adventure text. Full information on NPCs and monsters are given in a section directly after each encounter in a section titled "Combat Statistics" or can be found in the *Monster Manual*.

This adventure may use material from various other D&D sourcebooks and other official sources. While many times the adventure text notes where this information came from, the adventure is designed so that you don't need to have those sources during play.

Either attached to the adventure, you'll find a special *RPGA Session Tracking Sheet* tailored for this adventure. 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.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The *Libri Mordahve*—a battered, leather-bound tome with poorly cut parchment pages covered in pictographs of a long dead language—is the only surviving work of Aladar Mordahve, a survivor of the Quori invasion and an expert diviner. His insights and experiences after the invasion are contained within the aged tome along with hundreds of obscure passages on a myriad of subjects. Lost for centuries, it was recently unearthed and brought to Stormreach for examination.

For more than a year, the *Libri Mordahve* has intrigued scholars of the Covenant of Light, the faction responsible for its recovery. Its pages, a mystery to all but those the Covenant has chosen to study it, have generated fervor, and sparked many internal debates as to its relevance regarding the *Caldyn Fragments*. With Prophecy on everyone's mind and momentous events on the horizon, the Covenant is pursuing every resource it can find for any advantage it can get.

Certain words noted in the passages of the *Libri* have piqued the interest of the Covenant because of their striking similarity to the draconic Prophecies. While there have been no direct correlations, enough symmetry between the book and the *Caldyn Fragments* has been found to warrant a deeper examination of Mordahve's sole known work.

This need for information and forewarning has sent the *Libri Mordahve* from sage to specialist all over Xen'drik, each researcher hoping to be the one to unlock its secrets and provide the faction's masters with something concrete to use in the coming months. The latest hope for the *Libri* is Brother Tiris, a scholar serving in a small shrine to Aureon. Tiris, an aged expert on old languages, has an extensive knowledge of ancient history and may be able to provide some insight on the secrets within the *Libris Mordahve* where so many others have failed.

After a failed attempt at theft during its last transport between temples, the Covenant of Light has taken to guarding it each time the book is moved. Concerned that liveried escort only attracts attention, the faction has decided to use relatively unknown members for the duty. This not only lets the Covenant of Light keep its property safe from prying eyes but also lets them gauge the trustworthiness of its newest recruits. Faith is paramount to the Covenant of Light; even so, blind trust is a foolish chance the faction cannot afford to take.

The Covenant is right to be concerned about the *Libri Mordahve*'s safety, though its masters have no idea how powerful the forces arrayed against them are. The book is well known to a number of groups, chief among them the Inspired rulers of Dar Qat. These psionic entities have had an interest in the book since its discovery amid the ruins of Xen'drik and have only recently tracked it to Stormreach. Not wishing to reveal themselves directly, they have been working through agents to secure the text for themselves.

WHAT IS DAR QAT?

Stormreach isn't the only foreign settlement on the Xen'drik Continent...it's not even the first settlement. The ancient Riedran enclave of Dar Qat stands in the cold southwestern reaches of the Lost Continent, south of the Menechturan. From its crystal spires, the Inspired pillage and scheme.

The machinations of the Inspired are always subtle but those in their employ are not always so secretive or quiet. Trying to make the last attempt on the book appear as a simple robbery, the Inspired were foiled because their minions were common street thieves. Remaining behind after they already had the book to pick over the corpses, they were spotted and taken down by the city's guards.

This time the Inspired, acting through an enigmatic psion named Whisper, have set up a series of blinds and quiet ruses, each one designed to seem like the end of the chain should they be foiled. Their plan to get the book is simple; a changeling has infiltrated Brother Tiris's shrine and take possession of the book. Once he has it, Shellok is supposed to take the *Libri Mordahve* to a human gang leader named Vrache. Vrache, Shellok's 'employer', then buys the book and drops it off at the Stormreach docks. Vrache's mind has been psionically erased of any memories of his real contact, making him no real security threat.

From there, a fledgling psion calling himself Feral is waiting in the hold of a cargo ship dry-docked for repairs. The vessel, abandoned for more than three months while its captain looks for the funds to pay for its release, is an untraceable drop off point for the *Libri*. Feral has been

instructed to get the book, place it in a water-tight barrel and drop it off the pier into the bay. Again, his clear recollection of his employer has been compromised; the Inspired do not like to leave any trace of their activities.

That is the plan as the rulers of Dar Qat have conceived is simple, elegant, and, above all, quiet. The only thing that could disrupt their plans is the interference of outside parties, namely the PCs. If they fail, the book falls into the hands of the Inspired and its divine inspiration will be lost.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The adventure begins with the PCs in the antechamber of a temple to the Sovereign Host maintained by the Covenant of Light. This temple has been the resting place of the *Libri Mordahve* for several weeks to no avail; the scholars here have not been able to glean anything useful from the book. Reluctant to give up the fascinating tome, they are now under orders to relinquish it into the care of the PCs and their contact Renvis, a Covenant courier or some renown.

After the tensions of trying to convince the priests to give up the book, something they are reluctant to do, the PCs escort Renvis through the streets of Stormreach to the Sheltered Tome, a small shrine dedicated to Aureon. Along the way, there are several suspicious situations including a perfect ambush location that proves to be nothing. By the time the PCs arrive at the Sheltered Tome, they will likely be nervous and paranoid.

This is the perfect attitude to deal with the first true threat to the book. The acolyte in charge of greeting visitors to the shrine has been waylaid and replaced by Shellok, a changeling spy-for-hire. Shellok greets the PCs warmly and offers to take the tome in his master's name. If the PCs insist on following their orders to the letter and see the book into Brother Tiris's hands personally, Shellok improvises and leaves the room, returning as Tiris in disguise. His ruse is not perfect and observant PCs can discover the truth.

Questioning or following Shellok leads the escort to the Vultures, a gang of humans and humanoids led by a self-styled 'crime lord' named Vrache. Here Renvis leaves the PCs, using his authority with the Covenant of Light to change the nature of their assignment. Wishing to be proactive, he sends the PCs to track down this new lead while he returns the *Libri Mordahve* to the Church of the Sovereign Host himself. Alone he can move faster and more quietly than with a group and besides, this lets the PCs prove themselves in ways they never could on a simple escort mission.

The trail leads the PCs, now alone and under their own direction, to the back alley described by Shellok. Vrache thinks he is the mastermind behind the theft attempt but is actually a mentally controlled pawn of the Inspired. When the PCs arrive, his arrogance is overwhelming. He banters, bargains and even offers to let the PCs join his organization. Since they likely refuse, a fight is almost guaranteed. Fortunately, what Vrache lacks in modesty, he makes up for in muscle. His Vultures are hiding in the shadows, leaping to his defense.

Once they are downed or scattered, nothing remains of Vrache's bravado. Willing to do anything to save his life, Vrache reveals that he was going to take the book to the docks and drop it through a specific porthole. He cannot clearly recall why he was going to do this, which provides the PCs with the first clue that something psionic may be behind the attempted robbery.

The docks as their next stop, the PCs find the ship just as described. An abandoned caravel with some serious hull damage, the ship is elevated over the water in a massive

iron dry dock clamp. Boarding the ship doesn't prove difficult but maneuvering around the repair scaffolding is difficult. Just getting to the inside of the ship's hold proves a job favoring the small and the agile.

Adding to the complications of the scene is the next agent in the Inspired's scheme—Feral. Feral is a rare human with awakened psionic talents. His psionic awakening has manifested savagely; Feral is remarkably animalistic, more at home with wild beasts than sentient beings. Feral has no real interest in the *Libri Mordahve* but is acting on orders he cannot clearly recall. Whether he is actively opposed to the PCs or not, he will prove a most dangerous adversary along with the aid of his animal companions and trained beasts. Getting to Feral proves difficult; defeating him, harder still.

Once Feral is dealt with, the immediate threat to the *Libri Mordahve* is ended. With no further trail to follow, the mission is ended and the tome can be returned to the Covenant safely. Observant PCs may catch a glimpse of a female figure on a passing ship, but Whisper's part in the heroes' destiny is a story for another time....

ADDITIONAL COMPLICATIONS

There are several tangents that can occur during this adventure. The first involves numerous other agents and organizations wishing to procure the *Libri Mordahve* for themselves. Optional encounter seeds have been added to the adventure's text where they would fit best; tailor these extra scenes as best fits the PCs in question. They are optional, and are stories that you can pursue in the first Covenant of Light DM's Mark.

Another sidetrack revolves around Courier Renvis. While quite capable on his own, if he is at any time left alone by the PCs, he is likely to be abducted and the book captured. While PCs will certainly want to track down the *Libri Mordahve* and the missing courier, they are unable to do so due to the nature of its abduction. See the appropriate sidebar for more information.

The last complication is the *Libri Mordahve* itself. While the PCs are under orders to deliver the text to Brother Tiris intact and unharmed, nothing is said about it remaining unread. While the tome is complex and difficult to decipher, enough time exists during the span of the adventure for those wishing to peruse its pages to glean something from the work. A story object covers this examination.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Be aware of following four considerations throughout play of this adventure. A number of interested parties are striving to get their hands or other appendages on the *Libri Mordahve*. The only advantages the PCs possess in this contest are their initial possession of the work and momentum. A real sense of racing against unseen forces needs to be communicated to the PCs through the action of the adventure.

tone and mood

The first thing to keep in mind is that the *Libri Mordahve* is becoming very popular, especially with the wrong people. Stormreach is not a good city to have or keep a secret for very long; allies and adversaries lurk in every doorway, occasionally wearing the exact same face. Try to ensure the PCs understand that ultimately they have no one but each other to trust in the commission of their duties. If necessary, Courier Renvis can be used for this moral. See his NPC description for ideas on how to accomplish the right mood with his character.

The second guiding principle of the scenario is urgency. The book is thought to involve aspects of the Prophecy, elements of which could be coming to pass in the very near future. The translation attempt by Brother Tiris may be the Covenant's last chance to gain any advantage from its wisdom. As such, this mission is both a simple courier job and a vital part of the Covenant of Light's plan for the future. Make the PCs feel important; they truly are safeguarding one of their faction's most important treasures.

The third element to impart during play is that of paranoia. Stormreach is a chaotic city during the day, doubly so at night. The buildings are ominous and overreaching, the streets are a shamble of cobblestones and rain-soaked mud. With the fog from the waterfront in the late evening, visibility can be extremely limited and any approaching shape is as likely a murderous gnoll as it is a bread baker trying to find his way home. Danger can come from any side. If the PCs are jumping at shadows by the time they reach the Sheltered Tome, things are proceeding perfectly.

The last element is mystery, especially in the later half of the adventure. From Vراحة onward, things start to become unclear from a motivation standpoint. The gang boss cannot clearly recall why he even wanted the book and Feral, assuming he survives long enough to question, is equally clueless. The straightforward puzzle of who wants the *Libri Mordahve* and why comes up missing some important pieces at the end of the adventure. Leaving the PCs with more questions than answers is the point of *Divine Inspiration*. It makes learning the answers in later adventures all the more satisfying.

ITEM PURCHASE

There are no special purchases available for this scenario. It is assumed that the PCs have been summoned to duty "as they are" and no opportunity for special equipment exists. In fact, due to the secrecy of the PCs' selection for this mission, no chance to buy equipment is given before play begins. If they do not start *Divine Inspiration* with something, they will not have it for use during the adventure unless special circumstances exist.

NPC SURVIVAL

The PCs' actions should be the primary deciding factor of how the story unfolds. That said, Feral is an interesting possibility for later adventures and if he lives is certain to resurface stronger and more bestial than before. Only Whisper is a guaranteed continuance for the plotline, but because of the nature of her appearance, you shouldn't have to do anything to ensure her survival. Her only real exposure to the PCs is as a fleeting glimpse at a considerable distance at the end of the scenario. Existing in *Divine Inspiration* only as foreshadowing, Whisper's safety should be a non-issue.

SURVEILLANCE

Whisper, the true hand of the Inspired in this adventure, watches from a considerable distance at certain points during the action. No matter how things go for her plans, *she doesn't interfere* and is under orders to keep her involvement completely hidden. The only reason for her mention at all is for the purposes of the Adventure questions at the end of the adventure.

ADVENTURE START

In the tradition of the pulp noir setting that EBERRON represents, this adventure begins abruptly with all the PCs

gathered via summons by their faction. They are in the rectory of Flame Father Garris, a high-ranking priest in the Church of the Silver Flame. This places them in the Keep of the Silver Flame, in one of the outlying buildings near the central temple. Garris has them waiting while he and his acolytes bring the book from his private study.

The PCs are accompanied this evening by Rennis, a well-known courier for the Covenant of Light and a very capable adventurer in his own right. A professional scout with a distinguished record of service during the Last War, he works with the Covenant exclusively for reasons of his own. While this does mean that the PCs are in the company of a true hero of the Last War, Rennis has an easy-going nature that downplays his fame. He seems fairly focused on the task at hand but takes time to talk and cajole with the PCs, assuming they are so inclined.

Rennis is a well-built, brown haired human male with a rugged complexion, moderately thick facial hair, and a cougar's tooth dangling from his left ear. He dresses in hunting leathers even when he isn't on duty and rarely goes anywhere without his oak pipe and a pouch of aromatic leaf.

A suggested method of opening the adventure is to read or paraphrase the following text aloud, then provide a few minutes of open roleplaying time to allow the PCs an opportunity to settle into the scene. Once the mood seems set, proceed to Reluctant Relinquishing, below.

The dim violet light of late evening comes to the city of Stormreach, finding you all gathered in the common room of Flame Father Garris's rectory. A luminary in the Church of the Silver Flame, Flame Father Garris works closely with the Covenant of Light and often hosts meetings of the faction in his home. It is not uncommon for members of the Covenant to find themselves here for matters of faith, debate or friendly conversation in a safe environment.

Tonight, matters are different. You are here escorting a Covenant of Light courier by the name of Rennis on a mission of great import. Here to retrieve a book in Flame Father Garris' keeping, your task tonight is to see it safely across Stormreach to another sage. The precise details of your mission are not yet clear, but Rennis seems affable and willing to talk.

The building the PCs are currently in is made primarily of white stone and native woods, bleached to as close a white as the rich grain of the local lumber allows. Furniture of the same materials provide seating for everyone, an large dining table and a 6-foot-wide hearth make conditions comfortable, and a crystal pane bay window give visitors an excellent view of the majestic temple of the Silver Flame nearby. Accommodations are lavish and comfortable but not overly gaudy in style.

PCs may want to question Rennis about the nature of their mission tonight. He is happy to answer any questions he can. Rennis prefers the people he works with to be well-informed; it prevents assumptions later and makes for more efficient teamwork. Be sure to use that term, "team", at least twice while PCs are talking with Rennis. He is very willing to work with the PCs but has no desire to be thought of as a hireling or as their superior. They all have a job to do and the best way to accomplish it is as a cohesive group.

As such, use the following prompts for conversation with Rennis at this point. If questions are asked that have not been listed below, paraphrase his reactions keeping his personality and knowledge in mind. He knows the title of the book, the reason for tonight's mission and the details below. Beyond that, ignorance is bliss for Rennis; the less he knows, the less a security risk he might be if captured.

Question: Who are you?

Me? I'm the wrong man at the wrong time. I always seem to pop up where people least want me to be. The Covenant makes use of that 'talent', if you want to call it that. I served as a scout for one of the Houses in the Last War and I can tell you one thing, Last is exactly how I want the war to be. Never, never again. Got me, team?

Question: Why are we here?

It's quite simple, really. We get a book from the good father and take it to a sage in another place of worship. We aren't done until the Libri Mordahve is in Brother Tiris's expert hands, period.

Question: What book?

The tome is called the Libri Mordahve, a book written a long time ago by someone who may or may not have been completely mad. Everyone who has studied it so far has been fascinated by the work but details still seem... sketchy.

Question: Why are we moving it?

Solid question, that. Seems the book's style is pretty nebulous and hard to translate. The good father here has been working on it for two weeks to little avail so the Covenant wants to give another scholar a shot. Seems like a good idea to me. Sometimes when you keep hitting a wall, it's time to run in a different direction, you know?

Question: Why guard the transfer?

Well now, that would be because this isn't the first time the book's been moved and if anything tries to nab it, it won't be the first time for that either. The Libri Mordahve almost got filched on its way here and the powers that be seem to think there's every chance whoever tried it will try again.

Question: What happened the last time the book was transported?

Aside from a couple of good men dying? We were attacked passing by the west side of the Deneith compound. Never got a good look at the blighters but one of them took my dagger home with him in his gut for the trouble. I miss that dagger. Anyway, House Deneith denied all involvement and the Covenant seemed satisfied with their explanation of things. Not sure what happened but I can tell you this, we won't be going back out that way.

Question: What route are we going to take?

Tell you what; I trust you as far as we just met and I have no reason not to, but let the route stay a secret for now. I am willing to let you all handle security, okay? My contribution to this team will be navigation. I follow your lead, you follow mine.

Question: What else can you tell us?

I can tell you that some important people in the Covenant want this book to get where it's going, all the way up to the Lady herself. I hear tell that the Lord of Radiant Hold is sending a few troops to secure the shrine after the book arrives, so this must be high priority.

Between you and me, I think this is all tied in with the Caldyn Fragments. Prophecy stuff and all that. I try to avoid fortune-telling personally. I have enough trouble with my present to worry about the future. Take my advice here; keep your head in the now. The later is going to happen no matter what you do, so don't lose any sleep over it.

Once the PCs seem to be settled into their roles and a good opportunity presents itself, proceed to the first part of the adventure itself.

Courier Rennis: male human scout 6 / extreme explorer 2; hp 44; see Combat Statistics below though an

altercation with Rennis would be a disaster regardless of the outcome and the immediate end of the adventure. See Conclusion if this unlikely event occurs.

ROLEPLAYING RENNIS

For three years now, Rennis has served the Covenant of Light with distinction and valor, spearheading dangerous missions to ensure that information, personnel, and relics of import arrive where they need to be unharmed. Rennis has made quite a name for himself in the Covenant and is known even to members to other factions as someone to respect or beware. Not violent by nature, he has a friendly manner to his speech and behavior that belies his ability to burst into action when the need arises. A good and loyal friend, Rennis obeys orders and seems happiest when he is with others, working as a team to accomplish some vital task.

Rennis has been given secret orders by the Covenant of Light to observe the PCs during this scenario. Their performance and loyalties are under an unwitting test; Rennis's opinion of how they act while escorting the Libri Mordahve is very important to the Covenant of Light. He is professional enough not to let personal feelings weigh into his evaluation but outright abusive or disruptive PCs do not receive high marks in his evaluation.

Rennis only fights to defend himself and the Libri Mordahve. The focus of this adventure is the PCs and while he is with them as a team member, the mission falls to them to complete. In any case, he departs for the Church of the Sovereign Host after Part Three: Shrine of Lies.

COMBAT STATISTICS

RENNIS, COVENANT OF LIGHT COURIER CR 8

Human scout 6/extreme explorer 2

NG Medium humanoid (human)

Init +8; **Senses** Listen +12, Spot +12

Languages Common, Celestial, Elven,

AC 19 (20 skirmishing), touch 14 (15 skirmishing), flat-footed 19; uncanny dodge; Dodge

hp 44 (8 HD)

Fort +4, **Ref** +11, **Will** +3; evasion, trap sense +1

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares); flawless stride

Melee +1 scimitar +7 (1d6+2/18–20)

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

Atk Options Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, skirmish +2d6

Special Actions extreme hustle (free action; spend an action point to gain a move action), haste (from boots of speed),

Combat Gear boots of speed, wand of cure light wounds (CL 1st; 15 charges), arcane scroll of fly (CL 5th), arcane scroll of expeditious retreat (CL 1st)

Abilities Str 12, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 11

SQ skirmish +2d6 +1AC, Battle Fortitude +1 to Initiative and Fortitude saves, uncanny dodge, fast movement +10 ft., trackless step, flawless stride, additional action points, trap sense +1, trapfinding, dodge bonus +1, extreme hustle

Feats Action Boost, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative

Skills Balance +10, Climb +1 (+3 with rope), Disguise +5, Gather Information +3, Hide +10, Jump +12 (+24 after *expeditious retreat* or *haste*), Knowledge (dungeoneering) +6, Knowledge (geography) +8, Listen +10, Move Silently +12, Search +13, Spot +12, Survival +5 (+7 when underground, keep from getting lost, avoiding hazards, following tracks), Tumble +16, Use Magic Device +6, Use Rope +7

Possessions combat gear plus +2 studded leather armor, +1 scimitar, bag of holding (type II), arcane scroll of *sending* (CL 9th), 65 gp, 4 sp.

PART ONE: RELUCTANT RELINQUISHING

When the Flame Father comes out from the private part of his house, two young acolytes accompany him. None of them look terribly pleased and even Rennis seems unsettled by their demeanor. In this section of the adventure, the PCs have to deal with the Flame Father and his unwillingness to part with the *Libri Mordalve*. Diplomacy and roleplaying should win the day here, as combat would be a deplorable way to resolve the encounter.

The far door of the room opens quietly, admitting three robes figures in silver-threaded garments. The one in the lead is an older man with graying hair at his temples and a bald pate. To either side of him is a young man in simpler clothing, one blonde and the other dark haired. All three have a grave expression and while the blonde boy, the youngest of them, does indeed hold an aged tome, he has it in a tight grasp and does not seem willing to let it go.

“Rennis, could I have a word with you?” Flame Father Garris begins. The courier cuts his eyes to you all in a warning expression, looking worried even as he rises to comply.

The PCs are not barred from the conversation between Father Garris and Rennis but given his preference, the Flame Father would rather talk privately. The discussion between them is summarized below but do not read it verbatim as the PCs can and should have a part in the scene. Rennis is many things but he is no diplomat. Anyone willing or able to talk sense into the Flame Father is more than welcome to do so.

Flame Father Garris: male human cleric 6; hp 30; see Combat Statistics below though an altercation with Father Flame would be a disaster regardless of the outcome and the immediate end of the adventure. See Conclusion if this unlikely event occurs.

Pyrrin and Myccal: male human commoner 1; hp 4, 5; see Combat Statistics below though an altercation with Father Flame and his acolytes would be a disaster regardless of the outcome and the immediate end of the adventure. See Conclusion if this unlikely event occurs. Pyrrin is the blonde-haired boy; his half-brother Myccal has black hair and a very small tonsure as a sign of his faith.

REASONING WITH FIRE

Rennis: *“What is it, your Light?”*

Garris: *“Come now, my friend. We’ve known each other too long to stand on formality now.”*

Rennis: *“Apologies, but this seems like a formal occasion. What troubles you?”*

Garris: *“I would like to ask for more time with the book, my friend. I know that if we have but a little longer, my students and I can...”*

Rennis: *“I am sorry, Garris, but my orders are as clear as yours. Time is something we don’t have and the Lady wants the book deciphered quickly.”*

Garris: *“But a new scholar will have to repeat all my preliminary work before he can begin any work of his own. It makes no sense to take it out of my hands now.”*

The PCs can make a Sense Motive check at this point in the discussion. If they are participating in the talk, the DC is 12; if they are merely watching the DC is 15. Success shows serious stress on the Flame Father’s face. He does not want to give the book up; he seems almost desperate to keep it.

Rennis: *“I understand, but that’s why the Lady wants your notes as well. You have done a fine job, Father. Let someone else with a fresh perspective finish the task now.”*

Garris: *“But I have come so close to a breakthrough, Rennis. I do not think it wise to hand the book to someone else, someone without my familiarity with its passages and secrets.”*

Rennis: *“And that familiarity is why a new scholar might succeed where you have been stymied. My friend, please do not take this transfer as an offense. The Lady expressed her gratitude for your hard work, but you know what this book might mean to our cause.”*

Garris: *“My hard work got us this far and my hard work will take us the rest of the way if you let me!”*

The Flame Father raises his voice at this point, much to the alarm of both his acolytes and Rennis himself. His surprise at Garris’s sudden temper is obvious, though he tries to take the outburst in stride. PC efforts to keep things calm at this point would go a long way to making the rest of the conversation civil. Garris is a reasonable man; no Diplomacy checks are needed as any attempt makes him check his tone and relax again.

Rennis: *“Father, it isn’t healthy to be so preoccupied in this. I think it best for everyone’s sake that we get the tome out of here and into someone else’s hands for a while. Remember, we are a Covenant, Garris. That means we are all stronger for the efforts of others.”*

After this, pause the conversation and allow the PCs to get involved if they wish. The previous exchange was Garris’s only real ability to be reasonable and diplomatic. If the PCs do not take the opportunity to try and talk some sense into the Flame Father, he reluctantly agrees to give up the book but insists on keep some of his notes for further study. Rennis does not appreciate that demand but does not press the point other than to express distress at the withholding.

Be sure at some point during the argument to have Garris call Brother Tiris a “black haired charlatan”. Not only does this spine reveal how upset the normally good-natured Father can become, it provides an important clue for the PCs during Scene Three if Shellok impersonates the deceased scholar.

PCs are able to make a Diplomacy check to make the Flame Father more reasonable. Garris is normally calm and understand person, so the DC for the skill check is only a 14. Apply up to a +/-2 circumstance modifier for good or disruptive roleplay. Each PC can try once if he or she wishes; only one has to succeed. If Garris is convinced by their actions to see reason, he turns over the book and all of his notes. If not, he insists on keeping some of his

notes and only gives Rennis a few pages of parchment in addition to the book.

Either way, the Flame Father seems quite finished with the meeting after handing the *Libri Mordalve* to Rennis. With a rather curt farewell, he dismisses the courier and PCs from his home and retires for the evening. With nothing else to do but proceed, Rennis guides the PCs out into the night air of Stormreach.

“Well, I am sure I have taken enough of your time this evening and I have many matters of the Church to which I must attend. You can certainly find the way out. Good eve.”

COMBAT STATISTICS

FLAME FATHER GARRIS, CHURCH OF THE SILVER FLAME CR 6

Male human cleric 6

LG Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Listen +4, Spot +4

Languages Common, Celestial, Draconic

AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10

hp 26 (6 HD)

Resist none

Fort +7, **Ref** +3, **Will** +9

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +4 unarmed (1d3 nonlethal)

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +4

Special Actions turn undead (8/day; +4; 2d6+8), spontaneous healing

Spells Prepared (CL 6th) none (Garris has been working feverishly and has not stopped to pray for spells in days)

Abilities Str 10, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 18, Cha 14

SQ aura (lawful, good)

Feats Ecclesiarch, Endurance, Extra Turning, Skill Focus (Knowledge [religion])

Skills Concentration +8, Decipher Script +4, Diplomacy +10, Gather Information +7, Heal +9, Knowledge (arcane) +7, Knowledge (religion) +11, Profession (scribe) +6, Spellcraft +8.

Possessions holy symbol, clerical robes

PYRRIN AND MYCCAL, SILVER FLAME ACOLYTES CR 1/2

Male human commoners 1

LG Medium humanoid (human)

Init +0; **Senses** Listen +4, Spot +4

Languages Common

(These two are non-combatants; they flee at the first sign of trouble and make their way to the Temple of the Silver Flame. They do not fight and if captured cower in fear.)



After the meeting with the Flame Father is over and Rennis leaves with the PCs, the adventure takes them into Stormreach proper. The path he intends to take is a simple one through the southeast wall of the Silver Flame keep's compound, along the streets of the city's central trade district, and down into the area of city where the Sheltered Tome awaits. It is a slightly meandering route but Rennis has long since learned that the shortest distance between two points is the one most likely to contain an ambush.

Along the path, there is ample opportunity for PCs to take the lead and roleplay as they wish. If they were helpful with the Flame Father, Rennis takes a moment to thank them for their aid. If not, he politely chides them on not speaking up. This is as much their mission as it is his and he is not shy about reminding them of this fact.

It is now nightfall in Stormreach and, as the late hours tend to bring during this season, a low fog billows over the city streets. The lights ahead form globes of radiance that illuminate very little and every shadow grows deeper with each step. Little can be seen save the broken paving stones beneath your feet and the silhouettes of buildings to either side.

Special forms of sight are of limited use during this part of the adventure as the fog is not a magical effect and cannot be ignored through low-light vision or darkvision. Scent is also less than effective as the fog brings with it the odor of fish and salt from the nearby harbor. Even hearing is muffled as the fog is thick enough to impede the passage of background sounds. For all intents and purposes, all senses have a maximum range of 30 feet for the duration of Part Two with the exception of *detect* spells and other supernatural sensory effects.

There are plenty of opportunities for action and adventure in the rest of the scenario, but if the PCs seem really eager for combat, consider running the optional subsection below. As the scenario is laid out, nothing actually happens in Part Two except a very paranoid trek through the city. No encounters occur at all; the PCs and Rennis arrive safely at the Sheltered Tome. The following option (Dog's Night Out) can be run to make this Part more exciting, but in the interest of adventure pacing and time considerations, only run it if more than three hours remain in the session.

Surveillance: Whisper is tracking the party now through psionic means, subtly enough that she can avoid being detected. This means that she is too far to affect them in any meaningful way but she does not wish to get involved with them other than to keep tabs on their whereabouts. She is satisfying her curiosity about their motives, their capabilities and their loyalties. While she would not be averse to making allies among them if she thought they might be amenable to the idea, now is not the time for such contact.

Reading the *Libri Mordahve*: Because of his experience, Rennis assumes he will be carrying the tome. He is perfectly willing to let a PC do the honors, though anyone with the *Libri Mordahve* has his attention for the duration of the scene. He is also willing to hand the book over to any PC wishing to examine it; he does not have orders to keep his team from looking through the text. Personally, he does not think the book is anything but trouble—an opinion he is happy to share if asked.

If a PC spends a minute or more looking inside the *Libri Mordahve*, he or she receives the “Revelations of Mordahve” Story Object. There is not enough time to actually translate the work on the journey even if the PC possessed the proper skills to do so

JUMPING AT SHADOWS

After letting the PCs make their plans, set a marching order and take any actions they wish along the journey to the Sheltered Tome, insert this “encounter”. If possible, start this scene right after a PC has finished talking or taking an action so that it seems sudden and abrupt.

Through the fog, tumbling rocks from a nearby rooftop clatter to the street below. The lights of the glowing street lamps dim and the mist billows in every direction. A dark shadow darts across the path ahead of you, a stab of black through the gray surrounds.

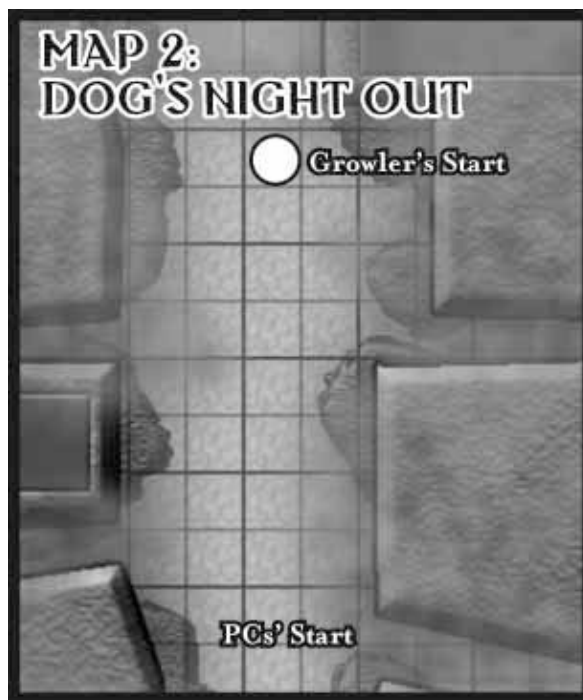
Let the PCs take any actions they wish, including preparing for combat. Feel free to set up the scene as if it were a full-fledged combat, complete with positions, actions and anything else the PCs want to perform. If they seem set for battle, even roll Initiative and let the PCs take a round of actions each. Rennis moves to the middle of the group if he had the book or draw his blade and cover the rear if he does not.

This scene is not a combat, however. The tumbling stones and billowing fog were simply the result of a strong harbor breeze. The dark shadow was the hinged sign of a storefront getting moved by the wind to block a glowing light crystal. There are no adversaries at all, though it may take the PCs several rounds to come to this conclusion.

It is perfectly permissible to run this scene several times along the PCs' journey to the Sheltered Tome, though the exact details should be modified with each iteration. Some ideas for variations include a stray animal darting out of the fog and running across the PCs' path, a shopkeeper appearing suddenly and walking past the

escort or strange sounds in the distance that never resolve into anything tangible or important.

Once the PCs have been thoroughly convinced that the only threat on the streets of Stormreach this night is their own collective paranoia, they are ready to arrive at the Sheltered Tome. Proceed to the next section of the scenario, Part Three: Shrine of Lies.



DOG'S NIGHT OUT (OPTIONAL)

While not every person in the city is after the *Libri Mordahve*, many interested parties would like to get their hands on anything of such apparent worth. The focus of this adventure is the Inspired's plan to gain the text, but that does not preclude other forces making a play for it while it is out of safekeeping. Word of the PCs' mission has reached several groups; this scene is the result of one of those security breaches.

The chill night air is cut by the shrill howl of a hunting hound. With a snarl and the snap of teeth, a figure comes rushing towards you. A steel battleaxe is hefted in its fur-covered right hand as it brings up a battered steel shield. With a growl of challenge, the canine creature attacks!

This is a straight-up combat with Growler, a gnoll mercenary with a minor reputation for being less than subtle. Until now, his straightforward style has paid off, overwhelming his victims before they can mount an effective defense. Unfortunately for the gnoll, the PCs' team is a bit larger than he was led by his employers to believe. His brash tactics, combined with the fog that dulled his senses as well, may now prove to be his undoing.

Growler starts the combat 30 feet from the front of the PCs' position and, on his initiative, begins with a charge action to the closest PC. While he was seeking to gain surprise, the fog and his own inability to stay quiet have ruined that chance. If incapacitated instead of killed, he can only tell the PCs that a human that smelled like an elf (half-elf) paid him to jump them and steal the book. He gives an address where he was going to take the book;

Rennis promises to follow up on this information. Growler does not have any other information to impart, as he is not very bright.

The Investigate Feat: One thing about Growler will be of interest to a PC with the Investigate feat or ranks in the Knowledge (local) skill—his coinage. He is only carrying the 10 gold he was paid to attack the party; the coins are all fairly dull and have been in circulation for some time but each one has a small nick on one edge. This mark is the telltale sign that a professional mercenary handled the coins. Mercenaries often nick their coins with their favored weapons as both a superstitious warding against bad luck and to make sure the coins are not fake.

Foes: Growler is the only enemy in this encounter. He is both too difficult to work with and too greedy to have any lasting partnerships.

Growler the Gnoll: hp 12; *MM* 130.

Tactics: His combat plans are unsubtle and brutal; he intends to take down the person in the lead of the group, continue hacking until he gets to the book, and then grabs it and runs off. Hit and run works for Growler, as it is about as complicated as his mind can grasp. If possible, Growler flees when dropped to 2 or fewer hit points. Bolstered by psionic (Sense Motive DC 25 suspects magical or psionic manipulation, but can't pinpoint the type), his aggression defies reason or Diplomacy.

Development: Proceed to Part Three: Shrine of Lies once the PCs are ready and able to continue the mission. The streets may continue to seem dangerous but nothing else assails them until they arrive at the Sheltered Tome.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

At higher levels, siblings join Growler. None of his kin are very bright, so they share Growler's tactics. They are capable and willing to flank, but they still initiate a frontal assault with no mind for advanced tactics. Growler's brothers and sister are Snickerer, Snarler and Shrieker (female).

2nd-Level Characters: Add two gnolls (hp 10, 14; *MM* 130).

3rd-Level Characters: Add three gnolls (hp 10, 14, 15; *MM* 130).

OTHER IDEAS

This section of the adventure is set up in such a way that you can throw virtually anything at the PCs. The fog is so thick that a veritable army could amass around the party (and very well could be, for all the PCs know). It is the perfect opportunity to have a bit of fun at their expense, all in the name of a memorable scenario of course.

As the PCs travel to see Brother Tiris, consider running any or all of the following mini-scenes either before or after the optional Dog's Night Out encounter. These are simple adventure seeds and can be as complex or brief as you desire. Keep in mind the time remaining in the session; you may not have enough to do more than one or two.

- ✦ A young man (**Karam:** male human commoner 1; hp 3) comes running out of the mist straight towards the PCs. With a dagger in one hand and a bundle of cloth in the other, he is in a great hurry and seems determined to charge straight through the party. The PCs get a surprise round to react to him before he even notices them. If they do not stop him or otherwise interfere, a second man (**Ollan the Baker:** male human commoner 2; hp 5) emerges from the mist with a club, shouting for the boy to stop. Karam has just robbed his store. None of this has anything

to do with the mission but the PCs won't know that to start with.

- ✦ One round before they rush out of the fog, a pair of runaway horses can be heard galloping down the road ahead. The horses are lashed to a carriage pitching violently behind the crazed beasts, running away as fast as they can from *something* in the mist. If the PCs calm the beasts or rescue the carriage, the occupant within (**Shyala d'Orien:** female dragonmarked human expert 2; hp 7) is extremely grateful. While she cannot repay the debt now, she promises to remember the PCs in the future. If the PCs are already injured from the Dog's Night Out encounter, Shyala could be used as a possible source of healing by way of reward.

- ✦ A wizened old man with a limp and a heavy staff hobbles into view on the side of the road. When he sees the book Renvis (or a PC) is carrying, he wanders close and attempts to engage them all in conversation. The man (**Sage Karlane:** male half-elf expert 6; hp 20) is a book collector and will make an offer on the tome if allowed to speak. The offer of 100 gold coins might tempt some of the party but Courier Renvis politely declines. Karlane is not insistant and goes about his way peacefully. While the PCs may suspect there is more to this encounter, it really is just an aged bibliophile looking for a new addition to his library.

- ✦ Four angry looking humanoid figures run out of the mists and stop twenty feet from the party, weapons drawn. Furious and obviously wounded, the members of the group are wearing red-dyed clothing and sporting shark tattoos. The leader looks over the PCs and, unless provoked to combat, shouts to his men that "These ain't the buzzards! Let's go!" Then, as quickly as they appeared, they turn and flee. The figures are members of the Bloodfins, a vicious Xen'drik gang current at war with the Vultures. This encounter can be foreshadowing for the later scene with said gang or a precursor fight to whet the PCs' appetites for battle. If combat does occur, use the statistics for the Vultures in Part Four and reduce every foe's hit points by 1 to reflect existing damage.

PART THREE: SHRINE OF LIES

The journey of the *Libri Mordahve* is supposed to end here with its transfer into the hands of Brother Tiris, an expert on ancient languages and lost civilizations. Unfortunately for the PCs and the Covenant of Light, the Inspired of Dar Qat have moved quickly and the Sheltered Tome has been compromised. Instead of a journeyman scribe at the end of their escort, the PCs are greeted by a changeling in disguise.

The fog thins as you pass through the west gate of a small, inner city courtyard. Ahead is a mostly open and cleared area with a pair of buildings against the northeast wall. One is a fortified keep house with shuttered windows and a portcullis main door. The other is smaller, made of aged bronzewood timbers but looks only slightly more welcoming.

There are no visible lights on inside the bronzewood tower. A weatherworn kite shield with a blazon of an open book hangs over the structure's only door. "This is the place," Rennis says with a faint sigh of relief.

The acolyte of the shrine, a teen-aged human girl named Aneya, is currently unconscious in a broom closet and her would-be assailant is posing in her place. Unfortunately for the replacement, there has been a small complication...but it is nothing a quick-witted changeling spy cannot work around.

THE COMPLICATION

When Shellok arrived at dusk to replace the shrine's acolyte, he found most of his work already done for him. The girl Aneya was lying unconscious against the wall of the shrine's entry chamber and Brother Tiris was dead in his room upstairs. There appeared to be some sort of struggle, but Shellok could find no trace of the killer aside from a trail of dark maroon blood leading out the bedroom window.

Shellok, not being a particularly evil being, tended to the wounded human girl and did what he could to make her comfortable. He still had a job to do, however, so after sunset he put her in the broom closet and prepared to greet the PCs at the front door. He is certainly curious what happened to Brother Tiris but as long as the assassin does not come back to make life difficult for him, Shellok is content to leave the mystery unsolved.

There is no way to solve Brother Tiris's death at this time. A partial set of tracks in Tiris's blood by his bed appear to be elven but no other evidence is present. The mystery of Tiris's death is a matter for another adventure, one that takes the PCs deep into the primal jungles of Xen'drik. (The killer was actually a drow elf, but only extraordinary circumstances should reveal this fact.)

When (or if) the PCs knock on the hardwood door of the shrine, they are greeted in the following manner.

The door opens slightly, a brass chain preventing the portal from swinging more than a few inches. From within the shadowed opening a small female voice can be heard. "Who is it and what do you wish?" A face appears, no older than sixteen years of age and almost too small and thin for the massive spectacles balanced on her pert nose.

Aneya, or in this case Shellok posing as Aneya, is an adorable red-haired girl with an impish visage and a quick wit. Shellok prides himself on his impersonation skills and will play her role to the letter if he can, having visited the

shrine on two previous occasions to observe her. He actually enjoys conversation, especially in character, and will engage the PCs for as long as he can as long as he can still accomplish his mission. Indeed, this gregarious attitude is what will likely get him caught out as an imposter.

Base Shellok's replies on the actions of the PCs. Rennis is still watching the surrounding courtyard and content to let the PCs do the talking. If they do not quickly try to get inside the shrine, he interjects a "*Perhaps we could chat inside?*" but beyond that, he will stay silent. One thing he does not do is allow the PCs to just hand over the book immediately; he has orders to give it to Tiris himself and while he won't force the PCs to adhere to the letter of that command, he certainly mention it to whoever is holding the *Libri Mordahve*. In his opinion, this mission is as much about the PCs as it is the book; if they choose to step outside their orders here, he will not stop them.

For her/his part, Shellok would rather just get the book handed to him through the half-opened door and requests as much once it's polite to do so. He loves to talk but the dead body upstairs (he hid Tiris under his own bed) has him on edge. He cannot help but chit-chat a little but he does not do so for more than a few minutes before mentioning the tome.

Shellok's impersonation breaks down if the PCs request to speak to Tiris. Since he was never able to observe Brother Tiris, he will have to make up details on the spot. Any time he talks about Tiris in any way, PCs requesting a Sense Motive check during the conversation get to make one at a reduced DC of 15. Normally, the DC would be opposed by Shellok's Bluff skill—a DC averaging around 20. Thus, asking about Tiris is the best way to determine that something is wrong. Since the PCs have never seen or observed Tiris, they are not able to specifically see through Shellok's disguise but a successful skill check here reveals something "suspicious" with the changeling's behavior.

Sense Motive is not the only way to catch Shellok. Impersonating religious figures is not his strong suit and he is liable to slip up in some way. Make sure that he makes at least one error during conversation. Possible mistakes Shellok could make include:

- ✖ Saying that Brother Tiris is engaged in nightly prayer upstairs, when anyone with clerical skills knows the worship of Aureon takes place during the light of day so as not to waste candles. (Knowledge [religion] check, DC 12 to see through)
- ✖ Claiming that Brother Tiris is still tired after his long trip and is asleep upstairs. While Tiris did go on a long journey recently, he has been back for two days and his still being exhausted is doubtful. (Knowledge [local], DC 16 to see through)
- ✖ Asking that the book be left here so that Brother Tiris can study it in the daylight tomorrow after he wakes up. Most worshippers of Aureon and scribes in general do their work at night by candlelight because the harsh light of day can be very damaging to older parchment, especially the ancient works collected by Brother Tiris. (Profession [scribe], or Craft [bookbinding] DC 10 and 12 respectively)
- ✖ Calling her master Brother "Tiros" by accident. Shellok recently impersonated a merchant named Tiros to take possession of a shipment of rare herbs. The name is still fresh in his mind. There is no skill check to spot this mistake; if a PC calls

him on the slip, Shellok panics and runs for the back door.

There is one other mistake the PCs could catch. Shellok is rattled by Tiris's death; he is a spy, not an assassin. While he has adopted the Brother's form, his distraction has caused him to forget to change his current hair color. He still has Aneya's red hair, not brindled black-and-gray like the aged scholar he is attempting to impersonate. Calling Shellok on this error causes the changeling to flee.

If the PCs insist on seeing Brother Tiris and do not catch him out on any errors, Shellok eventually lets them in and ask them to wait in the antechamber. Then he heads upstairs to Brother Tiris's bedroom, uses his racial ability to change his shape and comes back downstairs to greet his pushy guests. By now he is more than a little irritated at the PCs and his emotional state may be his undoing. A Sense Motive DC 14, notices that Tiris is both standing in exactly the same pose Aneya was earlier and that his emotions seem less than genuine.

For all his adventuring skills, Rennis is not particularly good at reading people and would honestly just like to conclude this mission. If Shellok fools the PCs, he is also fooled and does not object to giving the changeling the book. If this happens, despite the number of opportunities the PCs have to see through Shellok's ruse, the book vanishes with the changeling out the shrine's back door within a minute of their leaving the building. (Of course, if the PCs are watching the door, Shellok might still get caught.)

LIAR, LIAR

Shellok is not much of a fighter and would honestly rather bluff or cajole his way out of trouble. Even so, he has no desire to be caught and turned over to any authorities. If he is left with no option but combat, he fights to the best of his ability.

If detained alive, Shellok is a font of useless information. He openly tells the PCs everything he knows and, given a chance, will tell them about Tiris's body upstairs before they find it for themselves. He figures that if he admits to the body first, it makes his claim that he did not kill the man all the more convincing. It also helps that it is true; the priest really was dead when the unfortunate changeling got here.

What Shellok has to say may not make much sense to the PCs. This is because, in retrospect, they won't make much sense to the changeling himself. He has had his memories altered by Whisper, the Inspired agent in charge of taking the *Libri Mordahve* back to Dar Qat. He can only tell the PCs what little he has been allowed to remember.

Read or paraphrase the following. It contains everything Shellok has to say about his activities here. If for some reason Shellok cannot be interrogated (if he is dead, for example), see the troubleshooting section below for ways to get the PCs on the right track again.

"Khyber, you lot hit like lightning rails. Look, if you'll hold off I'll tell you what I know. I don't you'll like what I got for you though, 'cause it ain't much. Deal? Deal."

"I'm supposed to get that book, the Libri Mordahve, and take it to an alley near the docks. Now that I think about it, that's pretty daft. That part o' town's no place for a lover like me, you know? Still, that's what I am supposed to do. I wonder why?"

"Anyway, there's a human there named Vrache. He's a big fellow with a nice sword he took off some sailor and a gang of thugs he calls his Vultures. Cute, no? Scavengers named after scavengers. If they weren't all scum I'd revel in the symmetry. Oh well, that's what I was supposed to do. Just get the book and take it to him."

"You know, I don't actually remember if I was supposed to make any coin off this deal. I guess I was just going to get lost afterwards. If I had my way, I'd have gotten lost before getting to that end of the city... but I don't guess any of this is my way, now is it?"

"I'd love t'know whose way it is, truth be told."

COMBAT STATISTICS

SHELLOK, IMPERSONATOR CR 2

Male changeling bard 2

N Medium humanoid (shapechanger)

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

Languages Common, Dwarven, Elven, Halfling, Riedran

AC 16, touch 16, flat-footed 14

hp 10 (2 HD)

Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +4; +2 against charm and fear effects

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee mwk dagger +2 (1d4/19-20)

Base Atk +1; Grp +1

Special Actions bardic music 2/day (inspire courage +1, fascinate 1 creature, countersong)

Combat Gear arcane scroll of *mage armor* (CL 1st; had two *mage armor* spells, one of which has been used)

Bard Spells Known (CL 2nd):

1st (2/day)—*charm person* (DC 16), *cure light wounds*

0 (3/day)—*daze* (DC 14), *flare* (DC 14), *ghost*

sound (DC 14), *message*, *prestidigitation*

Abilities Str 10, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 18

SQ bardic knowledge, minor shape change (acts as *disguise self*; requires full round action)

Feats Spell Focus (enchantment)

Skills Appraise +4, Bluff +10, Concentration +4, Diplomacy +7, Disguise +5 (+7 acting, +16 when using minor change shape, +18 acting), Gather Information +5, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (local) +5, Knowledge (royalty and nobility) +5, Profession (actor) +6, Sense Motive +7, Tumbling +5, Use Magic Device +5

Possessions simple clothes, masterwork dagger

(Name note: Most changelings have a monosyllabic name.

Shellok's name was once Shel, but he took his sister's name Okk as part of his own upon her death as a form of remembrance.)

A PARTING OF THE WAYS

After dealing with Shellok one way or another and learning of the death of Brother Tiris, Rennis decides the mission is officially scrubbed. There is a lot going on here and while the book needs to be protected, the manner of its attempted theft needs to be investigated before anyone else gets killed. After the PCs are finished examining the scene and/or questioning Shellok, he calls them aside.

"My friends, this is where I must leave you. Without Brother Tiris, I think the best place to take this book is back to the Church of the Sovereign Host and the Lady herself. She'll know best what to do with it after that. I hate to pull rank on you, but I'm taking it back alone. You are all excellent teammates and I've been proud to work with you but I can make better time and better stealth on my own."

"The night's not over for you if you'll hear me out, though. There's still a job to do. This Vrache character sounds like the next link in a very shaky chain. I'd like to see you all take him down and get some answers in the process. What guards this city's got don't go to those streets at night so do what you have

to do as long as innocent people don't get hurt. Just bring the Light to that back alley, preferably in as painful a manner as possible, get me?

"You follow this as far as it goes, friends, and when you can't go any farther, come back to the Church and report. You've got my backing on this and my best wishes. Good luck, team."

Rennis does not take no for an answer here; he is leaving with the book. His rank and station with the faction should make this a non-argument but if he has to get rough he is not averse to attacking non-lethally. All he wants is the *Libri Mordabve* and a clear route out of the building- two things that his abilities should make extremely easy. If the PCs continue with their mission even after he has to take the book by force, he does not harbor any hard feelings against them. He is a member of the Covenant of Light; he understands how zealous people can get sometimes.

Troubleshooting: It is very possible that the PCs will attack and possibly kill Shellok during this encounter. Paladins and clerics with the right magic will be able to tell he is not evil but that may not be an option or stop

the changeling's death even if the PCs are aware of his alignment. If he is slain, have a small map fragment in his clothes with Vrache's alley circled many times in red ink. Old pulp devices are sometimes the best and a minion with a map in his belongings is a classic.

Surveillance: Whisper spends most of this scene on the shrine's roof eavesdropping as best she can on the proceedings. Again, she has no wish to get involved and does not interfere in any way. She just wants to observe; the time for action will come. Between *invisibility*, strong psionic abilities and high stealth skills, it should be all but impossible for Whisper to be detected at this time. If the PCs do manage to be in the right place at the right time spot her, grant them a fleeting glimpse of a shimmering female form before she vanishes without a trace (psionic *teleportation*).

Whisper had nothing to do with the death of Brother Tiris. She is just as surprised as Shellok was with the scholar's demise. While it would not be beyond her to kill someone in her way, she finds unnecessary murder very wasteful of resources. She is not a necromancer and thus cannot use someone if they are dead.

Treasure: If the PCs insist on taking it (or loot it from his corpse), Shellok's masterwork dagger can be obtained as a reward for this encounter. The changeling is also glad to offer it in exchange for his life if the PCs seem willing to negotiate.

Development: When the action is ready to continue, move to Part Four: The Master of Scavengers.



PART FOUR: THE MASTER OF SCAVENGERS

The trek to the alley mentioned by Shellok (or marked on his map) goes without incident; the focus of the Inspired's plot rested with the changeling's actions. They have more surprises in store but their plans are now reactionary on the part of their agents. Whisper has gone ahead of the PCs and warned Vrache through telepathic means of their impending arrival. This presents the party with the following situation when they get to the dark alley in question.

The alley ahead has a blind turn to the left after about thirty refuse-strewn feet. Obscured from what few lights dot this district of the city, the side street is covered by thinning sailcloth awnings that shroud its depths in deep shadow. Just before the turn to the left, a single figure can be seen disappearing around the corner.

"It's about time you showed up, changer", his gruff voice can be heard echoing back up the alley. "Let's finish up. I don't want to be here all night."

The PCs might assume Vrache thinks that they are the changeling and that they can catch him unawares. It is very unlikely that this is the case because of Whisper's warning. In fact, this is a trap but one that the would-be gang lord is in control of springing. Some of his best thugs are waiting in the bend of the alley to get the drop on the PCs but, against Whisper's mental urging to the contrary, Vrache does not immediately want them dead. His arrogance and lust for power is stronger than the psion's subtle control. Instead of jumping the PCs the moment they appear, he wants to talk with them first.

Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs come into sight of Vrache's alley ambush.

The end of the alley is a dead-end filled with old sea crates and wooden packing boxes. The walls are lined with them and

the back wall has been converted into a makeshift fortress of planks and blinds. Standing in front of the ramshackle palisade is a thin-necked human man with a curved blade in his hands.

"Bad idea messing with the Vultures, you Lighters. We're gonna own this city one day and we don't have time to play games with low-raters like you. If you are smart, you'll run home now."

With that, two figures become visible atop stacks of crates on either side of Vrache. They have crossbows and scarves over their faces with vulture beaks painted on them.

"If you're smarter, you'll throw in with us. We could use muscle and talent; you look to have both. What do you say, Lighters? Want in?"

This could play any number of ways, but one thing is certain; Vrache is no tactical genius. He is smart enough to have his fire support up on crates but by letting the PCs make the first move, he is giving up a surprise round to them if they choose to immediately move to combat. Vrache is so sure that the PCs will choose to back a winner (him) that he has not even told his people to cover them; the two thugs with crossbows do not have ready actions and cannot react first if the PCs attack.

Of course, Vrache could get bluffed as well. He is brash and arrogant enough that any play to his ego could work wonders. With no skill at all in sensing motives, he is extremely easy to convince of the PCs willingness to cooperate if they try to do so. He wants manpower desperately and tells his people to stand down if he thinks the PCs want to join him or are willing to leave in peace. As much as he wants people to fall in with the Vultures, he also does not want to lose the people he has to an unnecessary brawl if he can bluster his way out of one.

Foes: This is the knock down, drag out fight many of the PCs have likely been expecting or even hoping for; the Vultures are a pack of deadly criminals bent on kill-or-be-killed. There is no need for mercy here and none is given.

Vrache: male human barbarian 2: hp 19; Combat Statistics.

Gang Snipers (2): male and female goblin fighter 1: hp 7, 7; Combat Statistics.

Sennet the Shadow, Gang Skulker: male elf rogue 1:



hp 6; Combat Statistics.

Tactics: If the combat does occur Vrache is willing to make the best of a bloody situation. Vrache is not like most bullies; he does not back down from a challenge. He relishes a good fight, flying into a rage at first opportunity. Once he starts fighting, he starts roaring threats and speeches at his enemies. Use the following list as possible things he might say in combat or create your own along these lines.

Vrache's Taunts

- ❖ "I'll drape your innards over the walls of my fortress, fools!"
- ❖ "You'll wish you'd taken me up on my offer for the rest of your life! All three seconds of it!"
- ❖ "What we do to you will warn everyone else in this stinking town to respect the Vultures!"
- ❖ "Say goodbye to your heads! They're about to go swimming!"
- ❖ "The Vultures will strip your bones and leave you to rot!"

The rest of the Vultures know about their boss and his loud mouth in combat. They ignore his commentary for the most part and do their best to just stay alive. The two on the crates use their height and relative inaccessibility to their advantage, raining down crossbow bolts for as long as they can. Any hidden Vulture takes the first advantage to, sneak attacking.

During the combat, the goblins prefer to remain on their perches, safe from attacks of opportunity as long as PCs do not get the bright idea of smashing their crate stacks or knocking them over. The crates are simple wood

(hardness 5; 8 hit points; break DC 12,) and even one broken crate brings its stack tumbling down. If this happens, the goblin atop it falls 10 feet. Don't give them a Jump check to lessen the fall since they are not intentionally jumping from the height (PH 77).

Sennet is not at all interested in a fair fight. If he cannot maneuver into a sneak attack after two rounds, he moves to cover in the wooden fortress and throws his daggers at targets with the least apparent armor. He really just wants kills to enhance his reputation among the city's underworld; if he can take a cheap shot, he is quite happy to do so.

Vrache fights without quarter offered or given. He is also looking for kills but is more interested in a body count. As such, he refrains from attacking downed opponents until there is no one left standing.

Development: It is quite possible, even probable, that the PCs will kill all the Vultures present. That is perfectly acceptable; these are vicious people that have made a life of preying on the weak and helpless. Vrache is a multiple murderer with little chance or desire for redemption of any kind. Of course, a corpse is hard to question so if he survives the encounter, he will have to be made to talk. A simple Intimidation check, DC 15 has him spill what little he knows.

If the combat lasts until his rage wears off, Vrache's bravado disappears with it. No one has ever stood up to him this long and once exhausted, his desire to fight drains away. If any minions still live, he sends them away, claiming "I'll kill this fools myself! Get out of here and leave them to me!" Once they leave, his resolve breaks and he surrenders immediately. Vrache is evil and vicious, but he doesn't want to die.

The following is how he responds to questioning.

Paraphrase as desired and use the text merely as a guide around the PCs' actions.

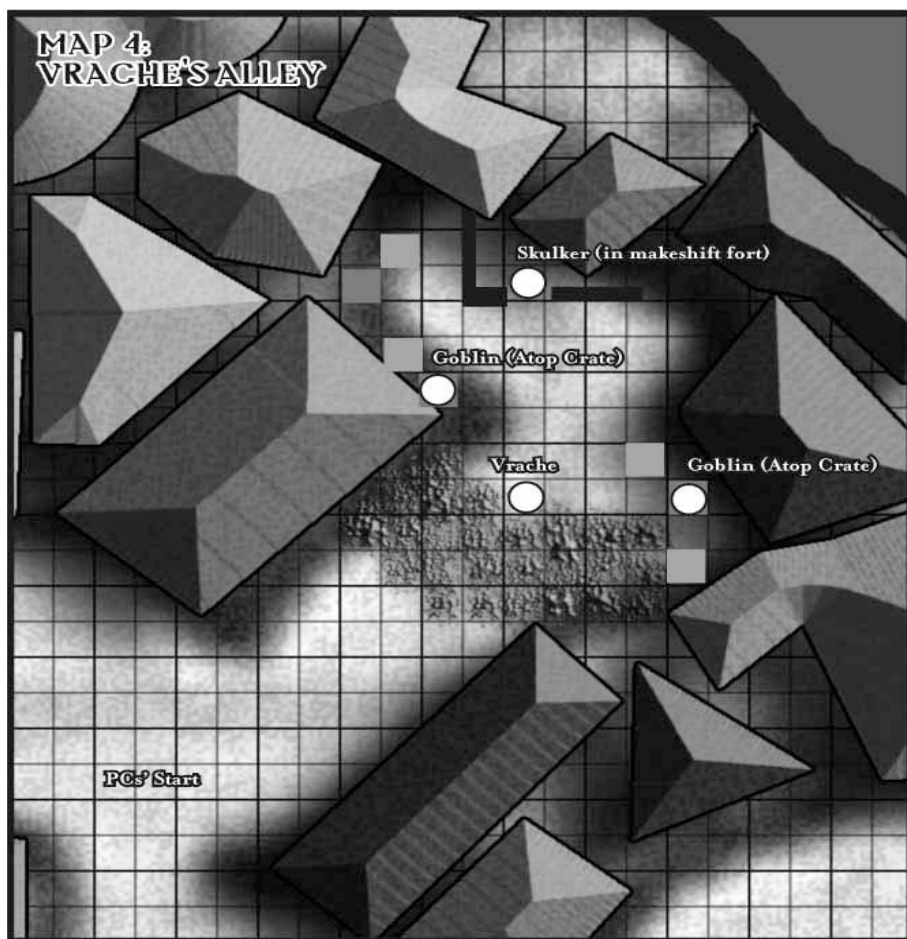
"I'm beat, you blighters. You got me... me! You all should be a gang yourselves; you could rule these streets like I did."

"The changer? Yeah, I was supposed to get something from him. A book I think it was, but it's hard to remember. He was goin' to drop it off here with me and I was supposed to take it... somewhere. I ain't right sure where now. Huh. Where was it again? Where..."

This is not Vrache being difficult, as a DC 15 Sense Motive determines. He really is suffering memory loss because of his exhaustion and loss of willpower. Whisper's implanted suggestion is coming into conflict with the man's own mind, causing a loss of details. This is bad news for the PCs, but he does recall part of his orders.

"I was headin' to water. Yeah... To water only I can't swim. Why would I do that?"

The only other relevant piece of information he has to offer



is a mental image of the porthole he is supposed to drop the book through; he remembers it as a nonsense phrase he has been chanting for a couple of days (much to the concern of his gang). If the PCs have killed Vrache, they can find this phrase carved into the walls of the wooden fort at the end of the alley along with dozens of strange wave patterns.

“Red light in the round... Red light in the round... Red light in the round...”

Vrache has little more to offer the PCs, though if he is left alone or encouraged to try and make his drop anyway, he eventually wanders to the docks and sit helplessly on one of the piers. This should only be done if the PCs are completely lost as to where to go next and Vrache is still alive. He may even stagger off in a daze despite their efforts in a half-mad attempt to fulfill his psychic orders.

Surveillance: Whisper watches this fight from one of the rooftops adjoining the alley. She notes PC fighting styles, capabilities and actions with a keen, coldly analytical mind. Of special interest is psionic use, as she scouts potential recruits for later machinations. Once the PCs move on to the docks, she leaves, boarding her own chartered vessel. Getting the book is no longer an option; the best she can do now is ensure that the information she has gets back to her superiors.

Once the PCs have some idea where to go next, move on to Part Five: Savage Sailing. It is possible from the clue given above that some PCs might think the next place to go is the Livewood Theater near the Keep of the Silver Flame. Remind anyone suspecting such that the Livewood is *not* a theater in the round and thus does not really fit the comment. If the PCs still wish to go there, they find a dead end and waste a considerable amount of time. If time remains in the slot, they can still follow up at the docks if they think to try; otherwise the adventure ends.

Treasure: The most valuable items that can be pulled from this adventure are a masterwork falchion and a masterwork rapier, both of which can be taken from their former wielders.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

At higher levels, there are more Vultures to contend with and Vrache is slightly stronger. His rule over his gang may be heavy-handed but he is bright enough to use them to their best advantage. Snipers are elevated, skulkers start in the shadows and his brawlers are right beside him ready to flank.

2nd-Level Characters: Add Kekk, another gang sniper (hp 7; Combat Statistics) and Sellah the Silent, another gang skulker (hp 6; Combat Statistics). Vrache becomes a barbarian 3 (hp 32; Combat Statistics).

3rd-Level Characters: All as above for 2nd level and add his gang brawlers Treshkal and Agvaresh, hobgoblin warriors (hp 8, 9, *MM* 153).

COMBAT STATISTICS

VRACHE, GANG LEADER (RAGING) CR 2

Male human barbarian 2

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +0; **Senses** Listen +4, Spot -1

Languages Common, Goblin (illiterate)

AC 10, touch 8, flat-footed 10; uncanny dodge

hp 23 (2 HD)

Fort +8, **Ref** +0, **Will** +1

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares)

Melee mwk falchion +5 (2d4+10/18-20*)

Base Atk +2; **Grp** +6,

Atk Options Power Attack (full power attack listed in statistic block), Cleave

Special Actions rage 1/day (lasts 8 rounds then fatigued), uncanny dodge

Abilities Str 18, Dex 10, Con 20, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 12

SQ illiterate, fast movement +10 ft, rage 1/day

Feats Power Attack, Cleave

Skills Bluff +2, Climb +6, Intimidate +6, Jump +11, Listen +4, Survival +4

Possessions leather armor, masterwork falchion, belt pouch.

LUUTH AND VAAH, GANG SNIPERS CR 1

Mix male and female goblin fighters 1

NE Medium humanoids (goblinoid)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +0, Spot +0

Languages Goblin

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 14

hp 7 each (1 HD)

Fort +3, **Ref** +2, **Will** +0

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee short sword +2 (1d4/19-20)

Ranged light crossbow +5 (1d6/19-20)

Base Atk +1; **Grp** -3

Atk Options Point Blank Shot

Abilities Str 11, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10

SQ darkvision 60 ft.

Feats Weapon Focus (light crossbow), Point Blank Shot

Skills Climb +3, Hide +5, Jump +3, Move Silently +5, Ride +7

Possessions studded leather armor, light crossbow, 10 bolts, short sword

SENNET THE SHADOW, GANG SKULKER CR 1

Male elf rogue 1

CE Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +3; **Senses** low-light; Listen +8, Spot +8

Languages Common, Elven, Goblin

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13

hp 6 (1 HD)

Fort +0, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2; +2 to saves against enchantment spells and effects

Immune sleep effects

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee mwk rapier +2(1d6+1/18-20) or dagger +2
 (1d4+1/19-20)
Ranged dagger +3(1d4+1/19-20)
Base Atk +0; **Grp** +1
Atk Options sneak attack +1d6
Abilities Str 12, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 10
SQ immune to sleep effects, +2 to saves against
 enchantment spells and effects, low light vision,
 trapfinding
Feats Stealthy
Skills Climb +4, Hide +9, Jump +4, Listen +8, Move
 Silently +8, Search +6, Spot +8, Tumble +6
Possessions studded leather armor, masterwork
 rapier, two daggers

VRACHE, GANG LEADER (RAGING) CR 3

Male human barbarian 3
 NE Medium humanoid (human)
Init +0; **Senses** Listen +4, Spot -1
Languages Common, Goblin (illiterate)
AC 10, touch 8, flat-footed 10; Dodge, uncanny dodge,
 trap sense +1
hp 32 (3 HD)
Fort +8, **Ref** +1, **Will** +2; trap sense +1

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares)
Melee mwk falchion +6 (2d4+10/18-20*)
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +7,

Atk Options Power Attack
 (full power attack listed
 in statistic block),
 Cleave

Special Actions rage 1/day
 (lasts 8 rounds then
 fatigued), uncanny
 dodge

Abilities Str 18, Dex 10,
 Con 20, Int 10, Wis 8,
 Cha 12

SQ illiterate, fast
 movement +10 ft, rage
 1/day, trap sense +1

Feats Dodge, Power Attack,
 Cleave

Skills Bluff +2, Climb +7,
 Intimidate +7, Jump +12,
 Listen +4, Survival +4

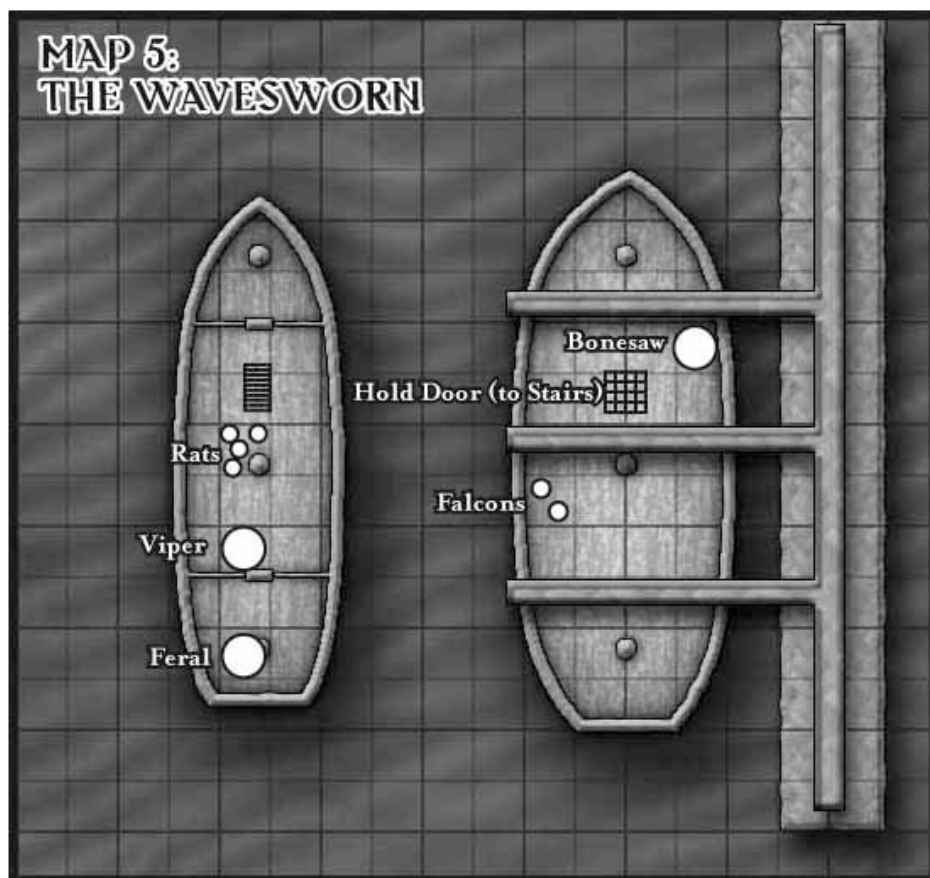
Possessions leather armor,
 masterwork falchion,
 belt pouch.

PART FIVE: SAVAGE SAILING

This is the climax of the adventure, the end of a very long night for the PCs. One way or another they have managed to find their way here in search of the mastermind behind the complex and confusing plot to steal the *Libri Mordalve*. The bad news is that they will not succeed in doing so; the true force behind the attempted theft is even now sailing out of the harbor for parts unknown.

The good news is that they do have a villain to catch, one that could become a true threat to the Covenant of Light and its plans if left to his own devices. Feral, a druid / psychic warrior of surprising ability and primal instincts, is waiting for the *Libri Mordalve* to be dropped into his ship's hold lair. When the PCs arrive to investigate, he is lying in wait, ready and eager to spring his animalistic trap on anyone foolish enough to face him in his den.

The PCs are likely here looking for a red light of some kind as per Vrache's hint in Part Four: The Master of Scavengers. Putting together that water plus a round window likely means a ship's porthole, they are on the right track and eventually find what they are looking for without need for a Spot check. If the PCs seem eager to use their character skills, let them make DC 15 Spot rolls as they comb the Stormreach docks for their goal. Success finds the window sooner rather than later but the PCs should not be barred from concluding the adventure even if the rolls fail. The red candle in a porthole on a dark night eventually draws their attention. Succeeding in the Spot check also lets the PCs potentially avoid the first encounter on the ship as Bonesaw the war dog is asleep.



If the PCs don't spot the candle on their own and follow the slower trails of clues below, Bonesaw is wide awake and ready to attack.

Even at night, the docks of Stormreach are a busy affair. While there are not as many people moving from ship to ship, there is still enough activity to hide your arrival effectively. More than half a dozen ships are in port currently, light cranes and overworked deck hands hauling their cargo around in a cacophony of voices and creaking timber.

If the PCs choose to question workers on the dock, none of them will be terribly helpful. They have not seen anything unusual this evening, not that they have had much free time to be sightseeing in any event. Basic questioning is useless.

Skill Use: A Gather Information check (DC 16) manages to turn up one piece of interesting gossip. Some of the dockworkers have been hearing a dog's whine now and then over the last few days. (This sound is coming from Bonesaw, the wardog on the deck of Feral's lair.) They cannot say exactly where, but it has definitely been coming from somewhere around the harbor area. A Search check (DC 16) finds a shed serpent's skin on the pier where Feral's ship is dry-docked. Lastly, anyone wishing to Track in the area finds some unusual animal droppings (from Qir and Qist the falcons) on the railing of Feral's ship. A Knowledge (nature) check (DC 15) identifies these droppings as non-native bird spoor. Even if Feral has had some reason to take his candle out of the window, these droppings remain.

When the PCs find the right ship, read or paraphrase:

A massive, slightly rusted iron and bronze clamp extends from the side of this pier. In its titanic grasp, a ship rests a few feet over the surface of the water below. Scaffolding surrounds the damaged vessel, a skeleton of wood around an aged caravel that has seen better days. The exposed deck of the boat is obscured by the crisscross of scaffold planks and while a door leading into the hold can be seen beyond them, getting to it could prove quite an acrobatic challenge.

If Feral still expects his late night visitor:

In one of the portholes of the ship, a single red stub candle can be seen. Its tiny, constant glow turns the round window into a crimson eye looking out over the languid harbor.

Getting into the ship is basically a series of small battles with animals both under the companionship control of Feral's druid abilities and trained to guard his lair through the use of his Handle Animal skill. Trained animals are not coerced in any way to fight to the death and certainly flee the area if brought below half hit points. Animal companions battle to the bitter end for their master.

Because Feral does not want his lair compromised, his animals does not attack until someone comes within 10 feet of their hiding places. All animals begin this encounter concealed to the best of their ability, trained to hide when at rest and while waiting to pounce. Under no circumstance do animals chase PCs off the ship; they all see the vessel as their territory and stay with it unless Feral flees combat or orders them to leave.

Moving across the deck of the ship is difficult because of the scaffold covering the ship, which counts as difficult terrain. Movement rates are dropped to a maximum of 5 feet base speed and a Climb or Tumble check (DC 15) is required to get into the ship's hold past all the timbers in the way. Small characters and creatures are not as impeded; 10 feet base movement and the skill check is

reduced to a DC 10. Of course, PCs could simply smash through the scaffolding (10 hit points worth of wood for every 5 feet cleared, Break DC 12) but doing so will certainly spoil any chance of surprise the PCs might have.

Once inside, the going is considerably easier. There is no light source save the moon's radiance through the portholes, making visibility poor at best (10 ft. illumination, 20 ft. with low-light vision). Past a nest of shoring planks and shipping crates lies Feral's lair and the final encounter of the scenario.

Foes: Each animal fights as creatures of its type would, hunting and stalking prey in the nature befitting their species. The animals try to strike from surprise if possible and do not participate in a "stand up fight" if they can help it. Moving and attacking, as long as they can avoid attacks of opportunity, is preferable to making themselves vulnerable through motionless full attack actions.

Bonesaw the Wardog: hp 14; MM 272 (Riding Dog, trained for war).

Qir and Qist the Falcons (2): hp 4, 5; MM 273 (Hawks, trained to guard).

Mot, Lor, Kal and Den the Rats (4): hp 1, 1, 2, 2; MM 278 (Rats, companions).

Hist the Viper: hp 8; MM 280 (Small Viper, companion).

As dangerous as these animals can be individually, they are only the sentinels and guardians of a much more dangerous predator—Feral the human druid / psychic warrior.

Feral: male human druid 2/psychic warrior 1; hp 22; See Combat Statistics.

Tactics: Feral begins the fight crouched in the corner of his lair, ready to pounce with his *claws of the beast* active and his preparatory spells (*guidance*, *resistance*, *magic fang*) cast. He has a psionic focus and is willing to expend it on his first attack. If he can meet all these conditions, his first attack is likely a one-hit kill (or incapacitate) if it lands successfully. Once he has downed someone in the party, he snarls savagely and fights like a maddened beast trapped in his den.

If at all possible, see to it that Feral lives through this encounter. He flees if he drops below 5 hit points, leaping through the nearby porthole into the dark waters of the bay. He does not get any kind of "get out of combat free" ability but if the opportunity arises, he takes advantage of any escape he can get. He regrets the loss of his animals but in his primal mind, survival must come first.

After survival comes revenge, but that is also a story for another time (and future adventure).

Treasure: Feral is not the sort to keep wealth but he does have a few items of interest in his lair. Scattered around his end of the hold are seven semi-precious stones worth 10 gp each (the rats love to play with shiny things). A silver earring set with a dangling black pearl worth 40 gp is sitting on a broken table, still resting in an elf's severed ear.

One last item, a hexagonal platinum coin of Riedran mint is sitting in one corner of the hold. This coin looks slightly chewed, having been "lifted" from Whisper by one of Feral's rats the last time she was here. Feral has no idea where it came from and his rats have forgotten about it. The closest thing to an actual clue the PCs are going to find in this scenario, the coin suggests that the Inspired have some involvement in the night's misadventures.

NEW RULES

Feral has feats from both the *Expanded Psionics Handbook* and the Eberron Campaign Setting, and a psionic power from the former source.

The following gives you information need to play two of these rules items.

The Beast Totem and the Strong Mind feats aren't described above because their affect is already listed in the statistic block.

Psionic Focus: For all intents and purposes, once Feral expends his psionic focus (using the Psionic Fist feat), he can't regain it for the rest of the combat. Expelling a psionic focus is not considered an action.

PSIONIC FIST [PSIONIC]

EPH 50

You can charge your unarmed strike or natural weapon with additional damage potential.

Prerequisite: Str 13

Benefit: To use this feat you must expend your psionic focus (see above, or the Concentration skill description EPH 37). Your unarmed strike or attack with a natural weapon deals an extra 2d6 points of damage.

You must decide whether or not to use this feat prior to making an attack. If your attack misses, you still expend your psionic focus.

CLAWS OF THE BEAST

EPH 83

Psychometabolism

Level: Psychic warrior 1

Display: Visual

Manifesting Time: 1 swift action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: 1 hour/level

Power Points: see text

You call forth the aggressive nature of the beast inherent in yourself, psionically transforming your hands into deadly claws. You gain two natural attacks with your claws, each dealing 1d4 points of damage (1d6 if you are Large, or 1d3 if you are Small) plus your Strength bonus.

Your claws are natural weapons, so you are considered armed when attacking with them, and they can be affected by powers, spells, and effects that enhance or improve natural weapons (such as the *magic fang* spell). You can choose to deal nonlethal damage with your claws, taking the standard -4 penalty to your attack roll.

Your claws work just like the natural weapons of many monsters. You can make an attack with one claw or a full attack with two claws at your normal attack bonus, replacing your normal attack routine. You take no penalties for two-weapon fighting, and neither attack is a secondary attack.

You can manifest this power with an instant thought, quickly enough to gain the benefit of the power on your turn before you attack. Manifesting this power is a swift action, like manifesting a quickened power, and it counts toward your normal limit of one quickened power per round. You cannot manifest this power when it isn't your turn.

You can call or dismiss the claws as a swift action during the duration of the power. If you attack with a manufactured weapon or another natural attack, you can't make any claw attacks in that round. You can still hold and manipulate items with your claws or cast spells just as well as you could with your hands.

As for Feral's own knowledge, he has been secretly trained by Whisper for several months now as a "pet project", pun fully intended. His Riedran blood and unique set of abilities intrigued her and every night in his dreams, she visits him as a shadowy figure to instruct and guide him. He has very little information about her and only knows her as a ghost in his mind. He is certain she exists but

cannot describe her or even say what her voice sounds like. All he knows and all he cares to know is that she is powerful and she has "great plans" for him in the future.

Surveillance: This is the last involvement Whisper has with the PCs. She is watching the action as her vessel leaves the harbor. Because she has been using her psionic abilities heavily tonight, she is not spending power points to remain invisible on the deck of her own ship. Thus, the characters have the chance to finally catch sight of her as she leaves. Right after Feral goes down or escapes, have him snarl:

"You've won nothing! She will make short work of you all! She'll flay your minds!"

Then read or paraphrase the following:

The last of the night's fog clings to the water of Stormreach's harbor, clinging to passing ships as they disappear into the night. One vessel in particular is of interest, a lone figure on its deck with glowing eyes. The woman's features are obscured by darkness and distance but, as her yacht sails away, it seems obvious she was looking this direction as she left...

COMBAT STATISTICS

FERAL, SAVAGE PSYCHIC CR 3

Male human druid 2 / psychic warrior 1

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Listen +2, Search +0, Spot +0

Languages Common, Druidic

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13

hp 24 (3 HD)

Resist +4 to saves versus fear

Fort +5, **Ref** +2, **Will** +7 (+4 bonus against fear effects, +3 against psionics)

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares); fast movement +10 ft.

Melee +3/+3 *claws of the beast* (1d4+2, 20); +2d6 if Psychic Fist feat is used and focus is expended (if *magic fang* is cast, claws are at +4 to attack and inflict 1d4+3)

Base Atk +1; **Grp** +3

Combat Gear potion of water breathing (used)

Druid Spells Prepared (CL 2nd, 1d20+2 to overcome SR):

1st— *magic fang*, *cure light wounds* (1d8+2 cured)

0—*cure minor wounds*, *guidance*, *resistance*

Power Points/Day: 1—□; 1 Power Known (ML 1st):

1st—*claws of the beast*

Abilities Str 14, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 15, Cha 12

SQ animal companion*, wild empathy, nature sense, woodland stride

Feats Beast Totem (krenshar)^{ECS}, Strong Mind^{ECS}, Psionic Fist^{EPH}

Skills Balance +5, Concentration +7, Handle Animal +6, Intimidate +5, Jump +4, Listen +5, Knowledge (nature) +5, Psicraft +5, Survival +4, Swim +5

Possessions hide armor

* Feral has lost his psicrystal in the jungles of Xen'drik. Rather than replace it, his primitive instincts have extended his druidical animal companion ability to include a family of four ship rats. They are bonus companions.



ENDING THE ADVENTURE

Once the battle with Feral has ended, the adventure ends. While PCs may have more they wish to investigate, the trail of clues ends here for now. As per Renvi's orders, they should report back to the Church of the Sovereign Host for further instructions. Renvi is certainly pleased to see them and listens to whatever they have to say with great interest.

For their efforts, each PC is awarded a *potion of cure light wounds* with the symbol of the Covenant of Light embossed in pewter on the vial. In keeping with the Covenant's traditions, each PC is also given an *everburning torch*.

These bits of treasure are called event treasure. They are noted on your Adventure Journal, and are kept between adventures played at a single event, but after the event, they are converted to EV, which is tracked with your character records on the RPGA website.

EVENT TREASURE EXTENSION

Until XEN'DRIK EXPEDITIONS character tracking is up and running, you can keep event treasure between events. We'll announce the end of event treasure carrying on the RPGA website, but it will end prior to the campaign's official launch at Gen Con Indy 2006.

As for the *Libri Mordahve*, it is in the safekeeping of the Covenant now. A new sage will have to be found for its mysteries to be deciphered but at least it has not fallen into the hands of the faction's enemies. But if you are running Covenant of Light DM's Mark 1 the PCs could possibly hasten its translation. But that story is for you to craft.

ADVENTURE QUESTIONS

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS CAMPAIGNS (of which XEN'DRIK EXPEDITIONS is part of) tracks character progress digitally. At the adventure's end, you report what the characters did, by answering a number of questions. The answers to those questions are tallied, and determine not only what happens in the campaign, but also the experience (XP) and gold piece (gp) value increase each characters gains.

At the end of this adventure, you'll find the RPGA Session Tracking form, tailored for this adventure. On the section titled "Adventure Questions" fill in the bubble that corresponds to the best answer for the questions below.

Many time the questions ask whether or not the PCs defeated an encounter. Defeating doesn't necessarily mean killing all the enemies, but many times such an event suffices as defeating an encounter. Sometimes the PCs merely bypass an encounter. Through luck or circumstance a group of PCs can avoid encounters unscathed. Does bypassing an encounter earn the XP that defeating it would? No. The reward for getting past an encounter without actually interacting with it is having extra resources to bear in the next encounter. Where is the line? You are going to have to make that decision, because you are the DM.

For traps, PCs get experience points just for encountering them, whether or not they have been disabled.

Sometimes the PC's actions don't really fit the actions of a particular adventure question perfectly. This especially happens when you play the adventure using the 'Scaling the Encounter' options. In these cases, find the answer that best fits the spirit of their results.

1) Did any of the PCs help Renvi try to reason with Flame Father Garris in Part One?

- a) Yes, all of them did.
- b) Yes, some of them did.
- c) No, none of them offered any help at all.

2) Which best describes the level of vigilance on the part of the PCs during the transport of the *Libri Mordahve*?

- a) Very vigilant and organized.

- b) Mixed vigilance; some PCs were careful and prepared while others were less cautious.
 - c) Poor vigilance; there were few precautions taken.
 - d) Unprepared. The only real protection for the book was Renvis himself.
- 3) Did the PCs discover Shellok as an impersonator?
- a) Yes, and they kept him from capturing the book or purposefully let him have it.
 - b) Yes, but not before he got the book and tried to escape.
 - c) No, but he did not get to escape with the book.
 - d) No, and he successfully escaped with the book.
- 4) Did the PCs defeat Vraché and the Vultures?
- a) Completely, every member of the gang was put down in some way.
 - b) Partially, one or more of them got away.
 - c) The PCs were defeated or had to flee from the Vulture's ambush.
- 5) Was Feral defeated?
- a) Yes, the maladjusted druid went down like a sack of bird seed.
 - b) No, he was too much beast for the PCs to handle.
- 6) Did the PCs somehow discover Whisper's presence in some way before the end of the module?
- a) Yes, one or more of the characters managed to spot her during the mission.
 - b) Yes, but only as a suspicion that something psychic was being done to cover her involvement with her pawns.
 - c) No; the glimpse they had of her on the boat at the end of the scenario was their first inkling of a greater plot surrounding the *Libri Mordahve*.
- 7) How would you rate the group's roleplaying?
- a) Fantastic. Everyone had interesting and engaging characters that interacted with the adventure in very fun ways.
 - b) Good. Most everyone had interesting and engaging characters that interacted with the adventure in very fun ways.
 - c) Okay. There was some roleplaying.
 - d) None. They treated the adventure only as a set of objectives. There was no roleplaying.

STORY OBJECTS

Story objects are digital story information tracked with character. You'll notice on both your Session Tracking Sheet, and in the online reporting on the RPGA database, there's a section titled certification or cert. These sections allow you to enter up to two groups of five alphanumeric characters. At the end of each adventure, usually in a sidebar of in the Conclusion section, there is a list of story objects unique to the adventure. This list also features a description of the object, and the five alphanumeric character code you place on the Session Tracking Sheet and the online reporting to grant a character a particular story object. The story object then is reported with the adventure questions, and appears on the character's online character record after the session is reported.

Divine Inspiration has two Story Objects, each connected to events and items in the adventure. It's possible for a character to have both Story Objects, though only one PC in the group can have the Six-Sided Enigma object.

Give the following Story Object to any PC that took the time to study the *Libri Mordahve*'s pages.

REVELATION OF MORDAHVE

Cert ID: EXCL01

You have taken a look inside the *Libri Mordahve*, a mysterious book said to contain prophecies, ancient wisdom and lore from bygone ages. While you do not understand the things you have seen in its pages, there is no denying that what little you glimpsed will linger in your mind forever. This revelation gives you the ability to discover the very first adventure secret in an expedition adventure. Tell your DM about this Story Object before play begins.

Give the following Story Object to the PCs who took the strange coin in the hold of the *Wavesworn*.

A SIX-SIDED ENIGMA

Cert ID: EXCL02

This strange platinum coin is hexagonal in shape and bears an image of a Riedran monolith on both sides. There is no writing on the coin, and aside from tiny teeth marks on one edge, it is undamaged. What makes the coin odd is that it is not any known form of Riedran currency.