

DEATH IN FREEPORT

20TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION



AN ADVENTURE FOR FIFTH EDITION
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DEATH IN FREEPORT



WELCOME TO FREEPORT!

Freeport, known as the City of Adventure, has been home to countless RPG campaigns since it was first published in 2000. Its mix of classic fantasy, pirates, and Lovecraftian horror has had an enduring appeal, and it all goes back to the original edition of *Death in Freeport*.

Back in those halcyon days, I was working at Wizards of the Coast designing such books as the *Guide to Hell, Slavers*, and *Vortex of Madness* for *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*®. I was in what was known as the TSR Product Group during the design and development of the third edition of *D&D*. I had already decided to start a side company to publish more RPGs when something called the Open Game License was developed at Wizards. The idea was to provide a framework that would allow third-party publishers to release D&D compatible material. In particular, Wizards was hoping companies would produce short adventures, as this was something they had difficulty doing profitably. I decided just such an adventure would make a perfect second release for Green Ronin (the first being a beer-and-pretzels game called *Ork! The Roleplaying Game*, now in its second edition). I knew Third Edition D&D was taking a “back to the dungeon” approach so I thought I’d offer something different: a city adventure. The result was *Death in Freeport*, a 32-page module that released at Gen Con 2000 the same day as the new Third Edition *Player’s Handbook*. It was an immediate hit and went on to win the very first ENnie Award and the Origins Award for Best RPG Adventure in 2001. We followed it up with two more adventures (*Terror in Freeport* and *Madness in Freeport*) to create what is known as the *Freeport Trilogy*. These modules not only put Green Ronin on the RPG map but also gave us a setting we could expand upon year after year. When I left Wizards of the Coast in 2002, Green Ronin became my full-time job and I’ve never looked back.

Now it’s 2020 and Green Ronin is celebrating its 20th anniversary. What better way to do so than release new editions of the adventure that started it all? There are two versions you can choose from, one using my own *Fantasy AGE RPG* and one using the *Fifth Edition* rules. Either is a great starting adventure for a new campaign and works best with low-level characters. One of Freeport’s novel features in the original adventure is that it was not tied to a specific campaign setting. The small group of islands that are home to Freeport can be dropped in any convenient location in your world of choice. We have maintained that approach in this 20th anniversary edition, though look for us to be developing the World of Freeport in our *Fantasy AGE* line in the future.

If you are a player, stop reading now! If you are a GM, enjoy an introduction to the city and its history, and then dive into the scenario itself. Adventure awaits!

Chris Pramas
April 14, 2020



A BRIEF HISTORY OF FREEPORT

While the current city of Freeport is only a few hundred years old, the site has been inhabited for far longer. Some two thousand years ago, this area was part of a much larger island known as Valossa. Stretching a thousand miles south to north and eight hundred east to west, Valossa was the heart of the empire of the serpent people. These sorcerous reptiles ruled vast swaths of territory when humanity was young, and pioneered magic and science when the elves still hid in their woods.

All was not well in the Valossan Empire, however. The serpent people had long worshiped Yig, the great snake god. But in the empire's latter days, a cult dedicated to the worship of the Unspeakable One, a dread alien power, sprang up in their cities. Called the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign, the cult spurned Yig and embraced the madness of the Unspeakable One. The leaders of the serpent people, arrogant and vain in their high towers, allowed the cult to fester among the discontented. By the time the priests of Yig were roused to action, it was too late. The Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign enacted a ritual to summon their dark god, and the Valossan Empire was smashed for all time.

No witnesses survived to tell of the Great Old One's appearance, but evidence abounds of the destruction it

wrought. Mighty Valossa was rent asunder, and sea water rushed in to drown the serpent people in their millions. Those who survived were driven mad, losing their civilization and magic in one terrible moment. Over 90 percent of Valossa slipped beneath the waves, leaving only scattered islands as a testimony to the once-great empire.

The crazed serpent people fled underground, where their degenerate descendants live to this day. A very few sorcerers and priests of Yig survived the Unspeakable One's wrath with their sanity intact. These few retreated into the shadows as the elves and humans built their own realms. The centuries passed, and few remembered that the Valossan Empire had ever existed or that serpent people had once been civilized.

THE RISE OF FREEPORT

The largest surviving bit of Valossa is an island chain known as the Serpent's Teeth. The name may be a distant echo of the Valossan Empire, though locals ascribe it to the shape of the islands themselves. The most important of the Serpent's Teeth, A'Val, has a natural harbor that is easily defended. As humanity took to the seas, A'Val was quickly found by roving captains. At first, it was just a place to rest, get fresh water, and refit. Before long a village sprang up, and as the years passed this village turned into a town. It was able to thrive by offering services to passing ships and providing refuge for those unwelcome elsewhere. The sailors took to calling it Freeport, and the name stuck.

WHERE IS FREEPORT?

The preceding history contains vague references to “the Continent” and its naval powers, but no details. These have been deliberately left sketchy, so you can use Freeport in any campaign world you desire. The *Serpent’s Teeth* is a small chain of islands you can easily drop into a given setting, or you may decide to use this information to flesh out an island city in your existing world. If you’ve got a good candidate, a simple name switch is all that’s necessary. Similarly, most references to gods in this module are generic. When the text refers to the God of Knowledge or the God of War, for example, substitute an appropriate deity from your campaign. If you are in the market for a complete pantheon and cosmology, check out our *Book of the Righteous*. This is written for Fifth Edition, but the core of it is easy to adapt to any fantasy RPG and it’s a great resource for gods and religion.

With its remote location and natural attributes, Freeport became a magnet for buccaneers. Before long they had taken over the town, which became a notorious pirate haven. What made Freeport work in the early days was a simple pirate code: Do whatever you want on the high seas, but don’t go against your comrades in port. That meant no stealing, no killing, and no kidnapping. Duels did occur on occasion, but they were formal affairs conducted outside the city walls. Most satisfied themselves with drunken brawls, and of those there were plenty. By and large, though, the peace was kept in Freeport.

About two hundred years ago, the era of the rogue buccaneer came to an end. Lone ships increasingly faced threats from organized navies. At one time a single privateer could hunt merchant ships with impunity, but now it was a fox to the hounds of naval squadrons. As crew after crew was hunted down and destroyed, the pirates of Freeport knew they had to change their ways.

Freeport’s captains realized that it would take a navy to fight a navy, so they decided to form a force of their own and then go raiding en masse. The only problem was choosing a leader. After much bickering, the pirates settled on two captains for the great fleet. Drac and Francisco were fierce rivals, and the assembled captains believed that anything the two could agree on would be a good decision.

It was not an ideal situation, but the pirates had surprise and numbers on their side. The combined fleet went on a three-month raid that netted more money, valuables, foodstuffs, and booze than Freeport had ever seen. It was a spectacular success, and Captains Drac and Francisco were not slow in claiming credit. Before long, each had declared himself a Sea Lord of Freeport.

WAR IN FREEPORT

The next ten years were tense ones in Freeport. The great raid set off a panic among the maritime nations, which spent huge amounts of money and resources building up larger navies. The Sea Lords were forced to fight battle after battle against determined foes. Freeport itself was assaulted on three separate occasions, but its defenses proved too strong for the attacking ships.

This undeclared war had no clear victor. Freeport withstood the assaults and inflicted several stinging defeats on its

enemies, but attrition was high on both sides. In the end the conflict petered out as the warring navies ran out of ships and crews to hurl into battle. After a decade of constant fighting, there was a long lull, during which each side licked its wounds.

During the war, adversity had kept the pirates united. When the pressure eased, however, trouble was not slow in coming. The Sea Lords had long hated each other, and this animosity flared up anew—with deadly consequences. After a series of provocations, real fighting broke out in Freeport for the first time in its history. The followers of Drac and Francisco killed one another in the streets, breaking forever the pirate code that had bound the city together.

Neither Sea Lord gained an upper hand. Before the conflict could be resolved, word came of yet another hostile fleet bound for the city. The pirates called a truce, and the fleet sailed out to defend Freeport, united once again—or so it seemed.

Captain Drac had realized that this ongoing war was one they could not ultimately win. The only chance for survival was to become a part of the world that was trying to destroy them. Drac entered secret negotiations with the enemy, using a wizard as a go-between. He agreed to betray Francisco in exchange for a truce and recognition of Freeport as a sovereign city-state. The enemy leaders were only too happy to sign such an agreement and end the ruinously expensive war.

With no knowledge of his comrade’s duplicity, Captain Francisco led the fleet to the attack. Once his forces were engaged, Drac’s ships simply sailed away, leaving Francisco’s fleet exposed and without support; they were quickly surrounded and destroyed. In the meantime, Drac sailed back to Freeport to announce the new city-state and his new regime.

A NATION EMERGES

Captain Drac quickly consolidated his power. He declared himself the sole Sea Lord of Freeport and eliminated his remaining enemies before they could organize against him. Some of the other pirate captains left Freeport rather than serve Drac, whom they despised for betraying Francisco and blamed for violating the pirate code. Most, however, seeing

FREEPORT TIMELINE

TIME BEFORE PRESENT	NOTABLE EVENTS
2,000 years	Valossa destroyed in cataclysm; Serpent's Teeth formed.
800 years	Pirates settle the island of A'Val.
200 years	Captains Drac and Francisco lead combined fleet; each declares himself Sea Lord of Freeport.
190 years	Civil war in Freeport; Drac betrays Francisco and assumes sole control of the city.
160 years	Drac dies and is succeeded by Captain Cromey, initiating a century of prosperity.
50 years	Marten Drac becomes Sea Lord, nearly bankrupting Freeport; institutes Drac succession law.
36 years	Anton Drac succeeds Marten and repairs much of the damage but does not repeal succession law.
11 years	Anton Drac assassinated; Milton Drac becomes Sea Lord.
10 years	Construction begins on the Lighthouse of Drac.

which way the salty wind was blowing, chose to remain in Freeport and ride out the storm.

As it turned out, Sea Lord Drac's reign was less bloody than anyone had believed possible. He ruled Freeport with a firm hand for the next thirty years, turning a pirate haven into a commercial hub of substantial importance. He set up trade routes with former enemies, cracked down on rogue pirates, and organized a Captains' Council. Drac's word was still law, but the Council was in charge of the city's day-to-day affairs and advised the Sea Lord on important matters.

Although Drac fancied himself a king, he resisted the urge to take the title. Somehow, he knew the citizens of Freeport would not accept something so contrary to their natures. Similarly, he knew he could not found a dynasty. The Captains' Council would never submit to Drac's son, a mere boy who lacked the experience of those salty dogs.

But Drac needed to ensure the survival of Freeport as an independent city-state after his death. With melancholy in his heart, he chose another old hand, Captain Cromey, to be his successor. Furthermore, he even set into law a requirement that the Captains' Council approve the Sea Lord's nominee. At the end of his life, Drac chose the interests of the city over his own glory, and for this he is remembered as a great man in Freeport.

A CENTURY OF GROWTH

The next hundred years were profitable ones. Freeport continued to grow, which necessitated building a newer and larger city wall. As new trade routes to the east opened up, the city became an even more important maritime center. Freeport was largely able to stay out of the wars on the Continent, although it did cement alliances with several important powers. All in all, this was a period of stability and growth, with a succession of competent Sea Lords assuring the city's continued importance.

A BAD SEEP

Things began to change fifty years ago, when a descendent of Captain Drac succeeded the outgoing Sea Lord. Marten

Drac is rumored to have used blackmail and assassination in his rise to power, and he most certainly did so to maintain his position. Marten ruled for only fourteen years, but the damage he did to the city was substantial. A series of burdensome duties and taxes fattened his coffers but drove away many merchants. More ominously, he drove through a new law, over the objections of the Captains' Council, that required the Sea Lord of Freeport to be a descendent of the original Captain Drac.

Marten's youngest brother, Anton, who became Sea Lord on Marten's death, saved the city from complete disaster. Anton Drac proved to be cut from the same cloth as his illustrious ancestor and was able to undo the worst excesses of Marten's reign. He abolished the unfair duties, as well as providing incentives to win back lost trade. He also provided limited military aid to several important nations, earning their thanks and their business.

Anton's one failing was that he did not abolish Marten's succession law. He was regularly urged to do so by the Captains' Council, but the Sea Lord could never quite bring himself to do it. Despite his enlightened rule, he did consider Freeport to belong to his family. This was to prove his undoing.

DECADE OF DECEIT

Eleven years ago, a great war broke out, involving nearly every nation on the Continent. Anton stayed out of it at first, but knew he would have to honor existing treaties. He announced to the Captains' Council that the Freeport navy would go to the aid of its allies in the spring—the first time the full fleet had sailed to war since the days of Drac and Francisco. The Council was torn on the issue, approving the move by only a single vote.

Anton had allowed enough time for preparations to be made throughout the winter. Unfortunately, this also gave his enemies several months to concoct an ambitious plan. So ambitious, in fact, that many suspected the plotters had help from agents of governments that wanted Freeport to stay neutral. Rumors continue to circulate to this day.

Toward the end of winter, as the Sea Lord was inspecting the fleet on the docks, a single yellow-fletched arrow flew from the crow's nest of an anchored ship, piercing Anton's chest. The wound should not have been mortal, but the arrow was enchanted with lethal magic. Anton died on the spot, leaving Freeport without a Sea Lord for the first time in two hundred years.

The assassin was cornered and killed before he could talk, and his body disappeared before priests could try to speak with the dead man. The Captains' Council dismissed the attack as the act of a lone renegade, hushing up its magical nature. The Council had more pressing business, namely, who would succeed Anton?

At this juncture, Captain Milton Drac stepped onto the stage of history. A distant cousin of Anton, Milton appeared as if from nowhere. He was not a member of the Council, but somehow he enjoyed tremendous support there. Those most likely to oppose him were strangely silent, as if they feared the consequences of such an action. In a matter of weeks, this previously unknown Drac became the new Sea Lord of Freeport.

Milton's first official act was to cancel all military aid to allied nations: The fleet was to restrict its activities to guarding commerce, nothing more. As war raged on the Continent, Freeport stood neutral. This was a grave disappointment to the nations counting on its navy, who branded Milton a traitor. Some called him the puppet of foreign agents or a religious cult. Milton denied these accusations and continued his rule of Freeport with little opposition.

After canceling the fleet action, Milton used the war chest to build a monument to his ambition: the Lighthouse of Drac. It has been under construction for the past ten years, on the nearest island of the Serpent's Teeth. Meant to be one of the wonders of the age, the Lighthouse soars towards the heavens, taller than any structure in the world.

The Sea Lord's stated goal is to make Freeport the preeminent maritime power of the world, but the reality has fallen short of that ideal. The Lighthouse of Drac, or "Milton's Folly," as some have taken to calling it, has nearly bankrupted the city. Taxes and duties have risen steadily during its construction, and an army of migrant workers was needed to finish the structure on time. It is finally approaching its scheduled completion date, three months from now. Milton is planning a gala celebration for its inauguration, and ships from around the world are expected to attend. This is an event not to be missed—or so Milton hopes.

FREEPORT TODAY

Milton is obsessed with his Lighthouse, but the Captains' Council still governs Freeport. Their task grew more arduous over the past ten years, as more and more money was sunk into Milton's Folly. Services have decreased. The garrison has shrunk and is largely confined to the Old City, while the docks are policed haphazardly, if at all. Crime has skyrocketed, but as long as it remains in the shadows the Council is content to pretend it does not exist. Known pirates who





previously visited the city inconspicuously now do so brazenly. As long as they bribe the dock officials, they can enjoy what Freeport has to offer without trouble. Ironically, the city is returning to its roots.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The temple to the God of Knowledge is one of the largest in Freeport. A repository of ancient scrolls and arcane learning, it is a magnet to scholars and wizards alike. In addition to its priests, the temple employs a large group of librarians, who maintain the collection and deal with visitors. Lucius was one of these librarians. He had grown up in the temple and lived to serve.

Six years ago, something very strange happened to Lucius. An extraplanar entity stole his body, displacing his consciousness and taking over his existence. For five years, the alien consciousness controlled Lucius's body, seeking to learn as much about the world as it could. The new "Lucius," nothing like the old, was expelled from the temple within a year for violating the sanctum. He then left Freeport altogether, traveling the world for four years before returning.

When the real Lucius returned to his rightful body, he did not remember where he had been or what he had done and was mortified to learn of his possessor's activities in his absence. With deep shame he approached the temple, asking for forgiveness and re-admittance. He offered the priests an amazing collection of scrolls and artifacts, apparently accumulated while his possessor journeyed abroad. They were in such awe of this collection that they reinstated Lucius and forgave him his transgressions. Both he and the priests were now happy, and each tried to forget the librarian's strange behavior.

Life for Lucius was tranquil for the next eight months. His life fell into its old patterns. The calmness of the library soothed him, and he lost himself in a world of books, scrolls, and artifacts.

Then the dreams came.

Lucius awoke screaming every night, his brain reeling with memories of gargantuan cities, monstrous creatures, and unspeakable rites. At first, he hoped that the nightmares would simply go away; instead, they got worse. Lucius did not want to accept the truth, but in the end he had no choice. Whatever these dreams were, they were somehow connected with those five years of missing time. If he ever wanted to have a normal life again, he knew he would have to find out what had happened to him.

The man who had spent so much time researching past lives now turned his skills to his own. He began to ask

questions about what “he” had done and how “he” had acted during those five years. He spent countless hours reading over “his” journals, trying to find out who had possessed his body and why. The priests of the temple grew uncomfortable with Lucius’s line of questioning. They wanted this incident buried, not subject to new scrutiny. The high priest begged Lucius to let the past stay in the past, but the librarian could not agree.

Two days ago, Lucius disappeared.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

Death in Freeport drops the player characters into the midst of political and magical intrigue, as the hidden Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign manipulates events to bring its dread god back into the world. Freeport is still a bustling center of trade, but evil currents run beneath the surface. There are secrets here, and questions unanswered. The characters will undoubtedly learn there is more here than they expect in a simple seaport. The question is, will that knowledge kill them?

As the adventure begins, the player characters (PCs) have just come to Freeport on a merchant ship. While on the docks, the PCs are attacked by a press gang, who mistake them for easy marks. The press gang is handily seen off, since they are unused to real resistance.

A bookish young man named Brother Egil approaches the PCs. He says he’s been looking for a group that can take of itself, and that he has a job for them if they are interested: finding a missing librarian. The missing man, Lucius, disappeared two days previously, and Egil is eager to find him.

Egil gives the PCs some background on Lucius and his strange behavior. The PCs are then free to investigate. They are likely to visit Lucius’s home, the temple to the God of Knowledge, and an orc pirate ship. This should form a picture of Lucius as a man searching for his own past—who found something he wasn’t counting on.

Following a trail of clues, the PCs learn about the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign. With a little luck, they can trail the cultists back to their hideout, penetrate the lair, and discover secret tunnels underneath it. Deep underground they find degenerate serpent people, and eventually Lucius himself. The librarian has been tortured badly and will die without aid.

The adventurers also must deal with the leader of the cult, a man they may recognize from the temple. When the cult priest is slain, they are in for an even bigger surprise. He was not human at all, but a serpent person in disguise! What this means for Freeport only the gods can say.

Note: Throughout the adventure, you will encounter sections of boxed text. This is information for the players, which you can read aloud or paraphrase as you wish. Statistics for some creatures and non-player characters (NPCs) are detailed in the **Appendix**, with abbreviated information presented in each encounter. Stats for creatures with **bolded names** can be found in the core rules.

PART ONE

BAITING THE HOOK

In which the player characters fend off a cowardly attack and find gainful employment in the city of Freeport.

The setup of the adventure assumes the PCs have just arrived in Freeport after serving or arranging passage on a merchant ship. You can easily alter the circumstances if that lets you kick off the adventure more smoothly. Perhaps one of the PCs is a friend of Egil’s from the Continent, for example. This would give them more reason to trust the young librarian and a better motivation to help him find his friend. The only real requirement is that none of the party should have been to Freeport before. Having inside knowledge of how the city works ruins some of the fun, so it’s best if the characters are from elsewhere.

THE PRESS GANG

Read or paraphrase the following:

You stand on the docks of the great trading city of Freeport. Your journey here was long and uncomfortable, so it’s with a sense of freedom that you walk the bustling dockside. Unfortunately, you are not laden with gold, or even silver. The merchant who hired you had to cut you loose after his shipment of foodstuffs went bad during the voyage. You were supposed to travel to ports beyond, but now it seems you’re going to have to fend for yourselves in Freeport—at least for a while.

The action on the docks is mesmerizing. There are ships in port from all over the world, carrying all manner of exotic goods. Sailors and merchants of all ancestries and backgrounds mingle on the wharves, with money changing hands so fast you can barely even follow. The sights and sounds are so overwhelming you almost don’t notice the group of men that casually coalesces around your party. They are a rough lot, scarred and crusty sailors armed with saps and belying pins. The leader of these scurvy dogs, a toothless man with tattooed knuckles, smiles crookedly and says, “You’ve all just volunteered for an exciting life at sea. Do you want to go the easy way or the hard way?”

These men are, of course, a press gang out looking for able bodies to sell to visiting ships. The PCs appear inexperienced and easy to overwhelm, making them a prime target. Characters with a passive Perception of 13 or higher may notice a young man in robes a short distance away who stays to watch with fight with great interest.

Creatures: When the encounter begins, the PCs are surrounded by eight sailors (use **commoner** stats). Old toothless picked his point of ambush well: Boxes of goods dot the wharf, making it difficult to maneuver. The crowd is also thick, though it will disperse if a fight erupts.

Tactics: These sailors are old hands at the press gang game. They don't wear any armor, but they are handy with their clubs, which they use first to knock PCs out rather than kill them. If things get serious (one or more of their fellows are killed), they switch to killing targets. The sailors are not trying to get killed—they expect easy marks. Press gangs prey on weakness, so these bullies clear out when it becomes obvious the characters can take care of themselves. Once three of them have been overcome, the rest flee.

AN OFFER OF EMPLOYMENT

Read or paraphrase the following:

As the last members of the press gang flee into the crowds, a young man in robes approaches you. "That'll teach them to pick on newcomers," he says, laughing. "But where are my manners? Allow me to introduce myself. I am Brother Egil, and I've been looking for people who can take care of themselves in a scrap. If you'll allow me to buy you a round of drinks, I'd like to talk to you about a job. What do you say?"



If the PCs are amenable, Brother Egil (use **acolyte** stats) takes them to a nearby tavern, the Bilge Rat. It's as charming as it sounds, but the beer is better than one would expect. Egil buys the first round, and then makes his offer.

"Two days ago, a librarian from my temple disappeared. For reasons that are somewhat complicated, the high priest has declined to look into the matter. The missing man, Lucius, is a dear friend of mine, and I'm worried some evil may have befallen him. I'm willing to offer you 50 gold pieces each, 10 now and 40 on completion of the work, if you can find Lucius and return him to the temple. I will provide you with any information I can, and healing should you require it. Interested?"

Considering their current straits, the PCs should indeed be interested. If they are too suspicious and don't accept right away, Brother Egil says that it's a standing offer and he can be found at the temple to the God of Knowledge. Once they accept the job, Egil fills them in on the situation. He'll also volunteer this information if the party wants to hear more about the job before accepting. He is honestly concerned for his friend's well-being and has nothing to hide.

Egil's description of the case follows, along with his responses to some likely questions.

"I have known Lucius for most of my life. We were both brought up in the temple. He became a librarian and I, a priest. But six years ago, something strange happened. He seemed to change overnight. One day he was my friend of many years, and the next he was a complete stranger. He asked bizarre questions, seemed to remember nothing of our friendship, and treated the temple as his own personal library. Some months later he was caught violating the sanctum and was expelled from the temple. Shortly thereafter, he left Freeport entirely and was gone for four years.

"When Lucius reappeared, he was like his old self. He came to the temple and begged to be readmitted, saying that he had no memory of the previous five years. Thuron, the high priest, seemed adamant about refusing Lucius's petition but changed his mind after a private meeting with him.

"Lucius returned to the temple, and it was like old times for eight or nine months. Then he started to look haggard, and told me he wasn't sleeping well. Something was disturbing him, but he wouldn't say what. He started asking a lot of questions about what he had been like right before his expulsion. The high priest talked to him about it, but Lucius wouldn't let it go.

"I grew increasingly worried for my friend. He seemed on the brink of madness, as if one small thing could push him over the edge. Two days ago, he failed to come to the temple. I went to his home and found it empty. I searched but could not find him. The priests of my temple deny it, but I know that something has happened to Lucius. I want you to find out what."

WHAT EGIL KNOWS

The PCs are likely to have some questions for Brother Egil. Below are his answers to the most probable. He answers to the best of his knowledge, as he is sincerely concerned for his friend, so be reasonably open with information that he can be expected to have.

Where did Lucius go when he left Freeport four years ago?

I don't know for sure, but Lucius seemed to think he had traveled quite widely.

Why did the high priest let him back into the temple?

That question has puzzled me as well. Thuron is not a man who changes his mind easily, yet something Lucius said or did during his meeting with the man swayed the high priest.

Can we search his house?

Yes, certainly. I can take you there whenever you like.

Can we talk to Thuron or other members of the temple?

Yes, but please do not mention my involvement. Better to say that you are friends of Lucius from abroad and that you've come to Freeport to see him.

Can you recommend a place to stay?

Certainly. The Scholar's Quill is a fine tavern located between Lucius's home and the temple. Many visitors to the temple lodge there, and it doesn't have the sort of rough clientele that many local inns do.

GETTING SETTLED

Unless the PCs have other plans, Brother Egil takes them to the Scholar's Quill. This is a quiet inn off the main thoroughfare that caters to academics. The first floor consists of a dining room, kitchen, and larder, and upstairs there are eight guest rooms that sleep two each. The innkeeper, a matronly woman named Desi (use commoner stats), lives on the third floor with her two serving maids. Brother Egil can get the PCs a good rate: 1 gp per day for the group, which includes a light breakfast and dinner. Breakfast is at 8:00 a.m. sharp and dinner is at 5:00 p.m. Those who miss meals will have to fend for themselves—or try to sweet-talk Desi's staff.

Should the PCs disdain the Scholar's Quill—because they don't quite trust Brother Egil or they prefer more rough-and-tumble establishments—Freeport has plenty of inns to choose from. Here are some alternatives to throw at them if you need to: The Rusty Hook (near the docks, notoriously dangerous), The Keelhaul (in the old town, attracts pirates), The Broken Mug (on a wharf, fights happen hourly), and The Black Rose (in the old town, caters to fat merchants).

NEWS AROUND FREEPORT

Enterprising characters may start out by making a few DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidate) checks around town and spending some coins to pick up the news of the city. They can pick up the following rumors:

- The Lighthouse of Drac is almost done now: Only three more months until it's ready. They say the Sea Lord is planning a big celebration too.
- They don't call that infernal lighthouse "Milton's Folly" for nothing. Ten years to build, and now the city coffers are empty.
- The Sea Lord's Guard (Freeport's watch) has been cut back so much that thieves are running wild. Only the Old City gets any real protection.
- Pirates don't even bother to disguise themselves when they come to port these days. There are pirate ships here right now—some of the crews are even orcs!
- The Captains' Council has had enough of Sea Lord Milton Drac. He may have an "unfortunate accident" before his precious lighthouse is finished.

PART TWO

A PROMISING LINE OF INQUIRY

In which the player characters conduct an investigation and uncover diverse items of interest.

The PCs now have a mystery on their hands. You should be flexible as they investigate, since there's no way of knowing where they'll want to look first. What seems obvious to you may not be so obvious to the players.

The best place to start the investigation is at Lucius's home. Chances are the party will head there right away, but a nudge in that direction might be necessary. Brother Egil could guide them there, for example. ("Do you want to see Lucius's house now? We'll have to hurry so I can be back at the temple in time for evening prayers.")

Brother Egil accompanies the PCs to make sure they don't just toss the place. Not that there's much to steal here, but he has Lucius's interests at heart.

Note: When your players first hear about Milton's Folly (see the **News Around Freeport** sidebar), they may want to run off and investigate it right away. While the lighthouse is key to *Madness in Freeport*, at this stage it's simply a construction site. Let your PCs run around if they want to, but they won't find anything at this time. During this adventure there



DEATH IN FREEPORT

is nothing suspicious going on at the lighthouse. A map of Milton's Folly can be found in *Madness in Freeport*.

LOCATION 1

THE HOUSE OF LUCIUS

Read or paraphrase the following:

Apparently, being a librarian in a trading city is not a lucrative job. Lucius's small home has only the ground floor, consisting of two rooms, although there is a basement. Most of the main room is cluttered with books, scrolls, quills, ink pots, and other tools of the scholar's trade. A cot is jammed into one corner, and there's a small desk under the front window. The small backroom is part kitchen, part junk storage. A trapdoor leads down to the basement.

1A. MAIN ROOM

Most of the books and scrolls here are geographies detailing far-flung and sometimes mythical locations, with titles like *The Sundered Empire: Its People and Wars* and *The Kingdom of the Blue Rose*. Successful Intelligence (Investigation) checks can turn up some useful information:

- **DC 12 or better:** Among the scattered papers is a hastily scribbled "to do" list; see **Handout A**.
- **DC 15 or better:** The desk has a drawer with a false bottom, which conceals a diary written in the same hand as the list. It takes about half an hour to skim through the entries, the most interesting of which are compiled in **Handout B**.

1B. BACKROOM

There is nothing here but dry goods and dirty clothes.

1C. BASEMENT

The trapdoor is not locked, and opening it reveals a staircase down. The basement is actually larger than the house, although it is strangely empty. There are bookcases lining the walls, as well as a display case. Searching turns up nothing, but a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) lets the character notice that the cases are much of more recent construction than the basement itself. The wood still has a "new" smell—probably no older than a year.

LOCATION 2:

THE BLOODY VENGEANCE

Lucius's list mentions a Captain Scarbelly. Brother Egil doesn't know of such a man, though he admits he doesn't get out of the temple much. If the PCs did not go to Lucius's

house first, they may still decide to check out the pirate ship. Not only does it loom large in city gossip, it is moored in plain sight, with its crew not bothering to hide themselves or their vocation.

A successful Charisma (Intimidate or Persuasion) check (DC 12 in town or DC 9 by the docks) reveals the privateer *Bloody Vengeance* is in port now. Its captain, Scarbelly, is a notorious orc pirate who operates out of Freeport. The PCs may make additional Charisma checks to learn more about the ship, its captain, and its crew. The table below summarizes what they can find out; if the characters' first check was at the docks, further Charisma checks at the docks to gather information are made at advantage.

DC	INFORMATION
12	The <i>Bloody Vengeance</i> pulled into port eleven days ago.
15	The crew has largely stayed on their ship. They seem edgy and hostile.
15	The ship has a crew of ten orcs, including a brutal first mate.
20	Captain Scarbelly has killed twenty-nine men in hand-to-hand combat.

Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs get their first look at the *Bloody Vengeance*.

The Bloody Vengeance is a crudely built orc ship, roughly 90 feet long. The ship is battle-scarred but seaworthy, and you note that no other ships have moored nearby. The sail is furled, but the crow's nest holds an orc lookout armed with a shortbow. Two other orcs guard the gangway, their scowls and jagged swords encouraging passersby to keep on walking.

The guards are as hostile as they seem. Anyone attempting to talk to them or request a meeting with Captain Scarbelly is told to clear off in no uncertain terms. The orcs follow up this instruction with a physical demonstration if the PCs persist and do not appear much of a threat. Otherwise, the pirates call for the first mate, Aggro.

Aggro ducks out of the forecandle, revealing a huge frame. He loudly snorts, hawks, and spits while you inquire about Lucius. When you are done, Aggro says, "He was here last week, sniveling for an audience with the captain. I told him the same thing I'm telling you: Sod off!"

You notice that the archer in the crow's nest has an arrow nocked. Aggro and the guards are fingering the pommels of their wicked scimitars. They're clearly itching for a fight. It's obvious they have something to hide on their ship, all right—but is it Lucius?

Actually, Aggro is telling the truth about sending Lucius on his way. The orcs are touchy because a powerful wizard named Kenzil hired them to attack a particular ship and

CAPTAIN SCARBELLY

Captain Scarbelly is rightly feared by merchants and seafarers. He and his crew have terrorized the sea lanes for years, and they know whom to bribe in Freeport to keep it that way.

Since he's waiting for the wizard Kenzil, Scarbelly spends most of his time on the ship. Once in a while, though, he does slip off for a drink and meal, and this may give the PCs a chance to talk to him. The old pirate won't say anything about Lucius unless he's given a bribe of at least 5 gp, but with sufficient incentive he relates the whole story.

The captain recognized Lucius right way, for he had indeed been on the *Bloody Vengeance* some four years ago. The librarian bought him a drink and asked many questions about that time, which seemed odd to Scarbelly: The human had been right there! Lucius paid Captain Scarbelly a handsome sum to travel with the pirates, observe them, and take notes. The orcs found it strange, but his money was good, and he stayed out of the way during fights. After a few months, Lucius moved on, and that was the last Scarbelly saw of him until a few days ago.

In his money pouch the captain also has a note from Lucius, passed to him by Aggro. It reads: *Captain, my name is Lucius and I believe you know me. I'd like to talk to you about my time on your ship. Please tell your mate to let me aboard next I call.*

acquire a magic staff for him. Captain Scarbelly doesn't like dealing with wizards, but the money was too good to pass up. He has the staff locked up in his cabin, and his crew is guarding it around the clock until Kenzil shows up. Scarbelly is on edge and eager to see the staff safely delivered—he is certainly going to resist anyone who boards his ship.

What Aggro does not know is that Lucius did manage to talk to the orc captain while he was visiting a tavern. Lucius had come to suspect that he had spent time on the *Bloody Vengeance* during his missing years, so he sought out the orc captain. Turned away by Aggro, Lucius followed Scarbelly and asked him some questions. See the **Captain Scarbelly** sidebar for more information.

ALL HANDS ON DECK

The PCs have several options for handling the orcs. They might simply rush the crew and start a brawl, or they can watch the ship and try to spy on Scarbelly. Rogues may try sneaking on board at night to have a look around.

Attacking the orcs is a mistake but the PCs probably won't realize this right away. The lack of the Sea Lord's Guard on the docks means a fight can rage without interference. Although Lucius is not here, there is loot—if the party survives the experience.

The stats for the orc pirates found aboard the vessel can be found in the **Appendix**.

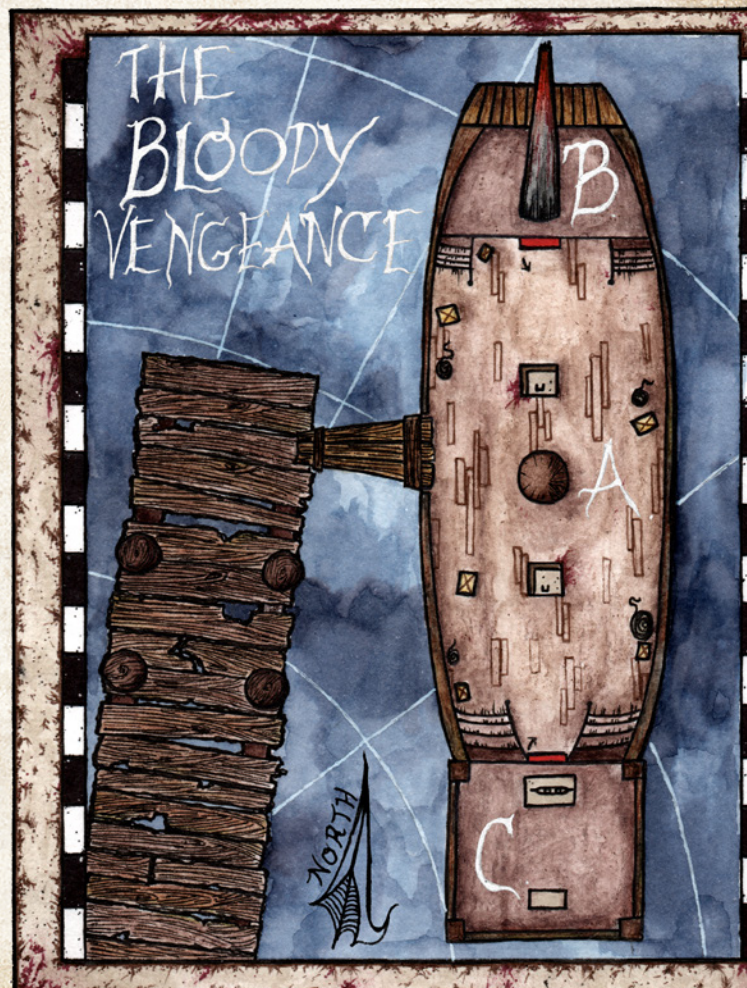
A. MAIN DECK

The main deck is 55 feet long and 20 feet wide. Its center is pierced by the mast, and coils of rope and other supplies are scattered across it. Two large trapdoors lead to the hold below: This is mostly empty but does have some food and grog stores.

There are usually two (sometimes three) orc pirates guarding the gangplank and one each in the forecabin and aftcabin. These structures provide at least half cover from missile fire, and their elevated positions offer a good view.

B. OFFICERS' QUARTERS

Captain Scarbelly and First Mate Aggro (see the Appendix) share a cabin underneath the forecabin (unlike human sailors, they like the way the ship's prow goes up and down!). The room is roughly 15 feet by 15 feet and crammed with stuff. There are two beds, a table, and a chest, all nailed to the floor (to keep things from flying about during storms).



The chest is quite large (it could easily hold a person) and doubles as a table.

During the day either Aggro or Scarbelly is here, and both are at night.

At the moment, there are sea charts and navigational equipment spread across the chest, but a large iron lock is clearly visible. The lock requires a DC 16 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to pick, and it is trapped.

Poison Needle Trap: A poisoned needle is hidden in the locking mechanisms of the chest. A successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check allows a character to detect the presence of the trap, and a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools disarms it. Attempting to pick the lock without first disarming the trap triggers the trap, whether the picking attempt is successful or not.

When the trap is triggered, the needle springs out, extending several inches out of the lock. A creature picking the lock takes 1 piercing damage and 11 (2d10) poison damage, and then must succeed at a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour.

Treasure: The chest does not contain Lucius, but it does hold pirate swag: 100 gp, 1250 sp, and 500 cp. On top of this bed of money lies a 5-foot-long staff carved with a scale motif. This is a *staff of defense* (see the **Appendix**), the item Kenzil hired Scarbelly to find.

C. CREW QUARTERS

The remaining eight crew members share this 20-foot-by-20-foot room under the aftcastle. Each wall has two hammocks and a small chest for personal effects. The PCs are welcome to poke through dirty orc laundry, but there is nothing of value.

While the ship is in port, there are always two or three orc pirates sleeping here.

Orc Tactics: Captain Scarbelly has not survived this many years as a pirate by being stupid. His crew is well trained, and they know what to do in case of an attack. When the first blows are struck, the orcs on guard raise the alarm with a terrific shout. They concentrate their defense on the officers' quarters and stay on board the ship no matter what. The orcs in the forecastle and aftcastle use their bows to neutralize obvious threats, with spellcasters at the top of that list. Sleeping orcs wake and join the fight in whatever area needs it the most. Aggro comes out to the main deck to organize the defense. However, if the captain is not aboard, the first mate instead guards the staff in the officers' quarters.

Development: The PCs don't know about Kenzil. He still wants his staff, and if the party took it, he'll try to track it down. He may pursue the PCs immediately on his arrival in Freeport. Alternatively, it may take him some time to learn the item's fate, making him a suitable challenge for a more powerful party. The character is peripheral to the adventure, so no details are provided here: This provides an opportunity to introduce a suitable NPC from your own campaign. He could become a thorn in the PCs' sides or appear just once as a seemingly random encounter.

LOCATION 3

THE TEMPLE

Sooner or later, the PCs should investigate the temple to the God of Knowledge. The building is quite large and easily visible from most parts of the city. The first time they go there, read or paraphrase the following description.

The temple is an impressive structure, its vaulted frame soaring up one hundred feet. Large bronze doors stand open, revealing a tiled atrium. Statues of the god indicate that this chamber is the center of worship, but balconies lined with books reach all the way to the frescoed ceiling. This place appears as much library as temple, and the rows of silent scholars working in the balconies attest to this fact.

A young man approaches you. He introduces himself as Norton, a temple novice, and asks how he can be of assistance.

Norton can take the PCs to the high priest's office, which is one level down. There they are passed on to Milos, a slight man with horn-rimmed glasses who Thuron's assistant. This is as far as they can get. Milos simply will not allow access to the high priest. Should the PCs attempt violence in the temple, a dozen clerics will be on the scene within minutes. This is not a good idea and may have far-reaching repercussions.

Read or paraphrase the following:

Your requests to speak with High Priest Thuron are flatly rejected by Milos. "I'm afraid such a meeting is impossible," he says. "The high priest is extremely busy planning the dedication of the Lighthouse of Drac. He cannot be disturbed. However, I am Thuron's eyes and ears around the temple, and you may ask me your questions."

MILOS SPEAKS

Here are some likely questions and Milos's answers.

What is the Lighthouse of Drac?

You must have seen it on your way into Freeport—an enormous structure. Sea Lord Drac, the ruler of Freeport, is building it to commemorate his glorious ancestors. The lighthouse has been under construction for some ten years, and its dedication is in three months.

What can you tell us about Lucius?

He is an excellent librarian, though he made several poor choices in his time. He was away from the temple a good four years but returned last year. He has not been here in a couple of days, and I do not know where he is.

Has Lucius been acting strange lately?

He has appeared increasingly strained over the past several months. He also began asking some very strange questions. The high priest himself had a talk with the man, but this seemed to do no good.

What sort of questions was Lucius asking?

He was asking about his activities in the temple in the time leading up to his expulsion. As if he weren't there himself! No one needs to be reminded that Lucius violated the sanctum, but he would not let it rest.

What did the high priest say to him?

Lucius has been very lax in his duties of late, and Thuron warned him to be more diligent. The high priest told him to forget the past and concentrate on the present: The events of five years ago are best forgotten by everyone.

Did Lucius have any enemies?

None that I am aware of. Anything may have happened in the years he was gone from Freeport, of course, but I know nothing about that time.

Why was Lucius let back into the temple?

He had acquired a very interesting collection of books during his worldly travels. He offered to donate them to the temple as penance, and the high priest accepted.

Can we see these books?

They have not been made public yet. Our experts are still evaluating them and checking their authenticity. They should be available next year.

GM Note: These books were in Lucius's basement—hence the “new” smell to the shelves—and include the travel logs mentioned in the “to do” list. Lucius wrote these logs during his possession, but they have proved very difficult to decipher. Not only is much of the writing in an unknown language (which could normally be circumvented with *comprehend languages*), but it is also in a complex code. Even after the librarians manage to break this code, they will have the same problem that they face with the other donated books: The subject matter is rather esoteric, and much of it is simply *alien*.

If Lucius is missing, why aren't you looking for him?

We do not have the resources to mount search parties for every librarian who fails to come to work. In any case, there is no evidence of foul play. I am sure Lucius is just sleeping off a hangover somewhere.



QUESTIONS AT THE TEMPLE

After their interview with Milos, the PCs are free to talk to other people around the temple. They can find four types of people here: priests, lay librarians and clerks, scholars, and worshipers. Temple regulars know Lucius, but they are not forthcoming with information. (Milos has already instructed the staff to put Lucius from their minds.) Should the PCs run into Brother Egil at the temple, he pretends not to know them.

At a later time, the PCs may want to ask Egil about Milos. He can tell them that Milos, although not a priest himself, is Thuron's right-hand man, and that the high priest doesn't make a decision without him. He's been at the temple for fifteen years and is dedicated to his own ambitions, the temple, and Thuron—in that order.

YELLOW SHIELDS AT SUNSET

The PCs' investigation does not go without a response: Milos is in fact highly placed in the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign. After the party's visit to the temple, he decides he must take action and orders one of the cultists to arrange their elimination. This cultist, Enzo, recruits a small band of

mercenaries known as the Yellow Shields and provides them with a description of the PCs.

Members of the Yellow Shields then fan out across the city. When exactly they do this is up to you, but a good time is shortly after the PCs have visited the three locations above. You should save the mercenary encounter for when they are out of clues and need a bit of a push or are about to do something foolish (such as fighting their way into the temple to see Thuron).

Once the mercenaries have established where the PCs are staying, they organize an ambush. They strike at sunset, hoping to hit the party on their way back from a long day of investigation when their guard is down.

Read or paraphrase the following:

The sun is setting in the west, silhouetting the Lighthouse of Drac beautifully with its dying rays. You are nearly back to the inn, ready for a hot meal and a stiff drink, when you hear the unmistakable thrack of crossbows discharging. As the bolts fly through the air, you see a group of warriors carrying yellow shields burst out of a nearby alley with swords drawn.

Looks like dinner will have to wait.

The mercenaries have planned their attack well, positioning themselves along a lengthy block to hem the party in. There is a crossbow-armed warrior on a rooftop at the front of the block. The mercenary leader and two of his followers come out of an alley to seal off the street ahead of the party, while the group's sorcerer and another archer block off the back. Unless the PCs have taken unusual precautions, they are caught by surprise.

The Yellow Shields mercenaries are treated as **guards**, and their leader Rittoro uses **veteran** statistics. The sorcerer Belko's statistics can be found in the **Appendix**.

Tactics: The mercenaries' plan is to bottleneck the PCs and then finish them off with a combination of missile fire and focused hand-to-hand combat, targeting spellcasters and dangerous combatants first. They stand fast until Rittoro, the leader, falls. Then those in the best position to flee (especially the mercenary on the roof) do so.

Development: If any of the mercenaries are captured, they quickly admit they don't know who hired them. Rittoro took care of that, and he won't be able to talk if he's dead. Should Rittoro survive the battle, he plays tough for a while but eventually reveals that a man named Enzo hired him. Even Rittoro doesn't know anything about Enzo, though: He had money, and that was enough for the Yellow Shields.

However, Rittoro does have a piece of parchment with an address written on it. This is where he's supposed to meet his contact after the job to receive payment. If the PCs search his possessions, they also find an ivory-handled dagger with an "L" carved in the hilt.

GM Note: The dagger belonged to Lucius and was given to Rittoro as a down payment on the contract. He has no information about its origin, but Brother Egil recognizes the dagger as Lucius' if he is shown it.

PART THREE

THE TRUTH SINKS IN

In which the player characters uncover a devilish underside to the city and reveal an agent of evil.

After the attack of the Yellow Shields, the PCs should realize their investigation has aroused interest of a most unfriendly kind. At this point, they can solve the mystery in two different ways, depending on what evidence they have amassed.

CHECKING OUT THE ADDRESS

If the PCs have taken the address from Rittoro, they find it corresponds to a tavern called the Black Gull. This is a rather seedy dive near the docks. Rittoro, if alive, tells them he was supposed to meet Enzo there at the first evening bells of the temples (about an hour after sunset) with proof of his completed mission. Otherwise, the PCs may have to stake the place out. Enzo is easy enough to spot. He's a thin, nervous-looking man—definitely out of place in the tough crowd at the Black Gull. The easiest thing to do is follow him: He can lead them straight to the cult's temple, a bricked-up house on an out-of-the-way street.

ENZO

While Enzo dreams of gaining power from the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign, in reality he is nothing more than a peon and an errand boy. A tailor by trade and a weak, unfocused individual, he turned to the occult in a desperate attempt to take control of his own life. The Brotherhood recruited him after he was seen visiting curio shops and booksellers, asking after magical secrets. (Yes, Enzo is that much out of touch.) Enzo has not yet been fully initiated into the cult, but he has proved a useful gopher. Milos had him hire the Yellow Shields to see if the man could be discreet, not considering the PCs a real threat.

Enzo (use **commoner** statistics) won't fight. Should the PCs confront him, he immediately crumbles. He's a coward at heart and has been bullied so often throughout life that groveling is second nature. He reveals the orders he was given and can lead the party to the cult's headquarters. However, Enzo's knowledge is quite limited.

- The cult is called the Brotherhood. Enzo is not yet worthy to know their dark patron's name.
- The leader of the cult is very powerful. Enzo knows him only as the Master.
- The PCs angered the Master and so earned a death sentence.
- There are some rooms beneath the bricked-up building, but Enzo has never been down there.
- Enzo was ordered to bring food to the building twice in the last few days. This doesn't usually happen.

FOLLOWING MILOS

After visiting the temple to the God of Knowledge and being stymied in their investigation by Milos, the PCs may become suspicious of him. They can learn quite a bit by shadowing him. He doesn't leave the temple often, but when he does, he visits some strange places. On a typical outing, Milos might stop in at a curio store or arcane supply shop to purchase esoteric spell components (strange for someone who is supposedly not a spellcaster), or an open-air market for a live animal, such as a black goat (even though the God of Knowledge doesn't require blood sacrifice). Eventually, he heads to a bricked-up building on a little-used side street and disappears inside.

If the party are stumped and can't figure out a next move, you can gently steer them in the right direction. For example, they might catch sight of Milos across the crowded marketplace. Although not dressed in his temple robes, he is unmistakable, yet does not respond to any hails. This should rouse the PCs' interest enough to follow him, although this is difficult in the busy streets, requiring Dexterity (Hide) checks opposed by Milos's passive Perception of 13, as well as DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) checks to keep him in sight. Milos eventually disappears inside the bricked-up building. This isn't the cleverest way to find Lucius, but it gets the job done.

LOCATION 4

THE BRICKED-UP HOUSE

Read or paraphrase the following:

This abandoned-looking building is the cult's headquarters, and the place where Lucius can be found. It is on a side street that is usually deserted.

The house is nondescript and seems a perfect hideout. It is a simple, one-story construction, roughly 20 feet by 30 feet. The dilapidated exterior is made of wood, but the windows have all been bricked up. Two steps lead up to a stout-looking wooden door.

The door is locked, though it can be picked with a DC 20 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. A successful DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check can knock it down but makes a lot of noise. The cult is alerted to the adventurers' presence even before they trigger the *alarm* spell in **area 1**.

Once inside, the PCs can see the place is a wreck. There are piles of masonry and refuse everywhere, and it's impossible to tell how many rooms it may have once had. Anyone with a passive Perception of 14 or higher notices parts of the foundation appear to be from an older construction: The stone is of better quality and finished with more skill.

Toward the back of the house there is a wooden trapdoor in the floor. This is not locked or trapped, and beneath it is a staircase leading down.

MILOS

The Serpent Person known as Milos has been living in Freeport for decades, posing as a variety of city folk and changing identities when necessary. His parents were both members of the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign, and he was brought up in the faith. His position in the temple to the God of Knowledge has been useful to the cult. He not only has access to enormous amounts of research material, but also has the ear of an influential figure in the city.

In his researches, Milos learned of extraplanar beings that possess mortal hosts to study different times and places. When Lucius underwent a personality change overnight, Milos knew just what was going on—but, to his frustration, he also knew when the real Lucius returned, he wouldn't remember anything of his time away. When the librarian began having his nightmares and memory problems, Milos took notice. Apparently, Lucius was remembering something of his time on another plane. Milos decided to kidnap the man and torture the information out of him. Such arcane knowledge could benefit the Brotherhood.

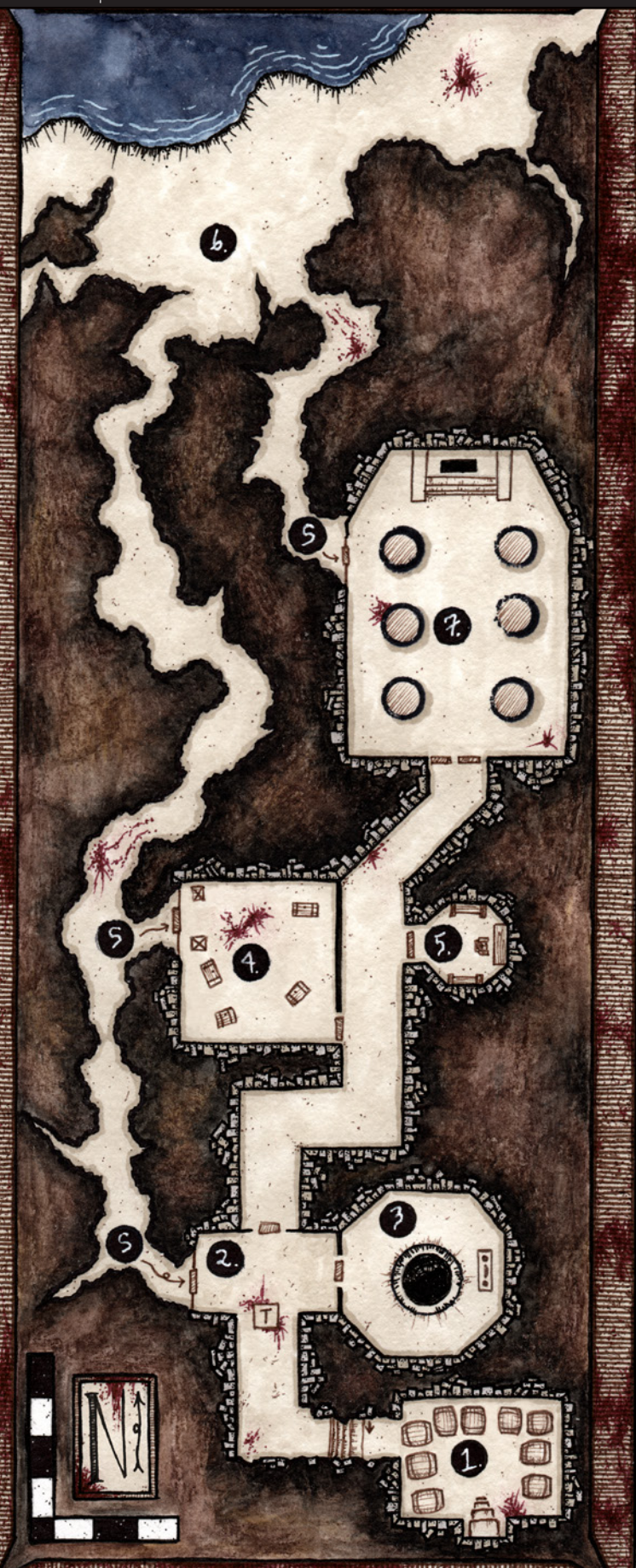
This scheme did not work out, though. Lucius had some vivid memories, but they were fragmentary and of little use. More significantly, the kidnapping put investigators on a trail straight to the cult's temple. Freeport is the nexus of an ambitious plan, and the Brotherhood's leaders don't need their underlings drawing attention to them at this crucial time. In the unlikely event that Milos survives the final encounter, his superiors will be most displeased.

1. WINE CELLAR

The stairway leads down to an old wine cellar. The walls are lined with nine large casks made of oak, each about 6 feet tall and nearly 8 feet long. They appear to have been here for a long time, though the room contains remarkably little dust.

Five of the casks still have wine in them, but it is quite spoiled. The remaining four make hollow sounds if struck. One on the west wall houses a concealed entrance. A character with a passive Perception of 14 or higher notices the tracks criss-crossing the room, and a DC 16 Wisdom (Survival) check notes faint footprints leading from the stairs to the cask with the concealed entrance. (Tracking should be done before the entire party stomps around the room—otherwise all traces are obliterated.)

The cask is hinged on the inside, and releasing a hidden latch causes the entire front half to swing out, revealing a stone passage and more stairs leading down. A successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check finds the secret mechanism. Should PCs decide to investigate the casks "the adventurer way" (that is, hacking at them with axes), treat



the barrels as Medium resilient wooden objects (AC 15, 18 hit points).

Development: Milos has cast *alarm* on the concealed entrance. When the PCs open it, a mental tone sounds that only he can hear, warning him of their approach. Although the sanctity of the secret temple has never been compromised, Milos is ready for the possibility. If he is not already onsite, he finds a secluded area within range and uses his *wand of escape* (see the **Appendix**) to travel to the cult's temple proper (area 7).

Milos then runs to the caves (area 6) and rouses the degenerate serpent people there. He orders them into the tunnels to ambush the PCs in the intersection (area 2) or the treasury (area 4). Once he's sent off the serpent people, Milos casts *mage armor* on himself.

2. INTERSECTION

The narrow stairs open into a corridor of finished stone, about 10 feet wide, that heads north about 25 feet and ends in a T-intersection. There are doors on the east and north walls.

Camouflaged Pit Trap: This pit has a cover constructed to resemble the floor around it. When a creature steps on the cover, it swings open causing the intruder to spill into the pit below, a ten foot fall that inflicts 1d6 bludgeoning damage. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check discerns the strange lack of foot traffic over the section of the floor and discovers the trap. Once discovered, it can only be disarmed by using something to wedge the trapdoor in such a way that prevents it from opening, whether a simple iron spike hammered between door and floor, or the use of *arcane lock* or similar magics.

Neither of the doors is locked. The north door opens into a 40-foot-long corridor that veers northeast, with two doors visible. The east door of the intersection leads to the initiation chamber (area 3). The west wall of the T-junction hides a secret door, discovered with a DC 16 Perception (Wisdom) check, that connects to the caves. Serpent people (see the **Appendix**) may attack out of this door, depending on how much time Milos had to warn them.

Tactics: Should the serpent people miss the party, they lurk in area 2 and await a suitable opportunity. They are most likely to attack when the PCs are heading down the corridor towards the temple proper (area 7).

3. INITIATION CHAMBER

The door swings open to reveal a 30-foot-by-30-foot octagonal chamber. The entire room has been painted black, and the ceiling shimmers with stars like the sky at night. There is a circular depression in the center of the room some 10 feet deep. On the far wall you can see a sturdy table covered with ritual paraphernalia: a gong, incense burners, two candelabras, and some other items you can't make out. No one is in sight, but the room itself seems to radiate menace.

This strange room is the initiation chamber for the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign. It is painted black in honor of the Unspeakable One's starry home. Recruits who have proven themselves are brought here to be judged by that dread entity. A candidate undergoing initiation is stripped naked and pushed into the depression. Milos then enacts a ritual to draw the attention of the Unspeakable One. This is by no means a pleasant experience, and one that cowards like Enzo are unlikely to withstand.

The items on the table are of considerable interest. The candelabras are made of pure silver and shaped like coiling serpents. They are quite old, and the craftsmanship is exquisite. Each would fetch 50 gp on the street, double that if sold to a knowledgeable wizard or sorcerer. The candles are black but are otherwise unremarkable. The incense burners are made of bronze (5 gp each). They are full and ready for the flame. Several small cases lie nearby, containing additional cubes of incense (total worth 15 gp). The large gong has pride of place on the table. It too is made of bronze and also features a serpent motif (10 gp).

4. TREASURY

As you open the door, your eyes are immediately drawn to the garish purple curtains hanging on the walls. Your attention quickly turns to the center of the room, however, where skeletal figures come to life and start towards you with claws extended. You can see many chests scattered about, but you'll have to fight your way through the walking dead to reach them!

This small, cramped room is the cult's treasury: Milos has stored a lot of wealth in here over the years. A cult superior animated the remains of some deceased initiates to guard the treasure. The purple curtains are mostly decorative but do help conceal a secret door to the ancient tunnels of the serpent people, discovered with a DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

Creatures: The number of skeletons is variable. There should be at least one per PC, up to double that if the party includes a cleric. The fighting is likely to be at very close quarters. The degenerate serpent people from **area 6** may also attack if they have not yet been encountered and the PCs are dealing with the skeletons too easily.

Treasure: There are four chests here, all locked (DC 20 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to unlock them). Milos carries the keys with him at all times. Should the PCs slay him first, they can open the chests with ease.

- Chest #1 contains 500 gp and 1500 sp.
- Chest #2 contains 3000 sp and one *potion of healing*.
- Chest #3 contains 2500 sp and four onyx gems worth 60 gp each.
- Chest #4 contains 2200 sp. Lying on top of the coins is a +1 *shield*.

The curtains also hide an old +1 *spear* standing upright in the southwest corner of the room.

NOW YOU'VE DONE IT!

Adventurers usually can't resist messing around with items they find. Often unwise, in the case on the Initiation Chamber doing so is very dangerous, as it may accidentally trigger the ritual. Should the PCs manage to light the candles and incense, and strike the gong three times, the Unspeakable One takes notice.

The room reverberates with the sound of the gong. Above you the stars seem to twinkle as if you really are looking at the night sky. Then you feel a presence—and the circular depression erupts with black tentacles. You can feel the evil here. It is ancient and potent, and you can only hope those tentacles have not come for you.

Anyone in the room when this happens must succeed at a DC 16 Wisdom save or have their Wisdom score reduced by 2 points. Those who fail the save also suffer a bout of short term madness. The tentacles do not attack anyone outside of the depression. Casting spells at or attacking the tentacles has no noticeable effect, for the Unspeakable One conforms to an alien reality beyond the ken of mortals. The tentacles remain for two rounds, then disappear.

Characters actually in the depression are in for a horrific experience. The tentacles engulf them, squeezing, pulling, and prodding. Inhuman voices fill their heads, uttering terrible words and evoking images of horror. Though this lasts for only two rounds, it seems like an eternity. Finally, the tentacles withdraw and disappear. Those who suffer through this have their Wisdom score reduced by 3d6 points (DC 16 Wisdom save to halve the amount lost). This Wisdom reduction is temporary except for 1 point, which is permanently lost. No one can survive such an experience unscathed. Those who suffer this experience also experience a bout of long-term madness, or a bout of short-term madness if they succeeded at the Wisdom save to reduce Wisdom loss.

Those reduced to 0 Wisdom fall into a catatonic state, tormented by nightmares of the Unspeakable One until they recover. Temporary Wisdom loss recovers at the rate of 1 point per long rest; characters who take the Recuperating downtime activity recover 2 points per full day of rest. Both *lesser restoration* and *greater restoration* also replenish lost Wisdom, but *greater restoration* is needed to heal any permanent Wisdom loss.

5. LIBRARY

Read or paraphrase the following:

Another octagonal room, this small chamber looks to be a study or library. A teakwood desk stands against the far wall, flanked by low shelves crammed with books and scrolls. An oil lamp hangs from chains in the center of the room, its flame burning low—the room seems alive with shadows.

Milos inherited this library from his predecessor. Some of the books date back a thousand years or more, and many are in languages that have been dead at least as long. A scholar would have a field day with this treasure trove, except that nearly every tome is full of blasphemous secrets.

The desk is a beautiful piece of work and has been lovingly maintained. On it lays a large book bound in black leather and finished with silver. The tome's title is rather ominous: *The Book of the Unspeakable One*. It is full of rituals and stories involving the dread god, and its pages are for cult members only. Anyone who has not been through the Brotherhood's initiation takes 1d4 points of psychic damage from any attempt to read the book. Furthermore, those of good alignment must succeed at a Will save (DC 16) or their Wisdom score is reduced by 1d6. The target regains 1 point of Wisdom per long rest completed, or all of it if they receive a *lesser restoration* or *greater restoration* spell.

There are several letters scattered across the desk. Two of them are progress reports on the construction of the Lighthouse of Drac. The third is short but to the point:

Our preparations are almost complete. We will arrive in Freeport on schedule. Make sure that all is ready for us. The Brotherhood is counting on you.

—N'Tal

GM Note: This letter's implications will become more important in *Terror in Freeport* and *Madness in Freeport*. For now, it serves to make clear that this temple is not the cult's only center of operations

HOW UNSPEAKABLE IS UNSPEAKABLE?

Once they learn the nature of the cult, players may want to find out if their characters know anything about this Unspeakable One. An Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) check can reveal something.

THE UNSPEAKABLE ONE

DC INFORMATION

12	The Unspeakable One is an evil god whose worship is proscribed in many lands.
15	The god is dedicated to madness and destruction, and its cults have been suppressed numerous times over the centuries.
20	Worship of the Unspeakable One dates back to ancient times. Legends speak of degenerate serpent people dedicated to worshipping it.
22	Even scholars are afraid to whisper the name of his cult: The Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign.

The rest of the library is full of old books and scrolls. Most are in no language the PCs are familiar with. Due to the age and obscure nature of these volumes, it requires the skills of dedicated sages and scholars to decipher them. A few titles should suggest that they are best left alone: *Cult of the Bloody Heart*, *Spawn of the Ages*, and *Rebirth of the Old Ones*. Any of these books would be worth a great deal of money to the right people but shopping them around would also attract the wrong kind of notice.

Unfortunately for any wizards in the party, the serpent people have no need of spellbooks. No matter how hard the party searches, there are none to be found in this library.

Development: This room is a great place to plant some seeds for later adventures. A clue here can lead the party into the next situation, if you have one in mind. This makes your campaign more of an ongoing story and less like an episodic TV show.

6. CAVE OF THE DEGENERATES

Unbeknownst to the inhabitants of Freeport, many bands of degenerate serpent people still live in tunnels underneath the city. The small section shown here actually connects to a much larger network. When the civilized serpent people of the Brotherhood built this temple complex, they made sure to connect it with the crude tunnels of their cousins. This gives the cult access to mindless force when needed.

The PCs are not likely to encounter the degenerate serpent people at this location, though they may find the secret tunnels with a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Unlike the rest of the complex, these tunnels are rough-hewn and unfinished. They lead to a large cave where the degenerates spend most of their time. Read the following description the first time the PCs discover the cave.

A large, irregular cave stretches out before you. It is different from the other rooms you've seen, looking both older and more primitive. At least 40 feet by 50 feet, and larger in places, the cave is scattered with bones, refuse, and filth. You can hear the lapping of water from the northwest corner, where there lies a dark pool. The water looks black, and you can tell neither its size nor depth.

Searching the cave uncovers nothing of interest. A short corridor heads east and then ends abruptly. A secret door here—discovered on a DC 15 Perception (Wisdom) check—leads to the main temple (**area 7**). There is a tunnel below the surface of the pool that leads deeper underground. This is not important for this adventure but may come into play in future Freeport products, as well as your own stories.

7. TEMPLE OF THE UNSPEAKABLE ONE

A pair of double doors lead to the temple proper. They are not locked. By this point Milos is well aware of the



intruders, and he wants to deal with them under the gaze of the Unspeakable One. Read or paraphrase the following:

Opening the doors, you are met with blazing torchlight. As your eyes adjust to the brightness, you can see you have reached the heart of the temple: a long hall, flanked with six pillars, some 40 feet long and 35 feet wide. Each pillar seems to have a giant snake coiled around it, and the motif continues on frescoes along the walls. An altar of black basalt stands at the far end of the hall, and a strange yellow symbol is inscribed on the wall behind it. There is a statue of a tentacled horror—it must be the Unspeakable One itself!

Two figures in dark robes lurk behind the far pillars, loaded crossbows at the ready. Behind the altar stands a small man wearing black robes with a full hood. As you enter the room, he throws back his hood, exposing familiar horn-rimmed glasses. Milos smiles at your reaction and says, “You are the first outsiders to ever reach the Temple of the Unspeakable One. Your achievement deserves congratulations. It is also your doom!”

Creatures: Now it’s a fight to the finish. Milos has chosen a position to give him the most advantage in a fight. He has the help of two temple attendants (see the **Appendix**), who are always on hand.

This is a very tough encounter. While it is certainly appropriate for the climax of the adventure, be careful not to overwhelm your players. When the PCs get to the temple, take stock of the situation. Are they almost out of spells? Are any party members severely wounded? At your discretion, remove one or both of the temple attendants from this encounter. If you find you erred too much on the side of caution, the attendants can always leap into the fray through the secret door.

Tactics: Milos has had time to prepare for this battle. After sending off the degenerate serpent people (see **area 1** above), he returned here to brief the temple attendants. They put on their armor and readied their weapons. Milos then cast *mage armor* on himself. He casts *bless* on the attendants, if there is time.

All three cultists have half cover, giving them a +2 bonus to AC and a +2 bonus to Dexterity saving throws. The battle opens at range, as the attendants fire their crossbows and Milos casts spells: *hold person* on the most obvious spellcaster, followed by *cause fear* on the most aggressive warriors if *hold person* is resisted or eventually overcome.

During the battle, the cult leader deflects all questions about Lucius and taunts the PCs with their lack of knowledge, saying things like, “Why you are so interested in that librarian I’ll never know. He is worthless, insignificant in the scheme of things, but you are welcome to die for him.”

AFTERMATH

When they defeat Milos, the PCs discover he was not human at all. His true form becomes apparent upon his death. Read the following text after the fatal blow is struck.

Milos slumps to the floor, lifeblood pumping onto the tiles of the blasphemous temple. He raises his head one last time, saying, "By the Yellow Sign, we will rule!" and then expires. As the cultist's eyes glaze over in death, a terrible transformation takes place. His skin and bones rearrange themselves in a most unnatural way, and soon his human visage is gone. Milos now lies revealed as a monstrous creature, a serpent man with scaly skin and forked tongue. Only the ill-fitting glasses on his ophidian head give a hint of the thing's former identity. You can only wonder how he got away with his deception for so many years, and if there are others like him in the city above.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

Terror in Freeport and *Madness in Freeport* deal with the continuing machinations of the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign, the secrets of the Sea Lord, and the ultimate purpose of Milton's Folly. However, if you want to run your players through some other adventures, Freeport makes a fine base of operations for pre-published modules and stories of your own. The events in *Death in Freeport* can also lead to several developments, some of which are suggested here.

The PCs may try deciphering or peddling volumes from the library of Milos. Many of those books contain dark secrets, though, and what begins as a simple sale may become something far more dangerous. The Yellow Sign is revealed only at the end of this adventure. The PCs may want to investigate this strange symbol further to learn its connection with the Unspeakable One. The sign is a symbol of madness and destruction: Any research into its meaning is sure to lead down a dark path.

There are more degenerate serpent people living under Freeport, and their tunnels make for a fine "dungeon crawl." The PCs could launch an expedition, and in the process, find out about the breaking of Valossa and the first coming of the Unspeakable One.

Surviving members of Milos's cult, or cult officials from outside Freeport, may discover the temple's destruction. Some of these cultists are sure to be from wealthy families and would have the means to make life difficult for the PCs. A string of arrests and assassination attempts should be a strong hint that someone wants revenge.

Once the battle is over and the ramifications of Milos's true nature sink in, the adventurers can at last turn their attention to locating and tending to poor Lucius (use the **commoner** stats). Milos had secreted him behind the altar, tied up and hidden from view. Torture has reduced him to 0 hit points, but he is not dying. A DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check can bring him to consciousness.

LUCIUS'S STORY

Lucius sighs with relief and thanks his rescuers profusely. They saved him from certain, painful death, and for that he is eternally grateful. If the PCs mention Brother Egil, Lucius expresses concern for his friend, wishing to leave the temple immediately and find him. He is willing to tell the party what little he knows, however, if they ask.

Lucius blurts out the whole tale of his possession, return, and subsequent trouble. He explains that Milos sent him on an errand to the bricked-up house, where he was overpowered and taken below. Milos spoke of the extraplanar entities, but he did not name them nor say why they studied other worlds. The sinister serpent man tortured Lucius, asking question after question about his memories of the other plane. Clearly Milos believed that valuable knowledge was locked in Lucius's head, but the librarian could not tell him much. The cultist became increasingly frustrated and told Lucius repeatedly that he was going to kill him—he probably would have, without the party's timely intervention.

Brother Egil is pleased and gladly pays the agreed-upon fee (although the PCs have likely gotten out of the temple with a good deal more). Both he and Lucius offer their services if needed. Their ability to do research in the temple to the God of Knowledge could be very handy indeed in the future.

As for Lucius, his own future is dubious. Milos provided some of the answers he was looking for, but he'd like to find out more. He is uncertain whether he'll stay at the temple or leave Freeport to search for his past. Sadly, Lucius may never again know peace after the theft of five years of his life.

What else lurks below the skin of Freeport? Well, that's a story for another time . . .

WHERE NEXT?

If you'd like to know more about Freeport, check out the *Pirate's Guide to Freeport*, a complete sourcebook about the City of Adventure. Note, however, the *Pirate's Guide* is set five years after the events of *Death of Freeport* and assumes all the events of the *Freeport Trilogy* and a further adventure called *Crisis in Freeport* have already take place. This mainly changes the political situation and the members of the Captains' Council. Most locations and personalities can be used in the earlier era without change. The advantage of the *Pirate's Guide to Freeport* is it is a pure setting book with no game stats on it, so it can be easily used with any RPG.

APPENDIX

In this appendix you will find the various creature stat-blocks, magical items, and other background material for playing *Death in Freeport*.

CREATURES

The following are NPCs encountered during this adventure, as well as the traits for playing one of the serpent people of Freeport.

SERPENT PEOPLE

The serpent people once ruled a vast empire. Their advanced knowledge of sorcery and the planes could not help them, though, when the Unspeakable One was summoned to the heart of Valossa. The Valossan Empire was destroyed, most of it falling beneath the waves, and millions died in the cataclysm. A few survived and continue to inhabit the islands of their former realm.

A FOLK DIVERSED

Of the remaining serpent people, most are the wretched offspring of those maddened by the dread god's coming. They have no memory of their ancestors' former achievements and act on instinct, tainted by madness. Most of the degenerate serpent people live deep underground, rarely coming to the surface. A very few serpent people are descended from those who survived with their sanity intact. This civilized breed, mostly sorcerers, has thrived over the centuries by remaining out of sight. They either live in seclusion or adopt the forms of humans or elves, living among their successors.

Serpent people are bipedal, but they retain the sinuous necks and long tails of snakes. Coloration varies widely, though black scales are dominant among the degenerates.

HEIRS TO RUINS

Hardly anything remains of the great serpent empire that once dominated the world. The degenerates multiply and fester underground, breaking free every few decades to cause murder and mayhem. These attacks are usually blamed on lizardfolk, since few now can recognize the serpent people as different beings.

Civilized serpent people are very long-lived: Some of their sorcerers are over a thousand years old. They are, however, usually solitary and pursue individual goals. Even among the serpent people, few know that the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign survived the cataclysm, and none guess that they would trifle with the Unspeakable One a second time.

Perhaps this is the best cover for the Brotherhood, and the reason that powerful members of their own line have not yet obliterated them.

SERPENT PEOPLE TRAITS

All serpent people player characters are assumed to be civilized, capable of independent thought and action driven by choice rather than instinct.

Ability Score Increase. Your Intelligence and Charisma scores both increase by 2.



DEGENERATE SERPENT PERSON

*Medium humanoid (serpent person), any evil***Armor Class** 13 (leather armor)**Hit Points** 30 (4d8+8)**Speed** 30 ft., swim 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	7 (-1)	8 (-1)

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +1, Stealth +3**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11**Languages** Common, Valossan**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

ACTIONS

Spear. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +5 to hit, reach/range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) piercing damage. If a melee attack with a spear hits, the degenerate serpent person may make a bite attack as a bonus action.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4+3) piercing damage and the target must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw, or have their Wisdom score reduced by 1d4. The target lapses into unconsciousness if this reduces its Wisdom to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest.

Spear (thrown). *Ranged Weapon Attack.* +5 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6+3) piercing damage.

Age. Serpent people mature at the same rate as humans, but can live for hundreds of years. On average, they live about 850 years.

Alignment. Though degenerate serpent people are almost always evil, driven by the ancient corruption of Yig, not all civilized serpent people are. Many of them certainly experience the same urges as their bestial kin, and a great many give in to those tendencies, but by no means all of them.

Size. Serpent people have the stature of elves and thin humans. Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your walking speed is 30 feet. You also have a swim speed of 15 feet.

Darkvision. Often raised in subterranean spaces, you have superior vision in dark and dim conditions. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

Bite. In your natural form, you have the ability to bite as an unarmed attack, although you lack the vicious poison of your degenerate kin. You may make an unarmed melee attack roll, which has the Finesse property, and inflicts 1d4 points of piercing damage on a hit.

Change Shape. You can assume the shape of any Small or Medium humanoid, appearing as another ancestry entirely, though you cannot use this ability to mimic specific individuals. You lose your Swim speed, unless the folk you are mimicking also have a Swim speed. You can remain in this shape until you choose to assume a new shape, or become

CIVILIZED SERPENT PERSON

*Medium humanoid (serpent person), any alignment***Armor Class** 14 (mage armor)**Hit Points** 15 (3d8+3)**Speed** 30 ft., swim 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Constitution +3, Charisma +6**Skills** Arcana +3, Deception +5**Damage Resistances** poison**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10**Languages** Common, Valossan**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

Change Shape. The civilized serpent person can assume the shape of any Small or Medium humanoid, appearing as another ancestry entirely, though they cannot use this ability to mimic specific individuals. They lose their Swim speed, unless the folk mimicked also have a Swim speed. They can remain in this shape until they choose to assume a new shape, or become incapacitated. This effect does not detect as magic and cannot be dispelled, but true seeing and similar spells reveal their true form. The civilized serpent person may change their shape in this way up to three times per day, regaining the ability upon completing a long rest. Reverting to their natural serpent person form does not constitute a use of this ability. While in an assumed form, they count as a shapeshifter for the purpose of rules that interact with shapeshifters.

Spellcaster. The civilized serpent person is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Their spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). They know the following sorcerer spells:

Cantrips (at will): *acid splash, dancing lights, mage hand, poison spray, prestidigitation*

1st level (4 slots): *animal friendship, charm person, mage armor, shield, speak with animals*

2nd level (2 slots): *mirror image*

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage.

Acid Splash. *Ranged Spell Attack.* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one or two targets within 5 ft. of each other. *Hit:* 6 (2d6) acid damage.

incapacitated. This effect does not detect as magic and cannot be dispelled, but *true seeing* and similar spells reveal your true form. You may change your shape in this way up to three times per day, regaining the ability upon completing a long rest. Reverting to your natural serpent people form does not constitute a use of this ability. While in an assumed form, you count as a shapeshifter for the purpose of rules that interact with shapeshifters.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common and Valossan. Valossan is the ancient tongue of the Valossan Empire, thought to be long dead by most sages. It is a complex tongue full of sibilant sounds and recursive meanings, a perfect language for intrigues and esoteric topics.

CAPTAIN SCARBELLY

Captain of the Bloody Vengeance
Medium humanoid (orc), chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (chain shirt)
Hit Points 44 (8d8+8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+1)

Skills Intimidate +3, Perception +2
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Orc
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Aggressive. As a bonus action, Scarbelly can move up to his speed toward a hostile creature he can see.

Sea Legs. While fighting aboard a water vessel, Scarbelly gains a +1 bonus to AC. Additionally, he may use his reaction to gain either a climb speed or a swim speed at his normal movement speed until the beginning of his next action.

Possessions. Captain Scarbelly has a +1 *battleaxe*, a chain shirt, five gold rings (worth a total of 150 gp), and a money pouch with 50 gp.

ACTIONS

+1 Battleaxe. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 11 (1d10+5) slashing damage.

Battle Cry (1/Day). Each creature of Scarbelly's choice within 30 feet of him, that can hear him gains advantage on attack rolls until the start of Scarbelly's next turn. Captain Scarbelly can then make one attack as a bonus action.

FOES

The following are adversaries encountered during the events of *Death in Freeport*.

CAPTAIN SCARBELLY

A terror of the seas, more than one vessel has increased their speed by hurling cargo overboard upon seeing the tusked skull on red background of the Bloody Vengeance. Scarbelly is hungry and vicious, and slakes his taste for blood on those ships he takes on the high sea.

BELKO

A sell-spell mercenary, Belko has found a comfortable home among the Yellow Shields. Though he feels he ought to be paid better, he's got a good thing, and knows it.

ORC PIRATE

Slenderer and less bulky than their tribal warrior counterparts, the orc pirates of the Blood Vengeance are no less vicious. Their standing with one another is based in how

BELKO

Medium humanoid (human), neutral

Armor Class 15 (mage armor)
Hit Points 22 (4d8+4)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	11 (+1)	11 (+1)	9 (-1)	15 (+2)

Skills Arcana +3, Stealth +4
Senses passive Perception 9
Languages Common, Elvish
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Spellcasting. Belko is a 2nd-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following sorcerer spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light*, *mage hand*, *message*, *ray of frost*
1st level (3 slots): *burning hands*, *detect magic*, *mage armor*

Possessions. A broach (worth 5 gp) and a money pouch with 5 sp.

ACTIONS

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 5 (1d8) bludgeoning damage.

Ray of Frost. *Ranged Spell Attack.* +4 to hit, range 60 ft., one target.
Hit: 5 (1d8) cold damage. Opponents damaged by this attack have their speed reduced by 10 feet until the start of Belko's next turn.

ORC PIRATE

Medium humanoid (orc), any alignment

Armor Class 13 (leather)
Hit Points 18 (4d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Skills Perception +2
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Orcish
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Aggressive. As a bonus action, the orc pirate can move up to their speed toward a hostile creature they can see.

Sea Legs. While fighting aboard a water vessel, the orc pirate gains a +1 bonus to AC. Additionally, the orc pirate may use their reaction to gain either a climb speed or a swim speed at their normal movement speed until the beginning of the orc pirate's next action.

ACTIONS

Cutlass. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) slashing damage.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Melee Attack.* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8+2) piercing damage.

AGGRO

First Mate of the Bloody Vengeance
Medium humanoid (orc), chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (chain shirt)

Hit Points 33 (6d8+8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	9 (-1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Skills Intimidate +3, Perception +2

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Orc

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Aggressive. As a bonus action, Aggro can move up to his speed toward a hostile creature he can see.

Brutal Charge. If Aggro moves at least 10 feet before attacking an opponent, he gains advantage on his first attack roll against them. If Aggro hits with this attack, his opponent must make a successful DC 13 Strength save or be knocked prone.

Sea Legs. While fighting aboard a water vessel, Aggro gains a +1 bonus to AC. Additionally, he may use his reaction to gain either a climb speed or a swim speed at his normal movement speed until the beginning of Aggro's next action.

Possessions. Aggro has a scimitar, chain shirt, an iron collar, a wooden amulet, and a belt-pouch with 5 gp and 10 sp.

ACTIONS

Cutlass. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6+3) slashing damage. If Aggro hits with his cutlass, he may make an attack against the same target with his dagger as a bonus action.

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4+3) piercing damage.

well they evoke fear among their victims, and each is determined to win the acclaim of their fellows, their first mate, and above all, their justly-feared captain.

AGGRO

The first mate of the Bloody Vengeance is sure of one thing above all else: he must constantly prove himself to the terror of the seas, Captain Scarbelly. As a result, Aggro tends to take his brutality one step further than even the rest of his vicious crew, so much so that his captain has had cause to chastise him.

MİLOS

Subtle and deadly because he is so unassuming, Milos has served the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign for many years. Cunning and very patient, Milos knows that his service to the dark powers will go rewarded, in time. And as one of the serpent people, he knows he has almost nothing but time. Milos does occasionally underestimate other folk, however, seeing them as messy and juvenile.

MİLOS

Medium humanoid (civilized serpent person), chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (chain shirt)

Hit Points 28 (6d8+6)

Speed 30 ft., swim 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Wisdom +5

Skills Arcana +3, Deception +3, Insight +5, Stealth +3

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Valossan

Challenge 2 (200 XP)

Change Shape. Milos can assume the shape of any Small or Medium humanoid, appearing as another ancestry entirely, though he cannot use this ability to mimic specific individuals. He loses his Swim speed, unless the folk mimicked also have a Swim speed. Milos can remain in this shape until he chooses to assume a new shape, or becomes incapacitated. This effect does not detect as magic and cannot be dispelled, but *true seeing* and similar spells reveals his true form. Milos may change his shape in this way up to three times per day, regaining the ability upon completing a long rest. Reverting to his natural serpent person form does not constitute a use of this ability. While in an assumed form, Milos counts as a shapeshifter for the purpose of rules that interact with shapeshifters.

Spellcaster. Milos is a 3rd-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance, light, poison spray, resistance*

1st level (4 slots): *bane, cure wounds, inflict wounds, shield of faith*

2nd level (2 slots): *hold person, spiritual weapon (kukri)*

Possessions. Key ring (with keys to treasure chests and places unknown in the temple to the God of Knowledge), *wand of escape* (3 charges; see the **Magic Items** section of this **Appendix**), three jeweled rings (total 73 gp), pouch with 15 gp.

ACTIONS

Kukri. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +2 to hit, reach/range 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) slashing damage.

MAGIC ITEMS

The following are new magic items presented in *Death in Freeport*.

STAFF OF DEFENSE

Staff, rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

You gain a +1 AC while holding the staff.

The staff has 10 charges. While holding it, you can use your action to expend 1 or more of its charges to cast one of the following spells from it, using your spell save DC and spellcasting ability modifier: *mage armor* (1 charge), *shield of faith* (1 charge), *warding bond* (2 charges).

Additionally while holding it, you can use your reaction to cast one of the following spells from it, using your spell save DC and spellcasting ability modifier: *resistance* (0 charges, self only, triggered by having to make a saving throw), *shield* (1 charge).

The staff regains 1d6+4 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the staff cracks and is destroyed forever. If this happens and you are currently under the effects of *mage armor*, it dispels your mage armor at the same time.

WAND OF ESCAPE

Wand, rare (requires attunement)

This wand has 7 charges. It regains 1d6+1 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the wand's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, it vanishes as though teleported, lost forever.

Spells. While holding the wand you can use your action to expend some of its charges to cast one of the following spells: *rope trick* (2 charges), *dimension door* (4 charges). While holding the wand you can use your bonus action to cast *misty step* (2 charges). While holding the wand you can use your reaction to cast *feather fall* (1 charge).

NEW GLASS ARCHETYPES

The following are new class archetypes appropriate to Freeport campaigns. The pre-generated player characters included with *Death in Freeport* use these archetypes.

VALOR DOMAIN

Cleric Domain

The gods of valor are those stalwarts who uphold bravery and courage as the highest of virtues. The world of mortals is a place of great danger, and these deities call upon their faithful to stand in the face of it defiantly. Deities of heroes and valiant defenders may teach their champions to never quail in the face of danger, while deities of war, battle, or strength have no use for those who give in to fear. Clerics of these deities can often be found rallying others to find their own grit, standing as examples in the face of even overwhelming odds.

AN ACT OF BRAVERY

Many clerics of this domain first hear the call of the divine in the midst of an act of unprecedented courage, even in the face of great danger to themselves. What was your defining moment of bravery?

BONUS PROFICIENCIES

At 1st level, you gain proficiency with martial weapons and heavy armor.

ACTS OF BRAVERY

D6	ACT
1	You stood against tyrants, bullies, and others who sought to dominate or conquer you and yours.
2	You defended your family against deadly odds or foes.
3	You protected someone weaker against a tormentor or assailant.
4	You organized an insurrection or rebellion against an oppressor of some kind.
5	You rallied others in battle, calling them to find their bravery.
6	You rescued bystanders from a disaster, accident, or other potential tragedy.

VALOR DOMAIN FEATURES

CLERIC LEVEL	FEATURE
1st	Domain Spells, Bonus Proficiencies, Stalwart
2nd	Channel Divinity: Overthrow Fear
6th	Channel Divinity: Beacon of Courage
8th	Divine Strike (1d8)
14th	Divine Strike (2d8)
17th	Avatar of Valor

VALOR DOMAIN SPELLS

CLERIC LEVEL	SPELLS
1st	<i>heroism, shield of faith</i>
3rd	<i>calm emotions, warding bond</i>
5th	<i>beacon of hope, remove curse</i>
7th	<i>death ward, freedom of movement</i>
9th	<i>dispel evil and good, hallow</i>

STALWART

Starting at 1st level, you gain immunity to the frightened condition. Additionally, you gain advantage on saving throws against spells whose effects are described as coming from fear or terror, such as phantasmal killer.

CHANNEL DIVINITY: OVERTHROW FEAR

Starting at 2nd level, you can use your Channel Divinity to instill bravery in the fearful. As an action, you present your holy symbol and evoke blessings of valor in those around you. Choose any creatures within 30 feet of you who can hear you. Creatures affected by the frightened condition are no longer affected by it. All affected creatures become immune to the frightened condition for the next minute. During that time, a creature may choose as a reaction to sacrifice its immunity to gain advantage on any single saving throw.

CHANNEL DIVINITY: BEACON OF COURAGE

At 6th level, you can use your Channel Divinity to embody the inspiring power of your deity for those around you. As an action, you present your holy symbol and cry encouragement to those around you. Choose any creatures within 30 feet of you who can hear you to become affected by this ability for one minute. Those creatures become immune to the frightened condition. At the start of each of your turns, as long as you are not incapacitated, affected creatures gain temporary hit points equal to your Charisma bonus plus your cleric level. Any affected creature may choose as a reaction to no longer be affected by this ability as a sacrifice to gain advantage on one ability check or attack roll.

DIVINE STRIKE

At 8th level, you gain the ability to imbue your weapon strikes with divine energy. Once on each of your turns when you hit a creature with a weapon attack, you can cause the attack to deal an extra 1d8 damage of whatever type your weapon inflicts to the target. When you reach 14th level, the extra damage increases to 2d8.

AVATAR OF VALOR

At 17th level, you can channel the ineffable valor of your deity, becoming an avatar of courage in the world. You are permanently immune to any spells or other effects described as being based in fear or terror. Additionally, beacon of hope

now has a duration of 1 minute when you cast it, instead of its normal duration.

The range of both your Overthrow Fear and Beacon of Courage Channel Divinity effects are increased to 60 feet. Creatures that choose to sacrifice being affected by one of those effects may choose the normal benefits of doing so, or they may instead choose to drop to 1 hit point when struck with an attack that would ordinarily otherwise drop them to 0 or fewer hit points.

BUCCANEER

Martial Archetype

There are many fighting folk who sail the seas. Many of them crew pirate, privateer, and corsair vessels, skilled at spilling blood into the salt water. But the buccaneer stands out even among such worthies. It is not enough to be adept with violence – the buccaneer is the subject of tales spread among envious cohorts and terrified merchants and sailors. As the buccaneer's career in bloodshed advances, so too does the terror around their legend, giving the buccaneer a potent weapon indeed: fear.

FIRST SHIP

All buccaneers have a history aboard a sailing vessel of some sort. No matter the task the ship is engaged in, there are always some aboard it who learn to fight on the rolling, wet decks, in defense of themselves and their ship. That ship is likely in your past – what was the ship's purpose, and why did you leave it?

BLOODED SALT

The buccaneer terrifies even other hardened seagoing folk, cultivating an appearance and demeanor equal parts terrifying and exotic. When you take the buccaneer archetype at 3rd level, you gain proficiency with the Intimidate skill and improvised weapons found aboard a ship or on the docks: bottles, belaying pins, gaff hooks, and similar items, as well as any weapons that are attached as prosthetics.

As a bonus action, you may seek to terrify an opponent with an Intelligence of 4 or greater who is within 5 feet of you with a snarl, display of violence, or other intimidation tactic. The target must make a Wisdom saving throw, DC 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Strength or Dexterity modifier (your choice). Failure means the target is frightened of you until the end of your next turn.

Along with the normal benefits of fighting a frightened target, you gain the following additional benefits against such a foe:

- Your melee weapon attacks inflict an additional +1d8 damage on frightened targets once per turn. This bonus

FIRST SHIPS

D6	SHIP TYPE
1	A pirate vessel, preying on fat merchantmen ships.
2	A smuggling vessel, full of forbidden cargo.
3	An exploration vessel, yardarm pointed toward the horizon.
4	A merchant vessel, heavy with riches.
5	A naval vessel, bristling with weapons and fighting folk.
6	A doomed vessel, brought low by fate, plague, or curse.

BUCCANEER FEATURES

FIGHTER LEVEL	FEATURE
3rd	Blooded Salt, Sea Legs
7th	Dreaded Name
10th	Signature Vessel
15th	Signature Port
18th	Flying the Colors

increases to +2d8 at 7th level, +3d8 at 12th level, and +4d8 at 15th level.

- When you reduce a frightened target to 0 hit points, your movement does not provoke opportunity attacks until the end of your turn.
- At 15th level, you gain resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from any frightened attacker.

SEA LEGS

At 3rd level, your experience with sailing vessels gives you proficiency with either water vehicles or navigator's tools. Additionally, while aboard a water vessel or on docks and wharves, you may use your reaction to gain either a climb speed or a swim speed equal to your normal speed until the beginning of your next turn.

DREADED NAME

At 7th level, you develop a signature style calculated to intimidate your foes. You and your Game Master should come up with what this is: matches in your beard set alight, tearing off of your shirt to reveal gruesome scars, or setting your crew-mates to chanting a signature dirge or shanty.

Whatever it is, when you use your bonus action to perform this signature threat, all enemies with an Intelligence of 4 or greater within 30 feet must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw at a DC equal to 8 + your proficiency modifier + your Strength or Dexterity modifier (your choice) or become frightened of you for one minute. Those affected by this condition may attempt another save at the end of each of their turns to throw off the condition. After using this scare tactic, you may not use it again until you have completed a short rest.

At 12th level, the range of this ability increases to 60 feet, and you regain use of it every time you score a critical hit against a target.

SIGNATURE VESSEL

The ships you sail on become an extension of you. At 10th level, you gain the ability to designate a single sailing vessel as your signature ship. You must have sailed aboard a vessel for at least one month to do so, although if you have sailed in a position of authority, you may do so in half the time.

While aboard a signature vessel, you gain the following benefits:

- When taking a short rest, instead of rolling fighter Hit Dice, simply recover 10 + your Constitution bonus per Hit Die spent recovering.
- Frightened targets aboard your signature vessel cannot perform opportunity attacks against you or your allies.
- You can choose to turn a hit with a melee weapon attack against a frightened target into a critical hit. You must complete a short rest before using this ability again.



DEATH IN FREEPORT

At 12th level, if you are attacking an enemy vessel and move from your signature vessel to that ship, you may spend one fighter Hit Die to cause that enemy vessel to be treated as your signature vessel. This lasts for ten minutes or until you leave the enemy vessel.

SIGNATURE PORT

The buccaneer's terrifying reputation extends beyond the vessels they hunt. At 15th level, choose one port town or city where your signature ship has docked for at least three weeks in the last year. You gain the benefits of being aboard your signature vessel while you are within the boundaries of that port city or town. You gain advantage on all Charisma checks with the locals there, and gain a 25% discount on goods and Lifestyle costs while there, as well. This effect ends if you ever choose another signature port, or are forced to flee your signature port.

FLYING THE COLORS

Some buccaneers – those who manage to survive long enough to see their names become legendary – become the scourges of the sea. At 18th level, you may designate multiple ships as signature vessels, as long as they fly your personal flag and their crews and captains look to you for leadership.

THE GANGS

D6	GANG TYPE
1	A gang of pickpockets, adroit in putting their fingers in other folks' purses.
2	A group of market swarmers, skilled at invading shops and markets, causing chaos, and snatching goods to run off with.
3	A cohort of burglars, planning heists and training in stealth and infiltration.
4	A mob of thugs, using violence and intimidation to enrich themselves.
5	A troupe of beggars, faking tragedy and playing others' sympathies like fine instruments.
6	A group of deliverers, picking up and dropping off illegal parcels for those who desire secrecy in their dealings.

ALLEY-RAT FEATURES

ROGUE LEVEL	FEATURE
3rd	Hide & Seek, Trip & Flourish
9th	Scurry & Scamper
13th	Orchestrate & Manipulate
17th	King of the Streets

On whatever vessel you are on, you may run up your flag as a threat to all seagoing vessels that do not follow you. As an action, you or a subordinate following your orders may run up your colors. All enemies with an Intelligence of 4 or greater who are within one mile and able to see your flag must make a Wisdom save at a DC equal to 8 + your proficiency modifier + your Strength or Dexterity bonus (your choice) the first time they see your flag or become frightened for one hour. Those affected by this condition may attempt another save every ten minutes. Success ends the frightened condition. After using this intimidation tactic, you may not use it again until you have completed a long rest.

ALLEY-RAT

Roguish Archetype

There are many kinds of rats who hunt the filthy alleys and stained cobble streets of big cities. The small furry kind are the most innocent of them. You are one such rat, lean and rangy, hunger and greed etched in the lines of your face. These streets are yours, and you move through them better than anyone else. Indeed, they are both armor and weapon to you, home and hunting ground. You're not the only one who calls the mean streets home, of course. You are, however, one of the most adroit.

THE GANG YOU RAN WITH

Alley-rats learn the ins and outs of their home through association with others. Though a rare few may have simply picked this up the hard way here and there, most alley-rats belonged to a gang – or may even still be part of it! Roll on this table to determine the nature of the gang you learned the secrets of alley and rooftop from. Were they “sponsored” by someone, or did they form on their own? What is your relationship with them today?

HIDE & SEEK

Upon taking this archetype, your mastery of urban environments allows you to blend into the shadows cast by the crowded terrain. In a city street, alleyway, rooftop, or similar non-wilderness area, you can attempt to hide while you are lightly obscured or have half cover or better.

Additionally, you are always watching. You can make a Wisdom (Perception) check as a bonus action, adding it to the list of Cunning Actions you can perform as a rogue.

TRIP & FLOURISH

At 3rd level, the crowded alleys and back-ways of the city taught you to use environment as a tool and weapon. You are proficient in all improvised weapons in an urban environment.

As a bonus action, you use some aspect of your environment to grant yourself advantage on your next skill check or inflict disadvantage on the next attack roll against you. The description for these effects should incorporate the environment in some way.

In addition, once per turn when an opportunity attack misses you, you can cause the target who missed the attack to suffer damage equal to your sneak attack damage as you dart through the environment and cause the creature to injure themselves on the local terrain features. This damage is most often bludgeoning, but if terrain features would inflict other types of damage, you may inflict that damage type instead.

SCURRY & SCAMPER

At 9th level, your experience with unstable footing and moving through dangerous terrain allows you to move surely. By using a bonus action to Scurry & Scamper, you gain the following benefits:

- You ignore the movement penalties incurred by difficult terrain.
- You do not halve your movement while climbing.
- You do not need to move 10 feet before performing long jumps.

Additionally, as a reaction, you can use the environment to slow your fall. As long as there are handholds at points in your fall (down a cliff or along a wall, for instance), you can make a Dexterity save at a DC of half the number of feet fallen. If you fail the save, you take half damage from the fall; if you succeed, you take no damage.

ORCHESTRATE & MANIPULATE

At 13th level, you are a master of the urban environment. While in an alley or streets, on the docks or the rooftops, or within large interior places, you cannot be surprised. While in such environs, you also gain a Lair Action. On initiative count 20 (losing all initiative ties), you can use one of your lair action options. You can't do so while incapacitated or otherwise unable to take actions. You may use your Lair Action to perform one of the following actions:

- Use your environment to protect yourself. Attacks against you have disadvantage until

the end of your next Lair Action turn.

- Set up an enemy within 30 feet. Through trickery and subtle maneuvering, the targeted enemy takes damage equal to your sneak attack damage the first time it attacks you or one of your allies. This is most often bludgeoning damage, but may vary according to the terrain, as with **Trip & Flourish**.
- Move your normal speed. Opportunity attacks against you during this movement have disadvantage.

SOVEREIGN OF THE STREETS

At 17th level, you gain resistance to all bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage while you are either in an area of difficult terrain, have at least half cover, or are climbing. You also gain a climb speed equal to your normal speed, and only need your feet and one hand free to climb.

SERPENTKIN

Sorcerous Origin

There is ophidian magic in your blood. Though this is a sorcerous bloodline common to serpent people, they are not the only ones whose lineage is touched by this power. It is possible your kin have admixed with serpent people at some point in the past, or that they were part of the cults of Yig. It may also simply be that someone in your lineage was too close to the blasphemous rites of Yig's own. Whatever the reason, you are an inheritor of the venomous and entrancing magics of serpent-kind.

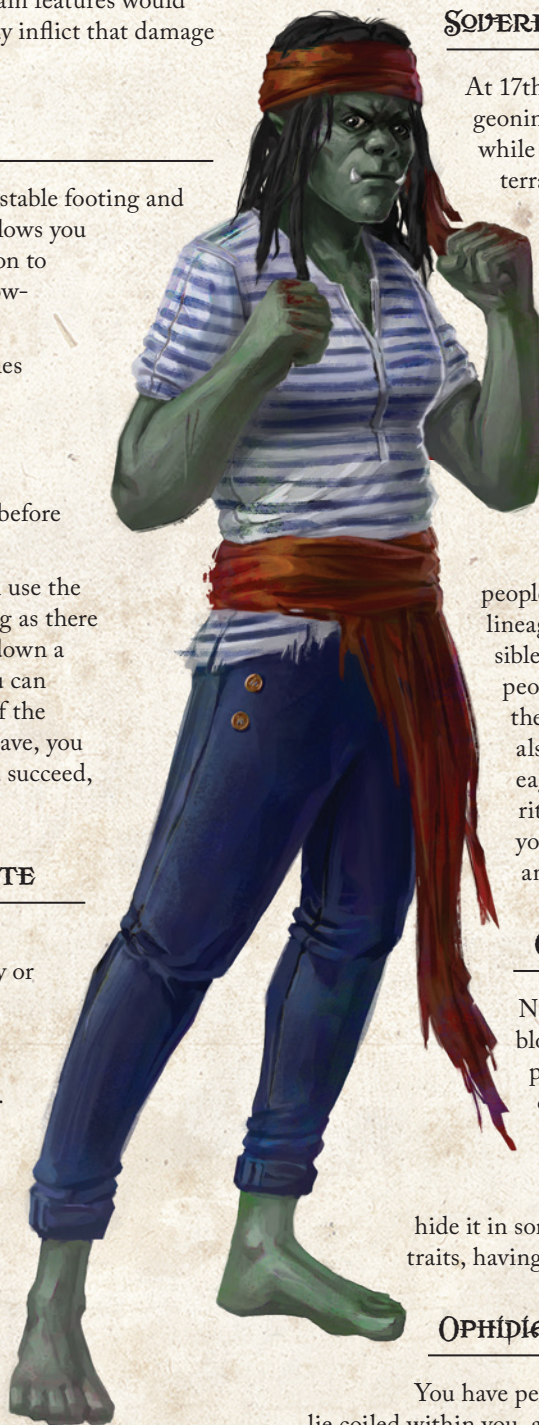
OPHIDIAN HERITAGE

Non-serpent people sorcerers of this bloodline often show some kind of serpentine traits in their bodies. These are often hidden, as they may be seen as signs of corruption or evil. How old were you when this trait manifested?

Do you wear it proudly, or do you hide it in some fashion? (These are all cosmetic traits, having no game effects.)

OPHIDIAN SORCERY

You have peered into the ophidian mysteries that lie coiled within you, and come away changed. You learn the



SERPENT FEATURES

D6	FEATURE
1	A small set of fangs that drop down from behind your teeth when you are angry or afraid.
2	A forked tongue. This could be an actual serpent's tongue, or it may be a tongue typical to your origins which has developed a split down its center.
3	Eyes that narrow into slits in low light conditions.
4	Small indentations behind the ears which you can use to vaguely sense heat near you.
5	A patch of scales, serpentine in hue and texture, somewhere on your body.
6	Cold blood, making you feel the cold more acutely and seek out sources of warmth.

SERPENTKIN FEATURES

SORCERER LEVEL	FEATURE
1st	Ophidian Sorcery, Viper's Blessing
6th	A Hiss from the Shadows, Serpent's Form
14th	Viper in the Mind
18th	Avatar of Yig

poison spray cantrip as a bonus cantrip. When used by you, this cantrip does not have a vocal component, and you spray the poison as a fine mist from your mouth.

Additionally, you know the *animal friendship* and *speak with animals* spells as bonus spells which do not count against your spells known. You gain the ability to cast *speak with animals* as a ritual. You may also cast *animal friendship* without spending a spell slot as long as it is targeting a serpent of some kind. You recover this ability when you complete a short rest.

VIPER'S BLESSING

You are blessed with certain snake-like gifts as a result of your heritage. You gain darkvision out to 60 feet. If you already have darkvision, its ranged extends to 120 feet. Additionally, you gain resistance to poison damage and gain advantage on all saving throws against poison.

A HISS FROM THE SHADOWS

At your call, wicked ophidian spirits slither from out of the dark places of the world to do your bidding. At 6th level, you gain the spell *conjure animal* as a bonus spell which does not count against your spells known. The spirits are fiends rather than fey, and they all must take the form of various serpents.

Additionally, when casting a spell that inflicts damage, you may sacrifice one of your summoned spirits to empower that spell with ophidian potency. The snake in question

disappears from its spot, consumed by the spell, which inflicts additional poison damage based on the creature's challenge rating: CR 2 creatures inflict +4d6 poison damage, CR 1 creatures inflict +3d6 poison damage, CR 1/2 creatures inflict +2d6 poison damage, and creatures of CR 1/4 or lower inflict +1d6 poison damage.

SERPENT'S FORM

At 6th level, you come into your true ophidian inheritance, gaining the ability to transform into a serpent. You may use your action to magically assume the shape of any serpentine beast of CR 1/2 or lower that you have seen before. This CR limit increases as you gain levels: at 8th level, you can assume the form of CR 1 serpents, and at 10th level, you may assume the form of up to CR 2 serpents. You can use this feature twice, and regain expended uses of it when you finish a short or long rest.

You can stay in beast shape for a number of hours equal to your sorcerer level (rounded down). You then revert to your normal form unless you expend another use of this feature. You can revert to your normal form earlier by using a bonus action on your turn. You automatically revert if you fall unconscious, drop to 0 hit points, or die.

While you are transformed, the following rules apply:

- Your game statistics are replaced by the statistics of the beast, but you retain your alignment, personality, and Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores. You also retain all of your skill and saving throw proficiencies, in addition to gaining those of the creature. If the creature has the same proficiency as you and the bonus in its stat block is higher than yours, use the creature's bonus instead of yours. If the creature has any legendary or lair actions, you can't use them.
- When you transform, you assume the beast's hit points and Hit Dice. When you revert to your normal form, you return to the number of hit points you had before you transformed. However, if you revert as a result of dropping to 0 hit points, any excess damage carries over to your normal form. For example, if you take 10 damage in your serpent form and have only 1 hit point left, you revert and take 9 damage. As long as the excess damage doesn't reduce your normal form to 0 hit points, you aren't knocked unconscious.
- You can't cast spells, and your ability to speak or take any action that requires hands is limited to the capabilities of your serpent form. Transforming doesn't break your concentration on a spell you've already cast, however, or prevent you from taking actions that are part of a spell, such as *call lightning*, that you've already cast.
- The sole exception to the above is the cantrip *poison spray*, which you may explicitly still cast in serpent form.
- You retain the benefit of any features from your class, race, or other source and can use them if the new form is physically capable of doing so. You can't use



any of your special senses, except for darkvision, which explicitly carries over.

- You choose whether your equipment falls to the ground in your space, merges with your new form, or is worn by it. Worn equipment functions as normal, but the GM decides whether it is practical for the new form to wear a piece of equipment, based on the creature's shape and size. Your equipment doesn't change size or shape to match the new form, and any equipment that the new form can't wear must either fall to the ground or merge with it. Equipment that merges with the form has no effect until you leave the form.

WIPER IN THE MIND

At 14th level, you gain the ability to make a creature unaware of your magical influence on it. When you cast an enchantment spell to charm one or more creatures, you can alter one creature's understanding so that it remains unaware of being charmed.

That creature then becomes host to an esoteric entity in their dreams. When that creature completes a long rest, their dreams are haunted by ophidian imagery. A creature affected by this curse recovers one fewer hit die from that long rest than normal. When you take a long rest, this serpent imagery appears in your dreams as well, feeding you the vitality stolen from your victim. You gain two bonus sorcery points upon completing your long rest. This effect

continues on a target until they receive a *remove curse* spell, or until you target a new victim with this ability.

At 16th level, you may have two such victims, and at 18th level, the number increases to three.

AVATAR OF YIG

At 18th level, you learn to channel the blasphemous powers of Yig. This functions as *Serpent's Form*, save that you must spend a sorcery point and one of your uses of *Serpent's Form* to change shape, and you assume the form of a guardian naga. You do not gain access to the spells typical of a guardian naga, but do retain access to your own spellcasting, including requiring only verbal components in casting those spells.

The transformation is particularly disturbing. Anyone watching it occur must make a DC 12 Wisdom save or suffer a bout of short-term madness. Those who have seen you transform in this way before may make the save at advantage.

HANDOUT A THE TO-DO LIST

Things to do:

Get some sleep! Talk to Cpt. Scarbelly Turnips
 Update diary Examine travel logs Get more sleep!

HANDOUT B: DIARY EXCERPTS

FROM SIX YEARS AGO:

I awoke this morning frightfully fatigued. I feel like the I spent the night in combat, not sleeping. My head hurts, and I feel weak. I can't miss work at the temple, but I think I'll confine myself to light tasks today.

THE NEXT ENTRY IS DATED FIVE YEARS LATER:

The gods help me! What happened? I awoke from some strange dream to find that five years have passed! Egil told me I was kicked out of the temple four years ago for violating the sanctum. Surely this is madness!

FROM SIX MONTHS AGO:

Life has resumed a kind of normalcy. I have won admittance back into the temple. My reception was strange, but everyone seems relieved that I am "back to my old self." I have so many questions about these missing years but it seems best to simply move on with my life now. If the god wills it, knowledge will come to me.

FROM FOUR MONTHS AGO:

Egil says that Milos was asking after me again, that he was worried about another "episode." Maybe he's simply concerned for the temple, but surely I have sufficiently proven myself by now. My life is mine again, and I'm not giving it up!

FROM TWO MONTHS AGO:

The dreams came again last night. I don't know that I'll ever get a good night's sleep! I dreamt of cities as tall as the clouds and creatures so alien in form that I can't describe them. Does this have something to do with my lost years or is this some fresh torment?

FROM ONE MONTH AGO:

It's clear to me now that I must find some answer if I'm ever to make the dreams stop. Thoron and Milos tried to discourage me... I think they fear what might happen to their temple. A pity their compassion does not extend to a living being.

FROM ONE WEEK AGO:

I have begun to feel like I'm being watched. I pray this is not a further milestone on the road to madness. I think I'll take my dagger with me in the morning. In a city like Freeport, I suppose one can't be too careful. Especially with pirates in port.

ROLLO

Race: Gnome (Rock) **Sex:** Male **Height:** 3'8"
Weight: 47 lbs. **Size:** Small **Age:** 56
Background: Privateer **Class:** Fighter
Level: 1st **Alignment:** Neutral Good

Strength: 15 (+2) **Dexterity:** 13 (+1)
Constitution: 15 (+2) **Intelligence:** 14 (+2)
Wisdom: 10 (+0) **Charisma:** 8 (-1)
Hit Points: 12 **Hit Dice:** 1d10
Armor Class: 13 (studded leather)
Speed: 25 ft. **Initiative:** +1

TRAITS

Gnomish Traits: Darkvision 60 ft., Gnome Cunning (advantage on all Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against magic)

Fighter Traits: Fighting Style (Two-Weapon Fighting), Second Wind

PROFICIENCIES

Saving Throws: Strength +4, Constitution +4

Skills: Athletics +4, Acrobatics +3, Insight +2, Perception +2

Tools: Water Vehicles

Weapons & Armor: All armor, all shields

Languages: Common, Draconic, Gnome

ATTACKS

Hammer-head. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) bludgeoning damage.

Pick-head*. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

Short Bow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6+1) piercing damage.

* The attack with the pick-head is made as a bonus action, following an attack with the hammer-head only.

Equipment: Backpack, bedroll, crowbar, explorer's outfit, flint and steel, gnomish hooked hammer, quiver with 20 arrows, short bow, studded leather, 3 torches.

Money: 14 gp, 8 sp.

NOTES



PRIVATEER (BACKGROUND)

You've spent your time at sea, cutting the line between criminal and bounty hunter. You have sailed with those with letters of marque, but you know they were often inclined to lean into a bit of piracy now and again themselves. Either way, you know your way around a ship, and the docks at port.

Skill Proficiencies: Acrobatics, Athletics

Languages: One of your choice

Tool Proficiencies: Vehicles (Water) or Navigator's Tools

Feature: The Brotherhood - You are known to the elite but often bloody brotherhood of buccaneers, pirates, corsairs, and privateers. By spending an evening at one of the dive drinking establishments they favor, you can find either information known to someone among them—usually rumors, though information about ships tends to be a bit more concrete—or a place to doss down for the night, free of charge.

GNOMISH HOOKED HAMMER

A strange double-headed weapon, with a hammer on one end and a pick-head on the other, gnomish hooked hammers are martial weapons that can be wielded normally, using the stats below. They may also be used with two-weapon fighting, using the normal rules for such. In that instance, the hammer-head is always the primary weapon, and the pick-head is the secondary one.

NAME	COST	DAMAGE	WEIGHT	PROPERTIES
<i>Hooked Hammer</i>	4 gp	—	2 lb.	—
Hammer-head	—	1d6 bludgeoning	—	—
Pick-head	—	1d6 piercing	—	Light

MALEDIR

Race: Half-Elf **Sex:** Male **Height:** 5'3"
Weight: 142 lbs. **Size:** Medium **Age:** 25
Background: Historian **Class:** Sorcerer (Serpentkin)
Level: 1 **Alignment:** Chaotic Good

Strength: 8 (-1) **Dexterity:** 15 (+2)
Constitution: 13 (+1) **Intelligence:** 12 (+1)
Wisdom: 10 (+0) **Charisma:** 17 (+3)
Hit Points: 7 (resistance to poison damage)
Hit Dice: 1d6 **Armor Class:** 12, or 15 (mage armor)
Speed: 30 ft. **Initiative:** +2

TRAITS

Half-Elf Traits: Darkvision 120 ft. (increased by Viper's Blessing), Fey Ancestry (advantage on saves against being charmed, magic can't put you to sleep), Skill Versatility (Insight and Stealth).

Sorcerer Traits: Spellcasting (Spell Save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks), Serpentkin Sorcerous Origin (Ophidian Sorcery, Viper's Blessing)

PROFICIENCIES

Saving Throws: Constitution +3, Charisma +5 (advantage against poison)

Skills: Arcana +3, Deception +5, History +3, Persuasion +5, Religion +3, Stealth +4

Tools: Calligrapher's kit

Weapons & Armor: Daggers, darts, slings, quarterstaves, light crossbows; no armor

Languages: Common, Dwarven, Elvish, Valossan

SPELLS KNOWN

Cantrips: *chill touch*, *light*, *mage hand*, *shocking grasp*, *poison spray*

1st level (2 slots): *animal friendship*, *detect magic*, *mage armor*, *speak with animals*

ATTACK

Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d6-1) bludgeoning damage.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320, one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8+2) piercing damage.

Equipment: Backpack, bedroll, ink (vial), inkpen, light crossbow, mace, parchment (sheaf), quiver with 20 bolts, sealing wax, signet ring, traveler's outfit. **Money:** 4 gp, 8 sp.



HISTORIAN (BACKGROUND)

No one knows that the world of today is built on the foundations of the past quite like you do. Though you likely have a specialty of some sort, you are fascinated by the history of the world in which you live. Indeed, adventuring is often a way of stealing a rare glimpse into the remnants of ancient empires and peoples, even if it is a dangerous option.

Skill Proficiencies: History, plus one other from among Arcana, Nature, or Religion.

Languages: One of your choice, relevant to your specialty.

Tool Proficiencies: Calligrapher's supplies

Feature: Access to the Archives - You are known among the scholars and sages of your community, and they are happy to provide access to their stacks and libraries, as long as you share your findings. When taking the Researching Downtime Activity, you can forego the normal monetary cost.

NOTES

ALAÏNA

Race: Human **Sex:** Female **Height:** 5'8"
Weight: 160 lbs. **Size:** Medium **Age:** 19
Background: Street Knife **Class:** Rogue **Level:** 1
Alignment: Neutral Good

Strength: 14 (+2) **Dexterity:** 16 (+3)
Constitution: 11 (+0) **Intelligence:** 15 (+2)
Wisdom: 9 (-1) **Charisma:** 13 (+1)

Hit Points: 8 **Hit Dice:** 1d8
Armor Class: 14 (leather)
Speed: 30 ft. **Initiative:** +3

TRAITS

Rogue Traits: Expertise (Acrobatics, Stealth), Sneak Attack (1d6), Thieves' Cant

PROFICIENCIES

Saving Throws: Dexterity +5, Intelligence +4
Skills: Acrobatics +7, Athletics +4, Investigation +4, Persuasion +3, Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +7
Tools: Dice, disguise kit, thieves' tools
Weapons & Armor: Simple weapons, hand crossbows, longswords, rapiers, shortswords; light armor
Languages: Common, Orc, Thieves' Cant

ATTACKS

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) piercing damage.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6+3) piercing damage.

Shortsword*. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) piercing damage.

* The attack with the second shortsword is made as a bonus action, following an attack with the main-hand shortsword only.

Equipment: Backpack, bedroll, caltrops, dice, disguise kit, explorer's outfit, flint and steel, hemp rope (50 ft.), leather armor, light crossbow, pouch, quiver with 20 bolts, 2 shortswords, signal whistle, thieves' tools.

Money: 1 gp, 5 sp.



STREET KNIFE (BACKGROUND)

You're a child of the rough streets, and yet you call them home. You may have been there your entire life, or only recently in the past few years, for whatever reason. Either way, you've taken to them with a natural grace and talent for viciousness that makes them a home to you. You may run with the gangs, be part of a crew of criminal entrepreneurs, or simply a talented loner.

Skill Proficiencies: Acrobatics, Stealth

Languages: None

Tool Proficiencies: Disguise kit and any one gaming set.

Feature: Home Turf - You have a rough area of town that you claim as your turf, and that protects its own in return. You can live there for free at a Poor Lifestyle, and it offers some degree of protection: anyone who comes looking for you in that part of town gets the run-around, and they make sure to let you know someone is looking for you so you can dodge them if necessary. The folk there won't necessarily shed blood for you, but they'll keep you ahead of the hunters if they can.

NOTES

THORGRIM

Race: Dwarf (Hill) **Sex:** Male **Height:** 4'4"
Weight: 155 lbs. **Size:** Medium **Age:** 71
Background: Acolyte **Class:** Cleric (Valor Domain)
Deity: God of Valor **Level:** 1
Alignment: Lawful Good

Strength: 13 (+1) **Dexterity:** 8 (-1)
Constitution: 16 (+3) **Intelligence:** 12 (+1)
Wisdom: 16 (+3) **Charisma:** 10 (+0)
Hit Points: 12 (resistance to poison damage)
Hit Dice: 1d8 **Armor Class:** 18 (chain mail, shield)
Speed: 25 ft. **Initiative:** -1

TRAITS

Hill Dwarf Traits: Darkvision 60 ft., Dwarven Resilience (advantage to saves against poison, resistance to poison damage), Dwarven Combat Training, Stonecunning
Cleric Traits: Spellcasting (Spell Save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks), Valor Domain (Domain Spells, Bonus Proficiencies, Stalwart)



SPELLS PREPARED

May prepare 4 spells from the cleric spells list; spells marked with an asterisk are Domain Spells and always prepared.

Cantrips: *guidance*, *light*, *sacred flame*

1st level (2 slots): *bane*, *command*, *cure wounds*, *heroism**, *shield of faith**, *protection from evil and good*

PROFICIENCIES

Saving Throws: Wisdom +5, Charisma +2 (advantage against poisons and fear effects; immune to frightened condition)

Skills: History +3, Insight +5, Medicine +5, Religion +3

Tools: Brewer's supplies

Weapons & Armor: All simple and martial weapons; all armor and shields.

Languages: Common, Celestial, Dwarvish, Orc

ATTACKS

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8+1) slashing damage.

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4+1) piercing damage.

Equipment: Backpack, bedroll, brewers' supplies, chain mail, dagger, explorer's outfit, holy symbol, longsword, scroll case, shield, 3 torches, whetstone.

Money: 18 gp, 8 sp.

NOTES

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