



PROPHECY'S UNWITTING SERVANT

A One-Round DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Adventure for
1st- to 3rd-Level Characters
CRIMSON CODEX™ Faction Adventure 1 for the XEN'DRIK
EXPEDITIONS™ Campaign

Design: Shawn Merwin
Crimson Codex Factionmaster: Shawn Merwin
Development: Stephen Radney-MacFarland
Illustrations: David Esbri
Cartography: Stephen Radney-MacFarland
Playtesters: Jeff Barnes, Mike Barnes, Kevin Lawson, David Lotempio, Sean Wawrzusin, and Norman Lowrey

Sources: *Complete Adventurer* [Jesse Decker], *Complete Divine* [Dave Noonan], *Draconomicon* [Andy Collins, Skip Williams, James Wyatt], *Eberron Campaign Setting* [Keith Baker, James Wyatt, Bill Slavicsek], *Monster Manual III* [Rich Burlew, Eric Cagle, Jesse Decker, Andrew J. Finch, Gwendolyn F.M. Kestrel, Rich Redman, Matthew Sernett, Chris Thomasson, P. Nathan Tommey].

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

This WIZARD OF THE COAST® game product contains no Open Game Content. This work may be reproduced for personal use or in its entirety for use at RPGA-sanctioned events. To learn more about the Open Gaming License and the d20 SYSTEM® License, please visit www.wizards.com/d20. This product uses material from the v.3.5 revision. This is an official RPGA® play document. To find out more about the RPGA and to learn more on how you can sanction and run DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game events of all sizes, visit our website at www.wizards.com/rpga.

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, D&D, D&D REWARDS, D&D CAMPAIGNS, DUNGEON MASTER, EBERRON, XEN'DRIK EXPEDITIONS, CRIMSON CODEX, HERALD-LEVEL, RPGA, d20, d20 SYSTEM, WIZARDS OF THE COAST, *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and *Monster Manual* and their respective logos are trademarks owned by Wizards of the Coast, Inc., in the US and other countries. This material is protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America. Any reproduction or unauthorized use of the material or artwork contained herein is prohibited without the express written permission of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. This product is a work of fiction. Any similarity to actual people, organizations, places, or events is purely coincidental. © 2006 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Visit the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS CAMPAIGNS website at www.rpga.com

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

RPGA-SANCTIONED PLAY

Most likely you ordered this adventure as part of an RPGA even from the RPGA website, or as part of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS CAMPAIGNS retail program. To play *Prophecy's Unwitting Servant* as part of the XEN'DRIK EXPEDITIONS campaign—a worldwide, ongoing D&D campaign set in EBERRON—you must sanction it as part of an RPGA event. This event could be as elaborate as a big convention, or as simple as a group of friends meeting at the DM's house.

To sanction an RPGA event, you must be at least a HERALD-LEVEL gamemaster. The person who sanctions the event is called the senior gamemaster, and is in charge of

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

By sanctioning and reporting this adventure you accomplish a few things. First, it allows the PCs participating in play to accumulate experience points (XP) and gold pieces (gp) to advance their XEN'DRIK EXPEDITIONS characters. Second, it allows the RPGA to track and record what character did during the adventure, and future adventures a written with what the majority of player did in mind—in this way characters' action shape the future of the campaign. Lastly, player and DMs gain rewards for sanctioned RPGA play if they are members of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS REWARDS program. Playing this adventure is worth four (4) points.

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

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

THIS IS A FACTION ADVENTURE

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



Crimson Codex Faction Symbol

PLAYERS READ NO FARTHER

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

PREPARING FOR PLAY

To get the most out of this adventure, you need copies of the following D&D books: *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, *Monster Manual*, and the *Eberron Campaign Setting*. It is also a good idea to have a copy of the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*, as it is possible that some character playing in this adventure will be kalashtar utilizing the psionics rules.

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

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

Either attached to the adventure, you'll find a special *RPGA Session Tracking Sheet* tailored for this adventure. If you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, complete and turn in this sheet to your senior GM directly after play.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

In Stormreach, an adult blue dragon known as Stormrider has fashioned himself as a minstrel, poet, and leader of an underground band of ne'er-do-wells. As a member of the Chamber, the group of dragons dedicated to interpreting and manipulating the draconic Prophecy, he studies and releases bits of the Prophecy (or at least his interpretation of it) to the public among the bawdy poetry, essays and limericks of his famous chapbooks. Some of these lines of the Prophecy he released were missing pieces of the *Caldyn Fragments*, the tome of prophetic lines collected by one of the leaders of the Crimson Codex, Ohnal Caldyn. When leaders of the Crimson Codex recognize these lines of the Prophecy, some Crimson Codex members are dispatched to look into the identity of the author of the chapbook and the source of the bits of the draconic Prophecy he revealed there.

The Lords of Dust, desirous of the source of the Prophecy and foiled by the Chamber on several occasions, have been seeking Stormrider for several months. They

have been unable to track him down to his hideout, but they harassed and even killed several members of his thieving ring. Between these two opposing forces come the PCs. A mole within the Crimson Codex, working on behalf of the Lords of Dust, frames the PCs for the murder of a Stormreach Guard, leaving them hunted by the authorities and bounty hunters throughout the events of this adventure. The mole knows they are searching for Stormrider, and he hopes that the PCs lead his hirelings to Stormrider in their haste to avoid capture by the authorities. The PCs are vindicated at the conclusion of the adventure, assuming they survive, and they can gain valuable information from Stormrider in the process.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The PCs are asked by a leader of the Crimson Codex to look into the astounding revelation that the content of a bawdy chapbook actually contains missing bits of the Prophecy, hinted at by phrases from the Prophecy found in the *Caldyn Fragments*. They are told to meet a contact with further information about Stormrider at the Raging Wrestler, a tavern in the northern section of Stormreach.

Arriving at the tavern, the PCs interact with a young boy and a shifter street performer juggling live rats. When the PCs enter the tavern, they cannot find their contact, but a copy of *Stormrider's Chapbook (998 YK Edition)* is resting open on the table. When the PCs read the highlighted text of the chapbook, they see lines of the draconic Prophecy that refer to them. They can deduce that their lives are in danger if they do not leave immediately and find the publisher of the chapbook. Sure enough, as they attempt to leave the tavern, some Stormreach Guards approach, obviously searching for the PCs. The PCs learn they are wanted for the murder of a Stormreach Guard, and that a bounty has been placed on their heads.

At the publishing house, the PCs notice suspicious individuals reconnoitering the place. The PCs must either sneak into the publishing house or dispatch the watchers to gain entrance. Once inside, they can speak to the publisher about the chapbook. That publisher, Happy Hubbard, provides them with more information on Stormrider. The publisher's revelations, when viewed in conjunction with the Prophecy lines in the chapbook, give the PCs their next destination in the search for Stormrider.

As the PCs move toward the fountain in a plaza in the southwestern section of Stormreach, they encounter a young boy who saw them earlier. The boy has lost his mother, and he goes into an alleyway to seek shelter. Unfortunately for the lad, the alleyway houses the nest of some particularly vicious dire rats, which attack the boy. The PCs then have the opportunity to rescue the boy or leave him to his fate. If the lad is rescued, the PCs then must convince him that they are not really the bloodthirsty killers everyone says they are.

After dealing with the boy, the PCs arrive at a fountain on the edge of Stormreach, hounded by guards and fearing for their lives. A dragonshard shower is taking place, and the area around the fountain is filled with stargazers. Everyone is pointing at the sky, which the PCs can interpret through the Prophecy as a sign they must get beneath the fountain. When they do so, they enter forgotten catacombs.

Mindshredder larvae, having burrowed up from the depths of Khyber, attack the PCs as they move up the passage. After getting past the larvae, the PCs find the hideout of Stormrider. However, so did some Cultists of the Dragon Below who are unknowingly doing the bidding of the Lords of Dust. The PCs can defeat the first

wave of cultists, but more follow. When all seems lost, Stormrider reveals himself in his true form, and the cultist underlings flee in panic. Stormrider tells the PCs that his and their goals are the same, and that he wants to help them in their mission to find more of the draconic Prophecy and the secrets of Xen'drik, including supplying them with a partial map to the Well of Woe.

TROUBLESHOOTING

In many of the Crimson Codex faction adventures, a great deal of emphasis is placed on research, knowledge, and interpretation of the draconic Prophecy. Emphasis will also be placed on role-playing and subterfuge.

In this adventure, the PCs need to interpret the draconic Prophecy to move from encounter to encounter successfully. Since the Prophecy is actually involving the PCs directly on a real-time basis, following the plot flow is not difficult, and the clues are fairly straightforward. On the chance that the PCs fail to interpret the words of the Prophecy correctly, the DM should use Pfilo the Filch (see Sidebar) to help the PCs in certain instances. If the PCs are having trouble finding or interpreting a clue, Pfilo can show up to offer assistance. If the PCs are getting off track or trying to hide out or escape Stormreach completely rather than move through the plot, Pfilo can let them know the guards are closing in or tell them that fleeing the city completely is not the best option.

Also, this adventure has been created to make the PCs feel like they are being hunted, that they are safe nowhere, and their time is running out. Tips are provided within the encounters of the adventure for to help you create and maintain this feeling, but you should keep this mood in mind as you run the adventure.

Finally, the action of this adventure should take place in one evening. If the PCs attempt to sleep for the night or hide out for longer than a couple of hours, use a company of Stormreach Guards or Pfilo the Filch to keep them moving.

PFILO THE FILCH

A friend in need is a friend indeed.

Pfilo is an independent agent in Stormreach who has a good relationship with Stormrider and his gang. Stormrider has asked Pfilo to keep an eye on the PCs, and to offer them assistance if the PCs have trouble following the clues to his lair. Only use Pfilo if necessary, although you can introduce him as a bit player in the drama if appropriate, as he will appear in future Crimson Codex faction adventures as well.

PFILO THE FILCH

CR 3

Male halfling rogue 3

N Small humanoid (halfling)

Init +3; **Senses** Listen +4, Spot +2

Languages Common, Halfling

AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 13, Dodge

hp 14 (3 HD)

Fort +3, **Ref** +7, **Will** +4; +2 morale bonus on fear saves

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee short sword +6 (1d4/19-20)

Ranged dagger +7 (1d3/19-20)

Base Atk +2; **Grp** -2

Atk Options sneak attack +2d6

Abilities Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 14

SQ evasion, trap sense +1, trapfinding

Feats Dodge, Weapon Finesse

Skills Balance +9, Climb +2, Disable Device +6, Hide +13, Jump +2, Listen +4, Move Silently +11, Open Lock +9, Search +6, Sleight of Hand +9, Spot +2

Possessions combat gear plus short sword, three daggers, leather armor and thieves' tools

ADVENTURE START

The PCs begin the adventure with a note from Ohnal Caldyn, one of their superiors within the Crimson Codex. This note (see Handout 1) explains that some bits of the draconic Prophecy have appeared in a popular chapbook penned by a mysterious figure in Stormreach known only as Stormrider. The note then asks the PCs to proceed immediately to the Raging Wrestler to meet their contact, a spellscale name Lzohki, who is supposed to have information on how the PCs can make contact with Stormrider. The PCs are tasked with finding Stormrider and learning from what source he has gleaned these pieces of the draconic Prophecy.

Late on the final Sul of Nymm, just before sundown, you received a message from one of the leaders of your faction, the Crimson Codex. The note gave you all the direction you needed to begin on your first real mission of importance on this untamed and mysterious continent of Xen'drik. The destiny of not just yourselves, and not just Xen'drik, but the entirety of Eberron, starts with your steps toward the Raging Wrestler Tavern.

PART 1: THE RAGING WRESTLER TAVERN

The PCs can enter the tavern after encountering the young boy and the juggling shifter. While the PCs do not find their contact in the tavern, the only table not occupied in the tavern holds a copy of *Stormrider's Chapbook* (998 YK Edition).

Bookmarks in the chapbook point the PCs to two different pages with highlighted sections. The pertinent sections are shown in Handout 2. Between the cryptic message from the juggling shifter and the text highlighted in the chapbook, the PCs can gauge that they are in trouble, and that their first step in finding Stormrider is to speak to the book's publisher.

As the PCs attempt to leave the tavern, they realize Stormreach Guards are heading in their direction. They must escape from the tavern without being seen in order to make it to Part 2.

THE RAT-JUGGLING SHIFTER

As the PCs approach the Raging Wrestler Tavern, they must make their way through a crowd watching a shifter juggling live rats.

Ahead of you is the tavern known as The Raging Wrestler. The one-story building is not well made, but it has been kept in fairly good repair. Pleasant smells come from the building, carried on the smoke of the cooking fire drifting from the chimney.

Both outside and inside the establishment a crowd has formed. A feline-faced shifter street performer is putting on a show just beyond the front door. What she is doing is hard to tell with the mass of bodies milling around her. A young boy trips as he runs past you to get a better view of the



performance. He rolls over and looks at you, tears starting to well in his eyes. He has skinned his knee where he fell, and blood trickles from the scrape.

The boy is a young lad of about seven years named Maldwick Roe. His father is a fisherman who spends days or weeks at a time at sea, and his mother is shopping in the adjacent market. She lets him wander about the area as long as he doesn't roam too far. His importance is revealed later in the adventure, so be sure that the PCs interact with the boy at some level, and be sure to note if they treat the boy kindly, mock him, scare him, give him a gift, or handle the situation in some other way. Their actions toward him now can have serious impact later.

If the PCs approach the tavern or move forward to see what the shifter is doing, continue. Even if the PCs try to avoid the juggler, she moves toward them:

The shifter who has drawn so much attention is juggling. Rather than colorful pins or balls, the performer is juggling live rats, which squeal and spin as they sail high into the air. The crowd parts a bit as the shifter moves toward your group, smiling as she approaches. With a speed almost incomprehensible, she tosses the rats directly at you.

If you, as the DM, are feeling up to the challenge and have players who are not physically impaired or standoffish, gently toss one die each toward three of the players. If they attempt to catch it, have their PC make a DC 10 Dexterity check. If they avoid the die or just let it roll away, they do not need to make the check. A successful Dexterity check means they have caught the rat. If you are not comfortable with the theatrics of die tossing, simply select three PCs at random and ask them if their PC would attempt to catch the rat or avoid it. Whether caught or dropped or avoided, the trained rats run back to the shifter to continue the performance.

Make a note if a PC successfully catches a rat. Any PCs who catch a rat and do not kill it, gains a +2 divine bonus to their AC against vermin for the next 4 adventures (see Story Objects). The shifter looks at anyone who catches a

rat and says the following: "A rat-catcher, I see. Not a bad skill to have in Xen'drik." The shifter then continues her performance and does not speak further to the PCs.

STORMRIDER'S CHAPBOOK (998 YK EDITION)

The PCs do not find their contact in the tavern, but they do find an empty table, on which rests a copy of *Stormrider's Chapbook (998 YK Edition)*. Bookmarked and highlighted text reveals bits of the draconic Prophecy that pertain directly to the PCs current situation (as shown in Handout 2). If they are able to understand and interpret the Prophecy correctly, they understand they need to immediately leave the tavern and find the publisher of the chapbook.

Read or paraphrase the following as the PCs enter the Raging Wrestler Tavern:

The shingle hanging from a post outside the tavern depicts a muscular human male flexing his biceps. The interior of the tavern is not opulent by any stretch of the imagination, but neither is it a dive. Several rough-hewn tables are placed throughout the dining area, and a bar made of highly polished dark oak dominates the northeast corner of the room. A burly human serves drinks and laughs with patrons standing at the bar. A swinging door to what is most likely the kitchen creaks on its hinges in the northwest corner of the dining area. The tavern is packed with the dinner crowd—and all the tables are occupied, save for the one in the southwest corner. On that table, containing enough seats for at least six people, rests an open book.

If the PCs ask the barkeep, a human named Goster, about meeting with a spellscale named Lzohki, he tells them a spellscale paid some coin earlier in the day to reserve the empty table and left that book there, but no one has shown up for it yet. If the PCs just walk right over and sit at the table without asking permission, Goster asks them if that is their table. If the PCs do not hesitate to say that it is in fact their table, Goster lets them sit down. (After all, it is their table that the spellscale reserved for their



As the PCs discuss the contents of the book (when the PCs' discussions are drawing to a close or when arguments are taking too much time), a halfling enters the building, walks up to the bar, and says a couple of things to Goster, loud enough so everyone in the tavern can hear. First he says that one of House Jorasco's chapterhouses was robbed the previous day, and a bunch of herbs were stolen. A reliable witness, a mage of some sort, claims a changeling was the culprit. Also, a Stormreach Guard was murdered early this morning, and the authorities are searching for a group of adventurers in connection to that crime. The group being searched for, which the halfling describes in general terms, should be an exact match to the composition of the PCs' party.

If that doesn't motivate the PCs to hurry in their investigations, the next encounter should.

A NARROW ESCAPE

As the PCs rise to leave, they see Stormreach Guards outside the tavern coming to arrest them. They have to escape from the tavern by whatever means possible and find their way to the publishing house of Happy Hubbard.

This part of the encounter begins when one of two things happens: either the PCs try to leave via the front door, or they remain too long in the tavern, hoping that not acting solves their problems. Alter the content of the read-aloud text to match the actions of the PCs:

Outside the tavern are six angry-looking Stormreach Guards marching up the street. They are speaking to the people milling about in the street. Most of the citizens simply shake their heads, but some nod and talk. One of the guards is talking to the little boy who tripped and skinned his knee earlier. He nods emphatically, then points directly at the tavern you now occupy. The guard shouts to the others, and they begin moving quickly in your direction.

The PCs need to escape. The Prophecy clearly states that justice, in this case, is blind, and hoping to get the situation cleared up by talking to the guards results in failure in the adventure. The PCs are held in custody for several days, but before they can be executed for the murder of the Stormreach Guard, the witness who claims to have seen the murder disappears, and then another witness arrives to clear the PCs. The witness who clears

meeting). If they hesitate, then he tells them they can't have that table and must use the bar. It takes a DC 15 Bluff or Diplomacy check, or a 5-gp bribe, for Goster to allow them to take the table (and take the book) if they act untrustworthy. You can also allow roleplaying to determine any actions. Unless the PCs completely mess up, allow them to gain access to the book and then give them the chance to sit down and read it in the tavern.

The book on the table is open to a particular page (shown in Handout 2), and one other page is bookmarked. When the PCs sit down at the table and look at the book, give them Handout 2. Be sure to mention that some of the text on the page is underlined in red, and make particular mention of the red cloth bookmark on the other page. The bookmark is near the front of the book, on a page that simply states that "The Happy Hubbard Publishing House" publishes the chapbook, and this text is also underlined in red. This information is essential for the PCs to move to the next part of the adventure, so do not hide this crucial information.

After the PCs have some time to review and talk to each other about the meaning of the underlined passage, they should realize that they are the rat-catchers (from the encounter with the shifter) in the belly of the grappler (The Raging Wrestler Tavern). Injustice is about to befall them (Crimson Codex are the wearers of scarlet), and they must flee or perish. The directions contained in the Prophecy then instruct them to find the copier of the words (Happy Hubbard). The fifth line won't make any sense until the PCs talk to Happy Hubbard, and the sixth line says that Stormrider will tell them the truth when they find him.

them of the crime is Pfilo the Filch, and he tells them that Stormrider is sorry they couldn't speak, but he is a very busy writer. In this case the PCs do not earn the map fragment (Handout 3).

The means to escape are nearly limitless. A DC 10 Knowledge (local) check reveals that the Stormreach Guards are very capable warriors who most reasonable people do not trifle with. If the Guards think the PCs are responsible for the death of one of their own, justice is likely to be swift and unpleasant. This knowledge should be the only clue the PCs need to realize that they should look for an alternative to violence in their dilemma.

The most obvious option for escape is simply to use a window or back door to slip down an alley. Doing this is fairly easy, requiring a DC 10 Hide check to succeed. If the PCs are smart enough to help themselves in this by grabbing boxes, crates, or other objects from the kitchen or alley to hide their faces, give them a +5 bonus to their checks. Only PCs failing the check are spotted; the others are considered escaped.

They can also try using disguises, causing a distraction, bluffing, using magic to trick or distract the guards, or any other reasonable option. In general, use a DC 10 check of the appropriate skill to set the difficulty in escaping based on the plan. The idea here is to make the PCs feel in great danger, while allowing them to escape to reach the other encounters in the adventure.

Even if the PCs fail with the first check and are pursued by the guards, give them other opportunities to escape. PCs who can move faster than 30 feet in a round escape easily by simply running. PCs can make another DC 10 check of whatever skill or ability they want to use to escape. As soon as one check is successful, the PC is considered escaped.

If the PCs seem unable to get a plan together, and you cannot reasonably let them escape due to their incompetence or poor die rolls, then let the guards capture just one PC while the others escape.

Creatures: If the PCs engage the guards, use the following statistics. Remember that this is just one small contingent of guards, and killing guards now does put them at risk of execution at the end of the module.

Stormreach Guards (6): mix male and female human fighter 2: hp 16, 14, 14, 12, 12; Combat Statistics.

COMBAT STATISTICS

STORMREACH GUARD CR 2

Mix male and female human fighter 2

N Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Listen +3, Spot +3

Languages Common

AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14

hp varies (2 HD)

Fort +4, **Ref** +1, **Will** +1

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee longsword +4 (1d8+2/19-20)

Ranged light crossbow +3 (1d8/19-20)

Base Atk +2; **Grp** +4

Atk Options Power Attack

Abilities Str 14, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8

Feats Alertness, Blind-Fight, Cleave, Power Attack

Skills Climb +5, Jump +5, Swim +3

Possessions light crossbow, 10 bolts, longsword, studded leather armor, light wooden shield, signal whistle, manacles

GATHERING INFORMATION ON STORMRIDER

At any point during the adventure after the Adventure Start, the PCs may want to make a Gather Information, Knowledge (local), or bardic knowledge check regarding Stormrider. Use the following to distribute that information based on the DCs. Give the PCs all the information for lower DCs as well. Remember that a Gather Information check takes hours and some gold to perform, and if the PCs are being hunted while making that check, they may be recognized.

DC 10 – Stormrider is most famous for his books of silly verses, limericks, satirical essays, and other doggerel. No one has ever seen him.

DC 15 – In addition to his writings, Stormrider is also the ringleader of a gang of small-time thieves, fences, and information peddlers.

DC 20 – Stormrider is rumored to be an incredibly powerful bard who has the ability to change his shape. He actually walks around Stormreach in various guises, which is why no one has ever seen him.

DC 25 – If you go out into the wilds of Xen'drik and find any relics, tomes, or scrolls, Stormrider pays better than any other collector.

PART 2: HAPPY HUBBARD PUBLISHING

The clues in the chapbook tell the PCs to find the person who copied the book, which in this case is the publisher, a gnome named Happy Hubbard. The PCs must first find the publisher, which they can do with knowledge checks or by simply asking around. Once there, they notice that the publisher's office is being watched by some mysterious figures. The PCs either must sneak into the place, or incapacitate or distract the watchers. Once inside, Happy Hubbard is very helpful in their search. He can provide them with the clues they need to move to Part 3. The PCs must then sneak out of the building and move to their next destination without being seen.

THE WATCHERS

Once the PCs have escaped The Raging Wrestler, they should be looking for Happy Hubbard's Publishing House. A DC 10 Knowledge (local) or bardic knowledge check reveals the location right away. If the PCs cannot make this check, they need to ask for directions. Asking for directions, of course, is a dangerous proposition, because there are now notices and bills being posted everywhere stating that a reward of 100 gold pieces is being offered for the PCs' arrest. Fortunately, the streets are crowded this evening, so if the PCs keep a low profile, they are safe. If they make a spectacle of themselves, on the other hand, they could be in trouble.

If the PCs ask for directions, make them describe whom they are going to ask and how they ask. Since anyone may know the location because the DC is 10 or less, assume the first person they ask (as long as it is reasonable) knows where the publishing house is. However, this person may also recognize the PCs as the ones wanted for murder. Roll a DC 15 Intelligence check for the NPC whom the PCs ask for directions (assume a +0 modifier to the roll). Add up to +5 to the DC if the PCs take precautions: for example, if only one PC asks instead of the group, if the PCs disguise themselves, if they ask someone who obviously can't read the "Wanted" posts, or if they use other intelligent means to not draw attention to themselves.

If the Intelligence check fails, then the NPC does not recognize the PCs, and they get their directions without any further trouble. If the check succeeds, the NPC calls out for the guards, and the PCs should be forced to flee again.

When the PCs finally arrive outside of the publishing house, read or paraphrase the following:

Happy Hubbard's Publishing House, a stately looking two-story building in the center of Stormreach, sits in front of you. On either side of the publishing house, two run-down one-story houses look quite squat and pathetic, separated from Happy Hubbard's by narrow alleys. People continue to bustle around you, and it is not difficult to hear that everyone is talking about two things. Sages are predicting a shower of Sibera's shards this evening, and the sight in the night sky should be spectacular. And the other topic, of course, is the murder of a Stormreach Guard by bloodthirsty and insane adventurers. A large bounty has been placed on their heads, and now both guards and bounty hunters are involved in the search.

Allow each of the PCs a DC 10 Spot check to notice the tiefling agents hired by the Lords of Dust staking out the publishing house. If any PC succeeds, read the following:

While most of the people are moving about and minding their own business, a pair of cloaked figures obviously stands near the front of the publishing house, keeping an eye on the front door. Another pair of similarly cloaked figures skulks about in one of the alleys, occasionally walking to the back. Someone other than you has certainly taken an interest in the publishing house!

Foes: Two pairs of tiefling rogues have been assigned by agents of the Lords of Dust to keep an eye on the publishing house, attacking the PCs if they are seen entering or leaving the place, and taking them to the Stormreach Guards, dead or alive. These mercenaries have no true ties to the Lords of Dust—they are just doing it for the cash. If captured and questioned, they can only say (truthfully) that they were offered 5 gold pieces each, plus the 100-gold-piece bounty, if they captured the PCs and turned over their bodies, dead or alive, to the authorities. They start out as unfriendly, and if made friendly, they agree to leave. They can also be bribed (10 gp each).

Tiefling Rogues (4): hp 5, 5, 5, 5; Combat Statistics.

Developments: A fight in the middle of a crowded street obviously draws attention. People start shouting for the guards on the second round of combat, and the guards arrive ten rounds later. Combat confined to an alley or within a run-down house (which are currently empty) doesn't draw the attention of the crowd for ten rounds, which brings the guards in 20 rounds total. Also, one group of tieflings does not generally come to the other's rescue, unless the battle is brought to them first.

COMBAT STATISTICS

TIEFLING WATCHERS CR 1

Mix male and female tiefling rogue 1

NE Medium outsider (native)

Init +1; **Senses** Darkvision 60 ft., Listen -1, Spot -1

Languages Common, Infernal, Draconic

AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; **Dodge**

hp 5 (1 HD)

Fort +1, **Ref** +3, **Will** -1

Resist cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee rapier +1 (1d6+1/18-20)

Base Atk +0; **Grp** +1

Atk Options sneak attack +1d6

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st)

1/day—*darkness*

Abilities Str 13, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 9, Cha 6

SQ trapfinding

Feats Dodge

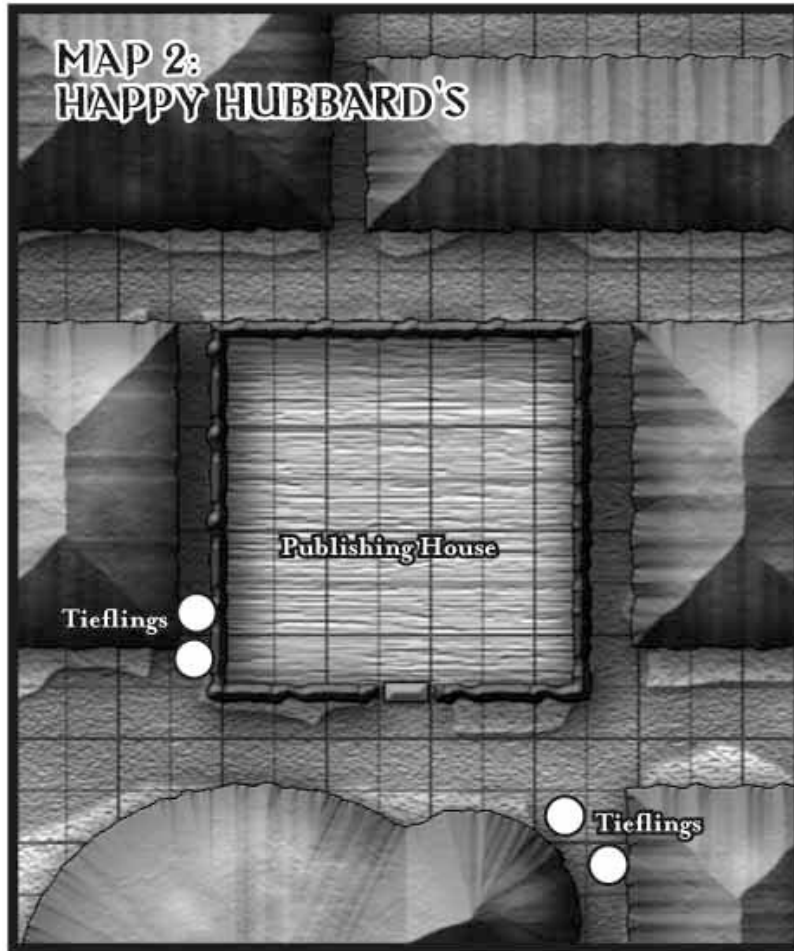
Skills Appraise +5, Bluff +0, Climb +5, Hide +7, Intimidate +2, Jump +5, Move Silently +5, Search +5, Sleight of Hand +5, Tumble +5

Possessions leather armor, rapier.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

2nd-Level Characters: Add one tiefling rogue to each pair.

3rd-Level Characters: Add two tiefling rogues to each pair.



HAPPY HUBBARD'S PUBLISHING HOUSE

Once the PCs have dealt with the tiefling watchers—by defeating them, distracting them, bribing them or sneaking past them—they have access to Happy Hubbard's Publishing House. The two-story building has several shuttered windows on the first and second stories. Solid wooden doors in the front and back of the building are locked (DC 20 Open Locks), although Happy Hubbard answers the door if anyone knocks. If the PCs break in, Happy Hubbard is sitting at his desk and watches the PCs enter, assuming they are not completely silent and invisible.

Paraphrase and adjust the following text based on the circumstances of the PCs' entrance into the publishing house:

The entire first floor of the publishing house is one large room. 'Chaotic' does not even begin to describe the scene. Reams of paper, scrolls, tomes, inkwells, writing implements, and other assorted tools rest on every bit of available desk and counter space, and even stacked on the floor. A gnome, perched on a tall stool, looks up from a tome. "Come in," he says in a surprisingly deep and unperturbed voice. "Reader or writer?"

Happy Hubbard is an expert 3/magewright 4, and a completely unflappable fellow. Born in Zilargo, his curiosity about the lost continent drew him here to set up residence. Hoping to explore the continent himself, he

quickly understood that he didn't have the martial skill to handle the dangers. Instead, he began recording accounts of the exploits of real adventurers who traveled into the wild and unknown interior of the continent. He bought the ancient tomes and scrolls they found, and before long he was an established collector and publisher.

In terms of this adventure, the information that the PCs need from Happy Hubbard is what sort of connection he has with Stormrider. The PCs should finally get around to asking about Stormrider or *Stormrider's Chapbook*. When they do, Happy Hubbard relays the following information:

"Yes, I publish Stormrider's Chapbook. Never met him though. No one has. Well, I assume Stormrider is a him. Several months ago a human approached me and asked if I would be interested in publishing a chapbook for a poet who had a lot of interesting work. I wasn't really interested, but then they offered to pay me to publish it. I never turn down money, as that is what keeps me in business. So I did. Amateur work, really, and some of it just incomprehensible, but the reading public couldn't get enough. So I will keep publishing his work. Strange thing though is how I got the first manuscript. Rather than anyone bringing it to me, I have to pick it up. There is an old fountain over on the southwest side of the town. The last day the year I went there, sat on the fountain, closed my eyes, and counted out loud to 100. When I opened my eyes, there was the manuscript. No idea how it got there, but it did. Plan to do the same thing next

year too."

Happy Hubbard remains very hospitable during the PCs' visit, including offering herbal tea (which is very tasty and soothing). If the PCs are polite and companionable to Happy Hubbard, he tells them about his business and shows them his library. He even offers to open up his extensive collection on Xen'drik to the PCs if they ever want to see it. (See Story Objects.)

If the PCs overstay their welcome, use the tiefling rogues or the Stormreach Guards to keep the PCs moving. The DM should get the PCs to the fountain this evening so that the clue caused by the astronomical Siberys shard event can be followed. Happy Hubbard is willing to lie for the PCs in order to help them escape. He also lets them use the second floor to jump from a window to a roof of another building, which assures the PCs of their escape. Again, the point is to make the PCs feel hunted by having the guards constantly on their heels, showing citizens recognizing them on the street, and constantly reminding them of the "Wanted" posters being put up around town with their description. In the end, however, the PCs should not be captured unless they do something completely foolish.

THE ATTENTION OF A CHILD

As the PCs move through Stormreach toward the outskirts of town where the fountain awaits, the young boy named Maldwick, whom they encountered earlier in the adventure, turns up again. Separated from his mother, he has sought refuge in an alley. Unfortunately, the alley contains much garbage, and nesting in the filth are dire rats.

As the PCs make their way through the streets and alleys of Stormreach on their way to the fountain, they come to an area where, despite the late hour, citizens are still out in the street, going about their various tasks or wanderings. Read or paraphrase the following, altering the text to match the actions of the PCs.

Stormreach's streets remain crowded even as night falls over the city. This area of the city contains crowded tenements, where the common laborers of the city retire after a long day. Ahead of you, at the mouth of an alley running between two buildings, a young boy stands and looks around nervously. Throngs of other people on the street ignore him, and soon the boy enters the alley. Not long after he enters, you hear a shriek, barely audible among the conversation.

Foes: In the 15-foot-wide alleyway between the two buildings, tenants dump their garbage. Although the filth there is mostly picked over by vagrants and the omnipresent vermin, some dire rats have made this particular alleyway their home.

Dire Rats (5): hp 7, 5, 5, 4, 4, 3; MM 64.

Tactics: The dire rats have gorged themselves on the refuse of the nearby tenants, but the smell of fresh human flesh drives them into a feeding frenzy. When Maldwick moves 30 feet up the alley through the garbage, one rat springs out between him and the alley entrance, and the other four come out on the other side of the boy. This is how the situation stands when the PCs arrive at the entrance to the alleyway. At this point, you can call for initiative.

The rats attack the boy unless the PCs are within melee reach of the rats, in which case the rats attack a PC instead. On the boy's initiative, he goes full defensive. If there is no rat between him and the entrance and no rat

threatening him, he runs for the street. He also follows the directions that the PCs shout to him, as long as they do not result in an attack of opportunity on him.

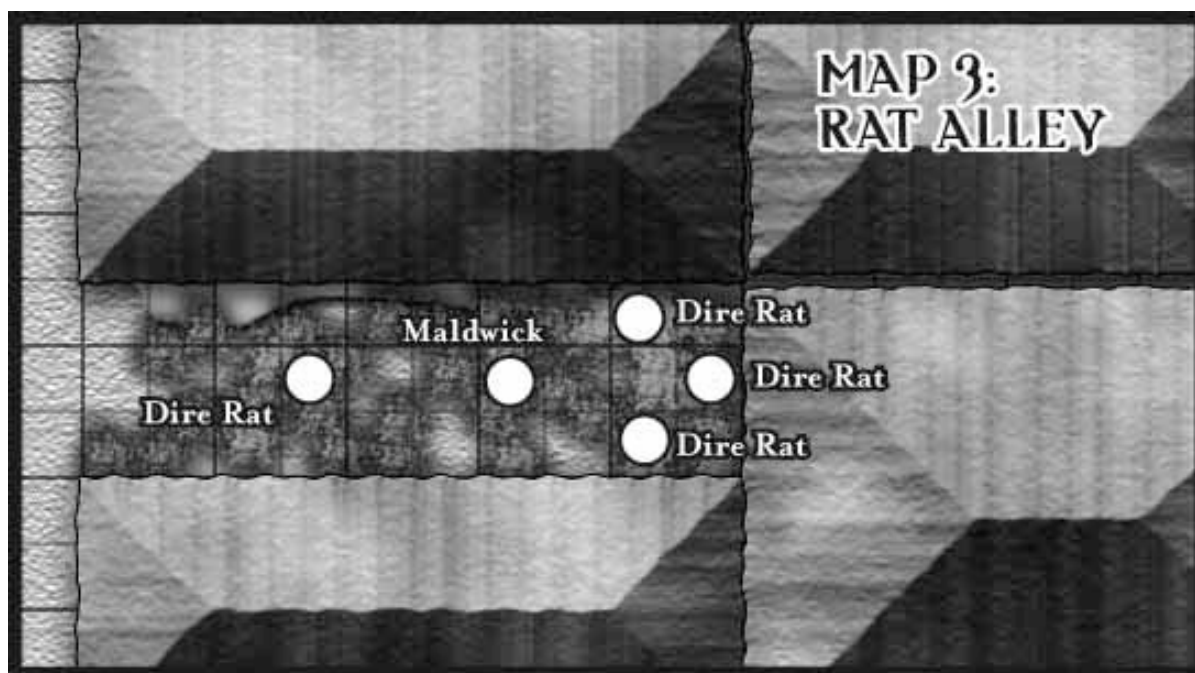
On the first round, only one rat attacks the boy while the other rats move up but cannot attack. The boy has 6 hit points and an AC of 11 (+1 Dex), and he moves at 30 ft. per round (6 squares). The rats do not leave the safety of the alleyway, so if the PCs can get the boy out and do not remain in the alley themselves, they are out of danger.

The refuse and trash make some of the squares uneven terrain. Moving into these squares costs double movement, PCs may not charge through them, and Balance and Tumble checks through these squares are made at a -2 penalty.

Developments: If the PCs rescue the boy, the fun is only beginning. The boy, already terrified by the rat attack, is now facing a bunch of people whom his mother and the city guards have told him are murderers. The PCs, after having rescued the boy, now must keep him from screaming for the guards. They can do this through force (grappling and then pinning to cover his mouth), using magic to silence him, or by using a skill check, among other alternatives as well. If the PCs try to use Diplomacy or Bluff to convince the boy they are not a threat, they must beat a DC 20. If they were exceedingly kind to him earlier in the adventure when he fell and skinned his knee, give them a +10 circumstance bonus to the check. If they were reasonable kind, give a +5 circumstance bonus. Also give a +5 bonus for rescuing him from the rats. If they were rude or mean to him earlier, assign a -5 penalty to the check. If they try to use the Intimidate skill, that is also a DC 20 check, and they get a +5 circumstance bonus for their reputation and the skill they showed in defeating the rats.

Treasure: In the filth of the alleyway, a DC 15 Search finds a leather satchel that was dragged here by the rats. In the satchel are two vials of acidic fire (*ECS* 120) and an arcane scroll of *repair light damage* (CL 1st).

Note: If the PCs rescue the boy and are able to convince that they are not really murders, they gain an unknown benefit in the fight with the Cultists of the Dragon Below in Part 3. The cultists are tracking the PCs, and they ask the boy if he has seen them during their investigations after the PCs have dealt with him. If the



boy is still alive to be questioned and trusts the PCs, he lies for them, sending some of the cultists in another direction. In this case, the PCs face fewer cultists in Part 3. See the encounter “Agents of the Dragon Below” for more details.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

2nd-Level Characters: Use four advanced (3 HD) dire rats below.

3rd-Level Characters: Use four advanced (4 HD) dire rats below.

COMBAT STATISTICS ADVANCED DIRE RAT (3 HD) CR 1

N Small animal

Init +3; **Senses** Listen +4, Spot +4; low-light vision, scent

AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 12

hp 15 (3 HD)

Fort +4, **Ref** +8, **Will** +4

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares), climb 20 ft.

Melee bite +6 (1d4 plus disease)

Base Atk +2; **Grp** -2

Special Actions disease

Abilities Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 4

SQ Low-light vision, scent

Feats Alertness, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Finesse^B

Skills Climb +13, Hide +8, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Spot +4, Swim +11

Disease (Ex): Filth fever — bite, Fortitude DC 11, incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con. The save DC in Constitution-based.

ADVANCED DIRE RAT (4 HD) CR 2

N Medium animal

Init +3; **Senses** Listen +4, Spot +4; low-light vision, scent

AC 14, touch 13, flat-footed 11

hp 24 (4 HD)

Fort +6, **Ref** +9, **Will** +5

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares), climb 20 ft.

Melee bite +6 (1d6+1 plus disease)

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +5

Special Actions disease

Abilities Str 14, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 4

SQ Low-light vision, scent

Feats Alertness, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Finesse^B

Skills Climb +13, Hide +4, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Spot +4, Swim +11

Disease (Ex): Filth fever — bite, Fortitude DC 12, incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con. The save DC in Constitution-based.

PART 3: STORMRIDER'S CATACOMBS

The PCs can find the entrance to the Stormrider's catacomb lair in the old fountain where Happy Hubbard picks up the manuscripts. In the catacombs themselves, the PCs come across some mindshredder larvae that have dug their way up from Khyber beneath Xen'drik. Then the PCs have to deal with some cultists of the Dragon Below, who have been tricked by an agent of the Lords of Dust into pursuing the PCs in an attempt to get to Stormrider. Surviving the Mindshredder larvae and cultists allows the PCs to meet the blue dragon Stormrider.

THE METEOR SHOWER

After the PCs have learned the location of the fountain from Happy Hubbard and dealt with the boy in danger, they can easily find the fountain where Happy is given Stormrider's manuscripts. Read or paraphrase the following as the PCs approach the fountain:

Although it is late at night, the plaza holding the fountain is packed with people of all ages. They stare up into the sky, and then a collective hush falls over the plaza. Gasps and shrieks of amazement erupt from the crowd. Dozens of arms raise and point to the sky. In the dark skies, silver lights like stars trail across the sky toward the horizon. Many people stand on the fountain and even in the fountain, and they all stare up, pointing at the amazing sight of the dragonshards raining down like the gods themselves are performing.

After a few minutes, the phenomenon concludes and the shard-gazers wander off, talking excitedly about the beauty and splendor of the occasion. As long as the PCs do not draw attention to themselves, they are not spotted as the murderers. Soon the PCs are alone in the plaza.

Hopefully the PCs remember the verse from the chapbook that talks about going in the opposite direction of where everyone is pointing. This clue should tell them to search for a way underground near or in the fountain. There are no obvious sewer grates or other openings in the plaza, so the PCs must get a little more inventive.

First, if the PCs search the fountain's flagstone base, under the thin layer of water in it (DC 20), they find that one of the flagstones is loose. Under the flagstone is a hole where the water is draining out, and the hole is wide enough to climb down. In fact, there are iron rungs leading down within the passage. It is a DC 5 Climb check to get down the 20 feet until hitting a solid floor, because the rungs are wet from the water.

If the PCs fail to search, or if their Search checks are unsuccessful, allow a DC 15 Knowledge (engineering) check to reveal that the fountain is holding water but has no apparent drains. This means the water would normally rise in the fountain, but since it isn't, the water has to be going somewhere.

If neither of these options gives the PCs the information they need, allow a DC 15 Spot check to reveal tiny bubbles streaming up from beneath one of the stones in the fountain's bed. PCs spotting the bubbles should think to search harder in that exact location.

Once the loose flagstone is found and the rungs are used to descend into the hole beneath the fountain, the PCs are in the catacombs that act as Stormrider's lair.



1. MINDSHREDDER LARVAE

The PCs can follow the winding passage for several hundred feet before they come to the section shown on the map. A DC 15 Survival check by a PC with the Track feat reveals that although this passage is hundreds of years old, several medium- and small-sized creatures with booted feet have used it quite recently. The passage is safe and not in danger of collapse, as a PC making a DC 12 Knowledge (engineering) check or relevant Profession check can attest.

The dark passage is obviously old, as cracks and rubble are prevalent throughout. The air is significantly cooler here, as you would expect in a subterranean passage. The rumors of ancient catacombs beneath the streets of Stormreach are obviously true!

Foes: Hiding within some of the rubble are two mindshredder larvae that found their way from the Khyber depths into the catacombs. They hide in the rubble of the passage and use their *thought sense* ability to prepare themselves when anyone comes near. Give the PCs a DC 17 Spot check (modified by distance at -1 per 10 feet away) to see the larvae hiding. PCs who make the Spot check can act in the surprise round.

Mindshredder Larva (2): hp 13, 11; Combat Statistics.

COMBAT STATISTICS

MINDSHREDDER LARVA CR 1

LE Small Aberration

Init +5; **Senses** Listen +1, Spot +1; darkvision 60 ft., thought sense 20 ft.

Languages (does not speak but understands) Common, Undercommon

AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 13

hp 13 (2 HD)

Fort +2, **Ref** +1, **Will** +4

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee 2 tentacles +2 (1d6 plus 1 Wis) or

Melee touch 2 tentacles +2 (1 Wis)

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

Special Actions Wisdom damage

Abilities Str 11, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 6

SQ Darkvision 60 ft., thought sense 20 ft., transformation

Feats Improved Initiative

Skills Hide +7, Move Silently +4

Thought Sense (Su): A mindshredder larva does not need to make a Spot or Listen to pinpoint the location of a living creature with an Intelligence of 3 or higher within 20 ft.

Wisdom Damage (Su): A mindshredder larva deal hit point damage, as well as 1 point of Wisdom damage, each

time it hits a living creature with a tentacle attack. A successful touch attack deals the Wisdom damage without doing any hit point damage. For each point of Wisdom damage a mindshredder larva deals, it heals 2 points of damage. If already at maximum hit points, the mindshredder larva gains 2 temporary hit points instead. Temporary hit points last 1 hour.

Treasure: Not far up the passage from where the mindshredder larvae hid lies a dead body. The body is human, and it looks like it has been there a couple of days. On the body is leather armor, a masterwork longsword, a masterwork crossbow, a hooded lantern, 2 flasks of oil, 2 *potions of cure light wounds* (CL 1st), and an *oil of magic weapon* (CL 1st).

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

2nd-Level Characters: Add one mindshredder larva.

3rd-Level Characters: Add two mindshredder larvae.

2. AGENTS OF THE DRAGON BELOW

After defeating the mindshredder larvae, the PCs can continue forward. They round the bend in the passage and see ahead of them some empty crates and boxes (assuming they have a light source). Also, the catacomb tunnel opens into a fairly large room. The room has been cleaned of debris and contains some furnishings pushed up against the walls. At the far end of the room a large hole gapes, leading down in the darkness further than the PCs can see (it is 150 ft. deep).

After the PCs have had a few seconds to look around the room, they hear a commotion from the passage where they just came:

Your searches are interrupted by a shout from back up the passage where you fought the strange tentacled creatures. The voice says in Common, "They came this way, and not long ago. We've got them now. Remember. No mercy and no prisoners."

Immediately roll initiative. The PCs have two rounds to act before the foes arrive at the X mark on the map. The PCs can use crates or barrels for cover, cast spells to prepare for combat, ready actions to shoot missiles, etc. After those two rounds, roll initiative for the foes.

Krul'kur: male dwarf favored soul 2: hp 16; Combat Statistics.

Garrtop, Gretch and Gutkil: male dwarf fighter 1: hp 9, 9, 7; Combat Statistics.

Foes: The dwarf Krul'kur is a chosen of the Cult of the Dragon Below, and he has come to Xen'drik with his followers to search for the secrets held here. Upon his arrival, he fell in with some members of the Lords of Dust, although he is not aware of their allegiance. He believes that he and his fellows are doing the work of the Cult of the Dragon Below. He has spent months trying to find Stormrider, and his associates told him to follow the PCs, as they were on the trail of Stormrider. Krul'kur is responsible for the death of several of Stormrider's gang.

Note: If the young boy Maldwick was rescued by the PCs and convinced that they are innocent, only two fighters accompany Krul'kur instead of three.

COMBAT STATISTICS

KRUL'KUR CR 2

Male dwarf favored soul 2 of The Dragon Below

NE Medium humanoid (dwarf)

Init -1; **Senses** Darkvision 60 ft., Listen +2, Spot +2

Languages Common, Dwarven

AC 14, touch 9, flat-footed 14; +4 dodge bonus against giants

hp 16 (2 HD)

Fort +5, **Ref** +2, **Will** +5; +2 bonus against poison, spells and spell-like abilities

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee heavy pick +3 (1d6+3/x4)

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

Atk Options +1 attack against orcs and goblinoids

Favored Spells Known (CL 2nd):

1st (5/day)—*cause light wounds* (DC 13), *divine favor*, *magic weapon*

0 (6/day)—*cure minor wounds*, *detect magic*, *guidance*, *resistance*, *virtue*

Abilities Str 14, Dex 8, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 12

SQ stability, stonecunning

Feats Combat Casting

Skills Concentration +7 (+11 cast defensively), Heal +7

Possessions breastplate, heavy pick, wooden holy symbol of the Dragon Below

GARRTOP, GRETCH AND GUTKIL CR 1

Male dwarf fighter 1

NE Medium humanoid (dwarf)

Init +1; **Senses** Darkvision 60 ft., Listen -1, Spot -1

Languages Common, Dwarven

AC 14, touch 9, flat-footed 14; +4 dodge bonus against giants

hp 9 (1 HD)

Fort +5, **Ref** +1, **Will** -1; +2 bonus against poison, spells and spell-like abilities

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee battleaxe +5 (1d8+4/x3)

Base Atk +1; **Grp** +4

Atk Options Power Attack, +1 attack against orcs and goblinoids

Abilities Str 16, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 8

SQ stability, stonecunning

Feats Power Attack, Weapon Focus (battleaxe)

Skills Climb +3

Possessions breastplate, battleaxe

Tactics: Simply put, the three dwarves want to get as close to the PCs as possible and chop them up into little pieces. The two fighters charge if possible and stay in melee, trying to threaten spellcasters if possible. Krul'kur enjoys casting *divine favor* and *magic weapon* and then wading into battle with his pick. If he has trouble hitting with his pick, he reverts to *cause light wounds* with a touch attack. Although there is a gaping hole in the floor of the chamber, the dwarves do not try to bull rush PCs into it. The PCs, however, may try that tactic, but note the dwarves' stability (PH 15) makes that tactic more difficult.



SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

- 2nd-Level Characters: Add one dwarven fighter.
3rd-Level Characters: Add two dwarven fighters.

3. STORMRIDER'S CURTAIN CALL

After the PCs defeat the dwarves, give them a bit of time at the end of the battle to recover, then read the following:

More shouts come from the hallway—this time the voices are much louder and much more in number. It sounds like dozens of creatures are approaching, and they do not sound friendly.

The mood and tone the DM should shoot for in this encounter is one of the PCs having no escape. Try to get them all into the large chamber with their back to the hole in the floor. Let them take shots at the many foes coming down the hallway, but don't damage the PCs. If the PCs try to leave the room and go back up the hallway, use some distraction (like noises from the hole) to get them all into the room. Then, after the mood has been established, read the following:

Several figures surge out of the hallway. They look at you menacingly, and begin to advance. More shouts and footsteps come from behind them. [Pause.] Then, inexplicably, their eyes grow wide and, with shrieks of sheer panic, they turn and run.

Give the PCs a chance to say something and think about what is happening. When they turn around to look at what caused this turn of events, continue:

Perched on the edge of the hole is a massive dragon whose bright blue scales almost glow. Now that the loud shouts of the enemy are fading down the hallway, you can hear electricity crackling in the room, and your hair is standing on end. The dragon peers at you, blinks, and says, "Stormrider, at your service. I'm sorry I had to put you through so much to find me, but I didn't want those others to lose your trail."

The PCs do not have to make saves versus Stormrider's *frightful presence*, as he is not threatening them. He has a civil conversation with the PCs as long as they are civil to him. He presents the PCs the following items and

information, which the DM should play out in roleplaying as the situation dictates:

- ✦ Stormrider is a member of The Chamber, a contingent of dragons that believes in taking a more active role in the interpretation and manipulation of the draconic Prophecy. In that way, Stormrider's mission is not far removed from the mission of the members of the Crimson Codex.
- ✦ Stormrider does have several important pieces of information and secrets, but these things cannot all be revealed at once. He uses his chapbook to release the relevant information for good-meaning people, like the Crimson Codex, to use.
- ✦ In the spirit of friendship and a shared goal, Stormrider offers the PCs a partial map to a site known as the Well of Woe. He doesn't know much more about the significance of that ancient site yet, but the Prophecy seems to imply that it would be in the best interest of the Crimson Codex to send people there to investigate.
- ✦ Several groups are aware of Stormrider's possession of knowledge and power, and they are trying to take it for themselves. These people who followed the PCs are pawns of that power, who have been doing a lot of damage to his followers and helpers on the surface. When Stormrider heard that some of the Crimson Codex were looking for him, he decided to have that information leaked. That way, the bad guys would be led into a trap while thinking they were going to follow the PCs and take Stormrider down. Stormrider has several of his people waiting at the top of the shaft by the fountain. The panicked bad guys are going to be slaughtered as they try to escape.
- ✦ Stormrider apologizes for using the PCs in such a manner, but it was the best way to achieve everyone's goal under the circumstances.
- ✦ The framing of the PCs for the murder of a Stormreach Guard was *not* Stormrider's doing, and he promises to use his connections in Stormreach to get the false charges dropped.
- ✦ The PCs can use Stormrider and Stormrider's gang as a source of information and aid in the future. The PCs must first swear to secrecy and

protect Stormrider's identity. Disclosing his form or his location (even though this is just one of his many "sitting chambers") makes the PCs *persona non grata* as far as Stormrider is concerned. (See Story Objects.)

☒ Stormrider does not detect as evil if anyone tries to.

COMBAT STATISTICS

STORMRIDER CR 18

Male adult blue dragon bard 8

N Huge dragon (earth)

Init +0; **Senses** Listen +35, Spot +27; blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., lowlight vision, keen senses

Aura frightful presence

Languages Auran, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Dwarf, Elf, Giant, Gnome, Infernal, Orc

AC 28, touch 8, flat-footed 28

hp 313 (21 HD); **DR** 5/magic

Immune electricity, sleep, paralysis

SR 21

Fort +19, **Ref** +18, **Will** +21

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares), burrow 20 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor)

Melee bite +33 (2d8+8) and

Melee 2 claws +28 (2d6+4) and

Melee 2 wings +28 (1d8+4) and

Melee tail slap +28 (2d6+12) and

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft (15 ft. with bite)

Base Atk +27; **Grp** +43

Atk Options Cleave, Power Attack, Snatch

Special Actions bardic music 12/day (*suggestion* [DC 20], inspire competence, inspire courage +3, *fascinate* 3 creatures [DC 20], countersong), breath weapon (Quicken Breath), crush

Bard Spells Known (CL 8th):

3rd (2/day)—*dispel magic*, *gaseous form*, *haste*

2nd (4/day)—*glitterdust* (DC 17), *invisibility*, *rage*, *silence* (DC 17)

1st (5/day)—*comprehend languages*, *inspirational boost*, *obscure object*, *unseen servant*

0 (3/day)—*dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *know direction*, *mage hand*, *read magic*, *resistance*

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 5th):

2nd (5/day)—*bull's strength*, *locate object*

1st (8/day)—*alarm*, *identify*, *mage armor*, *shield*

0 (6/day)—*detect magic*, *mending*, *message*, *open/close*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th):

Create/destroy water, ventriloquism (DC 16)

Abilities Str 27, Dex 10, Con 21, Int 16, Wis 17, Cha 20

Feats Cleave, Extend Spell, Extra Music, Hover, Improved Snatch, Obscure Lore, Power Attack, Quicken Breath, Snatch, Song of the Heart

Skills Bluff +25, Diplomacy +9, Concentration +37, Gather Information +7, Knowledge (arcana) +27, Knowledge (history) +15, Knowledge (local) +23, Listen +35, Perform (oratory) +25, Perform (singing) +25, Sense Motive +35, Spellcraft +17, Spot +27

SQ bardic knowledge +17

Possessions *Huge earring charisma* +2

Breath Weapon (Su) 100-ft. line, once every 1d4 rounds, damage 12d8 electricity, Reflex DC 25 half.

Create/Destroy Water (Sp) 3/day—as *create water*, but can also be used to destroy water. Caster Level 6th; Will DC 23 negates.

Crush (Ex) Area 15 ft. by 15. ft.; Smaller or smaller opponents take 2d8+12 point of bludgeoning damage, and must succeed on a DC 25 Reflex save or be pinned.

Frightful Presence (Ex) 180 ft. radius, HD 29 or less, Will 29 negates.

Sound Imitation (Ex) Can mimic any voice or sound it has heard, anytime it likes. Listeners must make a DC 29 Will save to detect the ruse.

ENDING THE ADVENTURE

The PCs can speak to Stormrider for as long as they wish, assuming they remain polite. When the PCs have talked to Stormrider and learned as much as they want, he instructs them to leave the way they came.

Give each player Handout 3—this is the map of the Well of Woe site that Stormrider gives to them.

On the way out of the catacombs, the PCs do see signs of a struggle in the corridor, on the rungs heading out, and around the fountain, but there are not bodies. Relevant skill checks show that a battle certainly has taken place though.

The Stormreach Guards are no longer hunting the PCs when they get back to the surface. Reports the next day are spread throughout the populace that the people wanted in connection with the murder of the Stormreach guard have been exonerated. The PCs are now free to move about Stormreach without fear of arrest.

PCs who gain the map fragment from Stormrider are also rewarded by the Codex. As event treasure, they are granted the following: a potion of *cure light wounds* or *oil of repair light damage*, and a *chime of opening* with one charge.

Event treasure is tracked on your Adventure Journal, and becomes part of your equipment list for the duration of the event it was gained. After that event, it is exchanged for an increase in your Equipment Value (EV) as reported on the online character tracking.

EVENT TREASURE EXTENSION

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

ADVENTURE QUESTIONS

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

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

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

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

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

1. How did the PCs escape the Stormreach Guards at the tavern?
 - A. Stealth.
 - B. Magic.
 - C. Force of arms.
 - D. A mix of the above.
 - E. They didn't. They were captured and did not finish the adventure.
2. How many times did the PCs need help from Pfilo the Filch?
 - A. None. They figure out the Prophecy on their own.
 - B. Once.
 - C. Twice.
 - D. Three or more times.
3. How did the PCs far against the tiefling rogues at the publishing house?
 - A. They entered and left using stealth or tricks and never fought them.
 - B. They defeated the tieflings soundly.
 - C. They defeated the tieflings but took some serious damage.
 - D. They were defeated by the tieflings and turned in to the authorities.
 - E. They didn't get this far.
4. What happened in the encounter with Maldwick and the dire rats?
 - A. The PCs ignored Maldwick and let him die, or they didn't get this far.
 - B. The PCs tried to rescue him but he died, and at least one PC got diseased.
 - C. The PCs tried to rescue him but he died, and no one got diseased.

- D. The PCs rescued him, but at least one PC got diseased.
 - E. The PCs rescued him, and no one got diseased.
5. How did the PCs fare against the minshredder larvae?
- A. No problem.
 - B. Defeated them but took heavy damage.
 - C. They got their minds shredded and never got past this encounter.
 - D. They never got this far.
6. How did the PCs fare against the cultists of the Dragon Below?
- A. No problem.
 - B. Defeated them but took heavy damage.
 - C. The PCs were defeated by the Dust agents.
 - D. They didn't get this far.
7. How was the role-playing?
- A. Wonderful! The players really got into it.
 - B. Mostly good. The players role-played a bit.
 - C. Almost no roleplaying.

ACCESS TO HAPPY HUBBARD'S COLLECTION

Cert ID: EXCC03

If the PCs take the time to access Happy Hubbard's library, they gain a +1 to any Knowledge checks concerning Xen'drik. PCs with the Research feat gain a +3 circumstance bonus to checks affected by the Research feat. Hubbard's collection can be considered "dedicated to a specific topic" regarding Xen'drik history for use with the Research feat.

STORY OBJECTS

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

Prophecy's Unwitting Servant has three Story Objects, each connected to events and items in the adventure. It's only possible for the PCs to have two of these story objects. Let the player decide which two.

RAT-CATCHER

Cert ID: EXCC01

For fulfilling your role in the Prophecy by catching a rat tossed by the juggling shifter, you have been blessed by some divine force. For the next 4 adventures, you gain a +2 divine bonus to AC against vermin and a +2 divine bonus to saving throws versus vermin poison.

STORMRIDER'S NETWORK

Cert ID: EXCC02

PCs get a +2 circumstance modifier to Gather Information checks made in Stormreach, and those checks can be made in one-quarter the time. In addition, no gold needs to be paid to make those checks. This bonus increases to +4 if the PCs have the 999 YK Edition of Stormrider's Chapbook. In addition, your invitation to work closely with Stormrider on the study of the draconic Prophecy fulfills the special requirement to gain access to the Dragon Prophet prestige class from Magic of Eberron.

HANDOUT 1

Most Resilient Prophecy Seeker,

I hope your travels and studies on Xen'drik find you well. A most fortuitous discovery has come to our attention, and you are in a position to investigate the situation in Stormreach. The mission that I now ask you to undertake sums up the very reason for our existence.

In my extensive studies and travels, I have found and interpreted numerous fragments of the draconic Prophecy, which I have collected in the tome you know as the Caldyn Fragments. Given the ephemeral and incomplete nature of the fragments I have gleaned over the years, our task in steering events to fulfill our vision of Khorvair's future has been very difficult.

One of our brethren in Stormreach, a half-elven bard going by the name Qwayle, contacted me two weeks ago. While perusing a book called Stormrider's Chapbook, a compilation of limericks, satire, and other doggerel, he found snippets of draconic Prophecy interspersed among the more mundane text! He notified me immediately, promising to look further into the mystery. Alas, all contact has been lost with Qwayle, and I fear his discovery may have led to his doom.

Fortunately, through other resources, we have managed to locate a spellscale who claims to have connections to this elusive and mysterious Stormrider. For the sake of Khorvair and the former Galifar, we need to find this Stormrider, learn his source for the fragments of the draconic Prophecy, and determine if he can be counted on as an ally in the Crimson Codex's plans to turn the Prophecy to our will, ensuring future peace and prosperity for all.

Meet the spellscale named Lzohki at the 6th bell after noontime on the last Sul of Nymm in a tavern called The Raging Wrestler. When you have located and spoken to Stormrider, contact me with all the details of what you have learned.

Counting on you as the heroes of our cause, I am,

*Ohnal Caldyn
Of the Crimson Codex
FOR GALIFAR and KHORVAIRE!*

HANDOUT 2

A tin can was looking for status
Impoverished he wanted it gratis
He begged a tattoo
From a tinsmith named Lou
And declared him the heir of Vadalís

When the rat-catchers rest in the belly of the grappler,
Injustice searches high and low for the wearers of scarlet.
When justice is blind, the sighted must flee or perish.

By first finding the copier of the words,
Then moving in the opposite wet direction from where the people point,
The lightning-dancer will reveal truth.

A Xen'drik warlock of fame
Thought the dragonmarks were a game
He caused quite a fiasco
Stealing herbs from Jorasco
And giving a changeling the blame.

HANDOUT 3

