



THE SAHUAGIN STONE

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

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Sources: *Explorer's Handbook* [David Noonan, Rich Burlew, Frank Brunner], *Heroes of Battle* [David Noonan, Will McDermott, Stephen Schubert], *Player's Handbook II* [David Noonan], *Secrets of Xen'drik* [Keith Baker, Jason Bulmahn, Amber Scott], *Stormwrack* [Richard Baker, Joseph D. Carriker, Jennifer Clarke-Wilkes]

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.

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INTRODUCTION

The Sahuagin Stone is the first faction adventure for the Cabal of Shadows 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.

The Sahuagin Stone 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 *The Sahuagin Stone* 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 *The Sahuagin Stone* 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 Cabal of Shadows. This means that the story is suited for that group, and can only be played by Cabal of Shadows100

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.



Cabal of Shadows Faction Symbol

PLAYERS READ NO FARTHER

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

PREPARING FOR PLAY

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

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

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

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

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The sahuagin of clan Regvagu have prowled the seas of Shargon's Teeth for centuries. Dedicated to the Devourer and his ways, their rule is dictated by a circle of priests who in turn take their direction from an unusual holy text they believe to have been sent to them by their deity. Called the *ebon tableau*, this large black stone, roughly the size of a door, is covered in complicated writings that sometimes change of their own accord. Under the direction of Kupsil, their high priestess, the sahuagin clerisy works tirelessly to decipher the wishes of their hungry god so that they might better feed his needs; that is, until the stone was stolen.

Rumors of clan Regvagu's divine direction had long since circulated among rival sahuagin clans and many were jealous of what appeared to be Shargon's direct guidance over an enemy. One of the rival clans, which is as yet unknown to the Regvagu, hired a skilled thief to slip into their lair below the sea and make off with the *ebon tableau*. The burglar, a tiefling called Sixfinger Jin, made his way

to Stormreach and seeking further profit, sold the stone to a collector of antiquities who has purchased from him in the past. Sadly for Sixfinger Jin, the dealer—a member of the Crimson Codex who sought to silence the only other person who knew of his purchase—betrayed him and now he languishes in the Red Ring, awaiting the next tournament where he will fight to the death for the amusement of the crowd.

Wary of the secret war for control of the *Caldyn Fragments* brewing in Xen'drik, a season ago advance agents of the Cabal of Shadows contacted guides from the Regvagu not only hoping to find safe passage, but also offering an alliance between the Cabal and the powerful clan that controls most of the entrance to Stormreach. The Cabal was politely refused—as politely as sahuagin refuse anything—and little blood was shed. However, months later, the sahuagin are unsure of how to proceed in the dangerous above water world of Stormreach. The Regvagu contacted the Cabal with a proposal: return the *ebon tableau* and an alliance will be made. Fail, and it will mean war.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

Adventure Start: The PCs begin by receiving an invitation to a get on a boat leaving Sharn. As the boat sets sail on a voyage to Xen'drik, the party discovers their orders from the Cabal of Shadows, and background on the mission. The long voyage gives the PCs a chance to meet one another in private, and discuss their first mission as members of a secret society.

Part One: The PCs reach the first of Shargon's Teeth, where the ship's captain calls a halt while he summons a sahuagin guide. A sahuagin, called Dilmoolgha, is actually there to meet with the PCs, but poses as a guide in order to join the crew. After coming to an agreement with the party, the sahuagin gives the PCs a shell they may use to contact him. If they throw it into the bay under the light of the moon it calls him and the priests. As the journey resumes that evening, a raiding party of skum sent by aboleth slavers attacks the ship.

Part Two: The PCs arrive in Stormreach where they likely seek out Hes, a member of the Bilge Rats street gang who has, for a price, agreed to meet with the party at the Ship's Cat tavern. Hes warns them about the dangers of Xen'drik before directing them to fence working out of the dungeons below the Red Ring. If someone was trying to sell a large artifact, it likely passed through the hands of Burgundy Clor. If he didn't fence it, he might know who did.

Part Three: If the PCs travel to the Red Ring seeking an audience with Burgundy Clor, he grants a meeting beneath the dungeons of the Red Ring but only to double cross them and throw them into the pits. While in the pits, the PCs can prove themselves by fighting off prison predators and gain trust of Sixfinger Jin who has also been imprisoned. If the PCs are willing to help him escape, Jin agrees to show the PCs the stone's hiding place.

Part Four: If the PCs have not secured escape, they, along with Jin and several other prisoners, are thrown into the Red Ring for the evening show. They must find a way to escape during the blood sport or amuse the crowd with their grizzly death.

Part Five: Once freed, Jin fulfills his part of the deal and leads the PCs to the Crimson Codex safe house. The route to the stone is guarded by Codex agents and crafty puzzle traps. If the PCs sound the alarm during any sort of raid or they take too long, the Codex members attempt to move the stone to a waiting ship in the harbor.

Part Six: If the agents of the Codex successfully move the stone to their wagon, the PCs must partake in a wild

nighttime chase through the streets before the stone is loaded onto a waiting ship and whisked away.

Ending the Adventure: The adventure ends with the party contacting the sahuagin. If they return the stone, the sahuagin tribe agrees to ally with the Cabal. If they do not, the tribe declares them enemies.

TROUBLESHOOTING

The adventure begins with the PCs receiving an invitation to board a boat in Sharn, leaving their old life behind to travel to Xen'drik for the Cabal's cause. This works fine for those PCs who have backgrounds anywhere but Sharn. Xen'drik based PCs, such as drow or half-giants, may require additional explanation. All the PCs have recently traveled to Sharn to be inducted into the Cabal in a secret ritual. Any PCs not native to Khorvaire have traveled in secret to Sharn for this purpose and have only been present in the city for three days.

ADVENTURE START

As play starts, give out Handout 1. None of the PCs begin together unless they already know each other in some manner. Allow the PCs time make any preparations necessary and when they are ready to board the *Heritage*, proceed by with the following read-aloud text.

Despite the late hour, the Precarious district of Sharn is still busy. The district's denizens bustle about and barely a glance comes your way. The Heritage is a tall wind galleon, with a crackling wall of mist and lightning roiling behind it and it's soarwood skids just barely under the water. With barely a glance at your tickets, the crewmember at the bottom of the plank waves you aboard where you are quickly directed to your private bedroom off the main room of your shared suite. There are several other people already here.

The long voyage gives the PCs a chance to meet one and other in private, and discuss their first mission as members of a secret society. Allow the PCs a few minutes to introduce themselves and interact. Once they have established that they are indeed all members of the Cabal of Shadows, proceed with Part One: The Friendly Seas.

Expanding the Encounter: If this adventure is played in during a private event without the strict time constraints of a four-hour session, feel free to allow the PC to interact with the crew of the *Heritage* before reaching Shargon's Teeth. Also, determine the PCs' daily routine and what parts of the ship they might frequent.

THE HERITAGE

The *Heritage* is similar to a traditional wind-powered vessel, but it has only a rudimentary mast and sails. On the aft deck a large tower holds a massive ring of moving air that trails the boat, propelling it forward. The hull of a wind galleon does not fully rest in the water, being supported instead by two long, finlike structures that sit on the surface. The *Heritage*'s hull is crafted partially from lighter-than-air soarwood with a mermaid painted along the prow, her arms draped backwards along the sides.

Heritage: Colossal vehicle; Seaworthiness + 4; Ship handling +3; Speed 100 ft. (perfect); 480 miles/day; Overall AC -3; Hull sections 80 (sink 20 sections); Section hp 60 (hardness 5), Section AC 3; Ram 6d6; Space 90 ft. by 30 ft.; Height 30 ft. (draft 0 ft.); Watch 7; Complement 30; Cargo 150 tons.

CREW MEMBER

CR 1/2

Male or female half-elf expert 1

N Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +2; **Senses** Low-light vision; Listen +1, Spot +1

Languages Common, Elven, Undercommon

AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12

hp 5 (1 HD)

Fort +1, **Ref** +2, **Will** +2; +2 against Enchantment effects

Immune sleep effects

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee short sword +2 (1d6+2/19-20)

Ranged javelin +2 (1d6+2)

Base Atk +0; **Grp** +2

Abilities Str 14, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 10

Feats Skill Focus (Profession [sailor])

Skills Balance +6, Climb +6, Profession (sailor) +7, Survival +4, Swim +6, Tumble +6, and Use Rope +6

Possessions short sword, two javelins, leather armor, a faded bandana

Description A tanned seadog, with a few days of stubble.

Hook "Right away, Sir!"

CAPTAIN HALLARD

CR 1

Male human expert 2

N Medium humanoid (human)

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

Languages Common, Elven

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13

hp 10 (2 HD)

Fort +1, **Ref** +2, **Will** +3

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee rapier +3 (1d6+2/18-20)

Ranged javelin +3 (1d6+2)

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

Abilities Str 14, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 10

Feats Alertness, Skill Focus (Profession [sailor])

Skills Balance +8, Climb +6 (+8 with ropes), Jump +3, Profession (sailor) +8, Survival +5, Swim +10, Tumble +6, and Use Rope +6

Possessions rapier, two javelins, studded leather armor, tricorn hat, gold earring, *ring of swimming*

Description A tall, plain man in fancy dress.

Hook "Avast you swabs! Put your backs into it or you'll be swimming home!"

PART ONE: THE FRIENDLY SEAS

The journey to Stormreach takes the *Heritage* three days, though they reach sight of Shargon's Teeth after only one day. This encounter covers both the arrival of the PCs' contact Dilmoolgha who poses as a guide, and the subsequent attack by a raiding party of skum sent out by aboleth slavers.

THE GUIDE

Once the *Heritage* reaches Shargon's Teeth Captain Hallard must stop the ship and summon a sahuagin guide. Determine where the PCs are on their first evening aboard the *Heritage* before continuing. Any PCs on deck when the ship comes to a stop witness the scene described below.

"All Stop!" Captain Hallard shouts above the spray of the night sea, and in mere seconds, the Heritage ceases its movement. Reaching into his pocket, the human captain removes a small stone bedecked with holes and indentations, which he momentarily examines before dropping it into the water. Noting interest in his actions, he turns toward you. "Now we wait. Our guide should be along shortly." No sooner that the Captain had turned back toward the water, there is a splash, and a great clawed hand of webbed fingers reaches over the rail. A wide smile of jagged teeth is not far behind.

It's late when the ship stops to hire a sahuagin guide and many of the crew have already retired. Only the PCs, Captain Hallard, and seven of the crew are on deck to witness the arrival of the sahuagin Dilmoolgha. After brief and surprisingly simple negotiations between the sea devil and captain, the crew's interest in the fearsome guide wanes and the PCs may speak with him in relative peace.

While competent in his duties, Dilmoolgha is only posing as a guide for the *Heritage*. In truth, he has come to meet with the PCs upon the orders of his clan's high priestess, Kupsil. Once the captain has finished with him, he approaches PCs to speak on his true purpose.

The sea devil approaches and in a quiet ritualized greeting offers on claw toward you, palm upward. "Greetings to you, Children of Shadow. I am Dilmoolgha of the Regvagu. You will speak with me now." His jagged smile makes you certain he does not mean it as an offer, but rather a command.

The sahuagin is confident in his ability and strength. He believes the air-breathers are of inferior species, but as followers of the True Gods (the Dark Six), they may be worthy allies and tools that might be used by Clan Regvagu against its enemies. If the PCs are to prove themselves, they must accept the mission. Dilmoolgha prefers to speak in Sahuagin or Aquan, but realizes the PCs are inferior creatures and will lower himself to speak Common if necessary. Anyone who can speak Sahuagin or Aquan greatly impresses him and he takes an instantly liking to him or her. Regardless of the language used, he imparts the following pieces of information as he treats with the party:

- ✦ The sahuagin of Clan Regvagu are devoted followers of Shargon, the deity that the air-breathers call the Devourer. Shargon guides the priests of his clan by speaking to them through an artifact called the *ebon tableau*.
- ✦ Some time ago, someone snuck into the lair of the Regvagu and spirited away the stone. While in the water, the priests of the Regvagu can hear

its call, so they knew immediately when it was taken to the surface. Shargon has told them that it has been taken by a weak air-breather to the Ruined Storm City (Stormreach).

- ✦ The *ebon tableau* is a stone made of black rock from the molten fire of the deep sea (obsidian). It is covered in writing that few can read, and frequently the writing changes with Shargon's will. The stone is roughly the size of a door but weighs less than a man and though awkward due to its size, it can easily be carried by one person. Dilmoolgha knows little about the stone, but assumes, as it is a powerful relic of Shargon, it must be magical.
- ✦ In the past, the Regvagu had been unwilling to entertain the desires of the Children of Shadows (as the Cabal is known to the Sahuagin), however the recent events requiring extended travel to the surface have convinced High Priestess Kupsil that it is a test of the Children to see if they are worthy of being allies of the Regvagu. If the PCs succeed and return the *ebon tableau* then they are allies. If they fail, then those on the surface that hunger in Shargon's name are weak, and it will be a holy war against the Ruined Storm City (Stormreach).
- ✦ Assuming the PCs choose to go after the stone, the sahuagin gives the party a magical shell they may use to contact him. If they throw it into the water under the light of the moon it calls him and the priests, and they will come as quickly as possible.

As the PCs agree to undertake the mission to Stormreach, the ship comes under the attack of slavers. Proceed to Skum! once an agreement has been reached.

SKUM! (EL 4)

Travel across the Thunder Sea is rarely without incident, and this time is no different. While the *Heritage* slows its speed to navigate through some dangerous shoals, a raiding party of skum, sent by aboleth slavers, attempts to sneak aboard and take captives. As the attack occurs during the evening, there are few crewmembers available to aid in the defense of the ship. A crewmember comes to the party's aid every two rounds until all six have arrived. Dilmoolgha aids his allies to the best of his abilities, in an effort to cement his alliance with the PCs.

Dilmoolgha: hp 11; MM 217.

Foes: Unless the one of the PCs is specifically watching over the side of the boat, the skum climb aboard under the cover of darkness and incapacitate a deckhand. His screams draw attention to the peril that threatens the *Heritage*. If the PCs are alert, they may spot them as they climb up the side of the ship and gain a surprise round as the Skum climb.

Skum (4): hp 9, 10, 11, 12; MM 228.

Tactics: Two of the skum carry nets (that they are not proficient with, suffering a -4 nonproficiency penalty on their to hit rolls). These two lead of the combat by attempting to ensnare PCs. The other two skum do their best to prevent PCs who are not entangled from aiding those who are entangled. As soon as possible, they attempt to drag victims toward the gunwale and hoist the PC into the water. The skum do not wish to kill anyone, though accidents do happen. They do not kill downed foes. Their goal is to capture slaves and flee the combat, not slay enemies. If the skum lose three-quarters of their number, they flee.

Development: In the unlikely event that one of the PCs is thrown over the side of the ship, one of the crew

throws them a *life ring* (enchanted to maintain buoyancy in the water, instead of the normal *feather fall* effect for an airship).

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

2nd-Level Characters: Add two skum (hp 8, 13; *MM* 228).

3rd-Level Characters: Add four skum (hp 8, 11, 12, 13; *MM* 228); a crewmember comes every three rounds instead of every two.

PART TWO: CATECHESIS

This encounter assumes the PCs wish to visit Hes at the Ship's Cat tavern. If that is not their first destination upon arrival in Stormreach, adjust the following read-aloud text accordingly.

Approaching the port of Stormreach, it first appears as though the city lies in ruins, but it becomes quickly apparent that smaller humanoid-size buildings of all architectural styles have been built in the shadows of the crumbling ruins of an ancient giant settlement. After arriving in the busy port of Stormreach, Captain Hallard offered directions leading to a rough-looking neighborhood where the gargantuan ruins of the giant city are festooned with tarps and lean-tos. The destitute shuffle past with fearful eyes darting between the many darkened alleys. Rounding one particularly forlorn corner, your destination comes into view. Densewood twigs have been thatched together to create a building that looks like a pile of sticks. A faded and battered sign hangs from the door displaying a cat lounging upon the prow of a ship. Several actual cats come and go freely through the opened door and windows ignoring the patrons whom they clearly outnumber.

The Ship's Cat is an inn run by a shifter woman named Harysh (NG female shifter ranger 1/expert 5), and while it may not be the most luxurious inn, for fair dealing and discretion it can't be beat. The inn takes its name from Harysh's "family", a dozen cats that share the place with guests. Familiars and animal companions receive excellent care at the Ship's Cat, and as long as they leave the cats alone, such creatures are always welcome in the inn. An angry Harysh, along with the aid of several of her patrons, expel any PC that dares to show cruelty to one of her children.

The Ship's cat offers a bunk in a large and drafty common room for 2 sp a night, and edible but greasy meat stew for 1 cp a bowl, and watery ale for 1 sp a cask.

The Ship's Cat is very busy on the evening of the PCs arrival, and the PCs draw little attention from the patrons. Harysh greets the PCs with a throaty yell as they enter and offers them any table they can find. She plunks down a cask of ale and several tankards before quickly moving on to serve others, a cat under one arm. Within moments, Hes (NE male changeling-wererat adept 7[the Traveler]) disguised as a young half-elf woman dressed in black leathers, approaches the party.

Stepping through the crowd, a young half-elf woman dressed in black leathers pulls up a tall stool. "You folks look like you could use a guide? Lucky for you, I know just the rat." She smiles widely showing her bright teeth.

Hes is a member of the Bilge Rats, a dangerous thieves gang with loose connections to the Boromar Clan of Sharn. The Bilge Rats enrich themselves with muggings, running protection rackets on local businesses, and stealing goods out of ships and warehouses. Five years

ago, one of the Bilge Rats was infected with lycanthropy. Since then, the disease has spread through the upper ranks of the organization, and most of the accomplished burglars and thieves in the guild are now wererats. Through contacts in Sharn, Hes has been introduced to members of the Cabal, though he is unaware of their true organization and simply believes them to be fellow worshippers of the Traveler.

Hes maintains his cover as a female half-elf for the time being, pretending to be the playful halfling rogue. While not giving away any details about himself, he is happy to aid the PCs with their quest. Use the following as a guide when role-playing Hes.

- ✖ **Who are you?** *You can call me Hes. The Bilge Rats and me get around, and we can help you for the right price. Fortunately for you, your uncle has prepaid for your visit.*
- ✖ **Who are the Bilge Rats?** *Some of my friends and I are sometimes called the Bilge Rats. We look out for our own, and offer protection to the local businessmen against vandals and thieves. It's really amazing how fast those who don't pay up see an increase in crime against their property.*
- ✖ **Do you know who stole the *ebon tableau*?** *I haven't heard of anyone trying to fence a big black rock, but if anyone would know, it's Burgundy Clor. Clor is the biggest fence and Stormreach and most rare items go through his organization. Even if Clor didn't fence it, he'll know who did. He works out of the Red Ring; the gladiatorial arena. Most people there know him, so any of the gamblers should be able to point him out. He will see just about anyone during the night hours as long as there isn't a game going on. The next bout isn't till tomorrow night so you should be able to get in to see him tonight if you hurry.*
- ✖ **Why do they call him Burgundy Clor or what does he look like?** *Clor is a short, frail looking human, but don't let that fool you. He is sneak, a liar, and he carries the power of the arcane in his blood. From his thinning hair to his weak chin, a large red birthmark that makes him look as if some splashed wine upon his face stains the right side of his head.*
- ✖ **What should we be on the look out for?** *Stormreach is a dangerous place. There are street gangs everywhere and don't expect any help from the so-called guardsmen the Storm Lords hire. They are the worst of the lot. There's an up side to it all. Few people look twice should a ruckus break out and some one gets killed. Oh the guard will come eventually, but if you make sure are gone by that time, no one will come after you. That is, unless your victim had angry family. Blood vendettas are common, especially among the drow.*
- ✖ **What can you do to help us?** *I have been paid by our mutual friends to assist you with advice or facilitate your locating necessary equipment or contacts. I'll be staying here at the Ship's Cat for the next three days in case you should need my aid. While I am sure whatever you are involved with is important to you, I'm not risking my neck for it.*
- ✖ **What other help can you offer us?** *Well, I'm not prepared for much at the moment, but you look like fine upstanding folk. Just the kind of people who blow in with the winds of change. I'll stay here for the next two days in case you need any advice about the city, or in case you need some place to hold up. If you get hurt badly, I can also offer you the blessings of the Traveler.*

- ❖ **What can you tell us about the latest happenings in town?** *Well, the sahuagin have been acting up of late. There have been a lot of empty ships found floating among Shargon's Teeth. I've heard that Valexa Von Ruthvek, a gnome that runs a local antiques store has found a map to some long lost crypt in or near the city and might be looking for someone to bring back any lost artifacts that might be found there. Oh, and there has been an influx of strangers in town talking about Prophecy, and looking for a well, but I don't know much about it.*
- ❖ **Do the Bilge Rats have any jobs they might want help with?** *Well, we're always looking for muscle. Maybe I could introduce you to someone in a few days, after you take care of your business with this stone.*
- ❖ **Tell me more about the Traveler.** *The Traveler is most mysterious of the Dark Six. He is said to walk the land in a thousand disguises while giving gifts, but he is master of cunning and deception. Proverbs warn "Beware the gifts of the Traveler," because one never knows what the Traveler will impart, only that it will change the way you see the world.*

Development: Given their similar religion or orders from their Obscura, some PCs may wish to recruit Hes into the Cabal. After a few questions about what the Cabal entails, Hes is interested in joining and will even privately reveal his true male changeling form to the PC. That said, Hes wishes some sign of the Cabal's generosity towards his needs. He wishes the PC to recover an item for him. One of the strangers asking about a well who recently came to Stormreach was a finely dressed gnomish woman with a brawny frame despite her expensive gown. She carried a harp carved to look as though the frame were notes of music. Hes desires the harp but has no knowledge of where the harp is or who the woman was. If the PC can find the harp and hand it over to Hes, he consents to join the Cabal of Shadows.

RETURNING TO HES

Hes is a valuable resource that should be available to the PCs throughout the adventure. The PCs have no other reliable contacts in Stormreach but Hes, whose loyalties are not certain but remain at least favorably disposed toward the PCs.

Spellcasting: While Hes is unwilling to travel through Stormreach on the PCs' adventures, he is willing to cast spells at no cost for his nominal allies. Hes's spell list is listed below, but may change given need and time.

Adept Spells Prepared (CL 7th): 0—*cure minor wounds, detect magic, ghost sound* (DC 13); 1st—*cause fear* (DC 14), *cure light wounds* (2), *disguise self, obscuring mist*; 2nd—*cure moderate wounds, invisibility, see invisibility, web* (DC 15).

Replacing Lost Equipment: During the course of the adventure, it is quite possible that the PCs will need assistance in replacing lost equipment. Hes can arrange to find anything the PCs once possessed for normal prices. If the PCs have no money, and no equipment to sell, Hes can still scrounge a ratty suite of clothes, a set of leather armor, a club, and a dagger for each PC. In addition, Hes can locate minor equipment such as a backpack, 25 feet of hemp rope, or a few torches if the PCs request it. This miscellaneous equipment should not exceed 5 gp. Of course, if the PCs choose to acquire equipment or money through alternative means, such as robbery, you'll have to adjudicate the success or failure. Intelligent plans should

be given benefit their of success in order to limit the amount of time distracting from the main plot of the adventure. If the PCs have something to trade, such as riding horses stolen from the Red Ring, Hes can fence the equipment for one-third price and get them any equipment from the *Player's Handbook* less than 200 gp. Hes also knows a place where scrolls of first-level spells found on table 7—23 and 7-24 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* can be acquired quietly and quickly. Once the PCs have finished dealing with Hes, he urges them to seek out Burgundy Clor this very night. After tonight, there will be games in the Red Ring and Clor won't see anyone till they are over. Hes can give the PCs clear directions on how to travel to the arena.

PART THREE: TROUBLE IN RED

Once the PCs attempt to investigate the trail of the *ebon tableau* by finding Burgundy Clor, they are forced to look for him beneath the arena. An astonishing array of events occurs in this arena of crimson stone, as gladiators do battle with giants, fantastic beasts, and one another. Not every battle is fought to the death, but when dealing with dream serpents and mad giants, anything can happen. Beneath the amphitheater is a maze of dungeons that house the creatures and condemned that fight in the blood sports above, and it is also where Burgundy Clor makes his home and runs his business. Fortunately, for the PCs, Hes's directions take them swiftly through Stormreach to the Red Ring.

The Red Ring is an arena of crimson stone, where gladiators do battle with giants, fantastic beasts, and one another. Not every battle is fought to the death, but as the PCs are likely to find out, many are. The large amphitheater is surrounded by a lowered area of sand where the battles play out, with the seats above giving a view of the split blood below for a few silver. Under the seats there are many large hallways meant to accommodate the crowds, and even deeper below, there are a maze of tunnels where the beasts and slaves lair.

THE GAMBLERS

Traveling through the streets and alleys of Stormreach, it becomes more and more clear that the jumble of architecture grows out of the ruins of a giant city, with Aundairan towers and solid Thrane construction all dwarfed by the collapsed columns of monstrous fallen wrecks of a bygone civilization. Taking the last left Hes suggested, the Red Ring, a coliseum of crimson brick rises from the mismatched skyline. Even with no matches scheduled tonight, the throng scuttles about under flickering lantern light near several animal pens.

The directions Hes has given the PCs help them navigate Stormreach to the Red Ring, but they offer no advice on how to find Burgundy Clor once they arrive. Fortunately, the gates of the Red Ring are populated by all manner of degenerates and gamblers at all hours that place bets in the shadow of the animal pens. Dice games, rounds of cards, and bookmakers taking bets for tomorrow's fights all mill about in a haze of pipe smoke and stale liquor. Everyone sizes up the PCs, but no one makes any trouble for them.

It takes little effort for the PCs to be directed to someone willing to help them. A squat goblin named Grot, with yellow skin and smelling of sour milk approaches the PCs curious if they wish to post a bet. Grot, who refers to himself in the third person between sniveling, is actually quite well connected and none of the regular gamblers fall for his act anymore. He is one of Clor's men. Grot attempts to needle out why they might wish to meet with Clor, hinting that he might know a way they could speak with "the boss." The PCs must either convince Grot that he should take them to Clor (DC 15 Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate), or pay him 4 gp for his time.

Assuming the PCs enlist the aid of Grot, he sneaks them past the crowd, through a door of iron bars, and to a poorly lit stairwell that leads to the levels below.

Development: Outright violence against Grot causes a disturbance in the crowd that draws the attention of Clor's thugs (see below, The Fence) who attempt to usher them toward Clor.

THE FENCE (EL 11)

The following read aloud text assumes the PCs are being lead by Grot. Alter it accordingly if this is not the case.

Grot slips quietly down the wide stone steps, only the rare sputtering torch to light the way. The screams of prisoners and the howls of wild beasts drift up from somewhere deep below. This way must lead to the dungeons beneath the arena where the pit's fighters while away the time until they find glory or death in the ring. Grot leads the way through an impossible maze of tunnels, all dark, damp, and unremarkable before others begin to cross your path. Men and women of various races, many monstrous, look ready to drawn steel at your approach but are silenced after noticing Grot leads you. The noise of many voices crashes upon you before you enter a large chamber populated with all many of men and beasts, arrayed with their attention generally toward the thin man holding court upon high-backed wooden chair that sits upon a plain stone dais. The right side of the man's face is covered in a deep ruddy birthmark. He notes your entrance. "What have we here Grot?" he says with obvious interest much like a snake regarding its next meal.

Grot, head bowed, quickly introduces the PCs as interested parties hoping to meet with the boss before he rushes off nervously. With many of his "men" looking on while others come and go, Clor bids the PCs to come forward and speak what they require of him. Clor puts off an air of being amused at the arrival of the PCs, but appears to remain friendly and helpful until the PCs have had the opportunity to speak and he might spring his trap. Use the following to aid in roleplaying the conversation between Clor and the PCs:

- ✖ **What do you do here?** *I do a great many things, all to the benefit of others I assure you. I help people find lost objects, I help others find gainful employment, and also help run the Red Ring you passed through.*
- ✖ **Did you fence the *ebon tableau*?** *You may know that I do a great business in helping others find things they have lost. Sadly, I do not believe this object passed through my hands though I believe it has been to Stormreach.*
- ✖ **Do you know where the *ebon tableau* is?** *Ah, now that I can help you with. While I do not know who has the object of your quest now, I do know the scoundrel who brought it to the city. Sadly, he is a bit indisposed at the moment and I'm not sure if he is receiving visitors.*
- ✖ **Tell us who took the stone!** *As you wish. I'm sure he could use the visitors. Sixfinger is almost certainly getting lonely by now. My men will take you too him. Of course, you will have to leave all of your belongings with me. I don't let my slaves keep weapons. Take them!*

Creatures: As the PCs speak with Clor, people both enter and leave his audience chamber. Allow the PCs a DC 15 Sense Motive check to not that it seems as if Clor's thugs are rapidly attempting surround them and block the exits. When Clor gives the order, they attempt to take the PCs into custody. Note that this is an overwhelming fight should the PCs refuse to surrender. If the PCs defend themselves, Clor orders the PCs be taken alive, since he needs more slaves for tomorrow's games. All of his men have saps and manacles that they use to the best of their ability. Any PC that surrenders is manacled immediately.

Bugbears (2): hp 16, 14; MM 29.

Burgundy Clor: hp 38; Combat Statistics.

Gnolls (6): hp 16, 14, 12, 11, 11, 10, 9; MM 130.

Hyenas (4): hp 14, 13, 13, 10; *MM* 274.

Ogres (2): hp 30, 28, 14; *MM* 199.

Troll: hp 63; *MM* 247.

Tactics: Clor's Men attempt to subdue the PCs or immobilize them to the best of their ability. They do not kill any of the PCs. Clor tries to stay out of combat, but may lob the occasional spell under the cover of *invisibility* and move away from combatants if it seems advantageous. Once incapacitated, PCs are drug to one of the dungeons with the other prisoners.

Development: Some PCs may have access to mind altering magic. While it is unlikely that they can affect a sufficient number of the enemies in this fight to turn the tide, it is possible that a PC may manage to escape. In this case, the PC is alone in the winding tunnels below the ring. DMs should be flexible when dealing with PCs and the creative use of magic, though Clor's men are not untrained in the ways of magic and if he begins behaving unusually after the PCs target him with a spell they will know something is wrong and behave accordingly. See the development box under the encounter Sixfinger Jinn for more details of what might be accomplished if such an occurrence arises.

BURGUNDY CLOR

CR 8

Male human rogue 4/sorcerer 4

CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +6; **Senses** Listen +6, Spot +6

Languages Common, Giant, Gnoll

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 15; Dodge, uncanny dodge
hp 38 (8 HD)

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

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee mwk rapier +5 (1d6-1/18-20)

Ranged +1 light crossbow +8 (1d8+1/19-20)

Base Atk +5; Grp +4

Atk Options Sneak attack +2d6

Combat Gear tanglefoot bag, three *potions of cure moderate wounds*

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 4th):

2nd (4/day)—*invisibility*

1st (7/day)—*color spray*, *mage armor*, *ray of enfeeblement*

0th (6/day)—*acid splash*, *daze*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

†Already used

Abilities Str 9, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 16

SQ Trapfinding, trap sense +1

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Silent Spell

Skills Appraise +9, Bluff +14, Concentration +12, Diplomacy +14, Escape Artist +9, Forgery +9, Gather Information +12, Knowledge (local) +9, Listen +6, Sense Motive +6, Spellcraft +6, Spot +6, Tumble +9

Possessions masterwork rapier, +1 light crossbow, 20 bolts, masterwork manacles, *cloak of resistance* +2, and *ring of protection* +1

Description Clor is a short, frail looking human,. From his thinning hair to his weak chin, a large red birthmark that makes him look as if some splashed wine upon his face stains the right side of his head.

Hook "I can help you, into my dungeons!"

THE DUNGEONS (EL 1)

Heavy hands drag you in chains into the deep dungeons below the amphitheater; the pitiful wails of the other captives all the

more meaningful given the current predicament. Your captives force you inside a large cell with a host of other prisoners and the detritus of previous slaves. Dirt, offal, bones, and cracked bowls litter the floor of filthy stray.

After one hour (allowing the PCs to naturally heal nonlethal damage equal to their level) the PCs are transferred to a cell in the dungeons with twenty other prisoners. Any PC who is still unconscious is dowsed in water till they wake and is treated as Staggered. All of their equipment and clothing is taken from them unless it somehow part of them such as a warforged component or daelkyr symbiont. Each PC is given a rough spun gray wool tunic to wear. All familiars, psicrystals, or animal companions are locked inside nearby cages appropriate to their size and out of reach of the PCs.

As the guards go to leave, they drop a few pales of slop and a loaf of moldy bread into the center of the room. After eyeing each other for a few minutes, many of the prisoners make a dash for the food. In the process, some of the prisoners begin beating another slave: Sixfinger Jin.

CRAFTY CASTING

Without spell component pouches and focuses, spellcasting PCs are weakened while in the Red Ring prison, but they're not entirely helpless. Warlocks, manifesters, and soulmelders are virtually unaffected, and the following low-level spells from the *Player's Handbook* that can be cast without material components or focuses.

0-Level

Acid splash

Arcane mark

Create water

Cure minor wounds

Dancing lights

Detect magic

Detect poison

Disrupt undead

Flare

Guidance

Inflict minor wounds

Know direction

Lullaby

Mage hand

Mending

Prestidigitation

Purify food and drink

Ray of frost

Summon instrument

1st-Level

Animate rope

Bless weapon

Burning hands

Calm animals

Cause fear

Charm person

Chill touch

Command

Create water

Cure light wounds

Deathwatch

Detect animals or plants

Detect poison

Detect secret doors

Detect snares and pits

Disguise self

Endure elements

Entropic shield

Erase

Expeditious retreat

Feather fall

Hide from animals

Hold portal

Hypnotism

Inflict light wounds

Magic missile

Obscuring mist

Produce flame

Ray of enfeeblement

Remove fear

Restoration, lesser

Shield

Shocking grasp

Silent image

Speak with animals

True strike

Undetectable alignment

Of course, making a spectacle of such castings, or spell-like ability, psionic, or incarnum use attracts the guards, who first bind the meddlesome spellcaster (Escape Artist DC x) and give them a stern warning, but have no qualms about executing repeat offenders. Bans on such magic, psionic, and incarnum use does not carry over into the Red Ring games themselves, as Clor and the ring's fans appreciate the spectacle such powers produce.

As the dash for food clears, the sounds of a beating reach your ears. Someone shouting "You don't deserve any food freak!" is punctuated by several breathy kicks. Two large, scarred men

have surrounded a slim figure huddled in a ball shielding itself from the blows. "You devil monster! I seen you looking to take our bread with your six fingered claw. Lets see how you like the taste of my boot!"

Jin (CN male tiefling rogue 2, has six fingers on each hand, and gills on his neck) has been in the slave pens since shortly after he sold the stone when Clor captured him for fencing a deal himself. Three of the prisoners have turned against Jin due to his odd looks.

Creatures: The two thugs begin with a starting attitude of unfriendly toward the PCs. If the PCs choose to do nothing, the thugs ignore them, but if the PCs intervene, the thugs attack unless the PCs can shift their attitude to indifferent, or bribe them with their portions of the food. If combat does ensue, note that there are ample makeshift weapons amid the bones and broken pottery. Treat as improvised clubs or daggers (-4 to hit).

Grilias and Ograde, Prison Bullies: male human warrior 1; hp 8 8; *Combat Statistics*.

Tactics: The bullies are just that. They believe if they beat someone bad enough, the rest of the PCs will back off. That said, they attempt to flank the biggest threat and Power Attack, hoping to eliminate the biggest threat in one round. If the PCs present an organized and unified threat, and it becomes clear that the bullies will be defeated, they back down and give up.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

2nd-Level Characters: Add two more bullies.

3rd-Level Characters: Add four more bullies.

PRISON BULLIES

CR 1/2

Male human warrior 1

AL CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +0; **Senses** Listen +6, Spot +6

Languages Common

AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; **Dodge**

hp 8 (1 HD)

Fort +5, **Ref** +0, **Will** +0

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee improvised club +0 (1d6+3)

Ranged improvised club -3 (1d6+3)

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

Atk Options Power Attack

Abilities Str 16, Dex 11, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 8

Feats Dodge, Power Attack

Skills Climb +7, Intimidate +3

Possessions improvised club, woolen tunic.

Description A strong, scarred veteran of the arena.

Hook "All you freaks deserve the beating I'm gonna give you!"

SIXFINGER JIN

Even if the PCs defeated Jin's bullies, the tiefling is wary of new friends. However, given his current problems, the thought of allies is an appealing one.

The crumpled form of a man huddles on the floor, his hands clutching at his side. It is clear that something is not right with him. His hand ends in claw-like nails and webbing joins his six fingers. As he gasps in pain, slits on the side of his neck open to take in the air. Whatever the man is, it is clear he is not entirely human.

Sixfinger Jin has lived on the streets of Stormreach all his life. Orphaned, and due to his unusual parentage, he's

spent much of his life thieving and recovering unusual items from the sea. He was recently hired by a man to recover a large black stone from a sahuagin enclave around Shargon's Teeth. While his mission was a success, it ultimately landed him here. Burgundy Clor heard that Jin was once again selling items directly without using a fence—and not using him in particular—and decided to teach Jin a final lesson in Red Ring.

So Jin has come to this low place. He is skittish and guarded as the PCs approach him, but he is desperate and willing to listen. The initial beating has left him with a broken arm, several broken ribs, and twisted foot. It is unlikely that he will be able to defend himself effectively in the ring, and so he is looking for someone to protect him, or better yet, help him escape Clor's grip. Jin knows that even should he survive the ring, Clor will likely arrange an accident for him afterwards.

Jin admits that he did steal the stone the PCs are looking for, and in return for securing escape promises to them to the buyer, but only after he is free. Living on the streets of Stormreach has lead Jin to be quite canny, and he realizes that the location of the stone is the only leverage he has with the PCs. Under no circumstances will he tell the PCs how to find the stone until they help him escape.

If asked, Jin suggests that their best chance for escape might either be as they are being lead to the ring, or once they are in it. Jin heard some of the guards talking a grand melee, and it is likely that dozens of slaves will be placed into the ring with a handful of skilled gladiators, or possibly a wild beast or two. To win the grand melee is to survive.

Development: If the PCs wish to try to break out of the cells before the next evening, they face a difficult but not impossible task. They have none of their equipment and the halls are populated with enemies. They are in a cell of iron bars (2 in. thick; hardness 10; hp 60; AC 5; Break DC 28, Open Locks DC 30). If the PCs do somehow manage to get out of their cells without attracting the attention of a guard posted in the hallway outside, they have to fight or sneak past a host of guards patrolling the tunnels (the same as in Clor's room, but without their boss). If the PCs do a spectacular job getting through the winding corridors with Jin in tow, the DM is encourage to allow any well thought plan to succeed. Poorly thought out plans, however, end abruptly at the end of an ogre-sized sap.

If the PCs successfully execute a plan to escape, proceed to Part Five. If the party decides to wait for an opportunity they are given a chance to rest for a whole day and regain spells (except for wizards who need a spellbook). Also note that the PCs have no spell components, though they might find anything the DM feels appropriate amid the detritus of the cellblock. Their opportunity eventually presents itself the next evening when they are thrown into the ring (Part Four).

SIXFINGER JIN

CR 3

Male tiefling rogue 2

NE Medium outsider (aquatic, native)

Init +4; **Senses** Darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +0, Spot +0

Languages Common, Goblinoid

AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 10

hp 12 (2 HD); currently at 2 hp

Fort +1, **Ref** +7, **Will** +0; evasion

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares); swim 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee improvised club -3 (1d6+3)

Ranged improvised club +1 (1d6+3)

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

Atk Options Sneak Attack +1d6
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 2nd):
1/day—darkness

Abilities Str 11, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 8
SQ Amphibious; resistance to cold 5, electricity 5, and fire 5, trapfinding

Feats Athletic

Skills Appraisal +6, Bluff +6, Disable Device +6, Hide +11, Listen +5, Move Silently +9, Search +6, Spot +5, Swim +7

Possessions improvised club, woolen tunic.

Description A slim man with fish eyes, gills, and webbing between the six fingers on each hand.

Hook “Take me with you and I’ll tell you what you need to know.”

Until fully healed, Jin has the following modifications to his statistics:

hp 2

Speed 15 ft. (3 squares); swim 15 ft. (3 squares)

Melee improvised club -7 (1d6+3)

Ranged improvised club -3 (1d6+3)

PART FOUR: TO FIGHT CLEAR (EL 3)

If the PCs wait for an opportunity to escape, it presents itself the night after they are captured. The Red Ring hosts a series games, and Clor intends to make the PCs part of the main event. A large number of well-armed guards escort the PCs (if necessary, use the creatures from Part Three), along with a dozen other prisoners including Jin to a barred elevator. Once placed inside, they are raised into the arena and told to fight for glory!

The guards use their longswords to herd you and approximately a dozen other prisoners into a barred cage connected to a pulley. Once locked inside, the cage rises through an opening in the ceiling and to the middle a great ring of sand surrounded by ruby-colored brick. Above the cage hundreds, maybe thousands, of spectators scream and shout for blood. The sand is studded with all manner of flotsam. Wooden boxes everywhere, berms sheltering stagnant streams ahead, and a maze of ropes and cargo netting to one side. With no warning, the cage swings open and one quick thinking slave sprints toward a distant box, smashes it open with a well-placed elbow, and draws forth a dirk. His single mindedness distracts him from the wide-swinging gates opening on the far side of the ring where a horde of ferocious animals pours forth. Within seconds, he is devoured from behind, the short sword doing him little good. Soon they will be upon you.

Have each PC make a DC 15 Spot check. Jin, and any PC that succeeds, quickly notes that the gates to the animal pens on the far side of the ring did not close correctly and have been carelessly left open. They lead to pens and corrals, which the PCs saw when they first arrived at the Red Ring. It is a way out, if the party can get past the beasts.

The ring floor is populated with a wide variety of terrain features that PCs must navigate in order to escape. Each item described below corresponds to Map 1.



1. MYSTERY BOX

Several low wooden boxes, each with a question mark painted on the top, are scattered across the sandy battlefield.

Several wooden boxes have been placed throughout the ring. The contents of each box (1 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 10; AC 5; Break DC 8) are random. Each box has a spike driven through the bottom, anchoring it into the ground. The box and spike can be pulled up by a successful DC 18 Strength check. Should a PC attempt to open one of the boxes, they find that each is nailed shut, though a DC 8 Strength check can pull open the lid. Pieces of a broken box may be used as improvised clubs, and the metal spike as an improvised dagger. To determine the contents of each, roll randomly upon the following table.

1d6	Result	Description
1	PC Equipment	All the belongings of a randomly determined PC. If all PCs' equipment has been found, the result is a "Useful Item" (see below).
2	Useful Item	The PC has found a useful item or minor magical item. All magic items are clearly labeled. Roll 1d12: 1-club; 2-dagger; 3-alchemist's fire; 4-grappling hook and 20 ft. of silk rope; 5-tanglefoot bag; 6-buckler; 7-potion of cure light wounds; 8-potion of enlarge person; 9-wand of magic missile (2 charges); 10-wand of color spray (1 charge); 11-divine scroll of cure light wounds; 12-arcane scroll of sound burst.
3	Trapped Crate	The PC has opened a rapped crate. Roll 1d3 to determine the effect. 1-Flour Bomb: A great cloud of flour bursts from the crate. The PC opening it must make a DC 11 Reflex saving throw or be blinded for 1d3 rounds, or until their eyes are washed clean (requires water, full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunities). There is only one of these crates, if duplicated the result is "PC Equipment" (see above). 2-Tiny Viper: A very angry tiny viper (MM 280) tries to bite whomever opens the crate. It then moves to hide from any combat, only attacking if bothered. There is only one of these crates, if duplicated the result is "PC Equipment." 3-Dart: A dart shoots out of crate towards the PC (+2 ranged attack). If it hits the PC takes 1d4 points of damage, but may reuse the dart. There is only one of these crates, if duplicated the result is "PC Equipment."
4	Empty	This crate is a decoy and contains nothing.

2. CARGO NETTING

Some large cargo netting rises the length of two longspears to a thick wooden pole rising out of the ground forming a large tent-like structure. To one side, it crosses several feet above the stagnant water.

Some ship's rigging has been used to create an additional obstacle. Originally intended to hinder boarders, the sturdy netting has been rigged to a pole 20 feet above the ground. A creature can't pass under the netting without a successful DC 10 Escape Artist (which is a full round action that provokes attacks of opportunity), but may make attacks through the netting. Piercing weapons or ranged weapons can be used through the netting at no penalty; slashing or bludgeoning weapons can only be used against foes adjacent to the netting, and take a -4 penalty on attack rolls. A 5-foot section of netting has hardness 2 (the rope is heavily tarred) and 20 hit points. Piercing weapons and bludgeoning weapons deal one-quarter damage to netting instead of the normal one-half damage when attacking an object.

Climbing the netting requires a successful DC 0 Climb check. In the area where the netting crosses above the water, no Escape Artist check is necessary to get under the net canopy.

3. BERMS

A low wall of sandy soil is heaped has been heaped here, offer some small amount of cover.

The low earthen wall slows movement and provides cover. Crossing one of the berms is considered moving through difficult terrain. Creatures standing on one side of a berm have cover from creatures on the other side.

4. WATER FILLED DITCH

A ditch filled with stagnant water meanders throughout the battlefield. In some places, beams have been laid across it, and at one point it moves under some cargo netting.

This water-filled ditch is nearly 5 feet deep. Moving through each square occupied by any water is considered difficult terrain. Anyone in the water may take a move action to gain improved cover (causing enemies to take a -10 penalty to attacks against the creature taking improved cover). The balance beams can be crossed at half speed by making a successful DC 10 Balance check. Failure by five or more means the PC falls prone into the water below.

5. POLES

A skeleton lies amid a cluster of poles, each no thicker than a stout club.

These forests of uneven poles create an area that is difficult for larger creatures to move through. Each pole is 1d3 x 10 feet in height. Anyone fighting within a cluster poles can use them to their advantage and gain a +2 bonus to armor class and a +1 bonus to Reflex saving throws. Medium or smaller creatures are otherwise not affected. Size Large creatures considered squeezing while moving through areas populated by these poles. Each pole has a hardness of 5, 75 hp, and can be climbed with a successful DC 15 climb check.

Creatures: This is a complicated combat. In addition to the PCs, their animal companions or familiars, and Jin, approximately a dozen other commoners and street folk have been forced into the ring. These other poor souls are used to the cutthroat world of the Stormreach streets and have no desire to aid the PCs and in fact make no effort to fight in a coordinated effort with them. They should serve as an example of what happens when fighting some of the larger beasts in the ring. In addition to being devoured by the beasts of the ring, these individuals do go about opening crates, effectively searching more boxes than the PCs might otherwise be able to. Of course, if they find a

weapon or some PC's equipment, they might not easily be willing to give it up.

Several dangerous, starved animals are loose in the ring and they attack the nearest creature. There are more creatures in the ring than the PCs are intended to fight, and the creatures seek out the PCs before they can exit the ring varies with the average level of the party (though all creatures listed in Scaling the Encounter are present to increase the epic scale of the combat). Those creatures not intended for the PCs to fight should be distracted hunting down and eating other captives that have been forced into the ring with the PCs.

Leopard: hp 19 each; *MM* 274.

Hyena: hp 13 each; *MM* 274.

Tactics: Given his grievous injuries, Jin is not an effective combatant. He needs help to cross the battlefield, and if in immediate danger, he attempts to dive into the nearest stagnant water where he can hide until the threat

the party finds four horses that might be used to rapid escape the area.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

2nd-Level Characters: Add an additional hyena.

3rd-Level Characters: Add an additional hyena and a dire wolf (hp 45; *MM* 65).

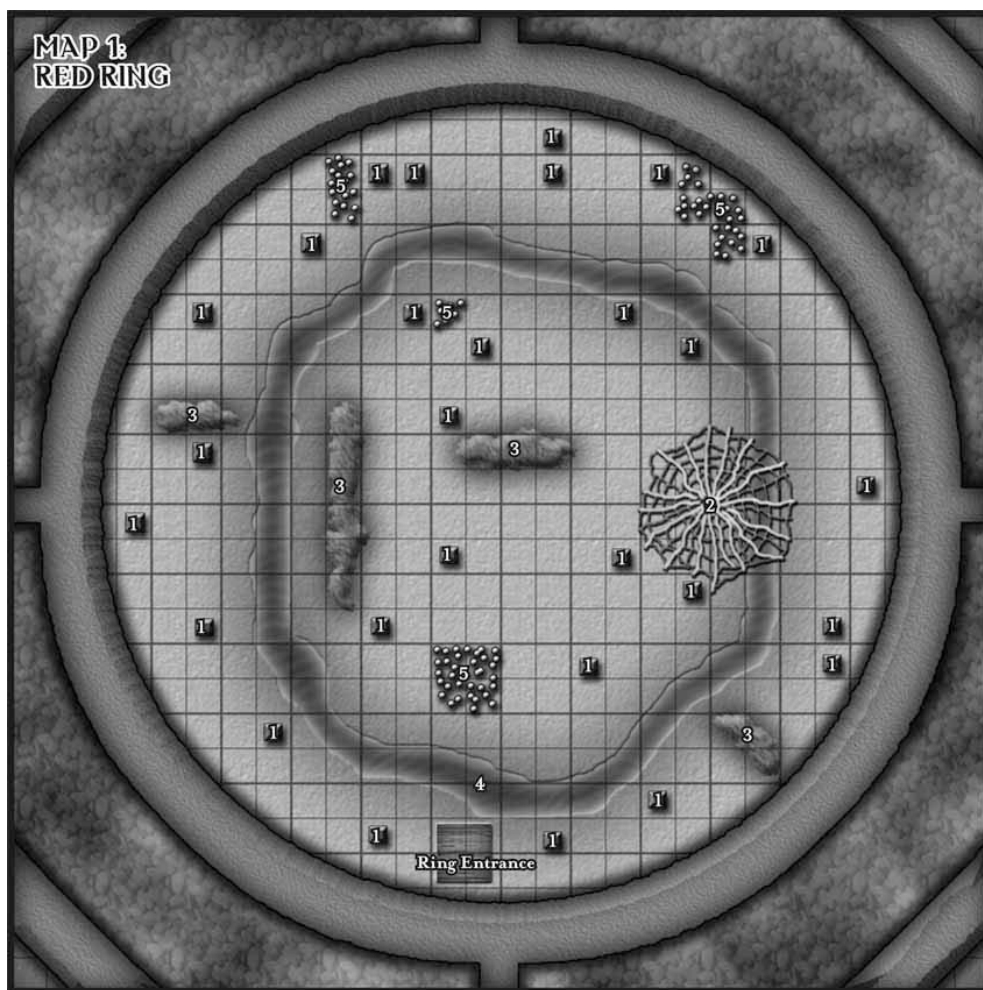
PART FIVE: CRIMSON SAFE HOUSE

Regardless of their success in restoring his health, Jin holds true to his promise to show the PCs where his buyer lives. Once there, he takes his leave and offers his services to PCs in the future. Once the PCs flee the Red Ring and are shown the safe house, they have until midnight the

following night before the operatives of the Crimson Codex attempt to move the *ebon tableau* to the docks. If they do so, all agents and Celemona leave with the stone for the ship.

Jin leads your party through a maze of back alleys to a nice neighborhood filled with older townhouses of Aundairan and Brelish design. Little of the giants' ruins remain here and each home is at least two stories, likely with a small army of servants within their close packed walls. The sheer number of actual glass windows marks this neighborhood as wealthy. "It's that one there," Jin points to a home in the middle of the block as you ride by. I sold the stone to a man there, probably from Aundair by his accent. He and two others carried it inside. Now we're even, so I'll be taking my leave, but if you are interested, I'm always for sale for the right price." With that, Jin pulls up his cloak and limps into the shadows of a nearby lane.

The PCs are in a residential neighborhood on a cobblestone lane. The house of interest to them is in the middle of the block, and shares walls with houses on either side of it. Besides the front door and obvious windows, entrance may be found through a door into the kitchen and a ramp into the stable below ground. Both of these entrances can only be found by walking through the back ally. Conscious of the value of their find, the agents of the Crimson Codex are not foolish in their protections. They do not leave the stone unprotected, and they are



passes. The animals in the ring attack randomly, though those creatures inappropriate for the characters level should not come into conflict with the PCs.

Development: Once the PCs have exited the ring, the yells of the crowd become deafening, but the party is essentially safe if they hurry. The tunnel they have entered leads directly to animal pens outside. The few unarmed animal keepers offer no resistance to the armed PCs and cower or flee whenever possible. Upon exiting the tunnel,

cautious of all they encounter. Most rooms have at least a candle or low burning lamps providing light within them. All doors and windows are locked at all times and unless otherwise noted, have the following statistics:

Wooden Doors: 1 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 10; AC 5; Break DC 18, Open Locks DC 25.

Windows: 1/4-in. thick; hardness 1; hp 2; AC 5; Break DC 13, Open Locks DC 20.

1. UNDERGROUND STABLES

A steep ramp leading down from the alleyway leads to an underground stable that house several horses amid the musty smells of earth, hay, and animal. A wagon sits unhitched to one side, several wooden boxes proclaiming themselves to be feed, can be found west and stairs rise to the east.

Built to conserve heat from the horses during the cold months, this underground stable also offers access to the rest of the house from the back alley. During most of the day, one of the servants can be found here caring for the animals and the equipment here.

The doors to the stable are different than those to the rest of the house in that they are both reinforced and trapped with a silent *alarm* spell made permanent that warns Celemona Ir'Cande if they are breached without whispering the phrase "Through knowledge we rule."

Wooden Doors: 2 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 20; AC 4; Break DC 18, Open Locks DC 25; silent *alarm* spell, 5th-level caster.

On the western walls behind the feed boxes is the entrance to a dumbwaiter that gives access to the kitchen

and the library above. On the eastern wall is a flight of stairs that end in a locked door. The door bars access to the hallway on the ground floor. There are four heavy horses, each in a separate stall, housed here with their appropriate tack and supplies. The horses ignore any PCs unless they are attacked, in which case they make significant noise and likely alert the rest of the house.

2. FOYER

A few large plants decorate this hall that smells strongly of their blooming flowers. Four doors and a stairway with a complicated carved wooden railing leading up to a second story exit this foyer. A mosaic upon the floor depicts a opened book done in red tile upon the black marble background of the rest of the floor.

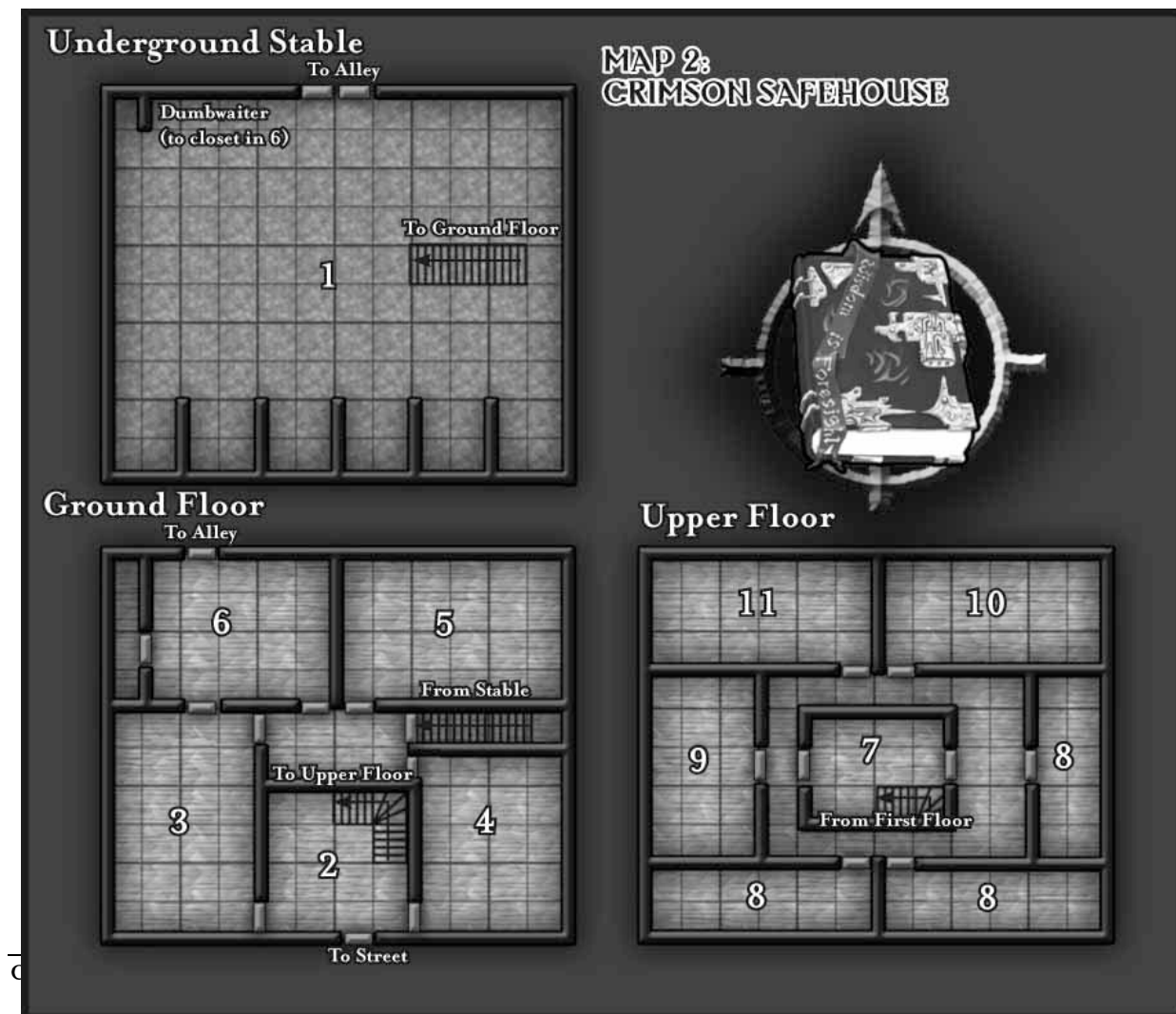
This wide-open room gives access to the rest of the house from the front door.

3. DINING ROOM

Underneath a large chandelier, a huge wooden table is surrounded by a dozen elegantly carved chairs. Several fine landscapes of Khorvaire decorated the walls. A bowl of dried flowers is centered on the table. Two other doors exit this room.

This large room is devoted to the large dinners that Codex occasionally throws when a large number of their members meet. At the moment, there is no threat to the PCs to be found in this room.

4. CONSERVATORY



Several plush fainting couches with interspersed end tables surround a large grand piano, facing toward the eastern wall. A number of paintings hang upon the walls depicting graceful musicians performing for appreciative audiences. A fine harp made of walnut and crystal rests inside a glass case against the western wall. The smell of incense is prominent.

This posh room is used to entertain guests with fine music. Very comfortable furniture is focused around a large piano, with a large glass case behind them. A close inspection notes that the harp is carved to look as though the frame was made of musical notes.

Treasure: The fine harp is an attractive piece of craftsmanship that less scrupulous PCs may claim. Given the likely escape or death of the Crimson Codex operatives, no one will be available to complain. This is the harp that Hes seeks, and it returned to him, he considers joining the Cabal of Shadows.

5. SERVANTS' QUARTERS

Shelves filled with linens and various supplies line northern wall of this room, and a number crates are placed to the right. Several cramped bunk beds take up the rest of the available space.

Effectively a large closet, the various goods required to maintain this large home are found here. From tablecloths to fresh bedding to oil lamps and candles, everything the safe house requires can be found in this room, although none of it is especially valuable. In addition to the supplies for the house, several small beds are here for the servants. Meager personal effects can be found under each mattress or hidden in the corners of the room. During most hours, this room is empty, but during the wee hours, all six servants can be found sleeping here. If it is day or earlier evening, three servants are in the kitchen, one is in the stables, and two others are moving through the house doing housework. While the servants report disturbances to the agents at the first opportunity, none fight unless forced too and general the servants cower from any display of violence. They know nothing about the *ebon tableau* or the Crimson Codex faction.

Crimson Codex Servants (6): male and female

human commoner 1; hp 3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 3; Combat Statistics.

6. KITCHEN

Cabinets surround a large butcher-block table in the center of this large kitchen. A hearth is located on the eastern wall, opposite a walk-in pantry. No one can be seen moving in the subdued light of the dying fireplace embers.

Four servants staff this well-stocked kitchen during most hours of the day, but it's empty in the dead of night. A low fire smolders in the hearth at all times. Access to a dumbwaiter can be found from inside the walk-in pantry. The dumbwaiter gives access to the library above, and the stables below.

7. PARLOR

Stairs rise up into this comfortable parlor. Several books are causally left atop some of the chairs and a blanket lies bunched at the base of large chair, with a pipe and tobacco pouch placed within arm's reach. Two doors exit this room.

Celemona uses the parlor for his daily relaxation, and it looks well lived in. However, there is nothing of particular interest here for the PCs. The doors exit to a square shaped hallway that gives access to the rest of the second floor.

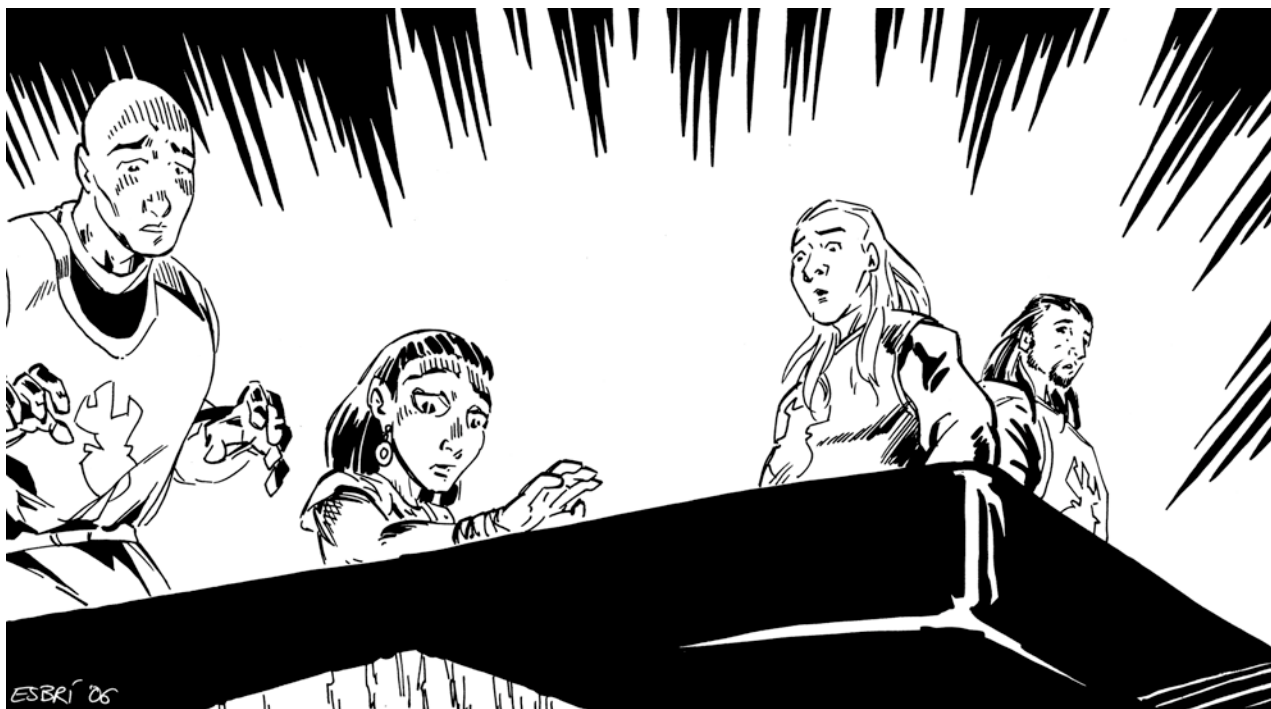
8. BEDROOM

This somewhat spartan room is clearly a guest bedroom. Done up in an ivy motif, green is the predominant color, with elegantly carved leaves worked into the chest of drawers and vines climbing the four posts of the bed.

The bureau is empty, and no one is currently using the bed. While full of general personal effects, there is nothing in this room of particular value. The agents that sleep in these rooms have virtually camped out in the library, unwilling to leave the sight of *ebon tableau*.

9. WASHROOM

A large tub dominates the center of this tiled room. A marble counter juts from the wall underneath a looking glass. Several



large blocks of fragrant soap wait to be used next to a dozen fluffy white towels that are piled high on an empty hamper. A screened off area suggests a privy. The miracle of second story plumbing suggests true extravagance.

The washroom serves the needs of the rich who inhabit the house, the staff being expected to go elsewhere. This room has a small latch (Break DC 10) meant more for privacy than for protection.

10. MASTER BEDROOM

A small but magnificent bed dominates the center of this darkly wood paneled room, with a large chest of doors to the west and an elaborately carved desk to the east. A deep red rug covers the floor.

This room is home to Celemona Ir'Cande, the Crimson Codex scholar who manages the safe house. Since acquiring the *ebon tableau* she has spent very little time sleeping; instead translating as much of the stone as possible and preparing it for transport. It is unlikely that when the PCs arrive that she will be found here unless they come some specific time their assault during one of her brief naps.

The desk holds a variety of interesting items for the PCs, all easily located. The first is a selection of archeologist's tools, complete with a leather case that can be rolled up and tied. All of the tools have a wooden handle painted red. The second item of interest is a bundle of copies of *Stormrider's Chapbook (998 YK Edition)* and a note that reads, "Acquire all copies available." It appears to be a bawdy chapbook with short questionable stories and dirty limericks.

11. LIBRARY (EL 4)

Shelves of dusty books surround the walls of this room, with three comfortable chairs surround a large table resting in front of a small hearth. A slim table against the southern wall is bedecked with bottles of Eldeen brandy and a humidifier filled with fine cigars. A small panel in the western wall suggests a dumbwaiter.

The library is furnished with a wide selection of comforts to aid in a quiet relaxing evening. A quick perusal of the tomes here notes that none of them are especially valuable, focusing largely on anthologies of fiction and travel logs. Several books are clearly missing, and can be found in the parlor.

Unless the PCs have alerted the safe house to their presence, the *ebon tableau* can be found on the table amid various notes and instruments intended for its restoration.

Creatures: If taken by surprise, all three of the Crimson Codex Agents and Celemona Ir'Cande are found here studying and protecting the *ebon tableau*. If they are alerted to the PCs presence the operatives of the Crimson Codex begin to put a plan into action. Using the dumbwaiter, the three agents ferry the stone into the stable where they load it onto the wagon and then they flee for the docks while Celemona defends her home to the best of her ability. The agents also disable the dumbwaiter so it cannot be used to follow them. If the party averages higher than 1st-level, the additional agent stays with Celemona to aid in her defense of the safe house.

Crimson Codex Agents (3): male or female human duskblade 1; hp 9, 9, 9; Combat Statistics.

Celemona Ir'Cande: female gnome illusionist 2; hp 9; Combat Statistics.

Tactics: In combat, the agents move to melee if appropriate and make good use of their *blade of blood* spell to do more damage to foes. At all times they fight smart, making use of cover and flanking while preventing attacks

on Celemona or any agents using ranged weapons. If unable to enter melee, the agents use their wide selection of alchemical attacks. Celemona relies on her many spells, particularly her illusions, to immobilize or confuse as many foes as possible. If necessary, she flees through a window or the dumbwaiter using her *feather fall* spell.

Development: If the PCs are given the chance to search the library they find a wide selection of notes on the prophecy as written on the *ebon tableau* and what it means to a secret cabal known as the Crimson Codex. This valuable information quickly leads the PCs to the realization that they are not the only faction in Stormreach after pieces of the *Caldyn Fragments*. If the PCs take the time to search the library, or return to gather the papers, they receive the Know Your Enemy story object.

If the PCs arrive here after the night after the night they escaped from the Red Ring, all of the agents and Celemona have left for their ship with the *ebon tableau*.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

2nd-Level Characters: Add a Crimson Codex Agent.

3rd-Level Characters: Add an additional Crimson Codex Agent and use the 3rd-level version of Celemona Ir'Cande.

VISITING THE NEIGHBORS

Whether to set up surveillance or to gain entrance to the Crimson Codex's safe house, it is possible the PCs will invade one of the surrounding homes. Assume a similar layout and statistics as the safe house, but use the statistics of the Crimson Codex Servants to represent the neighbors and their staff. None are effective combatants and the PCs should be able to easily overwhelm them. If the PCs spend more than a day in one of the neighboring houses, it is likely that someone will come to visit, wondering why none of the captives have been seen for a day. Depending on how the PCs deal with the situation, it is likely that a patrol of the Stormreach Guard may be summoned. If details for guardsmen are needed, use the statistics block for the Prison Bullies in Part Three, but outfit each with chain mail armor, a heavy crossbow, a halberd, and a sap.

Development: The guard is not forgiving. If the PCs come to blows with the guard, they kill rather than take prisoners. It is very difficult to get arrested in Stormreach.

COMBAT STATISTICS

CRIMSON CODEX SERVANT

CR 1/2

Male or female human commoner 1

NG Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Listen +5, Spot +0

Languages Common, Draconic.

AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10

hp 3 (1 HD)

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

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee dagger +0 (1d4/19-20)

Ranged thrown dagger +0 (1d4/19-20)

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

Abilities Str 11, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 10

Feats Skill Focus (Craft)

Skills Craft (any one) +7, Handle Animal +4, Listen +5

Possessions kitchen knife, pouch with 5 cp.

Description A small, sniveling servant boy/girl.

Hook "Please don't hurt me."

CRIMSON CODEX AGENT**CR 1**

Male or female human duskblade 1

AL NG Medium humanoid (human)**Init** +2; **Senses** Listen -1, Spot -1**Languages** Common, Draconic.**AC** 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13**hp** 9 (1 HD)**Fort** +3, **Ref** +2, **Will** +1**Speed** 30 ft. (6 squares)**Melee** mwk greatsword +6 (2d6+4/19-20)**Ranged** thrown dagger +3 (1d4+3/19-20)**Base Atk** +1; **Grp** +4**Combat Gear** two flasks of acid, two flasks of alchemist's fire, *potion of aid* (CL 3rd), *potion of cure light wounds* (CL 1st), smokestick, tanglefoot bag, thunderstone**Duskblade Spells Known** (CL 1st):1st (3/day)— *blade of blood*, *stand*oth (3/day)— *acid splash* (+3 ranged touch), *disrupt undead* (+3 ranged touch), *touch of fatigue* (+4 touch, DC 11)**Spell-like Abilities** (CL 1st):oth (4/day)— *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *flare* (DC 11), *ghost sound* (DC 11), *read magic***Abilities** Str 16, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 9**SQ** Arcane attunement (spell-like abilities), armored mage (light armor)**Feats** Toughness, Weapon Focus (greatsword)**Skills** Jump +7, Knowledge (local) +3, Ride +6, Spellcraft +3**Possessions** combat gear plus studded leather under fine clothing, masterwork greatsword, five daggers, pouch with 5 gp, ring of keys.**Description** A strong man dressed in fine clothing more appropriate for a ball than a combat.**Hook** "I say, that isn't sporting. Now I shall have to teach you a lesson." *cracks knuckles***CELEMONA IR'CANDE****CR 2**

Female gnome illusionist 2

N Small humanoid (gnome)**Init** +1; **Senses** Low-light vision; Listen +1, Spot -1**Languages** Common, Draconic, Giant, Gnome, Undercommon**AC** 12, touch 11, flat-footed 12; +4 AC against giants**hp** 15 (2 HD)**Fort** +5, **Ref** +2, **Will** +3; +2 against illusions**Speed** 20 ft. (4 squares)**Melee** mwk dagger +1 (1d3-2/19-20)**Ranged** thrown mwk dagger +4 (1d3-2/19-20)**Base Atk** +1; **Grp** -5**Atk Options** +1 to attack rolls against kobolds and goblinoids**Combat Gear** alchemist's fire, *potion of cure moderate wounds* (CL 3rd), smokestick, thunderstone**Wizard Spells Prepared** (CL 2nd, banned schools are Evocation and Necromancy):1st (3/day)— *color spray* (DC 16), *feather fall*, *grease* (DC 14), *silent image* (DC 16)o (4/day)— *acid splash* (+3 ranged touch), *daze* (2) (DC 13), *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 15)**Abilities** Str 7, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 16, Wis 8, Cha 8**SQ** Familiar (none)**Feats** Scribe Scroll; Spell Focus (Illusion)**Skills** Concentration +9, Decipher Script +8, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (history) +8, Spellcraft +10**Possessions** combat gear plus elegant gown, masterwork dagger, 2 spell component pouches, *bracers of armor* +1, *cloak of resistance* +1, ring of keys.**Description** A stocky gnomish woman in an elegant gown with her black hair done up above her shoulders.**Hook** "You have no idea who I represent and the trouble they visit upon you."**CELEMONA IR'CANDE****CR 3**

Female gnome illusionist 3

AL N Small humanoid (gnome)**Init** +1; **Senses** Low-light vision; Listen +1, Spot -1**Languages** Common, Draconic, Giant, Gnome, Undercommon**AC** 12, touch 11, flat-footed 12; +4 AC against giants**hp** 22 (3 HD)**Fort** +6, **Ref** +3, **Will** +3; +2 against illusions**Speed** 20 ft. (4 squares)**Melee** mwk dagger +1 (1d3-2/19-20)**Ranged** thrown mwk dagger +4 (1d3-2/19-20)**Base Atk** +1; **Grp** -5**Atk Options** +1 to attack rolls against kobolds and goblinoids**Combat Gear** alchemist's fire, *potion of cure moderate wounds* (CL 3rd), smokestick, thunderstone**Wizard Spells Prepared** (CL 3rd, banned schools are Evocation and Necromancy):2nd (3/day)— *glitterdust* (DC 16), *hypnotic pattern* (DC 19), *mirror image*1st (4/day)— *color spray* (DC 18), *feather fall*, *grease* (DC 15), *silent image* (DC 18)oth (5/day)— *acid splash* (+3 ranged touch), *daze* (2) (DC 14), *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 17)**Abilities** Str 7, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 16 [18], Wis 8, Cha 8**SQ** Familiar (none)**Feats** Greater Spell Focus (Illusion), Scribe Scroll; Spell Focus (Illusion)**Skills** Concentration +10, Decipher Script +10, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (history) +10, Knowledge (local) +5, Spellcraft +12**Possessions** combat gear plus elegant gown, masterwork dagger, 2 spell component pouches, *bracers of armor* +1, *cloak of resistance* +1, *headband of intellect* +2, ring of keys.**Description** A stocky gnomish woman in an elegant gown with her black hair done up above her shoulders.**Hook** "You have no idea who I represent and the trouble they visit upon you."

DUSKBLADE SPELLS

The following spells are from *Player's Handbook II*.

BLADE OF BLOOD

Necromancy

Level: Assassin 1, blackguard 1, cleric 1, duskblade 1, sorcerer/wizard 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 swift action

Range: Touch

Target: Weapon touched

Duration: 1 round/level or until discharged

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

Red blood erupts along the weapon's blade, bludgeon, or point. The blood drips to spatter in thick, viscous drops upon the ground.

This spell infuses the weapon touched with baleful energy. The next time this weapon strikes a living creature, *blade of blood* discharges. The spell deals an extra 1d6 points of damage against the target of the attack. You can voluntarily take 5 hit points of damage to empower the weapon to deal an extra 2d6 points of damage (for a total of 3d6 points of extra damage). The weapon loses this property if its wielder drops it or otherwise loses contact with it.

STAND

Conjuration (Teleportation)

Level: Duskblade 1, sorcerer/wizard 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 immediate action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft. /2 levels)

Target: One willing prone creature

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

With a swift upward gesture of your arms and a single clarion command ("Stand!"), you enable the prone creature to safely rise to its feet.

The subject creature immediately stands, without provoking attacks of opportunity.

PART SIX: HIGH SPEED WAGON CHASE

This encounter only occurs if the agents of the Crimson Codex successfully move the stone to their wagon in the cellar before the PCs succeed in capturing it. This encounter may also occur if the PCs wait until the next evening before making their move against the Crimson Codex safe house, but are watching the house and are able to intervene.

The slam of wooden doors and the rumble of wagon wheels signal that the search for the ebon tableau has become a chase. There well-dressed men flee into the night, their wagon moving at a high rate of speed toward the rising masts of the docks.

The drivers are pushing the horses and the wagon is moving with a base speed of 40 feet per move action through the cramped and narrow back streets of Stormreach. If it becomes clear that they are being followed, or after five rounds, they move onto one of the giant-sized thoroughfares and force the horses to hustle (120 feet a round). The wagon must travel 2000 feet to get to the docks. After they get to the docks, they jump out and attempt to carry the stone onto a waiting ship. Three rounds later, the crew pulls up the gangplank and sets sail. The PCs have until then to catch them.

Creatures: The number of foes in the wagon varies with the situation. If the Codex is moving the stone of their own accord, all the agents and Celemona are present. If the chase occurs as a result of a botched attempt on the safe house, then Celemona is not present (and at higher APLs, neither is one of the agents). In each case, all the combat statistics are provided in Part Five. The wagon itself is pulled by a team of four heavy horses (*MM* 273), unless the PCs have previously slain some of them while entering the house.

Development: If the PCs killed all four of the horses upon entering the safe house, the agents start running on foot and leave the wagon behind.

ENDING THE ADVENTURE

Once the PCs have either secured the *ebon tableau* or lost it forever, they must decide how to proceed. In addition to dealing with the Sea Devils, individual PCs must also resolve any secret missions undertaken on behalf of an Obscura.

READING THE STONE

Any PC that carefully peruses the *ebon tableau* notes that the writing seems to have changed, as now the Common script flows across its face. While in the possession of the PCs, it reads as follows (Handout 3):

"On the shore of the Thelani-kissed mere, and beyond the passage of ancestors, lies the Well of Woe.

"Flame is within—newborn and weakened—but still no lamb to slaughter.

"Hesitate not. Resist greed and fear. Its death is the first gateway to the kingdom of the dreamer and those who walk in shadows are to be the princes of a new age."

SUCCESS

If the PCs are able to recover the *ebon tableau* from the agents of the Crimson Codex, and they return it to the sahuagin, they receive this ending.

After throwing the shell into water you wait upon the shadowed shoreline for nearly an hour before the water gives way to the sea devils. Nearly a dozen of the scaled fish men cautiously approach. The leader, a female covered in great designs formed of scars moves forward to place her clawed hands upon the stone. "You have done well, Children of the Shadows," she says with a voice that bubbles like the foam of the sea. "Now I will bond you to use, that our alliance will never be forgotten." She pulls forth a bowl into which she dribbles a handful of crushed ingredients the least of which include some her own saliva and blood. Dipping a claw into the mixture she gestures you closer.

High priestess Kupsil performs a ritual whereupon she brutally, and permanently, scars each of the PCs' left shoulder while muttering prayers to Shargon. In the case of warforged, their metal shoulder is etched with the acid of the ritual. Refusal is looked upon with silent disdain, but causes no rift with the sahuagin who assume such PCs to be weak and squeamish. Those who agree to the ritual gain the Mark of the Regvagu story object.

After the ritual, the sahuagin take the stone and return to the waters. They offer no thanks. Such things are for the weak and are gobbled upon by the Devourer.

For the service to the Cabal, each PC gains the following event treasure: potion of cure light wounds (CL 1), vial of antitoxin, and a thunderstone.

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.

FAILURE

If the PCs have failed, they may choose not to contact the sahuagin at all. This effectively ends the event the same as if they had summoned the sea devils. If they fail, but still contact the sahuagin, proceed as below.

After throwing the shell into water you wait upon the shadowed shoreline for nearly an hour before the water gives way to the sea devils. Nearly a dozen of the scaled fish men cautiously approach. The leader, a female covered in great designs formed of scars moves forward to place her clawed hands upon the stone but realizes it is missing. "You have failed us, Children of the Shadows," she says with a voice that bubbles like the foam of the sea. "Now it will be war against the surface and all the weak will be fed to Shargon's great hunger. Go now. When next we meet, I will feast upon your flesh."

PCs that are part of parties that fail do not receive the Mark of the Regvagu story object.

RESOLVING OBSCURA SECRET MISSIONS

Any PC that completes the secret mission given to them by their Obscura at the beginning of the adventure should receive the Obscura Reward 1 story object. Here is a summary of what must be done to receive this reward.

- ✖ *Children of Xoriat*: There can be no witnesses to the PCs assault on the Crimson Codex safe house. This means that not only must Celemona Ir'Cande not survive, but all of her agents must also die. If the assault takes place in such a manner that it is more or less entirely unnoticed, all of the servants in the servant's quarters on the first floor must also be killed. This goal is mutually exclusive with the goal of the Mourners of Yore.
- ✖ *The Defiance*: Members of the Defiance need only copy down all the writing on the stone before giving it over to the sahuagin. Recovering the notes in the library of the Crimson Codex safe house accomplishes the same goal if they are handed over to the Defiance exclusively, as the Codex agents have already detailed the script upon the stone during their work.
- ✖ *Instruments of Change*: The PCs who have this goal must acquire the harp owned by Celemona Ir'Cande from the conservatory in the Crimson Codex safe house and give it to Hes. If they do so, his allegiance can be bought and he will join the Cabal.
- ✖ *Mourners of Yore*: To succeed in this mission, the PCs must capture Celemona Ir'Cande alive and deliver her to their Obscura for questioning. This goal is mutually exclusive with the goal of the Children of Xoriat.

ADVENTURE QUESTIONS

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

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

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

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

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

1. How did the PCs deal with the skum slavers?
 - a. The PCs easily through down their enemies.
 - b. The PCs need to be saved by the crew and Dilmoolgha, or all would have been carried away.
 - c. All was lost and the adventure ended with a watery grave.
2. How went the PCs' meeting with Burgundy Clor?
 - a. They somehow managed to avoid imprisonment.
 - b. The talked their way out of beating and calmly accepted their fate.
 - c. They fought till the last PC and woke up bloody and bruised, behind bars.
 - d. Beyond all odds they slew Clor and his men and liberated the slave pens.
 - e. The PCs never got this far.
3. How did the PCs react to the prison bullies?
 - a. They ignored them and never lifted a fist.
 - b. They schived the rats and left their bodies to rot as an example to the other prisoners.
 - c. The stood up to them and the bullies backed down.
 - d. They tried to intervene, but the bullies beat their heads in.
 - e. The PCs never got this far.
4. Which best describes the battle in the Ring?

- a. There ferocious animals were no match for battle hardened thugs like the PCs who killed all their foes.
 - b. The bloodthirsty PCs killed not only their foes, but the other animals, other prisoners, or anything else that stood in their way.
 - c. The PCs smartly allowed others to die in their place and went around their foes in order to escape.
 - d. Even starving kittens would have been too much for the party. The beasts easily defeated the PCs.
 - e. The PCs never got this far.
5. What occurred in the Crimson Codex safe house?
 - a. The PCs kicked the door in and slaughtered everyone, leaving behind no living witnesses.
 - b. The PCs used stealth and avoided combat when possible in order to steal the *ebon tableau*.
 - c. The agents of the Crimson Codex out fought the PCs and spelled doom for our evil heroes.
 - d. The agents of the Crimson Codex fled resulting in a high-speed wagon chase, which the PCs won.
 - e. The agents of the Crimson Codex fled resulting in a high-speed wagon chase, which the PCs lost.
6. Did the PCs retrieve the *ebon tableau* for the sahuagin?
 - a. Yes.
 - b. No.
7. Did the PCs recruit anyone into the Cabal of Shadows?
 - a. The bought Hes's allegiance.
 - b. They won over Sixfinger Jin.
 - c. They forced some other poor sucker to join up.
 - d. More than one soul was corrupted for evil.
 - e. The PCs felt it was better to murder any witnesses rather than expand their circle of friends.
8. Rate the players' role-playing (while keeping in mind limitations of convention time restrictions)?
 - a. Excellent, they should all be on the silver screen.
 - b. Good, you have a fun time.
 - c. Fair, someone used a funny voice.
 - d. Poor, they rolled some dice and ignored chances to role-play.

STORY OBJECTS

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

and the online reporting to grant a character a particular story object. The story object then is reported with the adventure questions, and appears on the character's online character record after the session is reported.

The Sahuagin Stone has three Story Objects, each connected to events and items in the adventure. It's possible for a character to have two of the following Story Objects. Let the Player pick which two to pick if he or she has earned all three.

If a PC is able to complete their secret Obscura mission, give them the following Story Object.

OBSCURA REWARD 1

Cert ID: EXCS01

You have succeeded an Obscura mission. Your reward depends upon your Obscura.

Children of Xoriat: Your Obscura wishes to be well equipped for the coming war. You receive a 500 gp discount on one magic weapon.

Defiance: Your Obscura shares some of the captured information with you. You receive a +2 circumstance bonus to Knowledge skill checks made concerning the *Caldyn Fragments*.

Instruments of Change: Due to your new connections, while in Stormreach you have access to first and second level Adept spells cast at 7th-level, provided you have time seek out Hes to cast them.

Mourners of Yore: Your Obscura hopes that you'll be well prepared to build a new home in Xen'drik and thus helps you find the equipment you need. You may purchase one potion from the *DMG* at x2 cost instead of the normal campaign price. It does not affect the cost of crafted potions.

If the PCs were able to take the papers in the Crimson Codex Library, they get the following Story Object.

KNOW YOUR ENEMY

Cert ID: EXCS02

You've uncovered information about another faction attempting to unravel the mysteries of the *Caldyn Fragments*. After pursuing captured documents, you now have significant knowledge of the Crimson Codex's inner workings. You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to any Knowledge check made that concerns that faction. In addition, you gain the same bonus to Bluff and Disguise checks made to pass yourself off as a member of the Crimson Codex.

If the PCs were able to return the *ebon tableau* clan Regvagu, they get the following Story Object.

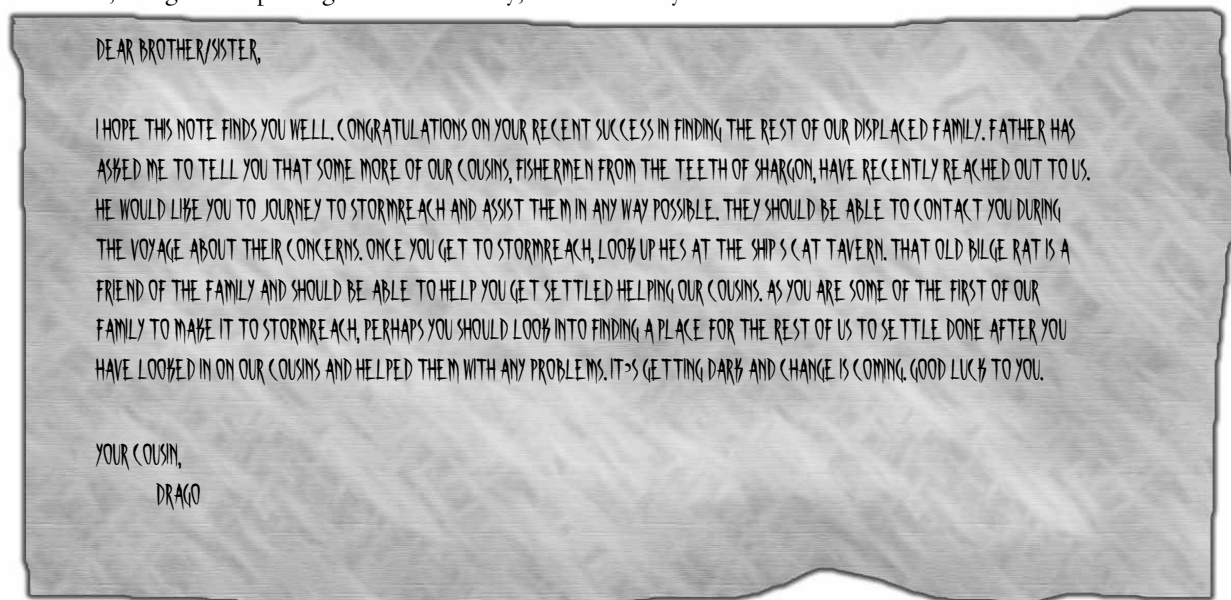
MARK OF THE REGVAGU

Cert ID: EXCS03

High priestess Kupsil of the sahuagin clan Regvagu has bound you to the clan in a blood scarification ritual that has marked your left shoulder. This scar is filled with the magic of the Devourer and once per adventure you may spend one action point to activate its power as a standard action that provokes attacks of opportunity. When you activate it, you are targeted by a *cloak of the sea* (*Spell Compendium 48*) cast at 16th-level.

HANDOUT 1

This note, along with a passenger ticket for today, was found in your sealed room.



HANDOUT 2: OBSCURA ORDERS

Have each player secretly write down their membership in an Obscura, if any, and then provide them with the appropriate handout. These are SECRET orders and should only be shown to players who PCs are in the listed Obscura.

CHILDREN OF XORIAT

You are contacted privately by a member of your Obscura in one of Sharn's dark alleyways. Your contact informs you that you will be sent to Stormreach on a mission for the Cabal. While you should do your best to fulfill the needs of the Cabal's mission, the Children of Xoriat have become worried that the Cabal is not the only faction operating on Xen'drik.

The Cabal will be asking you to retrieve an item for a clan of sahuagin. The Children are relatively certain, having tortured several captives until they died and for sometime even after, that another secret faction has laid claim to this possession of the sahuagin that the Cabal hopes to ally with. If this is true, it could precipitate a war against any enemy that the Cabal is not yet prepared for. You must leave NO witnesses in the opposing faction to your recovery of the stone. No one, besides your allies, can know that the Cabal of Shadows recovered the stone for the sahuagin. Anyone that might be a member of an opposing faction must taste your blade. Leave no one behind to identify you.

THE DEFIANCE

Within moments of the ritual of initiation into the Cabal in Sharn, a member of your Obscura pulled you into a private meeting room. Your contact informed you that soon you would be sent to Stormreach on a mission for the Cabal. The Cabal has few operatives in Stormreach as of yet, so you will be part of an advance team. While there you will be brokering a deal to ally the Cabal with a clan of sahuagin that the Defiance has previously failed to gain the aid of.

The reason the Defiance seeks to gain their aid is that the clan in question unknowing holds a piece of the *Caldyn Fragments* upon a holy relic known as the *ebon tableau*. The sahuagin have asked our aid, as the relic has been stolen. While it will be necessary that you return the relic to them in order to cement our alliance, you must obtain a detail transcription of the writing upon the stone before you do so. Once you have done so, there is no reason to tell them that we no also hold the secrets written upon the relic.

INSTRUMENTS OF CHANGE

After all others have left the secret hall in Sharn where you underwent your ritual of initiation to join the Cabal of Shadows, a priest of the Traveler and a member of your Obscura bid you stay a while. He told you that you would be sent on a mission for the Cabal in Stormreach very soon. The Cabal does not have much influence on Xen'drik yet, so you will be sent to expand the faction's control. In particular, your Obscura has arranged for a local priest of the Traveler named Hes to aid you on your mission. In addition to whatever else you are doing in Stormreach for the Cabal, the Instruments of Change require that you recruit Hes not only into the Cabal, but also into your Obscura. The Instruments know Hes's secret. He is not only a priest of the Traveler, but a changling and a wererat! Do whatever you need to do to win him over to the Instruments of Change.

While not specifically part of your mission, be aware of anyone else that might be useful members of the Cabal. Given the few operatives available on Xen'drik, converts are needed.

MOURNERS OF YORE

Following your ritual of initiation into the Cabal in Sharn, a member of your Obscura invited to a private meal where they told several secrets. Your contact claimed that you would shortly be sent to Stormreach to expand the influence of the Cabal on Xen'drik. Will be asked to aid a group of sahuagin from Shargon's Teeth in the recovery of a stolen artifact. The rest of the Cabal suspects simple thievery by the sahuagins' rivals, but the Mourners of Yore know that the Cabal is not the first secret faction to have gone there. There is a sect of scholars calling themselves the Crimson Codex who have already arrived and set up a series of safe houses for their members. It is likely that these scholars have stolen the item in question and have taken it to one of their safe houses.

The Mourners wish to subvert this system of safe houses to their own uses and thus, if indeed the Crimson Codex is revealed as the target of your search for this mission, you must capture the leader of the safe house where they have stored the sahuagins' relic. This agent of an enemy sect must be brought back ALIVE that they can be properly motivated to reveal their secrets.

HANDOUT 3

