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STIRRING THE EMBERS

A DUNGEONS & DRAGONS[®] *LIVING
FORGOTTEN REALMS* ADVENTURE

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All is not well in the Great Port of Tarmalune and no one speaks of it. People are disappearing toward some fell purpose and you are next. A double-length *Living Forgotten Realms* adventure set in Tarmalune for characters levels 1-4. It is recommended that you play the Embers of Dawn mini-campaign adventures in sequential order with one character for the best enjoyment and play possibilities within the mini-campaign, but it is not required.

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS[®] rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Andy Collins, Rob Heinsoo, and James Wyatt.

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Most likely you ordered this adventure as part of an RPGA event, or you received it from your organizer. To play this adventure and receive rewards for it, 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 enrolled in the Wizards Play Network (or WPN for short). Information on enrolling in the program can be found at www.wizards.com/wpn. The person who sanctions the event, called the organizer, is in charge of making sure the event is sanctioned before play, runs smoothly on the date sanctioned, and gets reported back to the RPGA in a timely manner. The person who runs the game is called the table Dungeon Master (or usually just DM). Sometimes (and almost all the time in the cases of home events) the organizer is also the table DM. You don't have to be enrolled in the Wizards Play Network to run this adventure if you are not the organizer.

By sanctioning and reporting this adventure you accomplish a couple of things. First, it is an official game, tracked under your play history. Second, DMs gain rewards for sanctioned RPGA play if they are members of the DM REWARDS program. DMing this adventure is worth one (1) point.

This adventure retires from RPGA-sanctioned play on December 31 2012.

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PREPARING FOR PLAY

In order to play this adventure, you'll need copies of the following D&D 4th Edition rulebooks: *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*. Any other rules referenced in this adventure will be noted in the **New Rules Items** section at the end of the adventure.

Throughout this adventure, text in bold italics provides player information for you to paraphrase or read aloud when appropriate. Information on nonplayer characters (NPCs) and monsters appear in abbreviated form in the adventure text.

Along with this adventure, you'll find a RPGA Session Tracking sheet. If you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, complete and turn in this sheet to your organizer directly after play.

READING MONSTER STAT BLOCKS

Most of the information should be easy to understand, as it mirrors the information presented in the *Monster Manual*. Attacks may have a letter next to them designating the type: M for melee, R for ranged, C for close, and A for area. A lower-case letter (used only in some melee and ranged attacks) denotes that the attack can be used as a basic attack.

IMPORTANT DM INFORMATION

As the DM of the session, you have the most important role in facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You take the words on these pages and make them come alive. The outcome of a fun game session often creates stories that live well beyond the play at the table. Always follow this golden rule when you DM for a group:

Make decisions and adjudications that enhance the fun of the adventure when possible.

To reinforce this golden rule, keep in mind the following:

- **You are empowered to make adjustments to the adventure and make decisions about how the group interacts with the world of this adventure.** This is especially important and applicable outside of combat encounters, but feel free to use the "scaling the encounter" advice (usually for adjusting to different-sized groups) to adjust combat encounters for groups that are having too easy or too hard of a time in an adventure.
- **Don't make the adventure too easy or too difficult for a group.** Never being challenged makes for a boring game, and being overwhelmed makes for a frustrating game. Gauge the experience of the players (not the characters) with the game, try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to give each of them the experience they're after when they play D&D. Give everyone a "chance to shine."
- **Be mindful of pacing, and keep the game session moving along appropriately.** Watch for stalling, as play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish the adventure too early; provide them with a full play experience. *Living Forgotten Realms* adventures are designed to be played within 3.5 - 4 hours; try to be very aware

of running long or short. Adjust the pacing accordingly.

- **Give the players appropriate hints so they can make informed choices about how to interact with their environment.** Players should always know when enemies are affected by conditions and are bloodied. They should be given clues about how to interact with their surroundings so they can tackle skill challenges, combats, and puzzles without getting too frustrated over lack of information. This helps to encourage immersion in the adventure and gives players “little victories” for figuring out a good choice from a clue.

In short, being the DM for a *Living Forgotten Realms* adventure isn't about following the adventure's text word-for-word; it's about creating a fun, challenging game environment for the players. Chapters 1 and 2 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* are filled with good information about being a DM for a D&D game.

APPROPRIATE CHARACTER LEVELS

This adventure is designed for player characters (PCs) levels 1 - 4. Characters that fall outside of the level range may not participate in the adventure. Make certain to check the levels of the PCs before beginning play to ensure that they are the proper level.

Each adventure has a low-level version and a high-level version. The low level is meant for a group whose levels, on average, fall in the lower levels of the adventure's level spread. The high level is meant for a group whose levels, on average, fall in the higher levels of the adventure's level spread.

A group may decide to play the high level when their levels are more suited to the low level if everyone in the group agrees to do so; however, some of the rewards may not be available to them. Conversely, a group may decide to play the low level when their levels are more suited to the high level if everyone in the group agrees; however, some of the rewards may be less than what they'd ideally want from the adventure.

Reading the Numbers: Each encounter has a level and sometimes other values (such as XP or skill check DCs) listed with two numbers divided by a slash. The number before the slash is always the value for the low-level version of the adventure; the number after the slash is the value for the high-level version of the adventure.

FAILING TO DEFEAT AN ENCOUNTER

If a group fails to defeat an encounter - that is, if they have to flee from a combat because it's too tough or they reach the predetermined number of failures in a skill challenge before reaching success - they are only awarded half experience points (round down) for the encounter. If they manage to tackle the encounter later and defeat it, award them the other half of the experience points for the encounter.

CHARACTER DEATH

If a PC dies during the course of the adventure, the player of that character and the rest of the group have two options, provided that they have access to the Raise Dead ritual (either a PC has it and can use it or the characters return to civilization), they have access to the body, and it is possible to return the dead PC to life.

- **Pay the component cost for the ritual.** If the group chooses this option, the cost should be divided evenly among the group (500 gp for heroic tier, 5,000 gp for paragon tier, and 50,000 gp for epic tier). Using a source outside the group to cast the ritual costs 20% more than the component cost. Total cost when using an outside source is 600 gp for heroic tier, 6,000 gp for paragon tier, and 60,000 gp for epic tier. A PC that dies and chooses this method of return gains full (or half, if the party was defeated) experience points from the encounter in which the character died, but no experience points for any encounters that were missed while the character was dead. If there are encounters remaining, the PC continues to earn experience as normal, and receives a normal cut of the rewards at the end of the adventure.
- **Invoke the Death Charity clause.** If the group cannot afford to pay for the ritual (or doesn't desire to do so), the PC can choose to return to life at the end of the adventure. Doing so forfeits all rewards (including treasure and story rewards) earned for the adventure except experience points gained prior to the character's death (the character receives the experience point award for the encounter in which they died). The PC cannot participate in the same adventure a second time.

MILESTONES

No matter if the characters succeed or fail in an encounter, they reach a milestone if it is the second encounter they've had since the start of the adventure or their last extended rest. **Encounters that do not give**

out experience points do not count for purposes of reaching a milestone. Make certain to mention this information to the players when applicable, as it gives each PC another action point and affects how some magic item powers are used.

LASTING EFFECTS

Sometimes a PC suffers a lasting effect that isn't easily resolved before the end of the adventure. The two most common lasting effects are the death penalty and diseases.

Death Penalty: When a character dies and is brought back to life by the Raise Dead ritual, that character suffers a -1 penalty to all attack rolls, skill checks, saving throws, and ability checks until they have reached three milestones. The player should simply record the adventure where the character died on their adventure log, and then keep a running tally of milestones reached. Once the PC has reached the third milestone since coming back to life, they no longer suffer the penalty.

Diseases: Diseases take hold of a character and last until they are cured or they reach their final state. Normally, a PC makes an Endurance check after each extended rest to see if the disease improves, worsens, or maintains its current condition. At the end of the adventure, any character suffering from a disease must resolve the disease to either its cure or final state, using the necessary number of extended rests to do so. Other characters adventuring with the PC may decide to aid the afflicted character during this time. If a disease reaches its final state and the PC can get a Cure Disease ritual cast (and pay the appropriate costs), they may do so.

Other Lasting Effects: Other effects that last beyond the scope of the adventure should be resolved at the DM's discretion. Any effects that last for a specific period of time (that end after a certain number of days or a certain number of extended rests) should be resolved at the end of the adventure in which the effect was obtained (unless otherwise specified). Effects that use some sort of adventuring benchmark of unknown duration (such as milestones) should be recorded on the character's logsheet and tracked across adventures.

THE EMBERS OF DAWN

Mini-Campaign Levels 1-4; Set in Returned Abeir

This adventure is Part 1 of the mini-campaign called "The Embers of Dawn." A mini-campaign is essentially a series of tightly linked adventures that assume characters experience them in sequential order.

It is highly recommended that new 1st-level characters be created for this mini-campaign, and that they are played exclusively within the mini-campaign until it reaches its conclusion. The Embers of Dawn mini-campaign will last for 6 double-length adventures, one debuting each month from August 2009 through January 2010. At the conclusion of the mini-campaign, characters successful through the adventures should be either 4th or 5th level.

While not necessary for enjoyment of the mini-campaign, players might consider creating characters from Tarmalune or one of the other Windrise Ports. New options for characters from Tarmalune and the Windrise Ports, including background benefits and regional feats, are featured in *Dragon* 376 in the article "Adventurers of the Realms: Tarmalune and the Windrise Ports." This content is available to all D&D Insider subscribers. To become a D&D Insider subscriber, visit www.wizards.com/insider.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Lekaral, a second son of wealthy old family, left Tarmalune because of disagreements with his older brother Jekaral. He fell in with a cult devoted to Achazar, the Raging Flame, who is a Dawn Titan. He rose through the ranks, learning its fell secrets and was eventually sent back to Tarmalune to carry out a magical experiment in hopes of rousing Achazar, a Dawn Titan. By rousing Achazar, Lekaral hopes to steal some his power for himself and advance himself further in the ranks of the cult.

For this magical experiment to succeed, individuals who possess trace amounts of dragon blood from the rebellious Dawn Titan steeds are needed. Using an old privilege granted to his family, Lekaral started press gangs operating in Tarmalune and siphoned off the people required for this experiment. Over the course of a year, he has refined the experiments and now dares to carry out the ritual, stirring the embers of the Raging Flame, and rousing Achazar the Dawn Titan.

DM'S INTRODUCTION

The PCs arrive in Tarmalune and all but one of them is traveling together. The group comes upon an altercation involving a press gang and the lone PC. After defeating the press gang, the PCs discover a nearby wagon and locked inside are people who the press gang has already rounded up.

As the PCs investigate, a rain of fire descends on the area, setting the wagon aflame. The draft animals bolt, taking the flaming wagon on a harrowing trip through

the streets. The PCs attempt to stop the wagon and save the people locked inside it.

After the wagon is stopped and the people inside saved, a Firequencher and a Vigilant squad appear on the scene to put out any remaining fires and to restore order. They question the PCs about the events leading up to their meeting and ask them to escort the injured to Halagothra the Healer.

When the PCs arrive at Halagothra's mansion, they meet her and she performs her 'laying on hands' on the injured and heals them. She tells the PCs about the press gang activities throughout the city that so far has remained below the attention of the city watch, and asks the PCs to put a stop to it, offering a suggestion on where to start. She asks them to return to them if they find out any more information.

The PCs go to The Black Boot, a notorious sailors' tavern, and The Golden Teacup, a hot new gambling club, to find out who is behind the press gangs. Their investigation leads to a Tarn-trader named Elalaran.

As the PCs go to confront Elalaran in his dockside warehouse, they are in turn confronted by his sellswords. After defeating the sellswords, the PCs gain entry into the warehouse where Elalaran waits for them.

With Elalaran defeated, the PCs discover the press gangs' prisoners. The prisoners relate to the PCs that three of them were taken by a group of robed people who kept their faces hidden. One of the robed people used a sparkling crystal to look at them before taking them away. If Elalaran or any of his sellswords are left alive, they confirm this. They mention those taken by the robed people are special, but they have no specifics.

The PCs return to Halagothra to report their findings. She asks them to find the three people still missing, find out who are the group of robed people and what are they doing. This ends Part One.

The PCs resume the adventure and their investigation leads them to Haven Tower to uncover who is the true owner of the warehouse. The PCs discover the warehouse is owned by a man named Lekaral, who is from an old-money family whose resources and wealth were drained away through mismanagement and misfortune.

The PCs confront Lekaral in his mansion, a tall stone building showing signs of age and lack of care. Lekaral's double invites the PCs in and is a cordial host. At some point, Lekaral's double panics and orders his servants to attack the PCs.

After defeating the double, the PCs explore the strange mansion/former sanitarium, seeking the prisoners and the real Lekaral. The prisoners are in a strange and guarded chamber, strapped down to tables and all of whom are catatonic. The PCs discover cryptic

notes indicating the prisoners were subjected to bizarre and mysterious experiments, all of which have to do with the Raging Flame, the hundred-foot tall pillar of fire that burns constantly in the center of Tarmalune. One prisoner is missing and notes show they are undergoing an experiment this very moment.

Lekaral and the cultists are on the roof of mansion and as the PCs confront them, a sudden storm strikes. As the storm rages, the PCs do battle with cultists and the hazards the storm poses.

At the adventure's end, the PCs receive a hook for the second module in the series along with their rewards for this one.

IN SLUMBER REMAIN QUEST CARD

Some PCs may have the "In Slumber Remain" Quest card in their stack. These PCs are looking to complete three tasks in order to participate in the second quest adventure, *Stir Not the World's Doom*. The tome they seek in order to complete task one can be found in Lekaral's laboratory during Encounter 11. If a PC recovers and later reads this tome, tell the player to record their successful completion of task one on their log.

PLAYER'S INTRODUCTION

The PCs have just arrived in the city of Tarmalune, often called the Great Port, having come here by ship. Start off with character introductions, asking for their name, a brief physical description and why they are here.

After character introductions, select one PC to be alone, with the rest traveling together as a group. Alternately you may ask for a volunteer to be the lone PC; the lone PC is the target of the press gang.

Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

The piercing cry of a lone seagull, wheeling overhead in the morning sun, echoes off the tall but narrow stone buildings that line both sides of the broad cobblestone street. As you make your way further into the city of Tarmalune from the docks, the tang of the salt air from the opaque green sea gives way to the unpleasant odors of civilization. The street you are on is choked with wagons, carts, people and mounts all carefully avoiding the slimy open drainage trough running down its center.

As you take a detour through a refuse strewn alley around a carry wagon accident and its crowd of gawking onlookers, you come upon an altercation involving a group of sailors and <point to one of the players while giving a brief description of their character>.

COMBAT ENCOUNTER 1: PRESSED

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 1/2 (500/625 XP)

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures at the low tier:

4 Human Press Gang Ruffians (R)

3 Human Press Gang Leaders (L)

This encounter includes the following creatures at the high tier:

4 Human Press Gang Ruffians (R)

4 Human Press Gang Leaders (L)

The PCs grouped together have taken a shortcut through an alley when they come upon the lone PC being accosted by the press gang.

As the adventurers enter the area, read:

“Here now, don’t think of it as forced servitude but rather think of it as being presented with an opportunity for new and unique experiences, experiences you wouldn’t normally undertake on your own if you had the choice. So, come along quietly or else you get crack alongside your head.”

The speaker smacks a club in his hand for emphasis, while the other sailors chuckle at his words. Several of them notice you, but give you a dismissive glance before returning their attention to their intended victim.

Description of the press gang:

- All are garbed as sailors and since the PCs recently arrived via ship, they can readily identify this.
- Half are armed with belaying pins (clubs)
- Half are armed with maces, a brace of four daggers and armored in leather

FEATURES OF THE AREA

This area has a few important features.

Illumination: Daylight (bright illumination).

Rain-water Barrels: The rain-water barrels are treated as covering terrain. It costs 2 squares of movement to enter the square or 1 square of movement with a successful DC 10/14 Acrobatics or Athletics skill check. Tipping over the rain-water barrels requires a DC 10 Strength check and the barrels no longer are treated as covering terrain. In addition, the barrel can be

used to knock an adjacent enemy prone with a successful Str vs. Fort attack.

Refuse Pile: The refuse pile counts as challenging terrain. It costs 2 squares of movement and a DC 10 Acrobatics check to move through the refuse pile square. If the Acrobatics check fails, you fall prone in the refuse pile square, end your move action.

TACTICS

The leaders move to flank PCs gaining combat advantage. They use their dazing strike in the first round of combat, most likely against the lone PC.

The ruffians help the leaders flank and against well armored PCs, they assist a leader’s attack.

Once all the leaders are bloodied, they maneuver to a good escape route while still fighting and if things look bad (DM discretion), they flee.

Once all the leaders are defeated or are fleeing, any remaining ruffians flee.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

Four PCs: Remove one human press gang leader.

Six PCs: Add one human press gang leader.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The combat ends when all of the press gang is defeated or have fled. Start Encounter 2 immediately afterwards.

If the PCs are later able to question a press gang member, they relate the following:

- Malkave, one of the leaders of the gang, who is not here, told them they were hired to grab people in the Fishstink ward for pressing them into service aboard the ships.
- The sailor does not know where Malkave is right now nor does he know what kind of arrangements this leader made. The sailor knows Malkave frequents The Black Boot, a notorious sailor’s tavern. (If the PCs search for him, they do not find him).
- Malkave provided the wagon and animals they are using.

If the group of PCs does not intervene on the lone PC’s behalf, the press gang subdues the lone PC and selects another PC to capture. Continue until all the PCs are captured or the gang is defeated.

If all the PCs are captured, feel free to improvise the rest of the adventure.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The PCs receive 100 / 125 experience points each for defeating the press gang or forcing them to flee.

TREASURE

There is no treasure found in this encounter.

ENCOUNTER 1: PRESS GANG

STATISTICS (LOW LEVEL)

Human Press Gang Member		Level 2 Minion
Medium natural humanoid		XP 31
Initiative +0	Senses Perception +0	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 15; Fortitude 13, Reflex 11, Will 11; see also <i>mob rule</i>		
Speed 6		
m Club (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+6 vs. AC; 4 damage.		
Mob Rule		
The human press gang member gains a +2 power bonus to all defenses while at least two other human press gang members are within 5 squares of it.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common	
Str 14 (+2)	Dex 10 (+0)	Wis 10 (+0)
Con 12 (+3)	Int 9 (−1)	Cha 11 (+0)
Equipment club		

Human Press Gang Leader		Level 2 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid		XP 125
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +1	
HP 37; Bloodied 18		
AC 16; Fortitude 12, Reflex 14, Will 12		
Speed 6		
m Mace (standard; at-will) Weapon		
+4 vs. AC; 1d8 + 1 damage, and the human press gang leader shifts 1 square.		
R Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Ranged 5/10; +6 vs. AC; 1d4 + 3 damage.		
Dazing Strike (standard; encounter) Weapon		
Requires mace; +4 vs. AC; 1d8+1 damage, the target is dazed until the end of the human press gang leader's next turn, and the human press gang leader shifts 1 square.		
Combat Advantage		
The human press gang leader deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee and ranged attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common	
Skills Stealth +9, Streetwise +7, Thievery +9		
Str 12 (+2)	Dex 17 (+4)	Wis 11 (+1)
Con 13 (+2)	Int 10 (+1)	Cha 12 (+2)
Equipment leather armor, mace, 4 daggers		

ENCOUNTER 1: PRESS GANG STATISTICS (HIGH LEVEL)

Human Press Gang Member		Level 2 Minion
Medium natural humanoid		XP 31
Initiative +0	Senses Perception +0	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 15; Fortitude 13, Reflex 11, Will 11; see also <i>mob rule</i>		
Speed 6		
m Club (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+6 vs. AC; 4 damage.		
Mob Rule		
The human press gang member gains a +2 power bonus to all defenses while at least two other human press gang members are within 5 squares of it.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common	
Str 14 (+2)	Dex 10 (+0)	Wis 10 (+0)
Con 12 (+3)	Int 9 (−1)	Cha 11 (+0)
Equipment club		

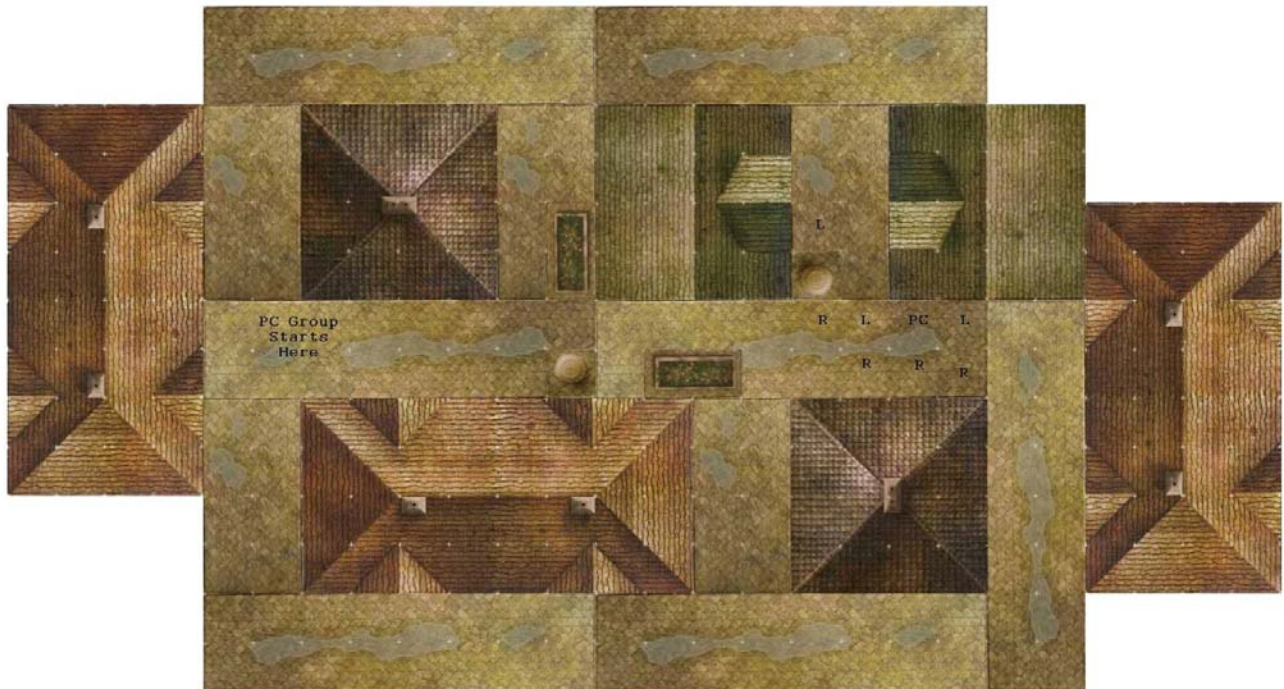
Human Press Gang Leader		Level 2 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid		XP 125
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +1	
HP 37; Bloodied 18		
AC 16; Fortitude 12, Reflex 14, Will 12		
Speed 6		
m Mace (standard; at-will) Weapon		
+4 vs. AC; 1d8 + 1 damage, and the human press gang leader shifts 1 square.		
R Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Ranged 5/10; +6 vs. AC; 1d4 + 3 damage.		
Dazing Strike (standard; encounter) Weapon		
Requires mace; +4 vs. AC; 1d8+1 damage, the target is dazed until the end of the human press gang leader's next turn, and the human press gang leader shifts 1 square.		
Combat Advantage		
The human press gang leader deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee and ranged attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common	
Skills Stealth +9, Streetwise +7, Thievery +9		
Str 12 (+2)	Dex 17 (+4)	Wis 11 (+1)
Con 13 (+2)	Int 10 (+1)	Cha 12 (+2)
Equipment leather armor, mace, 4 daggers		

ENCOUNTER 1: PRESSED MAP

TILE SETS NEEDED

DU2:Streets of Shadow

Wood Barrel / Floating Crate	1x1	x2
Building / Sewer T	4x4	x2
Building / Sewer Outfall	4x4	x2
Large Building / More Sewer	4x8	x3
Flower Box / Sewer Bridge	2x1	x2
Street / Sewer Straight	4x2	x5
Long Street / Long Sewer	8x2	x7



ENCOUNTER 2: RUNAWAY

SKILL CHALLENGE LEVEL 1 / 2, COMPLEXITY 2 (200 / 250 XP)

SETUP

This encounter takes place immediately after Encounter 1 ends. The PCs engage in a skill challenge to free the people trapped inside the covered and locked wagon. Read the following:

You all hear a distressed voice call out, “Hey. Hey you. Help us get out of here.”

The source of the plea comes from the far end of the alley where you make out a completely enclosed hard topped wagon drawn by two weary looking draft horses. From a small opening in the wooden side of the wagon, you spot a hand waving frantically.

“There’s six of us in here and we can’t get out. We’re locked in.”, the voice explains.

The PCs may decide to approach the wagon and investigate or ask questions of the people inside the wagon. They may also decide to hold off on their investigation until they take a short rest or question any of the surviving press gang. Grant the PCs a chance to discuss what they are doing and let them declare their actions. Unless you deem otherwise, there is no time for a short rest (the fire occurs if the PCs decide to do so).

After they decide their actions and before they take them, read the following:

The sky above erupts in a spectacular torrent of flames and balls of fire rain down on the area below, setting anything flammable alight. One particular large fireball lands squarely on the covered wagon, igniting the wood and frightening the horses. The panicked horses bolt in terror, racing off with the flaming wagon and the alarming screams of people trapped inside.

At the DM’s discretion, you can have the players roll for initiative to decide in the order the PCs act or you can go round the table in any order you determine.

The players might ask questions about the environment; describe the city’s streets, the frightened horses and the flaming wagon so that they understand how they can use their skills. Keep the action flowing, until the skill challenge is over.

The following scenes are provided as examples. Feel free to customize them based on what the PCs do, and give hints to the PCs about what skills might be useful if they are having trouble deciding what to do. If a PC wants to use a skill that’s not listed here and you think it is applicable, they need to make a DC 20 / 21 check with that skill to garner a success. Some PCs may conceivably also use powers that reward an automatic success.

SKILL CHALLENGE: RESCUE

Goal: Free the people trapped inside the covered and locked runaway wagon.

Complexity: 2 (6 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: Acrobatics, Athletics, Nature, Thievery

Other Skills: Endurance; if the PCs attack the horses, trying to kill one or more of them, they may make a basic attack, either a ranged or melee as appropriate, against an AC 20 / 21 to garner a success.

Victory: The PCs free the trapped people and escape any serious injury.

Defeat: The PCs free the trapped people, but each PC loses 1 healing surge due to their exertions.

SCENE 1

This scene is appropriate if the PCs attempt to get on the wagon and/or stay on it while it is moving.

The scorching flames wickedly lick at you, as the wagon jostles and tilts threatening to loosen your grip. The frighten horses race around a corner and the wagon fishtails precariously from side to side. The screams of terror from within the covered wagon are joined by the screams of terror from people on the streets as they flee for their very lives.

Acrobatics (DC 10/12): Moving around on the wagon trying to get to the locked door, getting to driver’s seat or something similar. On a failed skill check, a PC makes a saving throw otherwise they are physically injured as the wagon brushes against a nearby building and they lose a healing surge, but stay on the wagon. If PC’s check result is 20 or higher, they receive a +2 bonus to their next Acrobatics check in this skill challenge. If the check result is 5 or less, the PC makes a saving throw otherwise they fall off the wagon.

Athletics (DC 10/12): Jumping on the wagon or grabbing onto it and/or trying to stay on. On a failed skill check, a PC makes a saving throw otherwise they are physically injured as the wagon brushes against a nearby building and they lose a healing surge, but stay on the

wagon. If the PC's check result is 20 or higher, they receive a +2 to their next Athletics check in this skill challenge. If the check result is 5 or less, the PC fails to get or remain on the wagon.

Endurance (DC 10/12): Every time a PC makes an Acrobatics or Athletics check in this scene, they also make this check to resist the flames. If a PC has resist fire, they gain a +5 bonus to the check. If the check result is 20 or higher, they receive a +2 to their next Endurance check in this skill challenge. If a PC's check is 5 or less, they lose a healing surge. This skill check does not count toward a success or failure.

SCENE 2

This scene is appropriate if the PCs try to free the people. With 2 successes in this scene, allow the PCs access to the prisoners, but describe the ride as so dangerous that any attempt to push the chained-up prisoners off the wagon while moving would certainly kill them.

The large padlock on the wagon's rear door bounces and clangs as the wagon passes over the cobblestone streets. The terrified people trapped inside futilely pound on the stout door. Onlookers point and gape at the sight of people hanging precariously on a burning wagon while vocalizing their shock and disbelief.

Athletics (DC 10/12): Try to break the padlock off or break open the door. If the PC's check result is 20 or higher, they receive a +2 bonus to their next Athletics check in this skill challenge. If the check result is 5 or less, the PC receives a -2 penalty to their next Athletics skill check in this skill challenge.

Endurance (DC 10/12): Every time a PC makes an Athletics or Thievery skill check in this scene, they also make this check to resist the flames. If a PC has resist fire, they gain a +5 bonus to the check. If the check result is 20 or higher, they receive a +2 to their next Endurance check in this skill challenge. If a PC's check is 5 or less, they lose a healing surge. This skill check does not count toward a success or failure.

Thievery (DC 10/12): Pick the padlock. If the check result is 20 or higher, the PC receives a +2 bonus to their next Thievery skill check in this skill challenge. If the check result is 5 or less, the PC receives a -2 penalty to their next Thievery skill check in this skill challenge.

SCENE 3

This scene is appropriate if the PCs try to get the draft animals to stop or calm them down.

The horses' eyes are wide with fear as they draw the flaming wagon behind, fanning the flames even more. The wheels rattle loudly as they race over the cobblestone streets and the bone-jarring bumps. People on the street jump to the side to avoid the wagon while expressing both their anger and surprise.

Athletics (DC 10/12): The PC uses brute force to stop the draft horses, break the drawbar, wheels or other mechanisms to stop the wagon. If the check result is 20 or higher, the PC receives a +2 bonus to their next Athletics skill check in this skill challenge. If the check result is 5 or less, the PC receives a -2 penalty to their next Athletics skill check in this skill challenge.

Endurance (DC 10/12): Every time a PC makes an Athletics, Nature or Thievery skill check in this scene, they also make this check to resist the flames. If a PC has resist fire, they gain a +5 bonus to the check. If the check result is 20 or higher, they receive a +2 to their next Endurance check in this skill challenge. If a PC's check is 5 or less, they lose a healing surge. This skill check does not count towards a success or failure.

Nature (DC 10/12): The PC tries to calm the animals or gain control over them. If the check result is 20 or higher, the PC receives a +2 bonus to their next Nature skill check in this skill challenge. If the check result is 5 or less, the PC receives a -2 penalty to their next Nature skill check in this skill challenge.

Thievery (DC 10/12): The PC uses finesse to stop the horses, by cutting the traces or disabling a mechanism to make the wagon stop. If the check result is 20 or higher, the PC receives a +2 bonus to their next Thievery skill check in this skill challenge. If the check result is 5 or less, the PC receives a -2 penalty to their next Thievery skill check in this skill challenge.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The encounter ends when the number of successes for the skill challenge is reached regardless of whether the number of failures was reached first (or when it is obvious to the players that their PCs failed the skill challenge). Whether the PCs succeed or not, they free the trapped people. If applicable, the horses break free of the burning wagon and/or suffer a horrific accident resulting in their deaths. In any event, make it a dramatic ending.

At this point, the PCs may take a short rest if desired and the PCs likely milestone at this point.

Go to Encounter 3.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The PCs receive 40 / 50 experience points each for successfully completing the skill challenge.

TREASURE

There is no treasure found in this encounter.

ENCOUNTER 3: QUENCHED

SETUP

Firequencher (Arcana +12)

Halagothra (Insight +10)

Vigilant Sergeant Hofferan (Insight +7, Intimidate +7)

Teamster Joade (Streetwise +4)

This is a non-challenge encounter.

As the PCs bring the wagon to a halt, a Firequencher, an arcanist who puts out fires in Tarmalune, and a squad of the Vigilant, Tarmalune's police, arrive on the scene to put out any fires and restore order.

A crowd gathers around the spectacle laid out before them of injured people being pulled from a burning wagon and the fiery remains of the wagon itself.

A commanding voice cuts through the din, "By the order of the Lord Speaker, you are to disperse and go about your normal daily business."

A group of people clad in black armor with a silver badge emblazoned on their breastplate and carrying long poles comes into view.

At the same time a deluge of water douses the remnants of the blazing wagon, the source of it being from a short and slender individual, cloaked and cowed in purple robes, who is accompanying the black-armored group.

If questioned, a random onlooker relates the following:

- The people clad in black armor with a silver badge emblazoned on their breastplate are the Vigilant, Tarmalune's police force.
- The person cloaked and cowed in purple robes is a Firequencher, a wizard who specializes in putting out fires in Tarmalune.
- Tarmalune suffers from an inordinate number of fires that spontaneously break out.
- Many people think the fires have to do with the Raging Flame, a 100-foot tall pillar of fire that burns without any obvious fuel source.
- The Raging Flame has been there as long as anyone knows and tales told about it say it is something old, fell and magical.
- They have heard that sometimes people are pressed into service aboard ships, but that it is a thing of the past.

If questioned, the Firequencher relates the following:

- She is a member of the Firequencher Order, often just called the Order.
- The Order is charged with extinguishing fires anywhere in the city.
- The Order also seeks to douse, tame or lessen the Raging Flame, as it is seemingly the cause of the fires that break out spontaneously in the city.
- She refuses to give her name, stating it is important to the Order for individuals to remain anonymous, but she does not elaborate on the reasons.
- The tales told about the Raging Flame are mostly stories, though it is old and obviously magical. Whether it is evil or not is entirely subjective.
- She has heard a few stories about press gangs, but does not know any specifics.

If questioned, Hofferan relates the following:

- The Vigilant are Tarmalune's police force and are charged with ensuring Tarmalune's laws are followed.
- There are press gangs in the city, mostly operating in the Fishstink city ward which is the city's slum.
- The press gangs are known to target newcomers to the city.
- Press gangs are technically allowed to operate under an old city law.
- The Lord Speaker is working on outlawing the press gangs, but it is opposed by certain other city council members, ones that benefit from its practice.

If questioned, the people freed from the wagon relate the following:

- They were captured by a press gang in Fishstink city ward.
- They heard a commotion outside the wagon and one of them took a chance that someone came to help them.
- They did not see the PCs, but only heard them.
- They think the PCs defeated the press gang, but again they did not see anything and only heard something.

The Vigilant question the PCs about their involvement with the press gang, the wagon and the people freed from it.

If the PCs indicate they fought the press gang in the alley:

- The Vigilant detain the PCs and take their statements concerning the fight.
- They take the PCs back to the alley to make sure the PCs are telling the truth.
- If any of the press gang survived and if not prevented somehow, have fled, leaving the alley.
- Barring extraordinary circumstances, such as executing the press gang after they surrendered, the PCs are let off with a warning and are released. Use your discretion.

The Vigilant commandeer a wagon and load the injured on to them. In lieu of a punishment for fighting on the streets, they ask the PCs to escort the wagon to Halagothra's, a healer, while they restore order.

The PCs escort the injured people who they freed from the press gang's wagon to Halagothra, a local healer who can heal by 'laying on hands.'

The wagon moves slowly through the cobblestone streets of Tarmalune with each bump eliciting a painful moan from an injured person. The teamster, whose wagon was commandeered by the Vigilant, remains glum about his situation, but does his best to maneuver your way through the crowded streets.

If questioned, the teamster, Joade, relates the following:

- Halagothra the Healer is famous in Tarmalune and he is surprised the PCs have not heard of her.
- She can lay her hands on an injured person, healing their wounds and diseases.
- She was kidnapped a number of times by evildoers and now lives in a well protected mansion, complete with servants and bodyguards. Many regard her as a city treasure.
- He is concerned that Halagothra does not have many years left to her and wonders what the people will do when she is gone.
- He has heard stories about people being pressed into service aboard ships, but does not know any specifics.

The teamster directs his team through an open gate into a small courtyard past two guards who motion toward a side door.

Pulling up next to the door, a young woman hurries outside while stating loudly, "Come quickly Halagothra. There are injured outside here."

Hobbling after her through the door is an old woman, who is bent with age, and wearing a simple shift.

The old woman gripes, "I know very well when someone shows up at my door there are injured and if I hurry any faster, I am going to fall and hurt myself and then I'll be one of the injured too."

The old woman is Halagothra and she examines each of the injured persons in the wagon. If the PCs try to question her during her examination she tells them to keep out of her way and to be quiet.

Once her examination is complete:

Halagothra places her gnarled hands lightly on the person's injury. Soothing them as they shift uncomfortably under her delicate touch, she furrows her wrinkly brow, staring at the wound for a moment. Miraculously, the wound begins to heal and is replaced with blotchy pink skin.

"That'll go away in a few days", she explains.

If the PCs try to determine how Halagothra works her healing, a DC 10 Arcana check tells them it is obviously magic, but they have no good idea on how it works nor does it work like anything else they have seen or heard about.

If questioned, Halagothra relates the following:

- She does not know the source of her healing powers; she just knows she has only to lay her hands on the person and think about it to heal them.
- She has been kidnapped before by people trying to profit from her healing power and it has always ended badly for them.
- The mansion, guards and servants were given to her by Rathgar Malynd, the battlemaster of the Battle Hounds, a mercenary company. This is to prevent her from getting kidnapped again, of which she is dreadfully tired of happening to her.
- If asked about press gangs, she expresses her concern, stating "It just ain't right and I know because I have been kidnapped twelve times before. Hmmm, maybe it was thirteen."
- She remembers from her youth when press gangs operated openly before a city law was enacted that forced them to curtail their activities.

She questions the PCs about how these people came to be injured. Upon hearing about the press gangs, she asks the PCs to look into this and find out whom taking advantage of these people.

She suggests they start at the notorious sailors' inn, The Black Boot located near Nightmist Lane and Leldar's Ride. She used to work there as a cleaning

woman and knows it to be frequented by all sorts of disreputable seagoing folk.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

If the PCs refuse to escort the injured persons freed from the wagon to Halagothra, allow the PCs settle into a local inn or tavern. A messenger approaches the PCs asking them to seek out Halagothra.

If the PCs refuse Halagothra's request, the PCs receive a visit from the Vigilant who make a similar request to the PCs with hints of monetary rewards and/or dire punishment. If the PCs refuse this offer, the adventure ends. Alter the adventure as appropriate.

Continue with Encounter 4.

TREASURE

There is no treasure found in this encounter.

ENCOUNTER 4: INVESTIGATION

SKILL CHALLENGE LEVEL 1 / 2, COMPLEXITY 2 (200 / 300 XP)

SETUP

Lindelsan the Bartender (Insight +5)

Belyssa the Whaler (Intimidate +5))

Karadandel the Sly (Tiefling) (Bluff +10, Insight +10)

The PCs engage in a skill challenge to find out who is behind the press gangs operating in Tarmalune.

This skill challenge takes place at two locales: The Black Boot and The Golden Teacup.

- In Scene 1, when the PCs make 4 of the 6 successes or 2 of the 3 failures for this skill challenge, divulge the information about the Golden Teacup and the ship captains.
- If you have time, continue to play out Scene 1 allowing the PCs to make skill checks until they are satisfied with their investigations. There are no further successes or failures that count towards the skill challenge.
- If at a convention, keep track of time and if necessary, tell the players their PCs learn nothing else here and the next place to go is the Golden Teacup.
- Continue with Scene 2 where the final success or failure of the skill challenge is determined.
- At the end of the skill challenge, regardless of success or failure, the PCs learn about Elalaran.

After reading the text below, give the players a chance to discuss their strategy for having their PCs find out about the press gangs.

The sun directly overhead shines in the metallic-hued sky as you make your way through the busy streets. The smell of food wafts through the air emanating from “simmer wagons” where food and drink is sold to the hungry and thirsty crowds. Even the bake shops, taverns and inns have walkup windows to serve those looking for sustenance.

You easily spy a large sign bearing a black boot and pause for a moment at the door, waiting for several people to depart the establishment.

The players might ask questions about the environment; describe the people they speak to and the places they

are in so that they understand how they can use their skills.

The following scenes are provided as examples. Feel free to customize them based on what the PCs do, and give hints to the PCs about what skills might be useful if they are having trouble deciding what to do. If a PC wants to use a skill that is not listed here and you think it is applicable, they need to make a DC 20 / 21 check with that skill to garner a success.

SKILL CHALLENGE: REVEALED

Goal: Find out about the press gangs and who is behind it.

Complexity: 2 (6 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: Diplomacy, Intimidate, Streetwise

Other Skills: Endurance

Victory: There is no surprise round in Encounter 5.

Defeat: There is a surprise round in Encounter 5.

SCENE 1

This scene is appropriate if/when the PCs go into The Black Boot.

The Black Boot is packed with sailors all busy eating, drinking, gambling and doing other activities one would associate with sailors being ashore. Pretty young wenches move about the room delivering food and drink while avoiding most of the sailors’ amorous attentions. A large bald man with a several hoop earrings in each ear and a hook for his right hand stands behind the bar filling a mug for a heavily tattooed red-haired woman holding a whaling harpoon.

More than a few patrons eye you suspiciously as you enter, particularly a well-dressed tiefling woman with long honey-blonde hair and mischievous blue eyes.

Bluff (DC 10/12): A PC portrays himself as looking for work as a press gang or interested in procuring pressed people. On a success, relate one or more of the following:

- The place to go to is The Golden Teacup.
- The ship captains are getting pressed people there from a tarn-trader. They have no specifics on the tarn-trader, an independent broker.

On a failure, they receive no information.

Diplomacy (DC 10/12): A PC speaks with the bartender, the tattooed woman (Belyssa the Whaler) or the tiefling woman (Karadandel). On a success, relate one or more of the following:

- There is a shortage of willing people to become crew members aboard ships.
- Press gangs are operating and providing crew for merchants and their ship captains who are expanding their operations. Many of them have ties to city council members.
- The captains that look for those pressed into service often frequent a “varth darren” or hot new gambling club named The Golden Teacup, located near the intersection of Blackbanner’s Ride and Duth Street.

On a failure, the PCs receive no information. If the PCs opt to spend gold for information, add a +1 bonus for each 5 gp spent up to a maximum of +5 (25 gp).

Endurance (DC 10/12): Every time a PC is in a brawl, they also make this check to avoid serious injury. On a failure, the PC loses a healing surge. This skill check does not count toward a success or failure.

Intimidate (DC 10/12): A PC threatens someone for information. On a success, they relate the same information presented under Diplomacy (see above).

On a failure, the PC learns nothing and the sailor, the bartender’s bouncers, the tattooed woman or the tiefling woman’s bodyguards get into a physically altercation with the PC. The PC rolls an Endurance skill check (see above). If any other PC helps, they may roll to assist this skill check but they do not suffer any healing surge loss if it fails.

Streetwise (DC 10/12): A PC speaks with the sailors and wenches in the inn. On a success, relate one or more of the following:

- Over the past year or so, they noticed more people are pressed into service aboard ships.
- They heard these press gangs are operated by a tarn-trader or an independent broker who is selling them to the captains, but they do not know any specifics.
- A lot of these captains who use people pressed into service make these deals in “darrens” or gambling clubs and likely they know who is the tarn-trader or independent broker running the press gangs.
- One of those whose captain uses people pressed into service is at a place called The Golden Teacup, located near the intersection of Blackbanner’s Ride and Duth Street.

On a failure, the PC is told to “shove off,” i.e., leave them alone.

SCENE 2

This scene is appropriate if the PCs go to the Golden Teacup and talk to one or more of the ship captains who uses people pressed into service aboard their ship.

Outside, the large and finely decorative sign overhanging the street displayed a golden teacup. Inside, the establishment is a maze of private booths and rooms surrounding a gaming area. Provocatively dressed men and women circulate delivering food and drink to individuals who are playing cards, rolling dice or betting on other games of chance.

The smiling young woman at the door pleasantly states, “Welcome to the Golden Teacup. How may I serve you today?”

Diplomacy (DC 10/12): A PC speaks with one of the captains. On a success, they relate one or more of the following:

- The press gangs are operated by a tarn-trader named Elalaran.
- Usually they go to his warehouse in Maerhaven ward, located east of the Winterwood’s Way where the bridge goes over Imprel’s Stream. Take the alley next to Fishbucket Tavern.
- Elalaran recently contacted the captain the PC is speaking to and he has eleven prospective candidates available.
- They describe Elalaran as a short, slender human man with close-cropped graying hair, a long beard and a small scar on his right cheek.

On a failure, the PCs receive no information and are politely asked to leave them alone. If the check result is 5 or less, the captain sends a message to Elalaran warning him about the PCs resulting in their opponents in Encounter 5 receiving a +4 bonus to initiative.

Intimidate (DC 10/12): A PC threatens someone for information. On a success, they relate the same information presented under Diplomacy (see above). On a failure, the PC learns nothing and the captain secretly sends a message to Elalaran warning him about the PCs resulting in their opponents in Encounter 5 receiving a +4 bonus to initiative.

Streetwise (DC 10/12): A PC speaks with the staff and patrons in the gambling club to find out about press gangs and who makes deals for them here. On a success, they relate one or more of the following:

- Ship captains come here to make deals and some of those deals involve people pressed into service.

- They can certainly direct the party to one of these captains who make deals with press gangs.
- The one person they often see dealing with captains for these people is a human man named Elalaran. Other than he is a human tarn-trader and his location (see above), they know no other specifics.

On a failure, the PC learns nothing and a staff member or patron secretly sends a message to Elalaran warning him about the PCs resulting in their opponents in Encounter 5 receiving a +4 bonus to initiative.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The encounter ends when the PCs learn that the tarn-trader Elalaran is running the press gangs operating in Tarmalune along with the location of his warehouse. The PCs are to get this information whether they succeed or fail at the skill challenge.

Before you continue with the next encounter, determine if the halflings in Encounter 5 ambush the PCs and/or they receive a +4 bonus to initiative:

- If the PCs failed the skill challenge, the halflings in Encounter 5 ambush them.
- In Scene 2 at The Golden Teacup, if a PC rolled a Diplomacy skill check of 5 or less, the halflings in Encounter 5 receive a +4 bonus to initiative.
- In Scene 2 at The Golden Teacup, if a PC failed the Intimidate skill check, the halflings in Encounter 5 receive a +4 bonus to initiative.
- In Scene 2 at The Golden Teacup, if a PC rolled a Streetwise skill check of 5 or less, the halflings in Encounter 5 receive a +4 bonus to initiative.

Continue with Encounter 5.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The PCs receive 40 / 60 experience points for successfully completing the skill challenge.

TREASURE

There is no treasure found in this encounter.

ENCOUNTER 5: SELLWORDS

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 1 / 2 (500 / 625 XP)

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures at the low tier:

4 Halfling Sellword (S)

This encounter includes the following creatures at the high tier:

5 Halfling Sellword (S)

If the PCs succeeded at the skill challenge in Encounter 4, the sellwords are not prepared for the PCs and there is no ambush. In this case, read the following:

Extending from a building over the street is a broad sign that displays a painting of bucket overflowing with fish. Outside on the steps of the building next to a shaded alley are a group of leather-clad halflings playing cards and laughing boisterously.

One of the halflings turns his head toward the inside the tavern while calling out for more beer and as he does so, the others steal coins out of the gambling stake. The coin snatchers burst out in laughter at their mutual larceny while the beer caller turns to look at them with a confused look.

If the PCs interact with the sellwords, they relate the following:

- They are having a late lunch and playing cards. "Do you want to join? We can teach you to play. You do have money, right?"
- The coin snatchers state most certainly they did not steal coins from the gambling stake while the other stares suspiciously at them.
- They do not know anyone named Elalaran (DC 15 Insight to know they are lying).
- They know there is a warehouse down the alley owned by some tarn-trader, but no specifics (DC 15 Insight to know they are lying).

If the PCs failed the skilled challenge in Encounter 4, the sellwords are prepared for the PCs arrival and have setup an ambush. In this case, read the following:

Extending from a small building over the street is a broad sign that displays a painting of bucket

overflowing with fish. Outside on the steps of the building next to a shaded alley are the remains of a meal and empty beer mugs.

An old woman wearing a dirty apron walks out the door and begins to scrape plates and stack mugs. She sees you and calls out, "You here for something to eat and drink?"

If the PCs interact with the old woman, she relates the following:

- The meal remnants and empty beer mugs are from a group of halflings who were here earlier.
- She does not know where the halflings went.
- The warehouse at the end of the alleyway is rented out by a tarn-trader named Elalaran.
- She has not seen Elalaran today, but he stops here every so often with some of his hired men. She thinks there are 5 or 6.
- She does not know if he is at the warehouse.
- She thinks the halflings are in Elalaran's employ.

When the PCs proceed into the alleyway, the sellwords either move to stop them or spring their ambush. The sellwords also defend themselves if the PCs attack them. In the case of an ambush, a PC can act on the surprise round if they have a passive Perception of 19 or higher.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Daylight (bright illumination) on the street and shaded (dim illumination) in the alleyway.

Crates and Barrels: The crates and barrels in the alleyway counts as covering terrain. It costs 2 squares of movement to enter the square or 1 square of movement if you make a DC 10/12 Acrobatics skill check. A DC 10/12 Strength check knocks the crate or barrel over and it no longer counts as covering terrain.

Grate: The grate is loose (the halflings know this) and if anyone enters the square they make a DC10/14 Acrobatics skill check or fall through the hole into the sewer below taking 1d10 falling damage and landing prone. A PC trained in Acrobatics can make a skill check to reduce this damage. A PC may make an Acrobatics skill check to avoid falling prone. To pull oneself up back up through the hole is a move action and requires a DC 10/12 Athletics skill check.

Ladder: These ladders can be climbed to gain access to the roof. They are 4 squares high and a DC 5/8 Athletics skill check is required to climb these during combat. It costs 2 squares of movement for each square climbed for a total of 8 squares.

Puddles: These do not affect movement or the combat.

Stairs: The stairs do not affect movement.

TREASURE

The PCs can loot 10 / 10 gp from the sellswords in this encounter.

TACTICS

If ambushing the PCs, the halfling sellswords start the combat amongst the stack of barrels and crates, darting out of their hiding spot while making an attack using their Mobile Melee Attack power and then darting back into the cover provided by the stack of barrels and crates. They repeat this as necessary.

When 2 of the halfling sellswords are defeated, the others maneuver to escape. When the last 2 are bloodied, they flee by any means available.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

Four PCs: Remove 1 Halfling Sellsword.

Six PCs: Add 1 Halfling Sellsword.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

If the PCs question any of the sellswords, they relate the following:

- They are in Elalaran's hire.
- They were told to watch the entrance to the alleyway and stop anyone going to the warehouse but a group of brown-robed men with a letter bearing Elalaran's mark, a crab holding a sack.
- These brown-robed men were here earlier today with a covered wagon. They do not know if anyone left with them.
- Elalaran told them he is expecting trouble (this is particularly true if he was warned; see Encounter 4).
- They confirm that Elalaran runs press gangs in the city and they think several people on the city council are in on it, but they have no specifics.
- Elalaran is in the warehouse along with hired goons for protection (4 at low, 6 at high).
- There are 11 prisoners in the warehouse ready for being pressed into service.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

Each PC receives 100 / 125 experience points for defeating the sellswords.

ENCOUNTER 5: SELLSWORDS

STATISTICS (LOW LEVEL)

Halfling Sellsword	Level 2 Skirmisher
Small natural humanoid	XP 125
Initiative +6 Senses Perception +1	
HP 34; Bloodied 17	
AC 16; Fortitude 13, Reflex 15, Will 14; <i>see also nimble reaction</i>	
Speed 6; <i>see also mobile melee attack</i>	
m Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+7 vs. AC; 1d4+3 damage.	
R Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 5/10; +7 vs. AC; 1d4+3 damage.	
M Mobile Melee Attack (standard; at-will)	
The halfling sellsword can move up to 3 squares and make one melee basic attack at any point during the movement. The halfling sellsword does not provoke opportunity attacks when moving away from the target of its attack..	
Combat Advantage	
The halfling sellsword deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.	
Nimble Reaction	
Halflings gain a +2 racial bonus to AC against opportunity attacks.	
Second Chance (immediate interrupt, when the halfling would be hit by an attack; encounter)	
The halfling forces the attacker to reroll the attack and take the new result.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common
Skills Acrobatics +11, Stealth +9, Thievery +11	
Str 12 (+2)	Dex 16 (+4) Wis 11 (+0)
Con 10 (+1)	Int 10 (+1) Cha 14 (+3)
Equipment leather armor, 4 daggers, thieves' tools	

ENCOUNTER 5: SELLSWORDS

STATISTICS (HIGH LEVEL)

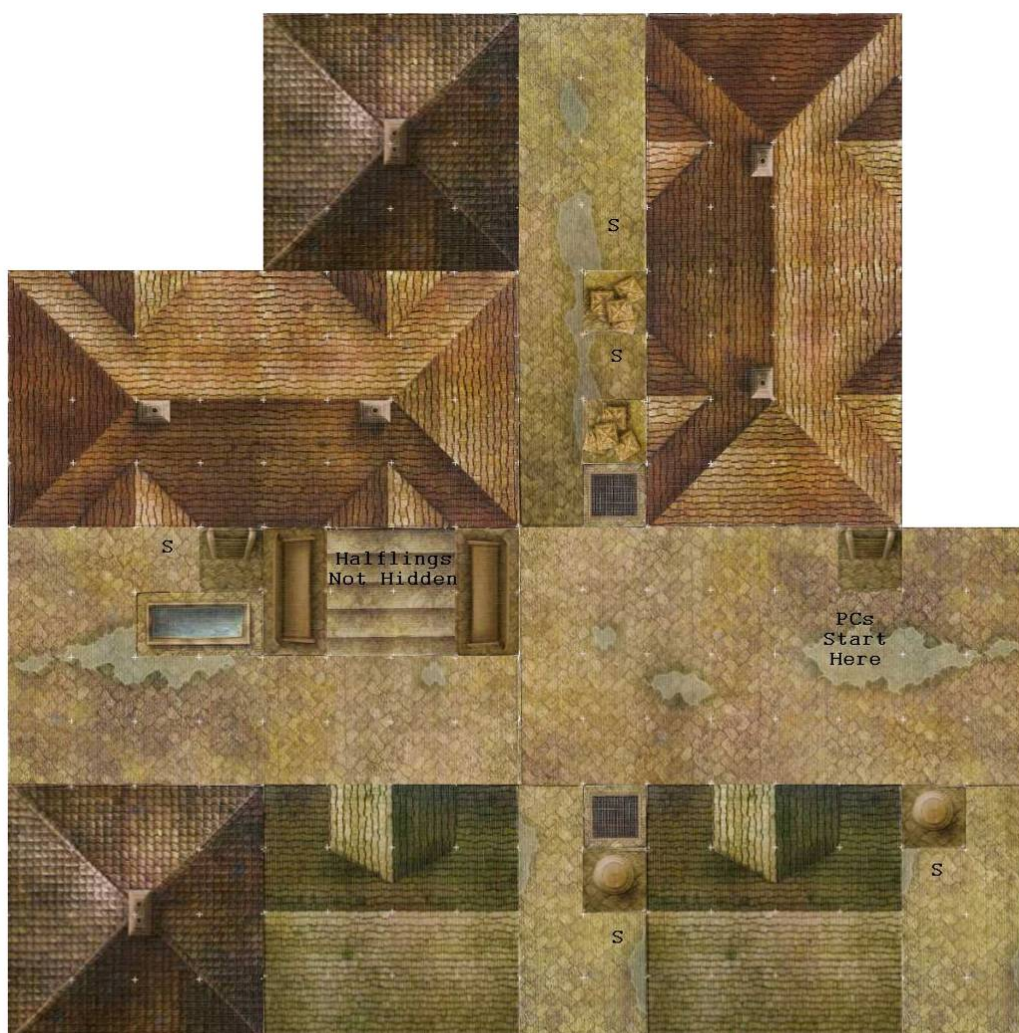
Halfling Sellsword	Level 2 Skirmisher
Small natural humanoid	XP 125
Initiative +6 Senses Perception +1	
HP 34; Bloodied 17	
AC 16; Fortitude 13, Reflex 15, Will 14; <i>see also nimble reaction</i>	
Speed 6; <i>see also mobile melee attack</i>	
m Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+7 vs. AC; 1d4+3 damage.	
R Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 5/10; +7 vs. AC; 1d4+3 damage.	
M Mobile Melee Attack (standard; at-will)	
The halfling sellsword can move up to 3 squares and make one melee basic attack at any point during the movement. The halfling sellsword does not provoke opportunity attacks when moving away from the target of its attack..	
Combat Advantage	
The halfling sellsword deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.	
Nimble Reaction	
Halflings gain a +2 racial bonus to AC against opportunity attacks.	
Second Chance (immediate interrupt, when the halfling would be hit by an attack; encounter)	
The halfling forces the attacker to reroll the attack and take the new result.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common	
Skills Acrobatics +11, Stealth +9, Thievery +11	
Str 12 (+2)	Dex 16 (+4) Wis 11 (+0)
Con 10 (+1)	Int 10 (+1) Cha 14 (+3)
Equipment leather armor, 4 daggers, thieves' tools	

ENCOUNTER 5: SELLSWORDS

TILE SETS NEEDED

DU2:Streets of Shadow

Street Ladder / Sewer Ladder	1x1	x2
Wood Barrel / Floating Crate	1x1	x2
Stack of Crates / Toxic Rats	1x1	x2
Long Street / Long Sewer	4x8	x2
Steps / Sewer Inlet	4x2	x1
Park Bench / Water Main	1x2	x2
Building / Sewer T	4x4	x2
Building / Sewer Outfall	4x4	x2
Large Building / More Sewer	4x8	x2
Water Trough / Sewer Again	2x1	x1
Drain Grate / Stairs Down	1x1	x2
Long Street / Long Sewer	8x2	x1



ENCOUNTER 6: ELALARAN

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 1 / 3 (500 / 750 XP)

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures at the low tier:

3 Human Hired Goons (G)

1 Human Hired Goon Leader (L)

Elalaran (E)

This encounter includes the following creatures at the high tier:

3 Human Hired Goons (G)

3 Human Hired Goon Leaders (L)

Elalaran (E)

Elalaran is expecting trouble having heard of people inquiring about his press gang business. Assuming the PCs take no precautions approaching the warehouse, read the following:

At the end of the alleyway in front of a warehouse is a small courtyard big enough for a wagon to turn around in. On a 5-foot high platform is a group of muscular men clad in leather who are loading an oxen-drawn wagon. Beyond the open warehouse doors is a dimly lit space, strewn with boxes, crates and barrels.

Spotting you, one snarls, "This is private property. Get outta here!"

If the PCs interact with the hired goons, they relate the following:

- If asked if Elaran is here, they lie telling the PCs he is not here and ask who wants to know (DC 10 Insight to know they are lying).
- If the PCs ask to wait for Elalaran, they are told to come back later tomorrow along with thinly veiled threats of violence if they insist on staying.
- They reiterate their demand for the PCs leave along with thinly veiled threats of violence if they do not do so.
- They refuse entry into the warehouse, along with thinly veiled threats of violence if the PCs attempt to enter.
-

If the PCs attack, the hired goons defend themselves. If the PCs try entering the warehouse, wait for Elalaran or

make their hostile intentions known (DM's discretion), the hired goons attack.

Elalaran lurks inside the warehouse completely concealed from view, listening to the interaction between his hired goons and the PCs. Once hostilities begin, he also attacks.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Daylight (bright illumination) in the courtyard and shaded (dim illumination) in the warehouse.

Crates and Barrels: The crates and barrels in the alleyway and warehouse count as covering terrain. It costs 2 squares of movement to enter the square or 1 square of movement if a PC makes a DC 10/12 Acrobatics skill check. A DC 10/12 Strength check knocks the crate or barrel over and it no longer counts as covering terrain.

Grate: This grate is not loose and does not affect movement or combat.

Ox and wagon: It costs 2 squares of movement and a DC 5/7 Athletics skill check to climb onto the wagon. If any combat takes place in a square adjacent to the ox, it bolts from the courtyard taking the wagon with it. Anyone adjacent to the ox or the wagon makes a DC 10/12 Acrobatics or a DC 10/12 Athletics skill check to avoid being knocked prone (no damage). Feel free to include anyone in the ox's path as it escapes from the courtyard.

Platform and Stairs: It costs 2 squares of movement for each square to ascend the stairs while costing 1 square of movement for descending them. A DC 10/12 Athletics skill check allows one to clamber up onto the platform without using the stairs. If someone falls off the platform, they land prone (no damage). A DC 5/7 Athletics skill check allows one to jump off the platform; if check failed, they land prone.

Puddles: These do not affect movement or the combat.

TACTICS

The hired goons gang up on the closest PC and beat on them with their clubs. If anyone is fighting on the platform, they push the PC off.

Elalaran uses cover and concealment to strike out at a PC using his power Deft Strike.

Elalaran fights on until he is defeated though when bloodied, he tries to cut a deal with the PCs to let him go free, starting at 25 gp and offering up to 50 gp each.

Once Elalaran is defeated, the remaining hired goons flee or otherwise surrender.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

Four PCs: Replace 1 Human Hired Goon Leader with 1 Human Hired Goon.

Six PCs: Add 1 Human Hired Goon Leader.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The encounter ends when Elalaran and his hired goons are defeated.

The PCs find 8 prisoners locked up in the warehouse's back room. If the PCs question the prisoners, they relate the following:

- There were originally 11 of them, but earlier today a group of brown-robed men came by, looked at each of them through a sparkling crystal and took 3 of them. They seemed especially delighted.
- Most were kidnapped from Fishstink ward, but a couple of them were newcomers to the city. "Some welcome, eh?"

If the PCs question any of the hired goons, they relate the following:

- They were hired by Elalaran to protect him and the warehouse along with its cargo and merchandise. This included guarding the prisoners.
- They are loading cargo and merchandise to take to merchant vessel, the Jaderunner, along with a few of the pressed people.
- They confirm that Elalaran runs press gangs in the city and that there are prisoners here (they show the PCs the back room), but they have no specifics beyond that.
- They confirm there were 11 prisoners, but earlier today a group of brown-robed men came by and took 3 of them with them. This has happened earlier this morning and Elalaran did not let them talk to the men nor did he answer any of their questions about them, telling them it was best if they did not know. Elalaran seemed afraid of them.

If the PCs question Elalaran, he relates the following:

- He is operating several press gangs in Tarmalune supplying people to various merchants and ship captains as required. He claims it is all legal and legit.

- He tries to bribe the PCs into letting him go, starting at 10 gp each. He increments his offer by 5 gp as he talks to them up to a maximum of 50 gp each. He mentions his wife and five children; tells them he is leaving Tarmalune and never coming back; and anything relatively reasonable to convince the PCs to let him go free.
- Over a year ago a man named Enleerd approached him offering to pay off a sizeable gambling debt in exchange for running a quasi-legal press gang business. Later after the business was running, Enleerd told him he was sending people to examine the ones the press gang seized and take any of them they wanted, no questions asked.
- He knows the warehouse is owned by someone else. He was told to never investigate it. Someone could probably find out who by going to Haven Tower, as they have to have property records on file.
- He thinks the brown-robed men are cultists and they are doing something with the ones they take, probably nothing good, but he has no specifics.
- He reckons there were 22 people over the past year taken by the brown-robed men.
- He has tried to get out of the business, but was warned in no uncertain terms that he and his family would die horribly. They demonstrated this threat by killing one of his hired goons.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

Each PC receives 100 / 125 experience points for defeating Elalaran and his hired goons.

TREASURE

The PCs can loot 65 / 65 gp each from Elalaran and his hired goons in this encounter.

ENCOUNTER 6: ELALARAN STATISTICS (LOW LEVEL)

Human Hired Goon	Level 1 Minion
Medium natural humanoid	XP 25
Initiative +0	Senses Perception +0
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 14; Fortitude 13, Reflex 11, Will 11; <i>see mob rule</i>	
Speed 6	
m Club (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+5 vs. AC; 2 damage.	
Mob Rule	
A human hired goon gains a +2 power bonus to defenses while at least two other human hired goons are within 5 squares of it.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common
Str 14 (+2)	Dex 10 (+0) Wis 10 (+0)
Con 12 (+1)	Int 9 (-1) Cha 11 (+0)
Equipment leather armor, club	

Human Hired Goon Leader	Level 2 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid	XP 125
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +1
HP 37; Bloodied 18	
AC 16; Fortitude 12, Reflex 14, Will 12	
Speed 6	
m Mace (standard; at-will) Weapon	
+4 vs. AC; 1d8 + 1 damage, and the human press gang leader shifts 1 square.	
R Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 5/10; +6 vs. AC; 1d4 + 3 damage.	
Dazing Strike (standard; encounter) ♦ Weapon	
Requires mace; +4 vs. AC; 1d8+1 damage, the target is dazed until the end of the human press gang leader's next turn, and the human press gang leader shifts 1 square.	
Combat Advantage	
The human press gang leader deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee and ranged attacks against any target it has combat advantage against..	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common
Skills Stealth +9, Streetwise +7, Thievery +9	
Str 12 (+2)	Dex 17 (+4) Wis 11 (+1)
Con 13 (+2)	Int 10 (+1) Cha 12 (+2)
Equipment leather armor, mace, 4 daggers	

Elalaran	Level 3 Elite Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid	XP 300
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +1
HP 35; Bloodied 17	
AC 17; Fortitude 13, Reflex 18, Will 14	
Action Point 1	
Speed 6	
m Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+7 vs. AC; 1d4+3 damage.	
R Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 5/10; +7 vs. AC; 1d4+3 damage.	
M Deft Strike (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+9 vs. AC; 1d4+4 damage; <i>Special</i> you can move 2 squares before the attack.	
M Bait and Switch (standard; encounter) ♦ Weapon	
+9 vs. Will; 2d4+4 damage; in addition Elalaran switches places with the target and can then shift 3 squares.	
C Blinding Barrage (standard; daily) ♦ Weapon	
Close blast 3; +9 vs. AC; 2d4+4 damage; <i>Hit</i> the target is blinded until the end of your next turn; <i>Miss</i> Half damage and the target is not blinded.	
First Strike	
At the start of an encounter, you have combat advantage against any creature that has not yet acted in that encounter.	
Artful Dodger	
You gain a +2 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks.	
Sneak Attack	
Once per round, when you have combat advantage against an enemy and you are using a weapon from the light blade, the crossbow, or the sling weapon group, an attack you make against the enemy deals extra +2d6 damage if the attack hits. You decide whether to apply the extra damage after making the damage roll.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common
Skills Bluff +8, Stealth +10, Thievery +10	
Str 12 (+2)	Dex 18 (+5) Wis 10 (+1)
Con 13 (+2)	Int 11 (+2) Cha 14 (+3)
Equipment leather armor, 4 daggers	

ENCOUNTER 6: ELALARAN STATISTICS (HIGH LEVEL)

Human Hired Goon	Level 1 Minion
Medium natural humanoid	XP 25
Initiative +0 Senses Perception +0	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 14; Fortitude 13, Reflex 11, Will 11; <i>see mob rule</i>	
Speed 6	
m Club (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+5 vs. AC; 2 damage.	
Mob Rule	
A human hired goon gains a +2 power bonus to defenses while at least two other human hired goons are within 5 squares of it.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common	
Str 14 (+2) Dex 10 (+0) Wis 10 (+0)	
Con 12 (+1) Int 9 (-1) Cha 11 (+0)	
Equipment leather armor, club	

Human Hired Goon Leader	Level 2 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid	XP 125
Initiative +6 Senses Perception +1	
HP 37; Bloodied 18	
AC 16; Fortitude 12, Reflex 14, Will 12	
Speed 6	
m Mace (standard; at-will) Weapon	
+4 vs. AC; 1d8 + 1 damage, and the human press gang leader shifts 1 square.	
R Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 5/10; +6 vs. AC; 1d4 + 3 damage.	
Dazing Strike (standard; encounter) ♦ Weapon	
Requires mace; +4 vs. AC; 1d8+1 damage, the target is dazed until the end of the human press gang leader's next turn, and the human press gang leader shifts 1 square.	
Combat Advantage	
The human press gang leader deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee and ranged attacks against any target it has combat advantage against..	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common	
Skills Stealth +9, Streetwise +7, Thievery +9	
Str 12 (+2) Dex 17 (+4) Wis 11 (+1)	
Con 13 (+2) Int 10 (+1) Cha 12 (+2)	
Equipment leather armor, mace, 4 daggers	

Elalaran	Level 3 Elite Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid	XP 300
Initiative +1 Senses Perception +1	
HP 35; Bloodied 17	
AC 17; Fortitude 13, Reflex 18, Will 14; <i>see also nimble reaction</i>	
Speed 6; <i>see also mobile melee attack</i>	
m Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+7 vs. AC; 1d4+3 damage.	
R Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 5/10; +7 vs. AC; 1d4+3 damage.	
M Deft Strike (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+9 vs. AC; 1d4+4 damage; <i>Special</i> you can move 2 squares before the attack.	
M Bait and Switch (standard; encounter) ♦ Weapon	
+9 vs. Will; 2d4+4 damage; in addition Elalaran switch places with the target and can then shift 3 squares.	
C Blinding Barrage (standard; daily) ♦ Weapon	
Close blast 3; +9 vs. AC; 2d4+4 damage; <i>Hit</i> the target is blinded until the end of your next turn; <i>Miss</i> Half damage and the target is not blinded.	
First Strike	
At the start of an encounter, you have combat advantage against any creature that has not yet acted in that encounter.	
Artful Dodger	
You gain a +2 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks.	
Sneak Attack	
Once per round, when you have combat advantage against an enemy and you are using a weapon from the light blade, the crossbow, or the sling weapon group, an attack you make against the enemy deals extra +2d6 damage if the attack hits. You decide whether to apply the extra damage after making the damage roll.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common	
Skills Bluff +8, Stealth +10, Thievery +10	
Str 12 (+2) Dex 18 (+5) Wis 10 (+1)	
Con 13 (+2) Int 11 (+2) Cha 14 (+3)	
Equipment leather armor, 4 daggers	

ENCOUNTER 6: ELALARAN

TILE SETS NEEDED

Dungeon Tiles

Double Doors / Rubble	2x1	x1
Ruins / Floor	4x8	x2

DU2:Streets of Shadow

Wood Barrel / Floating Crate	1x1	x2
Wood Platform / Storage Room	5x5	x1
Stack of Crates / Toxic Rats	1x1	x2
Long Street / Long Sewer	4x8	x2
Town Square Fountain / Sewer Junction	8x8	x1
Ox Cart / Sewer Floor	4x2	x1
Drain Grate / Stairs Down	1x1	x1
Long Street / Long Sewer	8x2	x1



ENCOUNTER 7: INTERLUDE

SETUP

Halagothra (Insight +10)

Senior Watcher Roraven (Vigilant) (Insight +10)

Valek (Haven Tower clerk) (History +10)

This is a non-challenge encounter. Run the parts of this encounter you deem appropriate. This encounter is also used to help point the way for the PCs and not all scenes are necessary.

Give the PCs an opportunity to discuss what they are going to do with any prisoners they have. Some options include:

- Turn them over to the Vigilant: The Vigilant take the PCs' statements and detain Elalaran and any that he hired. The final disposition is they are tried, convicted and imprisoned (reveal this at the end of the adventure if anyone inquires).
- Let them go free: In this case, Elalaran leaves Tarmalune while the others stay out of trouble for a while.
- Kill them: Barring extraordinary circumstances, the PCs are not punished for this, though murdering helpless prisoners may trouble most PCs.
- Lock them up: Elalaran and any hired goons escape after a day.

SCENE 1

This scene is appropriate if the PCs speak with Halagothra, informing her of what they found out.

With the mid-afternoon sun at your back, the hulking guards at the gate to Halagothra's mansion listen to your story three times before one finally remembers you from earlier when you came with the injured people.

Not long after that, you find yourself in the mansion's modest entrance hall where Halagothra waits, sitting on a bench.

"Well, what did you find out?" she inquires.

After the PCs relate their story to Halagothra, she relates the following:

- If the PCs ask her what they should do with Elalaran and any that he hired, she tells them to turn them over to the Vigilant. She is not sure what will happen to them, but the Vigilant will

detain them until they figure out what to do with them.

- She urges the party to investigate what happened to the 3 people taken by the brown-robed men and find out what they did with the others taken earlier.
- If the PCs did not find out from Elalaran, she tells them to find out if the warehouse was owned or rented. There are documents at Haven Tower, where the city council meets.

SCENE 2

This scene is appropriate if the PCs go to the Vigilant.

You find yourself in a small room, with not nearly enough seats and the seats to be had are uncomfortable. The senior watcher, or sergeant, is across from you, with a stern demeanor on his face.

He says in a no nonsense voice, "State your business."

The senior watcher, Roraven, relates the following:

- He can have Elalaran and any that he hired "carted off to the Keep" or arrested on kidnapping charges, but when they appear in court, he is unsure if they can be convicted since officially press ganging is not illegal.
- He is interested in the brown-robed men and the missing people. He shall pass this on to his superiors and hopefully an investigator can look into it. He, however, cannot act on this information on his own accord and he cannot help the PCs.
- If the PCs suggest they are investigating on their own, he cautions them to not break any of Tarmalune's laws otherwise they shall end up in Keep.
- He asks to be kept informed on their investigation's progress, but can offer no help at this time.

SCENE 3

This scene is appropriate if the PCs go to Haven Tower to examine the property records.

The august halls of Haven Tower leave much to be desired with its cramped rooms and confusing layout. After being redirected several times, you arrive at the office where you are told people can view property records.

Behind a desk is an old man with ink-stained fingers who is squinting at a faded crumbling

document. Looking up over the edge of the parchment, he exasperatedly states, "If you are looking for the office where shipping tax records are kept, it's next door."

Allow the PCs to speak with the clerk and explain their purpose. If you desire, allow the PCs to make skill checks to persuade the clerk, Valek, to help them. Valek provides the following information:

- A man named Lekaral is the owner of the warehouse property.
- His mansion is in Arendermore ward near the intersection of Talltowers Street and Glarstallion Street.
- The clerk does not accept bribes or gifts of any nature and is quite indignant if the PCs offer them.

SCENE 4

This scene is appropriate if the PCs go to what they presume is Lekaral's mansion.

The mansion's courtyard is surrounded by several small gardens, each verdant and flowering with bright colors. An old man, presumably the gardener, is busy tending to one, carefully pruning away any undesired plants.

Announcing your presence at the door, a formally dressed middle-aged man answers it and politely states, "Greetings and salutations. Master Balden is not at home this day having been called away on urgent business. I am his butler, Saernal, how may I assist you in his stead?"

The butler relates the following:

- Master Balden is renting the mansion from Lekaral.
- He does not know where Lekaral resides.
- The gardener Hezhnit, the old man tending to the courtyard's garden, perhaps knows, as he was the gardener even before Master Balden started renting the mansion.

The gardener relates the following:

- Master Lekaral now resides on Leldar's Ride in Fishstink ward in an old sanitarium now converted to a home.
- Lekaral's family, the Damsaretz, is an old money family, but through a series of misfortunes and mismanagement their wealth evaporated. Lekaral had to rent out the family mansion to someone with new money.

- Lekaral went away for some years and came back after his brother Jekaral was found dead, some say by his own hand. Those two never got along, but he doubts Lekaral killed his brother. Lekaral took over what was left of the family fortune then.
- There were strangers who showed up at the house from time to time for late night private parties. The servants were not even allowed to be there. Lekaral told him they were people he met while he was gone from Tarmalune.
- He knew Lekaral since he was a young boy and if you see him, make sure you say hello from old Nitter (his nickname). He'll know who it is. (This latter is important in the next encounter as it is the trigger to start the combat).

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The encounter ends after the PCs have found out where Lekaral is residing and decide to confront him.

While it is only afternoon by this time, this is an appropriate time for the PCs to take an extended rest if they so desire and is likely the last time it is appropriate for them to do so. Do not force the PCs to take an extended rest.

Continue with Encounter 8.

TREASURE

There is no treasure found in this encounter.

ENCOUNTER 8: DOUBLE

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 1/2 (500/625 XP)

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures at the low tier:

1 Dwarf Bolter (B)

7 Human Cult Acolytes (C)

Lekaral's Double (Doppelganger) (L)

This encounter includes the following creatures at the high tier:

2 Dwarf Bolters (B)

7 Human Cult Acolytes (C)

Lekaral's Double (Doppelganger) (L)

Assuming the PCs directly confront Lekaral:

As clouds gather overhead in the darkening green skies, you find yourself at a rusty unlocked gate that pierces the weathered high walls that surround a courtyard of cracked cobblestone. A tall aged and neglected building, with all but one its windows shuttered, lies opposite the gate.

You spy a face in an open second story window moments before a curtain falls in front of it. Almost simultaneously a tall thin man appears on the balcony, calling out, "Hello. I am Master Lekaral. Can I help you?"

This is Lekaral's Double, a doppelganger, and if the PCs indicate they wish to talk to him, he invites them into the courtyard stating he will send a servant down shortly to open the house door for them. He continues to speak with the PCs while staying on the balcony.

If asked where the servant is who is supposed to open the door, Lekaral's Double apologizes and calls out loudly (acting irritated) for the lazy lout to open the door for the guests. He tries to keep the PCs in the courtyard rather than inviting them inside. If necessary, he sends them away, apologizing for his rudeness.

Lekaral's Double relates the following:

- He had to rent out the family mansion for money and to save what was left of his family's reputation after his brother Jakarel ruined it.
- He denies owning the warehouse property, stating that he only owns this building. Perhaps his brother Jekaral rented it out or the records

are wrong or worse, someone is defrauding him. He will investigate the matter himself as soon as possible, thanking the PCs for bringing it to his attention (Bluff +10 vs. PCs Insight to tell he is lying).

- He denies operating press gangs in Tarmalune and does not know anything about them (Bluff +10 vs. PCs Insight to tell he is lying).
- He does not know anything about a group of brown-robed men taking people from press gangs (Bluff +10 vs. PCs Insight to tell he is lying).
- When Lekaral's Double wants the PCs to leave, he mentions "the weather is turning bad and likely it will storm soon. You best leave soon else you will get caught in the rain. I think I felt a raindrop."
- If/when the PCs mention the gardener's nickname, the PCs can tell he does not know what they are talking about.
-

If the PCs attack, Lekaral's Double defends himself while calling for help. The dwarf bolter and cult acolytes respond to his call.

At some point, Lekaral's Double panics most likely after the PCs mention the gardener's name (suggesting the PCs know too much about the real Lakaral) or when his suspicions are substantially aroused, Lekaral's Double calls for his servants to bring "cold refreshments to quench their thirst". This tells the dwarf bolter and the human cult acolytes to kill the PCs. You can read the following when this happens:

The front door opens and brown-robed humans carrying clubs emerge. On the balcony overhead, a dwarf garbed in chainmail appears and lines up his loaded crossbow.

Lekaral smiles, stepping back out of view.

Combat starts at this point.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Daylight (bright illumination).

Puddles: These squares represent the cracked cobblestone. Treat these squares as challenging terrain. Anyone entering these squares makes a DC 5/8 Acrobatics skill check or fall prone (movement ends). These squares cost 1 square of movement.

TACTICS

The acolytes attack a single PC, assisting the doppelganger in getting combat advantage against them. They acolytes fight until they are defeated; they do not surrender.

The Dwarf Bolter, who is also a cultist, appears on the balcony and attacks the PCs below. He fights until defeated; he does not surrender.

The doppelganger makes his way downstairs (assume it takes one round) and fights until he is bloodied. Once bloodied, he tries to make good an escape, possibly changing his shape to look like one of the PCs. If escape is not possible, he surrenders while swearing to reveal all.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

Four PCs: Remove 4 Human Cult Acolytes.

Six PCs: Add 1 Dwarf Bolter and remove 3 Human Cult Acolytes.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The encounter ends Lekaral's Double and human cult acolytes are defeated.

If the PCs opt for a more discreet approach, have Lekaral's Double spot them and confront them in the courtyard if possible. If the PCs break in, Lekaral's Double confronts them, backed up by the dwarf bolter with the cult acolytes out of sight, ordering them to leave or else he shall call the Vigilant. If necessary, the DM should improvise a combat inside the house.

If the PCs question any of the human cult acolytes or the dwarf bolter, they relate the following:

- They are acolytes in Lekaral's cult, The Reborn Flame.
- The cult seeks to master the Reborn Flame (a.k.a., Raging Flame) before the Firequencher agents do. The Firequencher agents are evil, posing as helpful and friendly but they are not. If they master it first, they shall cause it to consume all of Tarmalune in a massive conflagration. The cult seeks to prevent this.
- The people taken from the press gangs are Firequencher agents and they are taken to the basement for questioning. They suspect they are ultimately killed, but that is for the greater good.
- Lekaral is in the basement questioning the Firequencher prisoners.

If the PCs question Lekaral's Double, he relates the following:

- Over a year ago, he was hired by Lekaral to impersonate not only him, but other people too, including a man named Enleerd.

- He handled the dealings with Elalaran and others too numerous to mention (the latter being out of the scope of this adventure).
- Lekaral is behind Tarmalune's press gang. He has a writ that is good forever given to his family many years ago that allows him to do this, although he concedes it probably is not worth the parchment it is written on.
- Lekaral is a leader of a small cult here in Tarmalune called Reborn Flame. He does not know its true purpose nor does he ask such questions. It is not that he does not want to know, but that he is afraid of the answers.
- The cultists have keen interest certain people the press gangs kidnap. Many of the cultists think they are Firequencher agents, but he overheard Lekaral calling them the Reborn. They are brought here and take them into the basement, but he does not know what happens there, but they do not leave.
- He has overheard parts of conversations about the Reborn Flame, Raging Flame, dragons and blood. It sounds all very sordid.
- He thinks Lekaral is in the basement right now, preparing to do something awful to the prisoners. "Why you should tie me up and go save the prisoners" (he escapes if the PCs do so).
- There are 9 more cultists and a pack of guard drakes in the mansion.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

Each PC receives 100 / 125 experience points for defeating Elalaran and his hired goons.

TREASURE

There is no treasure in this encounter.

ENCOUNTER 8: DOUBLE STATISTICS (LOW LEVEL)

Human Cult Acolyte		Level 1 Minion
Medium natural humanoid		XP 25
Initiative +0	Senses Perception +0	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 14; Fortitude 13, Reflex 11, Will 11; <i>see mob rule</i>		
Speed 6		
m Shortsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+5 vs. AC; 2 damage.		
Mob Rule		
A human cult acolyte gains a +2 power bonus to defenses while at least two other human cult acolytes are within 5 squares of it.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common	
Str 14 (+2)	Dex 10 (+0)	Wis 10 (+0)
Con 12 (+1)	Int 9 (-1)	Cha 11 (+0)
Equipment leather armor, shortsword		

Dwarf Bolter		Level 4 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid		XP 175
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +8; low-light vision	
HP 46; Bloodied 23		
AC 17; Fortitude 16, Reflex 16, Will 14		
Speed 5		
m Warhammer (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+8 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage.		
R Crossbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Ranged 15/30; +10 vs. AC; 1d8+3 damage.		
Aimed Shot		
The dwarf bolter gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and deals and extra 1d6 damage with ranged attacks against creatures that don't have cover.		
Stand Your Ground		
When an effect forces a dwarf to move—through a pull, a push, or a slide—the dwarf moves 1 square less than the effect specifies. When an attack would knock the dwarf prone, the dwarf can roll a saving throw to avoid falling prone.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Common, Dwarven
Skills Dungeoneering +10, Endurance +7		
Str 14 (+4)	Dex 16 (+5)	Wis 12 (+3)
Con 16 (+5)	Int 11 (+2)	Cha 10 (+2)
Equipment chainmail, warhammer, crossbow with 20 bolts		

Lekaral's Double		Level 3 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger)		XP 150
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +2	
HP 45; Bloodied 22		
AC 18; Fortitude 14, Reflex 16, Will 16		
Speed 6		
m Short Sword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+8 vs. AC; 1d4+3 damage.		
Shapeshifter Feint (minor; at-will)		
+6 vs. Reflex; the doppelganger gains combat advantage against the target until the end of the doppelganger's next turn.		
Combat Advantage		
The doppelganger sneak deals an extra 1d6 damage against any target it has combat advantage against.		
Change Shape		
A doppelganger can alter its physical form to take on the appearance of any Medium humanoid, including a unique individual (see Change Shape, page 280).		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Common
Skills Bluff +10, Insight +9, Stealth +10		
Str 11 (+1)	Dex 16 (+4)	Wis 12 (+2)
Con 13 (+2)	Int 10 (+1)	Cha 15 (+3)
Equipment short sword		

ENCOUNTER 8: DOUBLE STATISTICS (HIGH LEVEL)

Human Cult Acolyte		Level 1 Minion
Medium natural humanoid		XP 25
Initiative +0	Senses Perception +0	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 14; Fortitude 13, Reflex 11, Will 11; <i>see mob rule</i>		
Speed 6		
m Shortsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+5 vs. AC; 2 damage.		
Mob Rule		
A human cult acolyte gains a +2 power bonus to defenses while at least two other human cult acolytes are within 5 squares of it.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common	
Str 14 (+2)	Dex 10 (+0)	Wis 10 (+0)
Con 12 (+1)	Int 9 (-1)	Cha 11 (+0)
Equipment leather armor, shortsword		

Dwarf Bolter		Level 4 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid		XP 175
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +8; low-light vision	
HP 46; Bloodied 23		
AC 17; Fortitude 16, Reflex 16, Will 14		
Speed 5		
m Warhammer (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+8 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage.		
R Crossbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Ranged 15/30; +10 vs. AC; 1d8+3 damage.		
Aimed Shot		
The dwarf bolter gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and deals and extra 1d6 damage with ranged attacks against creatures that don't have cover.		
Stand Your Ground		
When an effect forces a dwarf to move—through a pull, a push, or a slide—the dwarf moves 1 square less than the effect specifies.		
When an attack would knock the dwarf prone, the dwarf can roll a saving throw to avoid falling prone.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Common, Dwarven
Skills Dungeoneering +10, Endurance +7		
Str 14 (+4)	Dex 16 (+5)	Wis 12 (+3)
Con 16 (+5)	Int 11 (+2)	Cha 10 (+2)
Equipment chainmail, warhammer, crossbow with 20 bolts		

Lekaral's Double		Level 3 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger)		XP 150
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +2	
HP 45; Bloodied 2		
AC 18; Fortitude 14, Reflex 16, Will 16		
Speed 6		
m Short Sword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+8 vs. AC; 1d4+3 damage.		
Shapeshifter Feint (minor; at-will)		
+6 vs. Reflex; the doppelganger gains combat advantage against the target until the end of the doppelganger's next turn.		
Combat Advantage		
The doppelganger sneak deals an extra 1d6 damage against any target it has combat advantage against.		
Change Shape		
A doppelganger can alter its physical form to take on the appearance of any Medium humanoid, including a unique individual (see Change Shape, page 280).		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Common
Skills Bluff +10, Insight +9, Stealth +10		
Str 11 (+1)	Dex 16 (+4)	Wis 12 (+2)
Con 13 (+2)	Int 10 (+1)	Cha 15 (+3)
Equipment short sword		

ENCOUNTER 9: DOUBLE

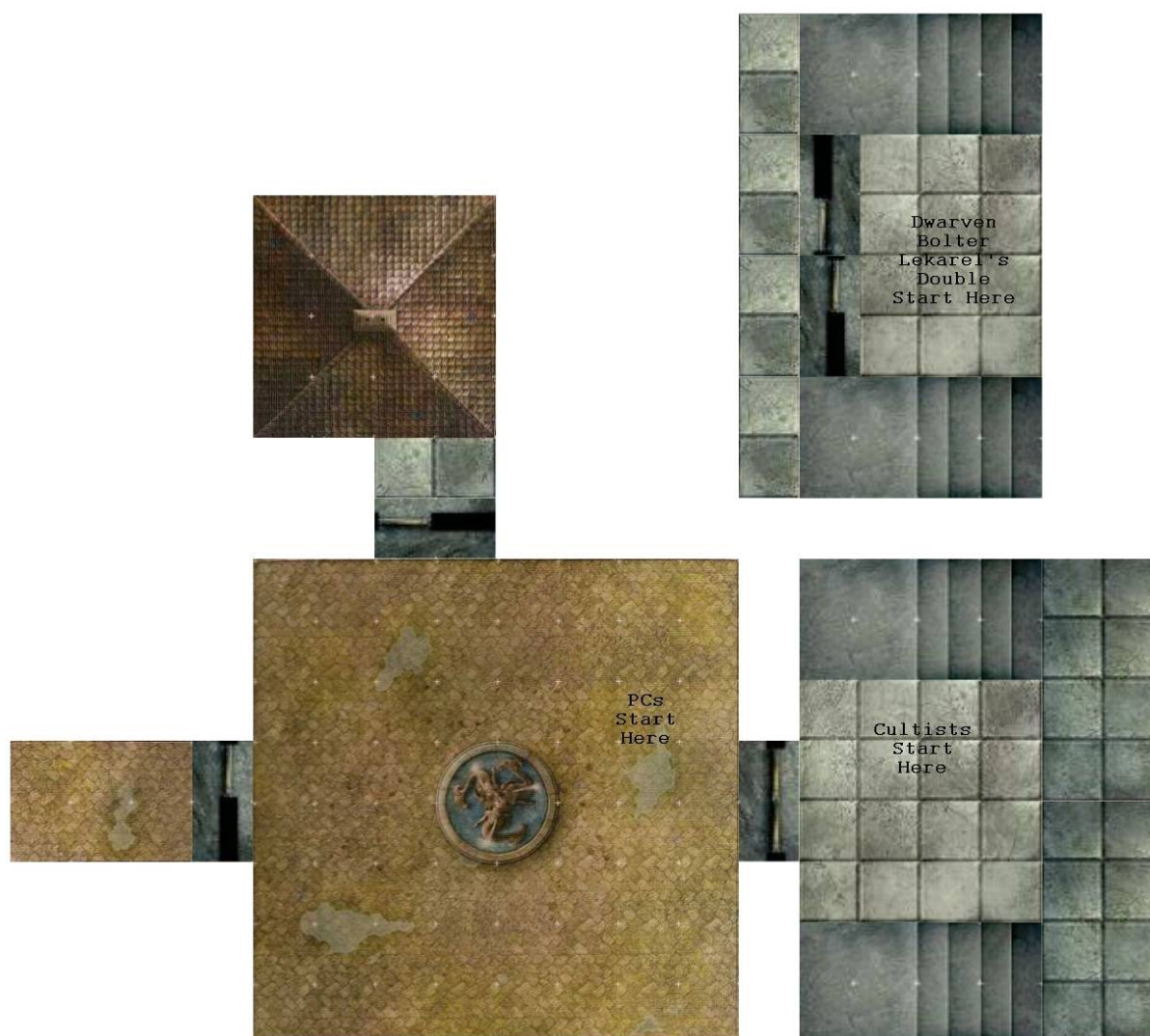
TILE SETS NEEDED

Dungeon Tiles

Double Doors / Rubble	2x1	x1
Pit / Floor	4x4	x1
Ruins / Floor	4x8	x1
Stairs / Floor	4x2	x2
Stairs Landing / Floor	4x2	x4
Single Door / Floor	2x1	x5

DU2:Streets of Shadow

One puddle street / Sewer with pipe	4x2	x1
Town Square Fountain / Sewer Junction	8x8	x1
Building / Sewer T	4x4	x1



ENCOUNTER 9: BASEMENT

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 2 / 3 (625 / 750 XP)

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures at the low tier:

- 3 Guard Drakes (D)
- 3 Human Cult Acolytes (A)
- 1 Human Cult Fanatics (F)

This encounter includes the following creatures at the high tier:

- 4 Guard Drakes (D)
- 3 Human Cult Acolytes (A)
- 1 Human Cult Fanatics (F)

Assuming the PCs make their way to the basement to find the people and discover what tortures are inflicted upon them, read the following:

The spiraling stairwell leading down into the basement opens into a well lit chamber lined with open doors on either side and at the far end is a large rune-covered door, barred and locked on this side. Beyond each open side door lays a small cell, matted with straw and filth. Stationed on each side near the entrance is a canvas-covered tube the thickness of a man's arm, which extends from the ceiling and ends in a discolored tapered brass tube.

As you reach the door at the far end, the sounds of hissing growls from behind alerts you, as a pack of small cat-like reptilians move quickly forward, while behind them a group of humans ready their weapons and shout, "Death to the Firequencher!"

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Lantern light (bright illumination).

Cell Doors: The open cell door can be closed with a minor action and a standard action locks the door. There are no keys for these doors on the cultists. A DC 15/17 Thievery check can unlock the door from the outside, while a DC 20/22 unlocks it from the inside. A DC 20/22 Strength check can push the door open. The cell door has only a small opening at eye level and another small opening at feet level.

Water Hoses: Picking up a water hose is a minor action, turning the water on is a minor action and using it to push someone is standard action. Those using the

water hose make an attack at +6 vs. Reflex. Those struck by the water are pushed 1 square. The water hoses have a range of 10 squares. If water hose is turned on and no one is controlling it, target a random person within range, but the attack is reduced to +4 vs. Reflex. Anyone attempting to gain control of an uncontrolled water hose uses a move action and must make a successful DC 10/12 Athletics skill check. When the encounter ends, the water hoses run dry and stop.

TACTICS

The acolytes use the water hose to attack a single PC, trying to push them through an open cell door while another locks them inside. They try to stay near the guard drakes, ensuring the drakes get the extra damage when an ally is within two squares.

The fanatic attacks the strongest looking PC, calling on the guard drakes to attack them also.

The guard drakes attack the closest PC in the first round. They continue to attack this PC until they are ordered by an acolyte or the fanatic to help attack them.

All fight until defeated.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

Four PCs: Remove 1 Guard Drake.

Six PCs: Add 1 Guard Drake.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The encounter ends when the cultists and the drakes are defeated.

If the PCs question any of the cult acolytes, they relate the following:

- The PCs are Firequencher agents seeking to destroy the cult.
- Lekaral is in the chamber beyond the locked door.
- They were sent to stop anyone from getting into the basement.
- They beg the PCs to kill them for their failure in stopping them, preferably quick and painless.

If the PCs question cult fanatic, he relates the following:

- Lekaral is on the roof, performing a ritual to awaken the Reborn Flame (a.k.a., the Raging Flame), and tapping into its power to stop the Firequencher. For the Reborn Flame!

- The Firequenchers are the cult's sworn enemy and you (the PCs) are their agents, whether knowing or not.
- He was warned there were intruders, likely Firequencher agents, on the grounds and was sent by Lekaral to stop anyone from getting into the basement.
- The prisoners are on the other side of the door at the far end of the chamber. The prisoners undergo a series of experiments involving their blood, but he does not understand such things.
- He begs the PCs to kill him, preferably with fire, for his failure in stopping them.

If any of the PCs investigate the rune-covered barred door, immediately proceed to Encounter 10.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

Each PC receives 125 / 150 experience points for defeating the cultists and their drakes.

TREASURE

There is no treasure in this encounter.

ENCOUNTER 9: BASEMENT STATISTICS (LOW LEVEL)

Guard Drake		Level 2 Brute
Small natural beast (reptile)		XP 125
Initiative +3	Senses Perception +7	
HP 48; Bloodied: 24		
AC 15; Fortitude 15, Reflex 13, Will 12		
Immune fear (while within 2 squares of an ally)		
Speed 6		
m Bite (standard; at-will)		
+6 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage, or 1d10+9 damage while within 2 squares of an ally.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages -
Str 16 (+4)	Dex 15 (+3)	Wis 12 (+2)
Con 18 (+5)	Int 3 (-3)	Cha 12 (+2)

Human Cult Acolyte		Level 1 Minion
Medium natural humanoid		XP 25
Initiative +0	Senses Perception +0	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 14; Fortitude 13, Reflex 11, Will 11; <i>see mob rule</i>		
Speed 6		
m Spear (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+5 vs. AC; 2 damage.		
Mob Rule		
A human cult acolyte gains a +2 power bonus to defenses while at least two other human cult acolytes are within 5 squares of it.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common	
Str 14 (+2)	Dex 10 (+0)	Wis 10 (+0)
Con 12 (+1)	Int 9 (-1)	Cha 11 (+0)
Equipment leather armor, spear		

Human Cult Fanatic		Level 3 Brute
Medium natural humanoid		XP 175
Initiative +3	Senses Perception +2	
HP 66; Bloodied 33		
AC 15; Fortitude 15, Reflex 14, Will 14		
Speed 7		
m Greataxe (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+7 vs. AC; 1d12+4 damage (crit 1d12+16).		
M Battle Fury (when first bloodied; encounter)		
The human cult fanatic makes a melee basic attack with a +4 bonus to the attack roll and deals an extra 1d6 damage on a hit.		
R Handaxe (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Ranged 5/10; +5 vs. AC; 1d6+3 damage.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common	
Skills Athletics +9, Endurance +9		
Str 17 (+5)	Dex 12 (+3)	Wis 11 (+2)
Con 16 (+5)	Int 10 (+2)	Cha 12 (+3)
Equipment hide armor, greataxe, 2 handaxes		

ENCOUNTER 9: BASEMENT STATISTICS (HIGH LEVEL)

Guard Drake		Level 2 Brute
Small natural beast (reptile)		XP 125
Initiative +3	Senses Perception +7	
HP 48; Bloodied: 24		
AC 15; Fortitude 15, Reflex 13, Will 12		
Immune fear (while within 2 squares of an ally)		
Speed 6		
m Bite (standard; at-will)		
+6 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage, or 1d10+9 damage while within 2 squares of an ally.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages -
Str 16 (+4)	Dex 15 (+3)	Wis 12 (+2)
Con 18 (+5)	Int 3 (-3)	Cha 12 (+2)

Human Cult Acolyte		Level 1 Minion
Medium natural humanoid		XP 25
Initiative +0	Senses Perception +0	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 14; Fortitude 13, Reflex 11, Will 11; <i>see mob rule</i>		
Speed 6		
m Spear (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+5 vs. AC; 2 damage.		
Mob Rule		
A human cult acolyte gains a +2 power bonus to defenses while at least two other human cult acolytes are within 5 squares of it.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common	
Str 14 (+2)	Dex 10 (+0)	Wis 10 (+0)
Con 12 (+1)	Int 9 (-1)	Cha 11 (+0)
Equipment leather armor, spear		

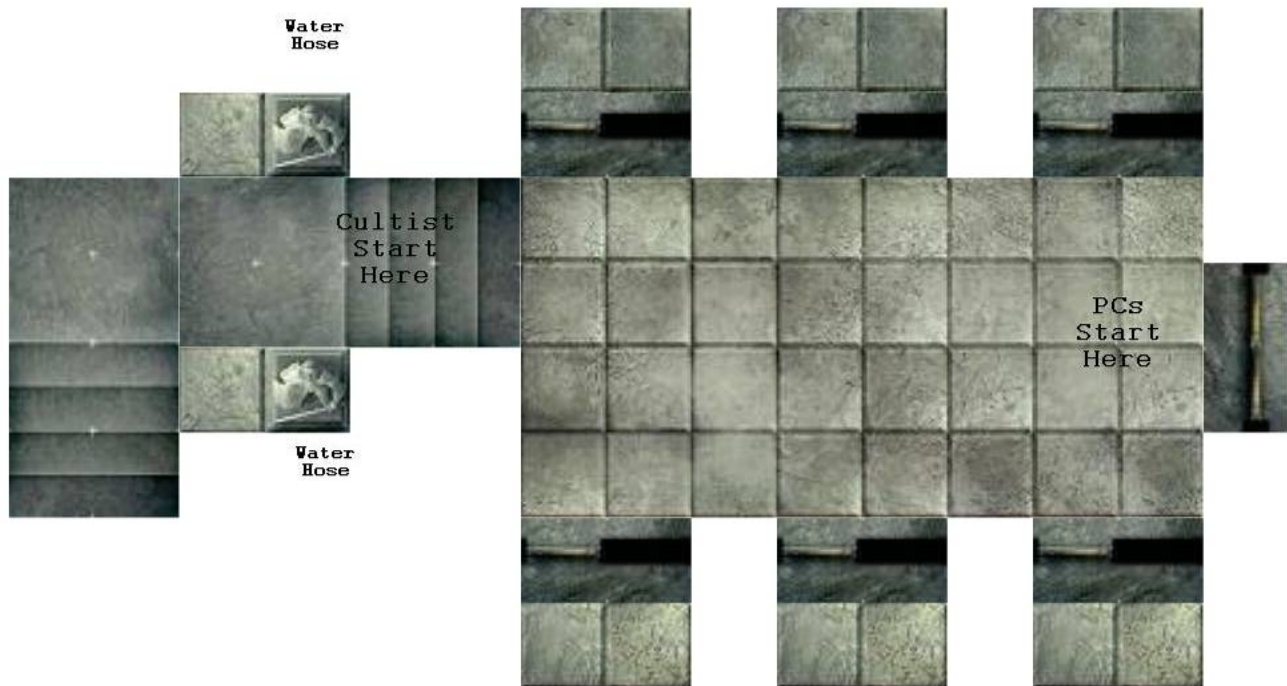
Human Cult Fanatic		Level 3 Brute
Medium natural humanoid		XP 175
Initiative +3	Senses Perception +2	
HP 66; Bloodied 33		
AC 15; Fortitude 15, Reflex 14, Will 14		
Speed 7		
m Greataxe (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+7 vs. AC; 1d12+4 damage (crit 1d12+16).		
M Battle Fury (when first bloodied; encounter)		
The human cult fanatic makes a melee basic attack with a +4 bonus to the attack roll and deals an extra 1d6 damage on a hit.		
R Handaxe (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Ranged 5/10; +5 vs. AC; 1d6+3 damage.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common	
Skills Athletics +9, Endurance +9		
Str 17 (+5)	Dex 12 (+3)	Wis 11 (+2)
Con 16 (+5)	Int 10 (+2)	Cha 12 (+3)
Equipment hide armor, greataxe, 2 handaxes		

ENCOUNTER 9: BASEMENT

TILE SETS NEEDED

Dungeon Tiles

Double Doors / Rubble	2x1	x1
Stairs Landing / Floor	4x2	x2
Single Door / Floor	2x1	x14
Statue / Floor	1x1	x2



ENCOUNTER 10: DOOR

SKILL CHALLENGE LEVEL 1 / 2, COMPLEXITY 1 (100 / 200 XP)

SETUP

The PCs engage in a skill challenge to stop the rune-covered door from injuring them.

Examining the rune-covered door, you notice one of the runes glints red, followed by a small curl of black smoke. One by one, the other runes do the same, each growing in intensity threatening to send a wave of blistering heat and a cloud of choking smoke throughout the chamber.

Roll initiative to determine the PCs' order. Ask the player what their PC is doing and have them make their skill check. Continue once for everyone at the table, regardless if the PCs succeed or fail the skill challenge, so everyone has a chance to do something. If after the first round, the requisite number of successes or failures is not met to end the skill challenge, such as at a 4 person table, select a PC or ask for a volunteer to make the crucial and deciding roll.

The players might ask questions about the environment; describe the chamber so that they understand how they can use their skills.

Feel free to customize them based on what the PCs do, and give hints to the PCs about what skills might be useful if they are having trouble deciding what to do. If a PC wants to use a skill that is not listed here and you think it is applicable, they need to make a DC 20 / 21 check with that skill to garner a success.

SKILL CHALLENGE: RUNES

Goal: Stop the rune-covered barred door from filling the chamber with heat and smoke.

Complexity: 1 (4 successes before 2 failures)

Primary Skills: Arcana, Athletics, Dungeoneering, Religion, Thievery

Victory: The PCs stop the door from injuring them and do not suffer a healing surge loss.

Defeat: The PCs suffer a healing surge loss.

Arcana (DC 10/12): A PC decodes the meaning of the runes on the door, how the magic powers the runes and the means to stop the door from erupting in smoke and flame. If the PC's skill check is 5 or less, the next skill check made by another PC suffers a -2 penalty due to interference.

Athletics (DC 10/12): A PC attempts to run out of the room or take some other measure to avoid being in the room if/when the door erupts in smoke and flame. If the PC's skill check is 5 or less, the next skill check made by another PC suffers a -2 penalty due to interference.

Dungeoneering (DC 10/12): A PC uses his knowledge on how this rune-covered door functions and the means to stop it from erupting in smoke and flame. If the PC's skill check is 5 or less, the next skill check made by another PC suffers a -2 penalty due to interference.

Religion (DC 10/12): A PC prays to their deity for protection and/or channels their divinity to protect against the door's magic if/when it erupts in smoke and flame. If the PC's skill check is 5 or less, the next skill check made by another PC suffers a -2 penalty due to interference.

Thievery (DC 10/12): A PC attempts to deactivate the rune-covered door before it erupts in smoke and flame. If the PC's skill check is 5 or less, the next skill check made by another PC suffers a -2 penalty due to interference.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The encounter ends when all the PCs have had a chance to make at least one skill check and the requisite number of successes or failures is met.

Continue with Encounter 11.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The PCs receive 20 / 40 experience points for successfully completing the skill challenge.

ENCOUNTER 11: LABORATORY

SETUP

This is a non-challenge encounter.

As you defeat the rune-covered door, the door seemingly swings open on its own accord, welcoming you to step beyond its portal into the chamber beyond.

The chamber is scattered with tables on which lie two deathly pale humans, both unconscious. Several thin silver rods pierce their bodies and these rods are attached to a hose that leads to a large red film-covered glass bottle. Around the rest of the room lay parchments, books, devices and other instruments.

Although this is not a skill challenge, feel free to have the PCs roll skill checks, with a DC 10/12 for any skills you deem appropriate as they examine the machine or the various notes.

The PCs can learn the following.

- The silver rods are large needles. They are used to extract and inject blood.
- The humans are all catatonic and the PCs cannot awaken them with normal means at this time (out of scope of the adventure). The humans were subjected to a magical experiment where blood was drained from them.
- The humans were selected because there is a trace of dragon blood running through their veins.
- This dragon blood is from one of the dragon steeds who rose up against the Dawn Titans.
- A magic ritual was performed on the blood and then it was put back into the humans.
- Lekaral hopes to concentrate and strengthen the dragon blood from those who have it and use it in a ritual to stir Achazar, a Dawn Titan, who is also known as the Raging Flame.
- Lekaral theorizes if Achazar senses one of the dragons who betrayed the Dawn Titans, it will stir him from his lethargy.
- One of the women recently taken, shows great promise and Lekaral decided to accelerate his plans despite orders from a cult leader in Sambral, another Windrise Port, not to do so.
- Lekaral is attempting the ritual to stir Achazar to not only advance his place in the cult, but to steal some of Achazar's power for his own.
- Lekaral has clearly been corresponding with someone else, a superior, within the cult

concerning his research. There are several letters that mention this superior in Sambral. None give a name, but all are signed with a "B."

- Mixed in with the other notes, books, and parchments is a moldy tome bound in worn leather. Stamped in barely readable lettering upon the cover is the title, "*The Darkturret Account*." In slightly smaller letters, the initials X. F. can be seen. The book describes on man's obsession with the ruins of Darkturret and his efforts to research their history. By the end it is clear the author is has become quite mad and he rambles for pages about fires eyes and the dread everlasting cold.

The PCs can also uncover treasure Lekaral has stored here in a chest for safekeeping.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The encounter ends when the PCs have learned all they can about Lekaral's plan and seek to confront him.

PCs that recover and read "*The Darkturret Account*" and who possess the In Slumber Remain Quest card may mark task one as complete.

Continue with Encounter 12.

TREASURE

The PCs can loot 75 / 125 gp each from the laboratory along with the following magic items:

- *Flame bracers*
- *Circlet of second chances*
- *Cloak of the walking wounded*
- *Amulet of protection +2 (high-level)*
- *Dwarven greaves*

ENCOUNTER 12: LEKARAL

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 3 / 5 (750 / 1050 XP)

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures at the low tier:

8 Human Cult Acolytes (A)

1 Human Cult Devotee (D)

Lekaral (L)

This encounter includes the following creatures at the high tier:

6 Human Cult Acolytes (A)

3 Human Cult Devotees (D)

Lekaral (L)

Read the following when the PCs enter the area:

Emerging onto the roof, you find yourself surrounded by slate-covered roof peaks and a distant view of the Raging Flame. Fat droplets of rain fall from the roiling dark green sky as lightning flashes across it. The booming thunder that follows drowns out the cultists' chanting along with a woman's terrified screams.

Your appearance on the roof has not gone unnoticed as a cultist points and shouts angrily, "Quenchers!"

Have the players roll for initiative and commence the final combat.

If/when Lekaral is defeated, read the following:

As Lekaral falls, he cries out, "Awaken Achazar. Awaken."

A ball of roiling fire appears overhead sending fiery tendrils lashing out, barely singeing all but Lekaral who it envelopes.

A blazing tendril sears the flesh from Lekaral's face, leaving a blackened skull before the fire overhead flickers out of existence.

If Lekaral was not killed by the PCs, this certainly does.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Overcast (dim illumination).

Puddles: Treat these squares as challenging terrain. Anyone entering these squares makes a DC 5/8

Acrobatics skill check or fall prone (movement ends). These squares cost 1 square of movement.

Slate-covered Roof: Treat the slate-covered roof as challenging terrain. It costs 2 squares of movement for each square moved and requires a DC 10/12 Acrobatics skill check to avoid falling prone. In addition to falling prone, they slide 1 square toward the roof's edge. At the start of their next turn, anyone who fell prone on their previous turn must make a DC 10/12 Acrobatics skill check or continue to slide 1 square towards the roof's edge. If anyone falls off the roof, they take 4d10 falling damage. A saving throw prevents the fall, but they remain in the same square and are still prone.

TACTICS

The human cult acolytes gang up on the closest PC and beat on them with their clubs. If anyone is fighting near the roof's edge, they attempt to push the PC off.

The human cult fanatic stays near Lekaral, using their mark on anyone daring to attack Lekaral.

Lekaral is unafraid to cast his ranged spells while engaged in melee combat due to his *shimmering armor* which prevents opportunity attacks. He uses his *bedeviling burst* to push PCs off the roof. If any PC is pushed off the roof (and fail a saving throw), they take 4d10 falling damage and can spend the next 5 rounds getting back to the roof. If a PC can fly or has another mode of travel besides their feet, the roof is 40 feet up from the ground.

If Lekaral is pushed off the roof, you can opt for him to take the falling damage, especially if he is nearly out of hit points. Alternately, he can catch himself on a third floor shuttered window where he can pull himself inside and rejoin the fight. This fight should not be anticlimatic.

None of the opponents surrender; all fight to the death. If there is only one or two acolytes left after Lekaral perishes, feel free to have them leap to their deaths off the roof to end the combat.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

Four PCs: Remove 6 Human Cult Acolytes.

Six PCs: A 1 Human Cult Devotee.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The encounter ends when Lekaral and the cultists are defeated.

If the PCs question any of the cultists, they relate the following:

- They are member of a cult called the Reborn Flame and their sworn enemy is the Firequenchers.
- They come from all walks of life, but all have recently been in Sambral, another Windrise Port, where they had received indoctrination. As part of their final ceremony, they burned the building they were meeting in to the ground. They do not know where the other cultists moved onto in Sambral after that, as they came to Tarmalune.
- The cult is active in the other Windrise Ports, but they have no specific details, though they know a group definitely operates out of Sambral.

The PCs do not receive the story award **Tarmalune Contact**.

Wrap up any other details you deem necessary and appropriate.

- THE END -

The PCs also receive the story award **Branded**.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

Each PC receives 150 / 200 experience points for defeating Lekaral and the cultists.

TREASURE

There is no treasure in this encounter.

CONCLUSION

If the PCs defeat Lekaral and the cultists:

When the people of Tarmalune found out that the press gangs were the work of evil cultists, they were understandably outraged. They demanded that a law be enacted to make them illegal and Halagothra herself went before the council, pleading the populace's case. It came as no surprise when the council unanimously voted to outlaw press gangs.

As for the Raging Flame, it still burns, perhaps brighter and hotter now that its embers are stirred.

For defeating the cultists, the PCs receive the story award **Tarmalune Contact**. Ideally it should be an NPC with whom the PC interacted, but this is not necessary.

If the PCs did not defeat Lekaral and the cultists:

A house fire in Tarmalune is not an extraordinary occurrence, especially for one in Fishstink ward. The Vigilant and the Firequenchers dutifully arrived on the scene, but it was much too late and the house along with all within it was consumed by the fire.

As for the Raging Flame, it still burns, perhaps brighter and hotter now that its embers are stirred.

ENCOUNTER 12: LEKARAL STATISTICS (LOW LEVEL)

Human Cult Acolyte		Level 1 Minion
Medium natural humanoid		XP 25
Initiative +0	Senses Perception +0	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 14; Fortitude 13, Reflex 11, Will 11; <i>see mob rule</i>		
Speed 6		
m Spear (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+5 vs. AC; 2 damage.		
Mob Rule		
A human hired goon gains a +2 power bonus to defenses while at least two other human hired goons are within 5 squares of it.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common	
Str 14 (+2)	Dex 10 (+0)	Wis 10 (+0)
Con 12 (+1)	Int 9 (-1)	Cha 11 (+0)
Equipment leather armor, club		

Human Cult Devotee		Level 3 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid		XP 150
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +6	
HP 47; Bloodied 23		
AC 18; Fortitude 16, Reflex 15, Will 14		
Speed 5		
m Halberd (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Reach 2; +10 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the human cult initiate's next turn.		
M Powerful Strike (standard; recharge 5 6) ♦ Weapon		
Requires halberd; reach 2; +10 vs. AC; 1d10+7 damage, and the target is knocked prone.		
R Crossbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Ranged 15/30; +9 vs. AC; 1d8+2 damage.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common	
Skills Streetwise +7		
Str 16 (+4)	Dex 14 (+3)	Wis 11 (+1)
Con 15 (+3)	Int 10 (+2)	Cha 12 (+2)
Equipment chainmail, halberd, crossbow with 20 bolts		

Lekaral	Level 4 Elite Artillery	
Medium natural humanoid	XP 400	
Initiative +2 Senses Perception +2		
HP 80; Bloodied 40; Surges 1; Surge Value 20		
AC 13; Fortitude 14, Reflex 15, Will 19		
Resist cold 5		
Action Points 1		
Speed 6		
m Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+5 vs. AC; 1d4 damage.		
R Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Ranged 5/10; +7 vs. AC; 1d4.		
R Chaos Bolt (standard; at-will) ♦ Arcane, Implement, Psychic		
Ranged 10; +6 vs. Will; 1d10+6 psychic damage; If you rolled an even number for the primary attack, make a secondary attack. <i>Secondary Target:</i> One creature within 5 squares of the target last hit by this power. <i>Secondary Attack:</i> +5 vs. Will; 1d6 psychic damage. If you rolled an even number for the secondary attack roll, repeat the secondary attack. You can attack a creature only once with a single use of this power.		
R Bedeviling Burst (standard; encounter)		
Arcane, Implement, Psychic		
Close burst 3; +6 vs. Will; 1d10+6 psychic damage, and you push the target 2 squares. If you rolled an even number on the attack roll, you slide the target instead of pushing it.		
R Dazzling Ray (standard; daily) Arcane, Implement, Psychic		
Ranged 10; +6 vs Reflex; 6d6+6 radiant damage. If you rolled an even number on the attack roll, the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls against you (save ends). <i>Miss:</i> Half damage.		
Elemental Shift (minor; daily) ♦ Arcane		
Lekaral can change his resistance to one of the other damage types for the rest of the encounter. In addition, one ally adjacent to Lekaral gains resist 5 to the damage type that he resists until the end of the encounter.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common	
Skills Athletics +6, Arcana +8, Bluff +11, Diplomacy +11, Intimidate +11		
Str 10 (+0)	Dex 15 (+2)	Wis 11 (+0)
Con 13 (+1)	Int 12 (+1)	Cha 19 (+4)
Equipment 2 daggers, <i>shimmering armor</i> +1		

ENCOUNTER 12: LEKARAL STATISTICS (HIGH LEVEL)

Human Cult Acolyte		Level 1 Minion
Medium natural humanoid		XP 25
Initiative +0	Senses Perception +0	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 14; Fortitude 13, Reflex 11, Will 11; <i>see mob rule</i>		
Speed 6		
m Spear (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+5 vs. AC; 2 damage.		
Mob Rule		
A human hired goon gains a +2 power bonus to defenses while at least two other human hired goons are within 5 squares of it.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common	
Str 14 (+2)	Dex 10 (+0)	Wis 10 (+0)
Con 12 (+1)	Int 9 (-1)	Cha 11 (+0)
Equipment leather armor, club		

Human Cult Devotee		Level 3 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid		XP 150
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +6	
HP 47; ♦ Weapon 23		
AC 18; Fortitude 16, Reflex 15, Will 14		
Speed 5		
m Halberd (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Reach 2; +10 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the human cult initiate's next turn.		
M Powerful Strike (standard; recharge 5 6)		Weapon
Requires halberd; reach 2; +10 vs. AC; 1d10+7 damage, and the target is knocked prone.		
R Crossbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Ranged 15/30; +9 vs. AC; 1d8+2 damage.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common	
Skills Streetwise +7		
Str 16 (+4)	Dex 14 (+3)	Wis 11 (+1)
Con 15 (+3)	Int 10 (+2)	Cha 12 (+2)
Equipment chainmail, halberd, crossbow with 20 bolts		

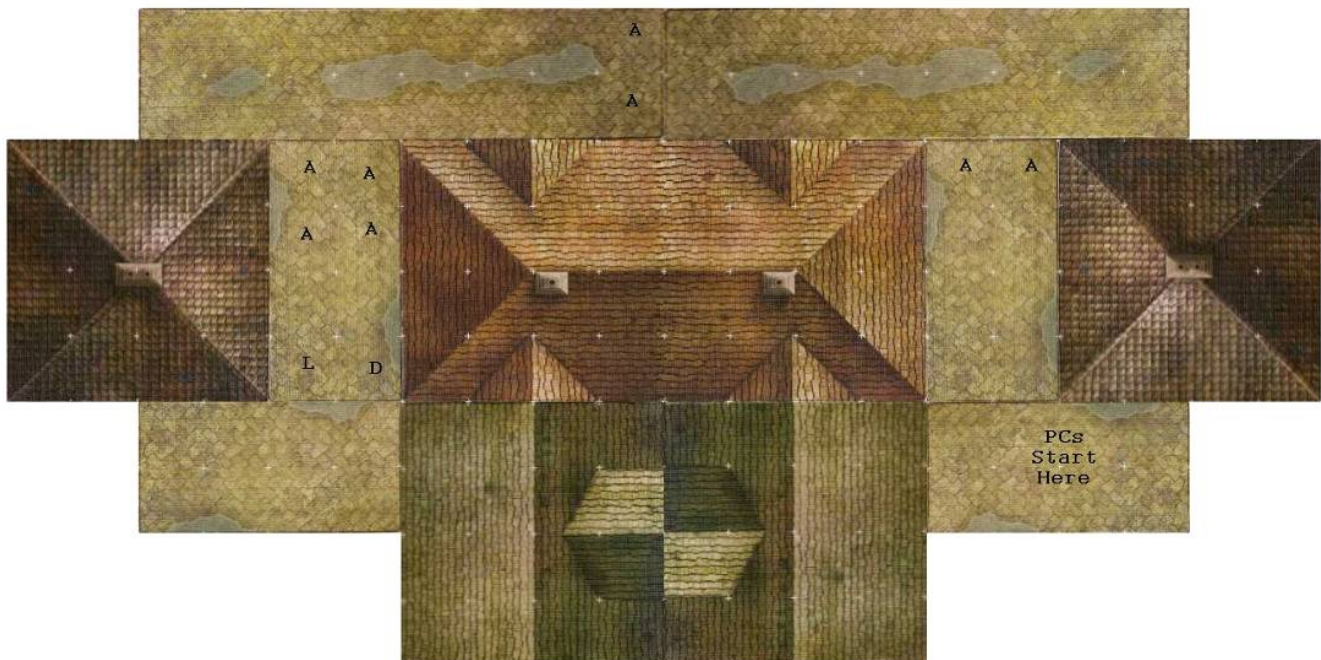
Lekaral	Level 5 Elite Artillery
Medium natural humanoid	XP 450
Initiative +2	Senses Perception +2
HP 96; Bloodied 48; Surges 1; Surge Value 24	
AC 13; Fortitude 14, Reflex 15, Will 19	
Resist cold 5	
Action Points 1	
Speed 6	
m Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+6 vs. AC; 1d4 damage.	
R Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 5/10; +8 vs. AC; 1d4.	
R Chaos Bolt (standard; at-will) ♦ Arcane, Implement, Psychic	
Ranged 10; +7 vs. Will; 1d10+6 psychic damage; If you rolled an even number for the primary attack, make a secondary attack. <i>Secondary Target:</i> One creature within 5 squares of the target last hit by this power. <i>Secondary Attack:</i> +5 vs. Will; 1d6 psychic damage. If you rolled an even number for the secondary attack roll, repeat the secondary attack. You can attack a creature only once with a single use of this power.	
R Bedeviling Burst (standard; encounter)	
Arcane, Implement, Psychic	
Close burst 3; +7 vs. Will; 1d10+6 psychic damage, and you push the target 2 squares. If you rolled an even number on the attack roll, you slide the target instead of pushing it.	
R Dazzling Ray (standard; daily) Arcane, Implement, Psychic	
Ranged 10; +7 vs Reflex; 6d6+6 radiant damage. If you rolled an even number on the attack roll, the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls against you (save ends). <i>Miss:</i> Half damage.	
Elemental Shift (minor; daily) ♦ Arcane	
Lekaral can change his resistance to one of the other damage types for the rest of the encounter. In addition, one ally adjacent to Lekaral gains resist 5 to the damage type that he resists until the end of the encounter.	
Alignment Evil	Languages Common
Skills Athletics +6, Arcana +8, Bluff +11, Diplomacy +11, Intimidate +11	
Str 10 (+0)	Dex 15 (+2)
Con 13 (+1)	Int 12 (+1)
	Wis 11 (+0)
	Cha 19 (+4)
Equipment 2 daggers, <i>shimmering armor</i> +1	

ENCOUNTER 12: LEKARAL

TILE SETS NEEDED

DU2:Streets of Shadow

Building / Sewer T	4x4	x2
Building / Sewer Outfall	4x4	x2
Large Building / More Sewer	4x8	x1
Street / Sewer Straight	4x2	x4
Long Street / Long Sewer	8x2	x2



REWARDS SUMMARY

At the conclusion of the adventure, the PCs earn experience points, treasure, and possibly story awards. All totals listed here are per PC. A number before the slash is the low-level value; after the slash is the high-level value.

IMPORTANT DM INFORMATION

It is critical that you enter the PC rewards accurately on the tracking form, and ensure that the information is reported and entered online in a timely manner. While players can and should track their character's information on paper, the online information serves as an important backup and verification of play. Ask the players for their RPGA numbers and character numbers (usually a single digit) when you begin to fill out the tracking form.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

Give PCs a full award for each encounter they successfully completed, and a half award if they were unsuccessful. Give no award if the characters did not play the encounter at all.

Encounter 1: Pressed

100 / 125 XP

Encounter 2: Runaway

60 / 75 XP

Encounter 4: Investigate

40 / 50 XP

Encounter 5: Sellwords

100 / 125 XP

Encounter 6: Elalaran

100 / 150 XP

Encounter 8: Double

100 / 125 XP

Encounter 9: Basement

125 / 150 XP

Encounter 10: Door

20 / 40 XP

Encounter 12: Lekaral

150 / 210 XP

Total Possible Experience

775 / 1,095 XP

Gold per PC

150 / 200 gp

(Encounter 5: 10 / 10 gp, Encounter 6: 65 / 65 gp, Encounter 11: 75 / 125 gp)

TREASURE

Each PC receives treasure in the form of gold pieces as well as one share from a treasure bundle. The treasure bundle may give the PC more gold, a magic item, or something else of value. Each player makes one and only one selection for their character; players may choose the same treasure bundle. Mark the one-letter bundle ID on the tracking form next to any character that selects a bundle; note that it is possible (and likely) that some characters will not select a bundle for each session of play.

If characters buy or sell magic items or other gear during the adventure (or pay for services) add or subtract that amount from the total gold the PC receives at the end of the adventure. If a player selects an option that gives their character more gold, add that amount to that character's base gold award, and ensure you enter the total amount of gold gained (minus any expenditures) online. It is possible and permissible for a character that spends more gold than he or she earns to have a negative total for the adventure. PCs receive 20% of the item's market price when they sell any magic item or consumable. They receive 50% of the market price for ritual books and alchemical formulas.

If a player selects a magic weapon or suit of armor for their PC that is not specific on the type of item listed, they must select the exact item at the time they choose that bundle. For example, if a *duelist's weapon +1* is listed as a choice in a bundle, a player selects the form of the weapon amongst the choices possible for that magic item (light blades). If the player selects the item as a *+1 duelist's dagger*, the player writes that information down on the PC's adventure log and the item is forever after that specific weapon.

An asterisk next to a magic item means that it is an item that appears in the **New Rules** section.

EACH PC SELECTS ONE OF THE FOLLOWING BUNDLES:

Bundle A: *shimmering armor +1** (item level 4; Adventurer's Vault 51)

Found in Encounter 12

Bundle B: *flame bracers** (item level 3; Adventurer's Vault 117)

Found in Encounter 11

Bundle C: *circlet of second chances** (item level 3; Adventurer's Vault 139)

Found in Encounter 11

Bundle D: *cloak of the walking wounded** (item level 4; Adventurer's Vault 151)

Found in Encounter 11

Bundle E: *amulet of protection* +2 (item level 6; *Player's Handbook* 249)

Found in Encounter 11

Bundle F: *dwarven greaves* (item level 7; *Player's Handbook* 246)

Found in Encounter 11

Bundle G: Alchemical Formula for *Alchemist's Fire**

Found in Encounter 11

Bundle H: Ritual Book for *Endure Elements*

Found in Encounter 11

Consumable plus Gold: If a player doesn't want to select one of the bundles listed above for their character, they can choose to add a *potion of healing* plus 150 / 250 gp to their rewards from this adventure. The player should write the consumable gained on their adventure log. That character (and only that character) then receives the consumable plus the listed amount of gold (if any) instead of any other treasure bundle. Consumable items obtained in this fashion do not take up found magic item slots.

More Gold: If a player doesn't want to select one of the bundles listed above for their character, they can choose to add 200 / 300 gp to their rewards from this adventure. That character (and only that character) receives more gold instead of any other treasure bundle.

STORY AWARDS

Award these if the PC completes the condition for the award in the adventure. Pass out certificates to the players for their story awards. Normally, if a PC earns three awards, they may only have 2 of them and must pick which two they want before ending the session (exceptions to this will be noted in the story award text). Make sure to mark the story award codes next to each character that earned them on the tracking form.

MINI01 Branded

You have embarked on a Major Quest to root out the cult and put an end to their nefarious doings. By doing so, you have gained the attention of the Cult of the Reborn Flame. In addition, you have received a unique magical sigil upon your left cheek that is not visible by ordinary means, but can be magically detected. Attempts to remove it fail.

MINI02 Tarmalune Contact

In the course of this adventure, you met several individuals who may be able to help you in the future. Choose one (1) of the following individuals who your character connected with:

- Halagothra the Healer
- Vigilant Sergeant Hofferan
- Teamster Joade
- Lindelsan, a bartender at The Black Boot
- Belyssa the Whaler
- Karadandel the Sly, Information Broker
- Valek, Haven Tower clerk
- Vigilant Senior Watcher Roraven

What the circled contact can do for you is determined by the DM, if the contact is not mentioned specifically in the adventure. This contact is only available in Tarmalune itself unless otherwise noted in a future adventure.

ADVENTURE QUESTIONS

Mark the answers to the following adventure questions on the tracking form.

1. What did the PCs do with Elalaran?

- a. Killed him.
- b. Turned him over to the Vigilant.
- c. Let him go.
- d. Something else.

2. Did the PCs defeat Lekaral?

- a. Yes
- b. No

NEW RULES

Circlet of Second Chances

Level 3

Luck favors those who don this plain copper accessory.

Item Slot: Head 680 gp

Property (Daily): No Action. Use this power when you fail a saving throw. Reroll the saving throw, using the second result even if it's lower.

Reference: *Adventurer's Vault*, page 139.

Cloak of the Walking Wounded

Level 4+

Thin red veins form across the fabric of this handom cloak when its healing properties are evoked.

Lvl 4	+1	840 gp	Lvl 19	+4	105,000 gp
Lvl 9	+2	4,200 gp	Lvl 24	+5	525,000 gp
Lvl 14	+3	21,000 gp	Lvl 29	+6	2,625,000 gp

Item Slot: Neck

Enhancement: Fortitude, Reflex, and Will

Property: If you use your second wind while bloodied, you can expend two healing surges instead of one (gaining hit points from both).

Reference: *Adventurer's Vault*, page 151.

Flame Bracers

Level 3+

Flickering flames dance across your arm guards, darting to cover your weapon on crucial attacks.

Lvl 3 680 gp

Item Slot: Arms

Property: When you score a critical hit with a melee attack, deal an extra 1d6 fire damage.

Level 13: 1d10 fire damage

Level 23: 2d6 fire damage

Reference: *Adventurer's Vault*, page 116.

Shimmering Armor

Level 4+

The sheen of this armor glints brightest when you most need its magical protection.

Lvl 4	+1	840 gp	Lvl 19	+4	105,000 gp
Lvl 9	+2	4,200 gp	Lvl 24	+5	525,000 gp
Lvl 14	+3	21,000 gp	Lvl 29	+6	2,625,000 gp

Armor: Cloth

Enhancement: AC

Property: You do not provoke opportunity attacks when you make ranged or area attacks.

Reference: *Adventurer's Vault*, page 51.

APPENDIX

Excerpts from “Backdrop: Tarmalune” by Ed Greenwood, *Dragon* 372.

Tarmalune

Tarmalune, the wealthy, bustling, crossroads port city, is the cosmopolitan trading heart of its continent, serving Returned Abeir just as Waterdeep does the Sword Coast of Faerûn.

Self-governing and fiercely independent, yet lacking a standing army, Tarmalune is the largest, wealthiest, and most socially prominent of the Windrise Ports (the independent cities on the eastern shores of the Dragon Sea). Only Imdolphyn dares to declare itself “the equal of Tarmalune,” and not even the richest Imdarm merchant-lords truly believe that boast.

Tarmalune has around 70,000 permanent residents (called “Tarralune”), and it hosts a constantly changing population of many more short-term visitors as ships dock or sail, caravans arrive or depart, and a steady stream of peddlers, traders, and seekers-after-fortune pass through its gates. Of old, the city was rightly called “Tarmalune Great Port” since it rivals Waterdeep in wealth, mercantile ventures, tolerance, variety among citizens and outlanders, and constantly unfolding opportunities.

Tarmalune is not a welcoming home to those who favor stability over change, or who trust in traditions and “old ways.” Each new month brings changes in fashions, ways of making things or doing business, and new faces rising to the center of attention in society, or seizing real power among Tarralune investors and traders.

The Raging Flame

The most striking sight in Tarmalune is the Raging Flame (the “Tongue of Fire” in more formal speech and to older Tarralune), a hundred-foot-tall pillar of tireless flames that burns constantly, in a cylinder that holds its shape even in gales, without fuel. Sailors use it as a beacon in the darkness or bad weather, since its light shines out to sea straight through the open (navigable) heart of the harbor. To Tarralune, it’s something “old, fell, and magical” that’s “always been there,” defying all attempts to extinguish it and seeming to know and strike out at persons who try (spitting gouts of flame for hundreds of feet that appear aimed at specific persons or buildings).

Hundreds of local tales, tall and otherwise, speak of this pillar of flame. Sometimes it features as an instrument of revenge, or it is portrayed as a fell monster harming those it dislikes and aiding those it favors. Some stories claim dueling wizards were transformed into it and are trapped within it even now; others insist it snatches and captures all manner of persons, transforming them into tormented flames and growing with each one it adds; and still other tales whisper that it’s used for sacrifices by dark cults who will one day rule all Tarmalune—cults perhaps based in Imdolphyn or other ports, who “seek to bring the Great Port down.”

There is almost universal agreement in the city that the fires that have broken out in the past are somehow the work of the Raging Flame, no matter how distant they were from the site of the fiery pillar. Most Tarralune also agree that without the watchful wizards of the recently established Firequench Order keeping the Raging Flame in check, more fires would have devastated Tarmalune, or “a greater evil would have erupted in our fair city.”

City Wards

The districts of Tarmalune are known as “wards” because a century ago each was separately governed by a warden. Today, they are merely neighborhoods, with formal boundaries that aren’t visually apparent to the visitor. However, every Tarralune “knows” vividly what each ward is like—in local stereotypes that refuse to fade. (Despite this, almost every sort of citizen, building, and activity can be found in any ward.)

Arendermore

This is the haughtiest city ward, where the “highcloaks” live. (Tarmalune doesn’t have any formal nobles—that is, persons titled and privileged by birth—but it does have old-money wealthy families and newly risen-to-wealth merchants who crave the reputations and fawning treatment Tarralune give to “old wealth.”) This district is named for the long-dead gnome builder Arender, who raised many of its magnificent turreted mansions. The descendants of his workers, who split into bitter rivals after his death, are the most skilled and busiest builders (and rebuilders, for new mansion owners love to “make their homes their own” by changing interiors) in the city today.

Dawnside

Dawnside is home to trendy, young newly wealthy (“new-coins”) Tarralune, and those desperately trying to stay young. This fashionable neighborhood is crowded with ostentatiously decorated mansions and ornate coaches, and any building not a mansion is likely to be a club for gambling, feasting, dalliance, and revelry—where swindlings are frequent but gaiety and reputation-making and -breaking is the order of every glittering day and night. In contrast to Arendermore, where the exteriors of buildings change little but the interiors are transformed, Dawnside is where buildings are smashed down and replaced by newer, gaudier ones constantly.

Copperstreets

This district is the abode of laborers, where most of the city’s shops, shopkeepers, and “nimblehands” (craft-workers) live. It’s the heart of workaday Tarmalune, where “the tumbling coins that roll us all through life” are made and spent every day. It’s not a slum, but everything is patched or salvaged, washing hangs out from balconies, and ornamentation is considered “overly haughty.”

Maerhavel

Maerhavel is where most “successful” but not wealthy Tarralune live (such as owners of several shops, and citizens well-enough-off to retire, but who then have to watch their spending). Many tarn-traders dwell in this ward, and it outwardly changes little. Conservative respectability and “quiet success” is the order of every day.

Fishstink

This slum is where the poorest Tarralune dwell, because only those lacking coins enough to afford more expensive lodgings elsewhere will tolerate the reek of rotting fishguts that lingers around the market stalls of the fishmongers who thrive around the outer edges of the ward. Tarralune who aren’t “Stinkers” rarely dare to walk deeper into Fishstink; its interior is home to fugitives, misfits, runaways, and the maimed or shunned (those visibly monstrous or “other,” who go about cloaked and cowed) who work in gangs to seize or steal coins and food, or horses and wagons that had can be traded for meals and goods.