

# Waterdeep: Dragon Heist

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Waterdeep:

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### **Session 1: Braving the Storm**

Six weeks following the assault on the UhlgMcUro's, our adventurers are enjoying the fruits of their hard work in building their business. During this time, they have become very close with young Galileo Figaro, a Drow Bard the party had met after plundering their business rivals. Mostly recovering from the previous campaign, while their crew manage things smoothly at the bar. After establishing a reputation for themselves in the north, word has spread of their capabilities - and have received a handful of requests for Adventure/Mercenary work. The most enticing: A message from Waterdeep, pleading for assistance from a trustworthy, and experienced band of adventurers for a highly secretive and delicate mission. With plans to set off for Waterdeep (a seven day journey), the party make themselves ready.

In the meantime, Amelia and Uro are making plans to return to Denvinshire, and Uro is concerned about leaving the bar without at least one Owner there to protect their Home/Business after it nearly burned down. Amelia reassured Uro that it wouldn't be unprotected, and that she will leave 50 of her Queensguard at the Bar, and send another 50 once they arrive in Denvinshire. This eases Uro's mind, however, now he fears letting his friends adventure without him. Young Gally, who Uro had taken under his wing as a Rogue, volunteered to go in Uro's place - to fill the position of Rogue, and help protect their friends.

Before setting off, Dewie tells the party that he had made contact with his brother a couple of weeks after the attack on the bar, asking if he and his crew would like to come join up with the UhlgMcUro's Crew. Dewie wanted it to be a surprise, given they had a very capable vessel in their possession, but no real crew to fly it: and Dewie's brother, Lewie Storm-Worthy was the very best Helmsman, with the very best flight-crew on the continent.

Upon the Storm-Worthy crew's arrival, the party met Lewie, and his first mate Thumper; followed by Thumper's brother Gullet, a tall and muscular, Roach, Lewie's young protege, Horseshoe, and a jittery middle-aged physician, Scratch. Lewie, aside from his crew, brought along several gifts for the party, purchased at an arcane market, and gifted as tokens of good faith from prospective crewmen. Lewie gave the party a Bag of Holding, Chlamydia's Chain of Returning, and a pair of Sending Stones - all of which are very powerful, very helpful, and essential to a band of seasoned adventurers. Together with their new crew mates, the party enjoy an evening of celebration, before they set sail for Waterdeep the following morning.

That evening, MC, Gally, and Uhhg all experienced very intense and bizarre dreams. A combination of familiar past, and abstract past, none are really able to piece together what it was exactly that they saw. But each was shocking in its own manner.

MC found herself, barely clothed, trudging through waist-deep snow in the middle of a vicious blizzard. Gally found himself floating in a rowboat, on calm waters before a violent explosion of blinding green lights occurs behind him. Uhlg found himself on foreign shores, in the throes of a raging battle and surrounded by vicious enemies; and although he struck each down - one emerged from a beached ship, cackling, running toward him in full plate armor he lunged at Uhlg before he woke. All woke in cold sweats, gasping for breath, and uncertain of what to make of their unique experiences - however, they did not share the details of their dreams with one another the following morning.

The next day, the party wake early and are greeted by Lewie and Dewie, and the entirety of the crew, as they offer to bring the adventurers on a tour of their vessel. Heading down to the ship, the party see that what was previously a ship simply capable of flight, had been transformed, reengineered into a very capable warship. Now outfitted with cannons and ballistas, a ram and improved armor; and complete with a new series of sails and masts that allow the ship to fly in the air, and to sail on the sea.

Uro, who accompanied the party on the tour, joined them for a setting off ceremony, with the intention of giving good luck to the voyage, the travelers, and to the vessel itself. Meanwhile, Amelia and her Queensguard made preparations for them to set off via carriage to Denvinshire, before joining for the farewell ceremony.

A bottle of champagne was provided by Dewie, and he told them to break the bottle for some good luck. MC first tried to break it, but the bottle bounced, followed by Gally who also failed - before Uhlg cracked the bottle, bouncing off the ship and shattering on the ground. Uro then said his farewells, wishing his friends the best of luck, and apologizing for being unable to join. The group understood, however, that being newly engaged, and with Amelia now pregnant, Uro felt obligated to stay with her.

Stocking the ship with all their necessities before boarding, the party then decided to leave Scratch behind at the last minute because he made them uncomfortable, and "just doesn't seem trustworthy..." The party sets off, slowly taking flight into the air, as Lewie oriented the ship in the direction of Waterdeep. It would be seven days journey to Waterdeep from the bar, and the party was fully prepared to set off.

The first few days were fairly uneventful, but on the third day of traveling, Lewie and Horseshoe point out the ominous clouds on the horizon. Lewie emphasizes to the party that he has never seen such storm clouds, "make yourselves ready..." as Horseshoe began lashing them both to the railings, "...we're going through." Lewie's fear was not only that the ship may not hold up to the storm, but also that there was no clearing to safely set the ship down once they were in the storm, and that a crash would more than likely be unsurvivable. It was at this moment that Lewie decided to tell the tales of all the times he crashed - a total of three ships lost - but he's never lost a soul onboard a ship.

The storm was one of legends; ferocious winds, rain like shards of glass, blinding lightning, deafening thunder, all exacerbated by dangerous maneuvering of Lewie at the Helm - although he did manage to keep the ship in the air. Flying in arches to avoid a direct lightning strike, Lewie built the momentum of the ship up to take it high above the storm. As he made his third arch, the final ascent past the clouds, Gally cast an illusion of an outrageously bright sunrise that blinded Lewie horribly. Nearly losing control the ship, the momentum in the wind caused the ship to roll as Lewie briefly lost his vision. MC and Gally managed to tie themselves to a cannon on deck, and as the ship rolled, Gally dropped his illusion and pulled MC back toward the deck as she was flung in the roll. Uhlg who had been up by the helm with Lewie and Horseshoe was wrenching back against the stern railings, his heels lifting off the deck from the roughly 80 degree angle Lewie was ascending at in high speed winds. As the weight of Uhlg caused the railing to crack, he nearly tumbled off the back end of the ship, but was able to get some extra rope from Horseshoe, and tie himself to the Helm deck. Lewie screamed a war cry of epic proportion, as he flew toward the break in the clouds to get above the storm, the entire ship vibrating so violently that it felt like it would come apart. Finally, Lewie breached the clouds, and light from the setting sun beamed the crew from the west, as Lewie slowly reduced the ship's speed. Although through the storm, they weren't out of danger; as Lewie pointed out, he'd never taken a ship of this size to this altitude before, and the thinness of the air had him slightly concerned.

Passing the storm, and making the descent toward the ground, the party and crew saw a city off in the distance. Lewie identified it as the city of marvel and exoticisms: Luskan. A city not many people go to because of the reputation it

maintains. It is a haven for pirates, mercenaries, ruffians, outcasts, thieves, and other social rejects from across the continent.

It was at this moment, a ballista bolt landed hard into the starboard side of the ship, attached by a long, thick rope. Followed by a second, landing on the same side, the ropes began pulling the ship hard to the right. While assessing the situation, Gally noticed off in the distance a band of about 30 orcs pulling the ropes with some others preparing a catapult. The party and crew made themselves ready as Lewie slowed the ship, ordering Roach, Gullet and Thumper to man the cannons - MC, Uhhg and Gally immediately got into the fray by manning the second cannon. Letting loose a volley of two shots that decimated the band of orcs, killing nearly half of them in those first two impacts.

After collecting themselves, the orcs loaded one of their own into the catapult, launching him high into the air toward the ship, he attempted to grab a hold of the railing and climb aboard - however he fell short by a couple of feet, plummeting to the ground below. As they prepared to launch another orc, rows of them began climbing the ropes that were attached to the ship, and Uhhg noticed one big orc in particular, giving all of the orders to the others on the ground. With a second volley of cannon fire, and Uhhg and Gally managing to disconnect the ropes from the ship, the remaining orcs were quickly dispatched. MC was knocked off the deck as Lewie maneuvered to dodge a third ballista bolt, and when she fell she was met by the orc chief. MC made easy work of him, and the party slaughtered the attacking band of bandit orcs, delivering a flawless victory.

Deciding that with the orcs killed, there was no reason not to make use of their camp, and even raid it for potential loot. In doing so, the party found a great deal of coin, as well as a couple of magic items; particularly a Mithril vest, and a ring of spell storing. Making camp for the evening, the party took their much needed long rest on solid ground since leaving the UhgMcUro's.

## **Session 2: Jewel of Acrema, Arriving in Waterdeep**

The party awoke early in the morning to the sounds of Lewie and Horseshoe training on deck of the ship. The crew had made the necessary repairs to the ship, and prepared themselves for the remaining journey. The following days were uneventful, and approaching from the northeast, the city of Waterdeep appeared on the horizon. Making their approach, those on deck saw glimmering off in the distance, quickly heading toward the ship. Swooping past the bow of the ship, the glimmering revealed itself to be sunlight's reflection on golden-plate armor of the Griffon Riders of Waterdeep. Ordering the ship to come to a halt, the dozen riders surrounded the vessel as Lewie slowed it to a stop and hover.

It was at this moment that Captain Avitus Corringere introduced himself to the party, and ordered his men to stand down. Avitus apologized for the aggressive nature of their approach to the aircraft, however their approach to the city was also, perceived as aggressive. To the party's surprise, Avitus made it clear that he was expecting the group's arrival. This was as result of a dream he had in which he heard, "the voice of the one whom led (him) to David," and revealed his holy amulet to MC. This would appear to be nothing short of a miracle.

Avitus offered to usher the party and the vessel along the more traditional route of approach via the Great Harbor, and to the docking stations of the Dock Ward; the first landing of Waterdeep. Aided by Avitus' navigation, Lewie piloted the 'Bountiful Wolfsbane of Boris' toward the water. As the ship descended, Roach, Gullet and Thumper began pulling at ropes to leverage two large masts, ingeniously stowed along the starboard and port sides of the ship, high into the air. They then loosened dark canvas sails that billowed from the arcane energy of the ship's levitation generators, bringing the ship to a speedy forward sail.

During the descent, and the final approach, the party get their first real look at the city of Waterdeep, that will function as their home for the foreseeable future. The sun was just cresting near noon, and the summer heat could be felt radiating from the ocean surface; but the cool breeze from sailing across the water, and refreshing mist of the cool ocean was enough to negate the perpetual heatwave yet to be experienced within the depths of the city. The party noticed massive statues scattered throughout the city, humanoid statues that stood towering over every surrounding structure. Avitus tells the group that these statues are used as landmarks to navigate the city, "with the aid of a city map (which he provided) and some general knowledge of the Walking Statues - one can never get lost in Waterdeep."

Pulling into the Great Harbor, the party saw the densely packed docks of the Dock Ward; hundreds of merchant ships, scattered military and mercenary vessels, an array of fishing boats, shuttle boats, all of varying sizes. It appears the

Dock Ward is a bustling hub of industry and trade for Waterdeep, and the group slowly navigate the waters of the harbor to a vacant dock to tie off their ship.

Making dock, the party tells Lewie and the crew to remain onboard the ship, and he happily obliges. Lewie tells Gally, MC, and Uhhg that as a band of sailors, he and his crew prefer to stay with the ship, unless absolutely necessary. They will function as a guard, and be available for back-up if the need arises. General note: while Gally, MC, and Uhhg follow Avitus off the ship, the crew has the main chest of party funds secured below-deck.

At this moment, the group follow Avitus as he makes his way toward a rather tall and slender High-Elf, standing behind a podium bearing the crest of Waterdeep. Avitus introduces Magistrate Lonabris Hillstride, one of the city's Wardens and Lawkeepers charged with overseeing and maintaining the Dock Ward. Hillstride tells the party that they must pay to dock their ship in the city, and a monthly price is agreed upon, with Lewie handling taxes and dues. Magistrate Hillstride, the strikingly tall, ardently law-bound institutionalist, also provided the party of the Code Legal - the simplified version of all laws governing the city.

With their ship docked, and crew charged with a few tasks to maintain their valuables and resources, MC, Gally, and Uhhg make their way into the city, traveling to their rendezvous with Volothamp Gedarm at The Yawning Portal. The densely packed Dock Ward consisted of mostly warehouses, or warehouses converted into homes, restaurants and shops. Traveling north through the Dock Ward, the party pass the imposing figure of The Honorable Knight, standing holding his great sword downward in his hands, his head slightly forward, in the pose of one in deep contemplation following a great battle.

Eventually arriving at the Yawning Portal, the party pushed through the doors of the tavern, and found it to be decently crowded with all sorts of characters inside drinking and eating. In the center of the room there was a large cavernous hole, that was frozen over as if it were an extreme winter. This appeared to be the portal that gave the tavern its' name, however something was wrong. As the thick ice blocked off the portal, a frigid mist radiated from the clouded ice. MC, Uhhg, and Gally were greeted by a scruff human man with a thick accent, Durnan; Barman, Innkeeper, Proprietor of the Yawning Portal. As the party introduce themselves, they inquire about the person they were there to meet with for their quest; Volothamp Gedarm. Durnan informs them that he has a room here at the Yawning Portal, but he's not in at the moment, but will return toward the evening. Frustrated, Uhhg, Gally and MC found seats at a booth, ordering some drinks and food from the barmaid, Bonnie. Gally noticed, as someone who hides in plain sight often - Bonnie is very adept at hiding in plain sight...

Gally and MC also clocked a group of armed, and capable adventurers sitting at a private booth on the second floor balcony. They seemed to be having a very detailed conversation, but we discussing things professionally, and in a manner intended to be inconspicuous.

As MC, Gally, and Uhhg took their seats, a human man in his thirties overheard the name, "Volothamp Gedarm", and politely introduced himself as Jalester Silvermane, born and bred in Waterdeep, and Tavern Regular at the Yawning Portal. He offered some information on the city, inquiring about what brought them to Waterdeep. MC and Uhhg were slightly suspicious, and Gally began hearing a low pounding from underneath the floor in the center of the room. Durnan, who had been talking to some other patrons at the bar, reassures his customers that the sound had been occurring for a few days since the portal froze over, and it was nothing to worry about. Everyone seemed settled given the deep banging had stopped, and the room resumed their conversations over drinks.

Jalester told the party that Volo was known to extend contracts to adventurers, given his proximity to them as a monster chronicler, and cartographer. Throughout his travels he would befriend adventurers on their quests, and study the beats and creatures they would encounter. When returning to the city to complete his books, he would additionally serve as a contractor helping adventurers find work for people within the city, particularly on behalf of Lords and Nobles. Although he is a colorful man, and is a tad inclined to the drink, Volo does great work for the industry of adventuring.

As Bonnie brings another round of drinks, and some more food and whiskey for Uhhg, the sound of the low, resonating thuds started again - this time, seemingly more determined than before. Durnan looked over the bar toward the center of the room, at the frozen portal, and he was more concerned, with a look of terror on his face as he watched in anticipation of what was trying to get out. People began moving toward the door as the banging grew louder, and shook the tables in the tavern. Durnan reached above his bar for his long sword, preparing himself for whatever may come out.

The thick layer of ice over the portal opening erupts with such force, that it sent melon-sized pieces of shrapnel rocketing through the room! Remaining customers ran for the exits, others looked to see what emerged, horrified to see three Frost Trolls emerging from the portal. Roaring, showing their long fangs, with one carrying a massive, stone war club; crafted from the trunk of a rotted tree, and a boulder. Durnan leapt over the bar, drawing his long sword; but having seen several winters, lost his footing and got tangled up in the wrappings of his own sheath. Durnan made it over the bar, but fell and tumbled, landing prone with his sword thrown from his hands, sliding away from him.

MC, Gally and Uhhg immediately stood from their tables, and drew their weapons to prepare for combat! Jalester grabbed Bonnie, and ran with her out the door of the tavern. Uhhg fearlessly charged the troll carrying the war club as it stood in front of the hole, roaring at the room. Uhhg landed a significant push, and barreled the troll back into the hole, as one of the others attacked him, ferociously; cutting Uhhg up a bit, but nothing significant. MC then cast sacred flame, and blasted the troll that attacked Uhhg. Gally then launched a bolt from his crossbow, hitting the troll squarely in the face. As it recoiled back, it allowed Durnan a moment to recover, and land a devastating attack on it, nearly slicing him in two. Durnan stepped past the troll, toward the second but missed his attack as the troll leapt away from him.

It was at this moment an individual sitting amongst the armed group on the second balcony stood from the table; a tall, physically fit, strikingly beautiful woman in red and black plate armor began making her way toward the stairs. She was armed with a long sword at her hip, along with a dagger, but as she made her way to the top of the staircase, she picked up a very large bearded great-axe. She had a look of frustration as she watched the battle unfold downstairs, and she took her time making her descent as her companions back at the table began taking interest with her approach combat. The woman was Tashlyn Yafeera, and she was the leader of the intimidating group at the table - the Doom Raiders.

As Tashlyn climbed down the stairs, Gally loosed an arrow toward one of the trolls. Unfortunately, in the final moments before pulling the trigger he lost his footing, sending the arrow high over troll's head to find purchase between the plates, and into the shoulder of Tashlyn Yafeera. She let out an exclamation of pain, and fell against the wall, gritting her teeth toward the only person in the room with a crossbow; young Galileo Figaro.

Even though Gally's bolt took Tashlyn out of the fray before she could get there, it turns out that the party didn't need the assistance. Together with some help from Durnan, Uhhg, MC and Gally were able to defeat the frost trolls that emerged from the frozen portal. Durnan was profoundly grateful, and offered room and board for the adventurers as compensation. And having saved the Yawning Portal from complete destruction, customers slowly began making their way back into the tavern. With a group effort of tossing the corpses back down the hole to fix the tables back up bringing everyone to a calm, the need of post-combat alcohol quickly became a universal ambition.

Tashlyn called to one of her companions, Skeemoo Weirdbottle, to come and help her remove the bolt from her shoulder, and to provide her with a healing potion. Skeemoo skipped down the steps to Tashlyn, telling her to settle down, and reassuring her that "everything will be golden," as he begins to mend her wounds. Skeemoo is a rock gnome that only stands up to Tashlyn's hip, he carries a small dagger well concealed under a yellow cloak, with an alchemists satchel.

Next after Skeemoo, a strutting, blonde-haired, stunningly handsome elven man began making his way down the steps with grace, elegantly glaring toward Uhlg, Gally and MC. With a mandolin on his back, Gally immediately recognized this bard as Davil Starsong, famous across the continent as one of the greatest bard adventurer in all of Acrema. Davil is an elf who carries himself with poise, omniscient regality, and radiant glamour; all while maintaining a reputation of maintaining his composure in the face and presence of any and all, always.

Following behind him is a short-legged, stout and hearty dwarven woman, Istrid Thoron, whose heavy foot-falls clang her chainmail and plate on every step. She stepped confidentially, with an impressive war hammer hung over her shoulder, and counseling Tashlyn to keep her calm, and with Skeemoo patching her up, they should befriend the people sharing part in their responsibilities.

Finally, as Tashlyn settles and talks with the other Doom Raiders, an ominous figure emerges from the darkness. A towering half-orc slinging an oversized longbow, and donning a large, curved or is blade on his back, trudged silently down the steps. He didn't speak a word to any of his companions, in fact, he walked directly past them to the first floor, where he stood looking curiously toward Gally, MC and Uhlg, waiting for the remaining Doom Raiders to join him.

It becomes very apparent, very rapidly that the Doom Raiders are an experienced band of adventurers, highly qualified, and have earned themselves a reputation worthy of seriousness, and respect within Waterdeep. They make their way over to Gally, MC, and Uhlg, and Tashlyn apologizes for her outbursts following Gally's errant bolt, and all introduce

themselves. Istrid and Davil invite them all to sit together, to share the evening discussing current affairs in the city, to drink heavily.

### **Session 3: The Doom Raiders, and Volo's Quest**

During the drinking session, the Doom Raiders reveal that they were formally a group of contract adventurers, like Uhhg, MC, and Gally; but they grew weary of constantly having to find work. With too much downtime on their hands, most of the Doom Raiders would spend their days drinking, fighting, gambling, and whoring themselves into the stockade - or more likely; the executioners block. So they decided to contract up exclusively with the Zhentarim, thereby using the contacts within that organization to farm contracts for themselves. Given their prominence already, the Doom Raiders quickly made their way through the ranks, eventually earning enough power to establish an internal organization within the Zhentarim; this, "company within a company", is known as The Black Network.

As the evening continued, and the drinking intensified; The Doom Raiders came to explain the origins of their name - Before they were well known by anyone, these five adventurers handled a single type of contract: Finding and destroying Lich Liars, which are referred to by commoners as "Dooms", and killing the Lich (Or wizard attempting to transform) dwelling there. By the time they had destroyed their 6th Lich Lair, the Doom Raiders had established themselves well within the ranks of the Zhentarim, and had generated a significant following of all types of mercenaries. Since earning seniority within the Zhentarim, and establishing The Black Network, the Doom Raiders have taken up permanent residency at the Yawning Portal.

Inquiring what brought Uhhg, MC, and Gally to the city, the party revealed that they had taken up a quest from Volothamp Gedarm, and the Doom Raiders chuckled amongst themselves. Thshlyn remarked that, "Volo is a kindhearted man, though his drinking habits tend to lead adventurers down convoluted paths, while he sometimes purposefully withholds information in the name of the quest; and, more often than not, his coin purse is lighter than he'd have you believe."

At some point during the evening - Uhhg and Tashlyn step away with one another. Tashlyn, taken by Uhhg's physique, playful charm, and warrior demeanor; seduced Uhhg, and brought him back to her chamber where she had her way with him. Only Uhhg truly knows what occurred inside the room, although some would speculate that he may have has some difficulty walking, or sitting down the following day...However, let it not be mistaken, for Uhhg, caught off guard by her ferocity and passion, found a way to enjoy himself, and had a pleasurable, albeit intense, sexual experience.

After waiting what seemed like an obscene amount of time, Volothamp eventually showed up at the Yawning Portal - seeming rather drunk already. Durnan shouted to him that his guests had arrived, and had been waiting. Volo then ordered himself a drink, stumbled over to the party; Uhhg, by this point, had rejoined, after managing to survive Tahslyn's passionate affections. Volo led the party down to the back of the Yawning Portal to one of the private tavern rooms.

Volo tells the party that having heard of their accomplishments to the north - fighting all manner of foes, defeating a Rakshasa and establishing a safe-haven in the form a tavern; the UhhgMcUros - he knew those adventurers were the ones for the job. He did wonder where Uro was, but understood that Gally was taking his place, which Volo didn't mind, being such an admirer of all Elves and Elven culture.

Volo drunkenly explained the circumstance of his request, and informed the party that things were not going well. He told Gally, MC, and Uhlg that he had been hired to find a band of capable adventurers that have not yet been corrupted by the political strata of Waterdeep. The details of the mission were very sensitive, and orders were coming from the most senior level of command in the city. Volo explained that the city had been robbed by the previous Open Lord of Waterdeep, Dagult Neverember, who had embezzled nearly one million in gold and platinum from the city before making his escape to Neverwinter - his ancestral home. However, Dagult's plot was uncovered, and he was forced to flee before he could smuggle the money out of the city. So now the hunt was on to find where the money is before any other Faction gets their hands on it.

As Volo was waiting for the party's arrival, he thought he would lend his assistance by generating some leads around the city. He and his young assistant, Floon Blagmaahr, were wandering the Dock Ward on a tavern-crawl, asking the locals questions about the missing gold, and any information on Dagult Neverember. The two ended up at a sketchy tavern called The Skewered Dragon. Not getting much information, but getting very drunk, Floon decided to return home. And since that evening, Volo has not seen, nor heard from Floon, and he is growing concerned for his young friend's well-being. Volo very drunkenly pleaded with the party to find Floon before tackling the major elements of the quest.

It was at this moment that the double doors of the private room slid open, Jalester Silvermane stood over the threshold, then stepped into the room. The party was confused as Jalester stood there quietly, before he excused Volo from the room. Volo stumbled from the room, and Jalester closed the doors behind him. He revealed to the party that his affiliations are with the highest order of authority in the world; the Lords Alliance, and that he represents the party's true employer - Open Lord of Waterdeep, Laerel Silverhand. The party is stunned, although they knew something more grandiose was going on, as the original request from Volo seemed far too vague. Jalester tells them of what was at stake, aside from the social stability of the city, it was its economic prosperity; the money that had been stolen, was virtually all of the city's wealth. And losing it, would also bankrupt Noble Houses and Lords that have significant investments in the city's infrastructure. Finally, as a Waterdavian citizen, born and raised in Waterdeep, Jalester shows how passionate he is for his work, and how loyal he is to his Lady, Laerel Laerel Silverhand, whom he serves - as MC subtlety questioned his loyalties - Jalester stepped forward with aggression, proclaiming his position is only awarded to those citizens that have proven to consistently sacrifice their own well-being in the name of Waterdeep. MC apologized for any offense, and Jalester collected himself, and too apologized for his defensive demeanor; saying, "Dagult has caused nearly irrevocable damage to the city by stealing that money, and those now fighting for it, will rip Waterdeep apart to find it. - If they find the wealth of the city, they'll use it to control the Court of Lords. Waterdeep itself is at stake."

After concluding their secretive meeting, Jalester says that there will be people watching to ensure their progress on the quest, and that he will be in touch. If ever the party needs to find Jalester, he is a regular at the Yawning Portal. Deciding it was too late to continue on, they would pick up things tomorrow morning following some much needed rest. MC and Uhhg went off to bed, while Gally remained downstairs for a series of nightcaps. Uhhg and MC did have the same strange dreams they had been having since before setting off.

While sitting at the bar, Gally began having a casual conversation with Mereg Three-Strings, one of the bards at the Yawning Portal. The two discussed the arts, and their different bard colleges, while Bonnie ensured the two had their goblets consistently refilled. After some conversation, Mereg begins to trust Gally, more than he normally would any other stranger. Bonnie asks Mereg to give her a hand changing a keg barrel in the back, and Gally volunteers to help. Once in the taproom, Bonnie and Mereg confide in Gally - Mereg is a member of Force Grey, a local organization of City Guard Veterans and former adventurers that work directly for the Black Staff of Waterdeep (The Blackstaff's private/special militia). Three-Strings informs Gally that Bonnie is one of five Doppelgängers that have been living secretly in the city for a little more than a year. Three-Strings and Durnan have helped protect them, and their identities, whilst helping them secretly infiltrate various factions within the city. Bonnie was called back to the tavern by Durnan, and in order to avoid suspicion; Gally and Three-Strings returned to their seats at the bar and continued drinking, with Gally promising Bonnie to continue their conversation.

Jalester saw Mereg and Gally venture off to the back following Bonnie's request. After Gally returned, Jalester picked up his drink and joined Gally at the bar. The two exchanged pleasantries, and it became apparent that Jalester was coming on to Gally in no uncertain terms. Gally went along with Jalester, playing into the flirtatious nature of conversation; even suggesting that they return to their rooms for more privacy. However, Jalester declines, saying that needs to ensure his sense of professionalism, and that has already crossed a line he shouldn't have. Jalester then stood from the bar and went to leave, before Gally told him that he understood his decision, and was looking forward to continuing the conversation. Gally then retreated to his room to take his long rest.

## **Session 4: Finding Floon**

The following morning, the party convened downstairs in the main tavern hall, their strange dreams continuing, growing more intense each evening. After a brief word with Durnan, the Uhgg, Gally, and MC make their way out into the streets of Waterdeep for the first time. Their destination is the last known location of Floon Blagmaahr; The Skewered Dragon in the Dock Ward.

Making their way toward the Skewered Dragon, party come across a very bizarre store with a stuffed beholder in the main window. A purple sign hung above the door, with "The Old Xoblob Shoppe" written in green letters. As the group stood before the stuffed beholder, MC began feeling a strange sensation in her gauntleted palm, as the gauntlet began to dimly glow. Deciding to enter the shop, they are greeted by the owner, Xoblob, who bought the shop a few years ago after moving to Waterdeep. He proclaimed to be a procurer of the most fascinating trinkets in all the world, as Gally found himself an interesting sleeping cap. Inquiring about the object, Xoblob told Gally that the cap prevented the wearer from ever experiencing bad dreams.

MC walked closer to the stuffed beholder to examine it, and was shocked by a flash of light in her vision, as her gauntlet began to hum and vibrate on her hand. She then heard a voice inside of her mind, "Hmm, interesting..." then silence. She stepped back, catching her breath from the slight stun. After looking around the shop some more, the group saw that most of Xoblob's "trinkets" were mostly trash.

In questioning Xoblob about the Skewered Dragon, he told them that the tavern was a few doors down the road, and that they were essentially there. Uhhg and MC then asked if he had seen or heard anything suspicious recently, and he told the party that he had heard a scrap happening outside, and it seemed as though these two gentlemen were getting jumped late the other evening. The two were overpowered and dragged off down the alleyway where Xoblob lost sight of them. Although it was dark, Xoblob described the two individuals as both looking like the description of Floon received from Volo. At that moment, the group decided to venture back into the streets, and investigate the alleyway Xoblob told them about.

Approaching the alley, MC, Uhhg, and Gally notice a dimly lit warehouse at the end of the alcove, and without anyone else around. Getting closer they can hear the voices of a few others inside, one in particular shouting, "There were two, I swear the snatched them both - the fucker is in here somewhere!!" MC and Gally noticed as they approached that the door was shut, but it had already been kicked in, and after hearing the voices, the all decide to ambush whoever was inside.

Leading into the room, the group noticed four Kenku thugs, dressed in Xanathar Guild clothing and armor standing over the slaughtered corpses of six Zhentarim. The Kenku were, evidently, searching the warehouse for someone they believed to still be hiding inside. Turning to see the three adventurers in the door, they initiated combat.

Effortlessly dispatching the Kenku, everyone began investigating the room to find it mostly storage for industrial tools, and fishing vessels in the dock ward, but a few smuggled weapons crates. However, Gally found someone hiding between the racks of the warehouse, tucked low behind crates and barrels; and Gally could see they were holding a dagger. Attempting to calm the person down, Gally sheathed his rapier, and coaxed the man out from hiding. Emerging from the crates and shelving is a handsome, red haired man in his late 30's; Raener Neveremeber - the only son of Dagult Neverember, former Open Lord who stole the city's wealth. Raener explains to the party that he and his best friend Floon had run into each other the other night when Floon was shit-housed. Raener says that the two were jumped shortly after Floon left the Skewered Dragon and taken to this warehouse by the Zhentarim. There were being held captive there and being interrogated, with the Zhentarim trying to find out which of them was Raener Neverember. Neither spoke up, and so they were separated, and then subjected to violent beatings.

A few hours later, Xanathar Guild thugs broke into the warehouse to kidnap Raener from the Zhentarim. In the chaos of the Zhentarim trying to defend themselves from the Xanathar Guild, Floon was taken, while Floon was able to hide. As Raener is explaining this, the City Watch show up to the warehouse to secure it, led by Captain Hyustus Stagette. Immediately recognizing Raener, Hyustus offers to escort him back to his home in the city. Raener refused, collecting whatever weapons and armor he could scrounge, and asserted that he was going after Floon; he heard them say they were bringing him down into the sewers. He asked Gally, MC, and Uhhg if they would help him - which they reassured him by saying they were already sent by Volo to save Floon: therefore, they gave *him* permission to join them in the rescue mission.

Heading back down the alleyway, the party come across a sewer grate that had been lifted from his place, and left on the ground nearby. Climbing down the ladder, and into the tunnels bellow, Uhhg instantaneously notices a symbol etched into the stone on the wall by the ladder; a circle with ten jagged lines jutting out of it, with one large circle in the middle. Underneath the Xanathar Guild emblem, there was an arrow pointing down the dark tunnel, presumably in the direction of one of the guild's liars.

Once everyone made it down the ladder, they began the long walk into the darkness, following the signs as they go. At one of the cross-sections, a Gazer suddenly appeared, sounding an alarm to nearby guards - as it appeared the party had managed to find the outer limits of the liar. With a swift attack, Uhhg knocked the gazer from the air, sending it flying down into the stone with such force that ruptured, sending goopy eye jelly spattering onto the wall. However, the alarm was sounded, and a handful of guards managed to hear it, and they were rapidly making their way toward Uhhg, MC and Gally.

In the final few seconds, Gally spotted a secret door to a hidden passage way, that seemed to parallel the tunnel turn to the left, and open up into a separate series of chambers. Through the stone wall the party was concealed behind, they could hear the footfalls and shouts of the guards on the other side as they found what was left of the Gazer. Pressing

forward, with Uhhg leading the way, the party quietly made their way through the liar without much detection. Aside from a few straggling guards, the group was able to remain undetected from the larger band of guards inside the liar, by staying on the outer limits and finding the secret passage that led directly into the main chamber.

After a series of chambers, the tunnel opened up to reveal a large staircase leading up into the main chamber. Creeping stealthily up the steps, the party finally saw Floon, as he was tied to a rack, being tortured by a half-orc wizard. Sitting on an alter above him was a tentacle-faced humanoid figure, caressing a brain with four legs. Floon shrieked in pain, as the orc, Grum'shar, used his arcane abilities to freeze Floon's flesh, then burn the same spot; all while cranking the rack a few clicks with each iteration of the spells.

Raener and the party are able to deduce that the individual sitting on the alter was a Mind-Flayer, and Grum'shar referred to the Flayer as Nihilloor. The pair seemed to be thoroughly enjoying their work, while three guards also stood inside the chamber as an audience. Raener couldn't sit and watch Floon being tortured any longer, so he stood and loosed an arrow toward Grum'shar - sending the arrow just over the half-orc's head - and they were launched into the fray. Nihilloor stood up from his chair, and cast a massive fireball toward the party at the staircase. Thankfully most were able to dodge out of the way, however, the Mind-Flayer still landed a shockingly strong attack and managed to deal some damage to MC, Gally, Uhhg, and Raener. Nihilloor then said to Grum'shar, "You're welcome for the head start. Consider it payment for the entertainment." He clutched a glowing necklace hanging in the center of his chest, and in a flash of light, vanished into thin air.

After slaying Grum'shar, and killing the remaining guards, MC, Gally and Uhhg set Floon free, and were able to secure the chamber. Floon told them that he had been taken when the Xanathar thugs stormed the Zhentarim hideout, and at first they interrogated him, believing him to be Raener. After realizing he was who they thought, they decided to torture him to death at the request Nihilloor. They kept asking him about the location of something called the Stone of Gohlor, Floon had no idea what that was - but Raener seemed to know something.

Raener said that he did not know why they would be looking for the stone, but he remembers that the stone use to sit on his father's desk. Dagult told Raener that the stone was an old trinket, and that his grandfather gave it to him as a very special keepsake.

Having rescued Floon, everyone begins investigating the chambers and found an Adamantine chest, as well as a series of prison cells. Inside the chest was a very old and magic artifact - the Deck of Many Things - and against all recommendations, Uhhg decided to pull a card; it turned out to be his Ruin, as all his material possessions, with the exception of magical items, evaporated.

Inside one of the cells, Gally found an elderly gentleman who clearly had been held captive for years. He introduced himself as Hemsworth, and said that he was there as a torture doll for Grum'shar's pleasure to practice his techniques on. Having lived inside a cell for years, Hemsworth instinctually took his shit-bucket with him - Gally planned to have him house-trained by a member of the crew.

Investigating the chamber further, the party were able to find a teleportation portal, a door that led to somewhere, but unwilling to step through (very wisely) the group made note of its existence in the Xanathar Guild liar.

## **Session 5: Xanathar Guild Lair, and Trollskull Alley**

Having rescued Floon, the party returned to the Yawning Portal to regroup with Volothamp Gedarm, and to collect part of their reward. Upon arriving, Volo told the group that the amount of gold that he initially promised would have to wait, but he had some to give now. Only because he has been struggling to finance his most recent book, however he promised to pay them in full, and reassured Uhhg, by saying that the city will be paying them for most of their efforts. That being said, Volo presented the group with a treaty to old manor grounds in the North Ward; Trollskull Alley. The group left with Volo, noticing that the Doom Raiders were nowhere to be seen, and Jalester Silvermane was also absent.

Arriving at Trollskull Alley, the group were given a tour by the ground's porter, Damien, bringing the group around to show them the business that reside on the property. Walking through, the group was surprised to see that they had a resident blacksmith/armorsmiths, carpenter, apothecary, arcanist, and a special private detective. Additionally, the party were now owners of a tavern/inn that was in need of some repair; but was theirs nonetheless. Gally immediately imagined what they could build, and the type of prestigious theatre he could cultivate there. There was also a brief encounter with the now Manor Butler, the former owner, Lif, who lives for his life's work, even in death.

While at the blacksmiths, Uhhg and MC inquire about adamantine, and recall the chest they had left behind in the Xanathar Guild Liar. Deciding it was too worthy to leave behind, the two decided to venture back to the liar to retrieve it. In the meantime, Gally could stay on and finish the tour.

Uhhg and MC arrived back at the liar and were confronted by some of the remaining guards that had managed to retake the liar after the attack and rescue mission. Making quick work of the Xanathar goons, Uhlg and MC eventually found the adamantine chest and returned to Trollskull with it.

While that had been happening, Gally was in the bookshop, meeting with its owner, Rishaal Nemnysis, an elderly Dragonborn wizard that specializes in ancient spell books. When Uhlg returned, he joined the two, and then demanded that Rishaal provide this month's rent to his new landlord, immediately. Shocked by this demand, and not even knowing Uhlg's name, Rishaal very nervously handed over half of the rent, and pleaded not to be hurt - given it was still two tendays until the rent was technically due, although he promised he would have the other half by the end of the month.

Gally was absolutely ashamed of Uhlg's extortionate behavior of the old Dragonborn, believing that Uhlg needlessly bullied, and intimidated him; essentially robbing him of whatever money he had in his cash box. Uhlg shrugged it off, stating that if Rishaal was indeed uncomfortable with his actions; he was free to move out. Gally was dumbfounded.

The party then made their way next door to Tiger's Eye, owned by private detective Viktor Trench. Gally inquired a bit too much of Viktor, which caused Viktor to become a little shy. Gally then asked if he could join Viktor's detective service, offering to help with whatever cases he may have ongoing at the moment. Viktor told Gally that he would certainly let him know if he needed any assistance, and then slowly closed the door.

## **Session 6: Kebabs and Laerel Silverhand**

After introducing themselves to all of the resident shop owners, Damien then introduced the party to the tenants of Trollskull Alley. Gally took this opportunity to put on a little performance for the group as they gathered for their dinner, and the tenants of Trollskull, including the shop owners, watched in awe as they were regaled by the performance of young Galileo Figaro.

Utterly impressed by the talent of Gally, overcome by the charm of MC, and slightly intimidated by the - economic fervor, and imposing stature - of Uhlg; the tenants were in high spirits about their new landlords. The talks of remodeling and revitalizing Trollskull has encouraged most, if not all of the tenants to take more pride in their neighborhood; especially Damien, who feels reinvigorated in his role as Porter.

Following the performance, the party returned inside the manor, and begin drinking heavily with Volo, Floon, and Raener. At this time, the group begin asking Raener questions about his father, and about the Stone of Gohlor that the Zhentariim and Xanathar Guild have been searching for. Raener reassured the group that he did not know what the stone was, nor why either of those guilds would be interested in finding it. Gally and Uhlg then asked how it was exactly that Raener came to stumble upon Floon that night they were kidnapped, and he told them that he had merely been in the neighborhood; and had bumped into him near the Skewered Dragon. MC and Gally clocked this as suspicious the moment he finished his sentence. Floon, by now, was very drunk, and told the group that Raener was his best friend, and that the two had known each other since childhood. He professed to know everything about Raener, and said that it takes time for him to trust others.

Raener interrupted, telling Floon he was very drunk - Floon didn't disagree - Volo then produced a flask that he had been sneakily swigging from, and getting obliterated in the process. Uhlg inquired as to what it was, and Volo said it was a particular time of potent alcohol, crafted by some of the most nefarious moonshiners in the country. Enthusiastically taking a swig, Uhlg found that it was delicious at first, but burned the throat to an insane degree - it was essentially ethanol. Passing the flask around, the group became the most intoxicated they had ever been - at any level - in this moment, Volo passed out at the bar, Raener helped Floon to bed, and MC said that she too was going to bed for the evening. Uhlg and Gally, however, had other intentions...

After imbibing all that alcohol, Uhlg looked at Volo slumped over the bar and said: "Let's fuck with him..." Gally, looking at the defenseless, Volo, who had passed into a deep, alcohol-induced, coma-like slumber and replied; "I mean, obviously we're fucking with him."

The two then proceeded to invent a game that consisted of stacking every possible thing they could on top of Volo's snoozing body. To their own amazement, they were really quite good at balancing everything, and Volo slept undisturbed as all manner of chairs, goblets, stools, tables, and even Volo's own flask.

Carrying on their shenanigans, Uhhg decided that he was sufficiently inebriated to warrant stuffing his face with some sort of food. Gally told Uhhg of the stew pots that he saw outside, saying that the tenants of Trollskull keep the stew brewing pretty much around the clock for anyone who would like to eat. However, stew wasn't good enough for Uhhg, being a half-orc of exotic, and complicated tastes; he had a craving for something a bit more exciting. Explaining to Gally that he had the most profound craving for Kebabs that he'd ever experienced, Gally and Uhhg sought out Damien to see if he knew of any places to get a good Kebab and nearly 2 in the morning...

Damien said that the only places near Trollskull that would be open at this hour would be found in the Field Ward to their north, but Damien warned that this neighborhood can be quite dangerous at night. Deciding that his kebab cravings outweighed the risks involved, Uhhg was determined to set out. Gally, excited and enthusiastic about the little adventure, told Uhhg that he felt obligated to wake up MC and bring her along; or at least, wake her up and tell her what they were doing so she could decide to join or not.

Rallying MC from her slumber, the party set out to find kebabs a little after 2AM, and in an effort to expedite the process; they brought Damien along to help navigate the mostly drunk MC, and very drunk Gally and Uhhg, through the Field Ward for kebabs. As they approached the gate, they were briefly stopped by guards who saw the group of armed adventurers walking toward them with conviction. Realizing that they were nothing more than a handful of drunks, the guards let them through, adding to be watchful of robbers and the like at this hour.

With Damien's guidance, the group found a fusion themed kebab stand, and the four enjoyed a couple of rounds of delicious, late-night kebabs. While they were enjoying their food, Gally and MC clocked at least four individuals in the crowd that appeared to be watching them closely, and had been following them. MC told everyone to play it cool, as Uhhg then used his towering stature to conceal Gally from the individuals that had eyes on them while he cast invisibility on himself. Gally's intention was to approach at least one of the people watching them, but as he maneuvered through the crowd, he lost sight on his target. MC also lost her visual, and the group decided it would be best if they casually left the area, while trying to reestablish a sight-line on their stalkers. Before doing so, letting the liquor get the better of him, Gally leaned his invisible head into the kebab stall, and shouted in the face of the woman that had taken their orders. She flailed a fraying pan with an outstretched arm, swinging it wildly in the direction of whatever made the sound. Although it earned a good laugh from the group, the kebab stall worker took it as a threat, or an attempted robbery - so she nervously called for the guards. This being the Field Ward, the guards only tend to rouse themselves when they witness a crime taking place, or if the severity of the crime cannot be ignored.

While the group marched back, Gally caught a visual on a pursuer sneakily peeking around the corner of a building; he quickly broke off from the group, sneaking around and doubling back to flank their stalker. As Gally sneakily rounded the corner, he expected to get the drop on the person. But when he peered around the corner to see them, they had vanished. Frustrated, Gally then returned to his companions and dropped his invisibility, angrily stating that he knew "fucker would get away!" And as the group continued back to Trollskull Alley, a person gently slipped past the group in a scattered crowd, and Gally turned to watch the hooded individual walk away - suspicious.

Upon returning to Trollskull, Damien thanked his landlords for the adventure, but asked that he be left out of the next one, fearing for his safety and that of his family. The party separated from Damien, said their good nights, and entered the tavern to find Volo still sleep, and everything still precariously stacked on top of him. Exhausted and very drunk, Uhhg, MC, and Gally finally decided to bed down for the evening.

Once Gally was back in his chambers, he found a note that had been slipped into his pocket by the mysterious, slender figure that had slithered between them on their way back to the manor. It read:

"Neat trick - Are you who I think you are?  
-FL"

Realizing that this was his mother, Fel'Rekt Lafeen, Gally knew immediately that at least one of the pursuers was Bregan Dearth, and that with that tail, it meant their leader, Gally's father; Bainrae Jarlaxle, was definitely aware of his presence in the city.

That evening, Uhhg, MC, and Gally had vivid, and new dreams that paralleled those of previous evenings. MC began her dream walking down a long, endlessly straight road - as far as her eyes could see, there were no bends in the road. As she followed the path, it led her deeper into an intensifying blizzard. The wind howled in the air, as tiny shards of ice scraped against her skin. Feeling that the cold was nearly too much to bear, she suddenly heard a voice echoing inside her mind: "My child, my lost soul - you can hear me now..." The wind whirled around MC, and her visibility in the blizzard became ever so slightly better. The voice continued; "You're lost my dear, follow my voice - you'll find me in the lonely cabin, in Winter's Wood. I wait for you by the fire." MC continued down the road, trudging through the snow, as the forest on either side of her began growing thicker. The road she had been following, slowly disappeared beneath her feet in the snow, and the woods grew thicker every passing moment before she found herself standing in the middle of what could only be Winter's Wood. Surrounded by towering, leafless trees that all waved in the whipping, freezing winds. MC squinted through the snow and ice in the air, almost unable to see, as the voice started again; "There is a great evil aware of your presence in that foul city. A dark, and tormented creature that lingers deep beneath Waterdeep." Peering through the storm, MC barely makes out the shape of a cabin in the distance, and she begins moving quickly toward it. As she got closer to the cabin, she could see the dark wooden door, and dim light flickering underneath it on the threshold. As she walked to the door, extending her hand to the knob, the voice whispered, "Only I can give you the power to stop it." Just before she clutched the known - she found herself awake in her room at Trollskull, her gauntlet glowing white, and even though it was summer, one of the hottest on record in Waterdeep - MC could see her breath in the air with each exhale.

Gally found himself standing on an abandoned shore, staring out into the dark abyss of the ocean, as the moon reflected from the surface of the water like glass. As Gally stood there staring, he watched as two oars were flung about in the crashing waves, aimlessly glancing over to sea a small rowboat pulled up on shore. Turning back to look at the dark water, Gally heard a woman's voice softly asking him what it was that he was searching for. Saying she was certain he wasn't needlessly pursuing the answers of questions he already knew the answers of. When asked who she was, the voice replied, "A friend, who wishes to help those that are lost; that are traveling on lonely roads, shunned by those they trusted, and abandoned by those they loved." Gally stood on the shore, looking out at the night sky as the voice continued, "What are you running from, young Timoti? Or are you running toward something?" Gally then shouted with his might into the cold, pale white, moonlit waters, "Who the fuck are you?!?" - and a blinded light flashed before his eyes, and he found himself gasping for breath in the darkness of his room.

Uhhg came into his dreams in the middle of a wildly intense battle, standing in the Vanguard, he was in a fight of biblical proportions. Uhhg was vanquishing each foe he encountered, when suddenly he felt a hard hit on the back of his head. Dazed, he began looking around and taking note of the piled bodies and entrails, the pools of blood, piss and shit, the low howls of the painfully dying - Uhhg's vision slows, and he catches a glimpse of Thumper aiming his rifle toward the enemy line; he then sees Gullet lying motionless on the ground, his mouth agape and the handle of a dagger protruding from his left eye. Uhhg then saw Roach calling out for him to move foreword, just as Roach is stabbed from behind with a long spear, and hoisted high into the air like a banner. Roach excruciatingly held on to the pointed end coming out of his midsection, as he was leveraged off his feet. Uhhg sees Horseshoe kneeling beneath Roach, clutching Lewie. As he knelt, sobbing over his captain's corpse, Horseshoe allowed himself to be slaughtered along with his crew. Just behind the enemy lines, Uhhg looks beyond the fray to see the backside a tall, bird-like creature lift Uro above its head by his throat. Uro desperately clutched to the creatures forearms as he was being strangled; Uhhg watched as Uro's tail frantically flailed around, his feet futilely kicking to find solid ground. The creature held Uro high above its own shoulders as the life was slowly drained from Uro's bulging eyes. Suddenly everything slowed to a standstill - The battlefield fell silent, and all were petrified in place. Uhhg then heard the same voice as MC and Gally saying, "So much death as a result of such reckless hate. Hate, born of Fear - fear causes poor judgement. For if only the world would listen, they would not perish. Mighty Uhhg, I sense your Rage. You remind me of my closest, and most trust Lieutenants." The surrounding battlefield then fades away - "I've already shown you one; Deldanbras, full of rage...like you." An image appears of a wicked looking figure in skeletal armor, and standing nearly 9 feet tall, his face concealed with a skull-faced helmet, and a black axe with an anthropomorphic shaft and axe head. "But Lannistall," the voice continues, "Lannistall possess qualities similar to your drive, and ambition." She said softly as another figure appeared, a stout, but twisted looking figure with a menacing grin stretched across his face, he stood holding two long swords. "Finally, and most importantly," she continued, "you are infinitely loyal to those you love - much like my beloved; Shiraneth." A slender figure appears holding wooden staff, dressed in long black robes, holding his arm and fingers outstretched, and dawning the headdress of a buck skull and antlers - he had small keys dangling from twine hanging from his antlers - none of them spoke, nor moved. Suddenly the voice spoke, "I can give you the power you seen, I can arm you with the most formidable weapons - I can make you a Warrior God - I would have you be my Champion." The figures faded into the darkness, and Uhhg gently returned to consciousness in his room the next morning, with Lif hovering at his bedside.

In fact, Lif appeared in MC, Gally, and Uhhg's rooms at the same time, and spoke the same message. "Lords - there is a Lady, a Gentleman, and a...figure in the tavern room requesting an audience with you." The three party members rouse themselves from their beds and chambers, making the descent a little more hungover than they would have liked; at least MC managed to look graceful for company. Making their way into the tavern room, MC, Gally, and Uhhg saw a tall, slender, beautiful older woman with white hair. She stood with her back to the group, fixing up the room with her arcane abilities, as Jalester Silvermane sat in a chair with crossed arms, legs, and a shit-eating grin. And a third, ominous, masked figure who hovered silently nearby stared expressionlessly at MC, Gally, and Uhhg. MC greeted the woman, kindly asking who she was, and gracefully turning she introduced herself, "I am Laerel Silverhand." The party was stunned, and Laerel then introduced one of the five Masked Lords of Waterdeep who subtly bowed, acknowledging its host.

Laerel asked the group of their knowledge of their quest, and the party revealed all that they knew, discovering that Jalester had left out some key points of the contract. Particularly, that failure to recover the gold would ultimately execution of the Open Lord, and those responsible in the ultimate downfall of Waterdeep. Although a little barbaric, it becomes apparent via Laerel's elegance, and kindness that she would not allow that to happen - she merely wants them to realize how seriously the Court of Lords is taking this situation. Understanding, the party promises to do their very best in finding the city's wealth and returning it, however they'll need help. Laerel promises all that she can do for them, and best use her own resources to assist the part in anyway she can. It was at this time the Masked Lord stepped forward, and presented Laerel with three Badges of the Lords Alliance - giving the party profound authority, but warned against using it recklessly, given the clandestine nature of their mission.

At this point, Uhhg's curiosity got the better of him, as he'd been staring at the Masked Lord the entire time. MC, knowing Uhhg so well, realized he was planning on doing something particularly stupid - and sent a message to Uhhg telling him not to do whatever it was he was about to - Laerel immediately clocked the use of magic, and heard the message, and cast Hold Person on Uhhg, causing him to be paralyzed in position. Right away, MC and Gally tried to diffuse the situation, as Laerel's eyes flared with energy.

Being convinced by MC and Gally that Uhhg meant no harm, nor did he mean any offense - he's new to cities, and especially new at being around Lords and Nobles, he has very little experience. Laerel is then taken by Uhhg's almost childlike demeanor.

Raener and Floon eventually join the company downstairs, and Laerel greeted him showing the two were already well acquainted. Raener confessed that he had not been entirely honest with the group, and that he is very reluctant to trust many people by nature. Raener tells the group that he is a member of the Harpers, an elite, and highly secretive organization that exists to preserve peace and safety throughout the world, often working closely with the Lord's Alliance to eliminate universal threats. With this information, Raener promises Laerel to help the party, which are now under her command, exclusively, and therefore represent her in this investigation. Raener swears to help return the city's wealth, and makeup for his father's cataclysmic wrongdoing.

Laerel then provides the party with their first direct mission - finding, interrogating, and eliminating a recruiter for the Xanathar's Guild; a man named Harko Swornblood. His exact location was unknown, however he had been spotted at various taverns in the Dock Wars, and so that would be where they would begin their hunt. Giving specific orders to eliminate Harko as discretely as possible, the party had to hatch a plan to accomplish this.

Additionally, Laerel told the group seek out Vajra Zafahr, the Blackstaff of Waterdeep - stating that she too had some work for them pertaining to the Doom Raiders, and the Zhentarim. Before Laerel, Jalester, and the Masked Lord made their exit, Gally stepped forward and informed Laerel that the Bregan Dearth had been following them, and that he feels they will try to recruit him. Laerel contemplated this information for a moment before looking to Gally, and telling him to allow them to make contact, and learn what they want.

With the first meeting completed, Laerel asked Jalester and the Masked Lord to stand/hover near her - she raised her left hand gracefully in the air and in a vibrant, bright flash of white light - the three vanished.

## **Session 7: Harko Swornblood**

The party started out in Trollskull alley, immediately after Laerel Silverhand, Jalester Silvermane, and a Masked Lord left the tavern. Following a review of current objectives and quests, the party decided on their first task of the session; finding and eliminating Harko Swornblood - a recruiter for the Xanathar Guild.

Upon exiting their Tavern, into the grounds of Trollskull, they met with Damien, their groundsman, and porter, who asked Gally for another performance for the Tenants, at his leisure. Utterly enthused, Gally promised Damien a performance that evening, at 8 pm, *sharp*.

The Party made their way toward the Dock Ward, and Gally was nearly pickpocketed by a street urchin. Shocked by his appearance, the little girl didn't have the courage to flee - Yet Gally gave her the coin she was trying to remove from his back pocket, and she disappeared into back the crowd.

Arriving in the Dock Ward, the party passed the familiar Old Xoblob Shoppe, where they first saw the stuffed Beholder in the shop window. A familiar voice found its way into MC's head, saying to her, "There you are." The voice introduced itself as Xanathar...after exchanging some pleasantries, and admiring MC's "trinket" - the party continued toward the warehouse where they had slaughtered members of the Zhentarim, and rescued Raener Neveremeber.

They were greeted by the friendly Captain Hayustus Stagget, a Captain with the City Watch, who was guarding the scene, and investigating any potential clues on the Zhentarim and their activities. The party asked Captain Hayustus if they could enter the warehouse to investigate the corpses of the dead Zhentarim. Hayustus accommodates the party inside, and they are immediately greeted with the sight of several detectives of the City Watch, examining various parts of the room, with a few piling the bodies onto a small wooden cart to be burned.

Brilliantly, the party hatched a plan to exacerbate tensions of tumultuous conflict between the Zhentarim and the Xanathar's guild, by framing the Zhentarim in an attack on a Xanathar Guild recruiting station. For this they would need to plant overt evidence of the Zhentarim as the perpetrators of the assault. Therefore, the party decided to remove several of the Zhentarim patches, which are covertly worn by all members of the Zhentarim, as an identification requirement from their leaders.

The plan was to locate the recruiter station, kill Harko Swornblood and any members or initiates of the Xanathar guild, and plant evidence framing the Zhentarim for the assault. First, they needed to find out where exactly in the Dock Ward this station was, and determine how they would get inside. As they made their exit, MC, Uhhg and Gally thanked Hayustus for his time and allowing them to collect the Zhentarim patches - Gally then invited Captain Hayustus, and his men, to his concert that evening - at 8pm, sharp. Hayustus was very grateful and enthusiastic, and promised to see the party that evening.

Walking away from the warehouse, they again passed the Old Xoblob Shoppe, and Xanathar murmured a greeting, "Martha-Charlene." To which she replied, unflinchingly, "Xanathar..."

Upon returning to the Main Square in the Dock Ward, they saw the Warden's Podium, with the very slender, and very tall High-Elf, Magistrate Hillstride standing behind it, attending to his books. The party decided that it would be best to talk to Magistrate Hillstride, given his extensive knowledge of the Dock Ward. As they approached, Uhlg took it upon himself to get Hillstride's attention in traditional Half-Orcish fashion, and snatched Hillstride's ledger from his podium, throwing it to the ground. He then attempted to intimidate Hillstride for the information the party was seeking, which Hillstride responded to with a whistle for the Griffon Riders that patrol the Dock Ward - signaling Captain Avitus Corringere to swoop down with his cavalrymen. Upon diffusing the tense situation, the party was able to convince Hillstride that Uhlg meant no offense, that he's new to cities, and the laws that govern them. Hillstride forgave the boarder-line assault, and proceeded to as how he could be of service.

When questioned about the presence of a recruiting station, and the whereabouts of Harko, Magistrate Hillstride described an area of the Dock Ward that not even his watchmen dare to patrol. He tells the party about a tavern that functions as a requirement station, and that only members, or those wishing to become members, of the Xanathar Guild are permitted entry. He warns the party to be careful, for that area is very dangerous, given the absence of the City Watch.

MC seized this opportunity to have a huddled conversation with Avitus, to find out more information about he dream that he had in which he knew how to look for MC. She asked how it was exactly that he came to find Dave, given it

isn't a very popular religion. He told MC that many years ago, he was stationed in Winterhaven - a country far across the Shivering Sea - There, he served as additional legion strength for the then Lord, Veritas Frostbourne. He told MC of how Veritas searched for many years to find a wife, but never managed to settle on the perfect bride. Until the day he brought Merideth "Ice-White" Stelaltulath to the Keep, whom he had found in Winter's Wood, emerging from the frozen lake, Stelaltulath. Veritas was a gifted soldier, specializing in Single Combat, and after beating virtually all he challenged in Winterhaven, he extended the invitation abroad - he also raised the stakes, from a mere 5,000 gold, to gambling his newfound wife's hand in marriage to the combatant that could defeat him.

It was then that the Lal'Axe Black Dragons landed in Winterhaven, led by Cheravon "Black-Breath" Lal'Axe, answering the invitation to single combat. Challenging Veritas for his wife's hand, Cheravon made easy work of Veritas, using his acid breath to destroy Veritas's Ancestral sword, and severely maiming him in the process. Cheravon left Veritas there to die on the arena floor, and ordered the rest of his men to destroy the city.

Avitus, duty bound to defend Winterhaven, attempted to stop the Black Dragons from burning down the city, but was dismounted from his griffon, and mortally wounded. It was this moment that Merideth Ice-White stepped forward, barefooted, slowly walking toward Avitus through the shallow snow, she revived him with blessings of Dave before she was kidnapped by Cheravon. It was at this moment he saw her as divine, and decided he would dedicate his soul to Dave in her honor.

Avitus described that Merideth spoke to him in a dream, telling him to expect travelers coming to the city from the North within a ten day, and that one would be a cleric of Dave, of profound importance, identifiable by the artifact worn on their left hand.

Following her conversation with Avitus, MC rejoins the group, and they briefly discuss the fact that they have all been having particular strange and oftentimes, very unsettling dreams in which they can all hear a woman's voice. Without discussing too much, they agree they all must be vigilant, as things are happening rapidly. Which inspired Gally to put on his Sweet-Dream Hat, which he bought from Xoblob's shoppe.

The party then made their way to the location of the recruitment station, which was located on an isolated boardwalk, tucked away from the streets and right on the waterfront of the harbor. At the front door of the tavern, they noticed two Kenku standing guard, and above the door, a very subtle emblem of the Xanathar's Guild - a circle with a dot in the middle, and ten jagged lines sprawling off the top portion.

Approaching the door, the party convinces the guards that they are there to talk to Harko about joining the Xanathar Guild. Following a password in the form of a series of knocks - the locks and chains behind the door began being undone, and the door slowly opened.

Upon entering the tavern the party noticed three Kenku sitting at a table, adjacent to another with one Kenku and a bald-headed human, who they rightfully assumed was their target. Additionally, there were two members of the Fire-Brands; a particularly cruel tribe of humans that owes their fealty to Cheravon Black-Breath, and the Lal'Axe Black Dragon Clan. There was also a thin, scared, young bartender tending to glasses and bottles, carefully looking over his shoulder at the party.

For a moment, the party exchanged pleasantries with Harko Swornblood, maintaining the masquerade of potential initiates into Xanathar's Guild. Harko took great interest in the party's capabilities, and questioned their motivations for joining, having never met nor heard of them before - Harko was slowly growing more suspicious of the party with every awkward explanation.

Realizing this, MC conferred with Uhhg and Gally, and with their approval - initiated combat. Three Kenku sitting at a table in the tavern were disintegrated, instantaneously, with a blast from MC, taking them out of the action before they had a chance to stand. Immediately, the two Fire-Brands drew their scimitars and daggers, with the last remaining Kenku - a thug named Blimpo, drawing his weapon as well. The bartender, meanwhile, took cover behind the bar, carefully peering over the bar-top, intermittently. Realizing the strength of his assailants, Harko calmly stood from his chair and drew his short-sword and broadsword, preparing himself to make, what he knew would be his last stand.

Gally banished Blimpo from combat, by casting Suggestion, telling him to talk a run around the city. Blimpo followed the order, and bolted through the door passed the other two Kenku standing guard outside. Hearing the commotion outside, seeing Blimpo, their senior, running from the scene, the Kenku guards followed suit, taking off and

fleeing the scene. After besting both of the Fire-Brands, Harko was left barely alive, following several stabs from Uhhg's great sword. He slumped against a broken table, slowly bleeding out, and coughing up blood. The party crossed swords with the Fire-Brands, and following several failed attacks against the seasoned adventurers - the two mercenary warriors fell under the spiritual and physical weapons of the party.

The group then seized this opportunity to interrogate - well, torture - Harko. Stringing him up by his ankles, they hung him from the rafters of the tavern, as the young bartender watched. Uhhg left the questions to MC and Gally, and went hunting behind the bar for some whiskey. Harko revealed many details about the Xanathar Guild. He told the party that no one has ever seen Xanathar, not even his closest lieutenants have seen him. And fewer have seen even Xanathar's Lieutenants - communication is done through letters. Harko only had orders to recruit for the guild, and find out information about the missing gold. Harko also revealed his knowledge of Bregan Dearth - led by Bainrae Jarlalaxle, using the alter-ego Zardoz Zord- ring leader of a circus. Based on his three ships the Eye-Catcher, the Heartbreaker, and the Hell-Raiser. The Drow have been working with the Xanathar guild to smuggle items, and special cargo in and out of the city.

Gally then instructed Blimpo to execute his former employer in order to prove his loyalty. Blimpo apologizes to Harkko and proceeded to impale Harkko with Gally's rapier, pushing the blade through his anus, to the back of his throat. Gally then recruited Blimpo to help the party's effort to cause further chaos between the Zhentarim and Xanathar's Guild. Blimpo agreed to sell the story to his senior commanders that the Zhentarim raided the recruitment station, and had killed Harkko.

## **Session 8: “Basilisks in the Market”**

Leaving the warehouse, the adventurers realized they still had some time before Gally's performance back at Trollskull, and that they had yet to return the stolen property belonging to the Cassalanter's. Therefore, they hailed a taxi-carriage and made their way to the Sea Ward, toward the extravagant Cassalanter Villa. Upon arriving, they party encountered two members of the Cassalanter Guard, mercenary and militia men hired exclusively to serve the Cassalanter family. Prompting curiosity from the guards, and knowing it was beyond their duties, they called the Head Servant, Willifort Crowelle to the gates.

Managing to persuade Willifort to allow an audience with Lord and Lady Cassalanter, the party was led though the luxurious manor grounds, and into the massive villa of the Cassalanter's. While the grounds of the villa were impressive, the interior of the villa was mesmerizing - however, slightly ostentatious, and gaudy. And Willifort led the party into the Main Library of the villa, with Lady Cassalanter sitting behind a desk, peering over documents and books; while Lord Cassalanter slowly paced about the room, tugging at his beard with one hand, and contemplating an open book in the other - he snapped it shut, bringing hands and book elegantly to the small of his back to greet their unexpected guests.

Willifort pardoned the intrusion, but informed his Lord and Lady that these unexpected guests have some property of theirs, and wish to return it. Amalia and Vittorio Cassalanter looked curiously to MC, Gally, and Uhhg, as they presented the items and gold recovered from the Zhentarim warehouse. Amalia seemed to stand in disbelief of the paintings, telling the party that these are the last of her mother's possessions, that were stolen from the villa a few tendays earlier. She seemed relieved to have the things returned, however Gally regarded her actions and reactions as more theatrical than sincere. His suspicions were confirmed when MC told her where they had found the items, at hearing it was likely the Zhentarim, she looked shocked and turned to Vittorio in disbelief. Amalia told MC that she and Vittorio had no idea how or why the Zhentarim robbed them, nor what they wanted with the items, as they were mostly sentimental. - Gally immediately clocked that as a blatant lie.

Vittorio told the party that these are tumultuous times in the city, and that it is extremely difficult to find trustworthy, dependable friends. Being members of the Court of Lords, he told the group that he and Amalia would remember their act of kindness. Gally asked Amalia what it takes exactly to become part of the Court of Lords - Amalia and Vittorio looked perplexed, and told Gally that usually one's house is inducted via nomination by the court, and Masked Lords, and/or official recognition by the Open Lord, thereby elevating the status of the elected to Nobility. Spurred by his curiosity, Gally asked if there had ever been any one who has lost their status in the Court of Lords, and Amalia leaned in to gossip, only saying: "There hasn't been any Houses removed recently, but there are talks" before being cutoff by Vittorio, speaking sharply to her in a strange language. Amalia then apologizes for gossiping, acknowledging it was not proper manners for an initial meeting, and changes the subject. With a wink to Gally, Amalia invited the party to one of their

dinner parties in the future, saying the party atmosphere would be more appropriate for gossip. Gally then invited Lord and Lady Cassalanter to his concert that night, and the two responded with hollow enthusiasm, stating that perhaps they'll find the time that evening. Vittorio then called for Willifort to escort the party to the main gate, and instructed him to provide a reward for returning Amalia's mother's items from the Zhentarim.

Back on the streets of Waterdeep, Willifort leaves the group at the front gates of Cassalanter Villa. Realizing they aren't that far from Trollskull, Gally, Uhhg and MC decide to walk back to the manor in time for the concert. Arriving at Trollskull, the group saw the Gnomes for Home Improvement packing up for the day, and there were noticeable improvements on the manor itself as well as the alley. The siding and shingles of the manor house were broth stripped, and scaffolding surrounded the entirety of the exterior of the building to allow easier access for structural repairs. Gnomish construction workers descended ladders, gathered their tools, and continued packing up the job-site for the day. Looking around Trollskull Alley, Gally noticed a stage in the center, recently completed for the evening's performance. Although it wasn't the largest stage, it compensated for its size with elaborate carvings, a modestly decorated proscenium, and a final fit and finish to epitomize quality craftsmanship. The tenants of Trollskull were preparing food, and gathering barrels of wine and ale for everyone to drink and feast, as the group approached they saw Damien organizing the many moving parts of the evening.

Damien informed Gally, MC, and Uhlg that all the necessary preparations were in place, and now it was just a matter of waiting until 8pm, *sharp*, for the performance to begin. Gally then took this opportunity to seek out the foreman of the Gnomish construction workers, and then invited them to stay for the performance. At the sight of free food and booze, the gnomes very enthusiastically accepted the invitation, and Damien and the tenants found more seats for the additional 50 workers.

Earlier in the day, Uhlg, MC, and Gally had discussed how each could contribute to the concert. MC volunteered herself to be the "MC" for the evening, and Uhlg very passionately suggested that he could do a stand-up routine - "Okay," Gally speculatively continued, "Are you gonna write jokes, or wing it?" And Uhlg paused, "I'll write a few, wing a few." Assured that Uhlg's natural inclination toward comedy would carry him in a pinch, Gally and MC prepared themselves for the show.

Moments before audience members began taking their seats, Captain Hayustus and an additional 50 members of his company of watchmen arrive at the manor for the evening's performance. Bringing the number of audience members to around 130, there was a concern there wouldn't be enough booze and food - but Damien assured everyone that he would make arrangements; and running to a nearby tavern, he bought several more barrels of booze, and cooked boars.

In the final moments before the show began, Gally was preparing himself backstage, and he noticed Davil Starsong elegantly striding into the manor grounds, and finding a seat for himself. Gally was nearly overwhelmed with anxiety at the sight of the continent's most famous adventuring bard taking a seat as an audience member at his first show in Waterdeep, but he composed himself as MC took the stage.

Using her charm and beautiful looks, MC was much-loved, and likable as an "MC", and she warmed the crowd up wonderfully for Uhlg to take the stage for his comedy routine. With several cat-calls (gnome-calls?) MC exited the stage as Uhlg made his way to the center, and greeting the audience in a gentle, and lighthearted manner. With his first few jokes doing surprisingly well, the audience were laughing, and clapping for his punchlines, and all seemed to be going well. Until one joke that didn't really land well, not that it was inappropriate, nor was it offense, it just wasn't all that funny. That was until Uhlg shouted down at the crowd, leaning forward in an intimidating pose - the audience all chuckled nervously, looking at one another, now a little afraid of the comedian. Uhlg continued his routine for a few more punchlines, all actually landing with the crowd well, and with his big closer; Uhlg left the stage to sounds of belly laughter, and applause from the audience, as some exchanged nervous smiles, and wide-eyed glances.

The moment had arrived for Gally to take the stage, and after taking a single breath, strutted out on stage to an audience that welcomed him with much anticipation. As he began to play, the audience became putty in Gall'y hands, listening intently to every note he played, and word he sang; Galileo Figaro had them mesmerized. Davil could be seen peering at Gally with an impressed look on his face, his arms crossed as he leaned back in his seat, the slightest, satisfied smirk could be seen gently etched across his face. Gally continued playing a number of songs, and with each one, the applause grew more intense, with shouts and hollers for encores. At the end of his final song, Gally exited the stage, and his close of his performance brought the audience to their feet. They cheered and applauded, and the tenants could be seen holding their heads high with pride, knowing that the talented Gally, the funny Uhlg, and beautiful Martha-Charlene are their Landlords - Damien leads them in cheers for each, raising his goblet high into the air in a toast.

Gally then meets Davil offstage, and Gally requests that he play a single song for the audience. Davil agrees, and tells Gally that he was remarkably impressed with his performance, and that he, MC, and Uhhg should come meet him at the Yawning Portal for some drinks, and talk. Gally agrees, and Davil took the stage - to the surprise of all in attendance, Davil marveled them with his talents, playing a single, slow song to bring the show to a close. The applause from the audience was much more diffused, but nonetheless sincere in their appreciation of the passionate performance from Davil.

With the evening come to a close, the group decided that it was time to head to bed. Retreating to their chambers, Gally ensured that his dream hat was on as he climbed into his bed. The group had grown weary of their vivid dreams, but exhaustion from the excitement of the evening's performance had everyone in need of some sleep.

Before going to sleep, however, Gally sent a message to Fel'Rekt Lafeen, saying that he wanted to meet in person, reaching his fill of "cat and mouse games." Although he did not receive a response, he knew that Fel'Rekt had received the message. At this moment, all found their beds and took their rest - experiencing strange, and terrifying dreams.

MC began her dream where she had left off the last; just outside the door of the cabin in Winter's Wood, reaching out for the handle. As she finally clutched the doorknob, she felt the cold metal in her palm, pushing the wooden door slowly open. Inside, sitting by the fire, she saw the slender figure of Merideth Ice-White, her long white hair lining the sides of her pale, porcelain-like complexion, as she looked to MC with peering, soft white eyes. Merideth welcomed MC, and asked her to join her by the fire, which MC did, taking a seat by the warm flames. Merideth explained her goal is "to help lost travelers that wander down empty roads, betrayed by those they trusted, and abandoned by those they loved." Merideth shows MC that she has the power to help MC save those she loves, and imbues some of her power into her gauntlet. Additionally, Merideth gave MC a ring that - should the gauntlet take her life in its use - MC will be brought back from the dead. MC leaves the meeting feeling uncomfortable, unsure of what to do, and unsure of what Merideth truly wants, given her consistent reluctance to provide straight answers.

Gally found himself not necessarily in a dream, but in an ethereal form, in an unfamiliar place. It appeared to be some type of dark library, with a dimly lit center portion. As he listened carefully, he could hear voices coming from the area of light a few bookcases ahead of him. He heard one deformed and twisted voice saying, "We shall continue that conversation, I think a guest of yours has arrived." A second, deep and thunderous, yet eerily jovial voice responded, "Of course. Come out, little friend - We know you're there...come out, come out, wherever you are..." Gally swallowed his fear, and stepped out from the shadows, coming into the light he could see a Beholder hovering at the head of a long black table, with a Mind-Flayer sitting at one of the chairs to Its side; Xanathar, and Nihiloor. Gally became stunned with fear for a moment, as Xanathar toyed with Gally, slowly revealing all of the details It knew about his, as well as Uhhg, and MC's time in Waterdeep. Nihiloor clearly grew tired of Xanathar's games, and the two told Gally that he could be at ease, given his current form, he was free from their harm. Someone he may know, however, will not be so fortunate. Gally's eye's widened as the many faces of his new friends flashed in his mind, and there was a sudden knock at the door. A familiar voice sounded from the other side, "Uhh hello - I'm here to talk about what happened to Harko Swornblood? Name's Blimpo!" Gally felt his heart sink as he realized the party's plan was practically in shreds, and that their plan has cost Blimpo his life, in the most horrid way.

Nihiloor stood from the table, as the door opened, and Blimpo stepped into the room. Xanathar smiled as he stared at Gally, watching with great delight as the young bard stood in helpless horror. Nihiloor turned to face Blimpo, and he let out a low shriek of shock at the sight of the Mind-Flayer, but before he could realize what was about to happen, it had already happened. Nihiloor whipped the tentacles hanging from his face out to grasp onto Blimpo's head. The tentacles tightened their grip, as Blimpo kicked his feet, struggling against being pulled toward Nihiloor's maw. Suddenly, with a sharp, upward jerking motion, Nihiloor hoisted Blimpo from the ground, as a low rumbling crunch echoed through the chamber; Blimpo's arms fell limp to his side. Nihiloor held Blimpo's lifeless body in the air, the muffled moans of agony now silent, replaced by the subtle slurping sound of Nihiloor devouring Blimpo's mind. Opening the tentacles to release the corpse, Gally caught a brief glimpse of the blood-soaked, toothy maw that was Nihiloor's mouth, surrounded by flailing tentacles, the sight sent a shock of terror shooting up his spine. Xanathar then told Gally that he was looking forward to seeing him, and his friends in person, and that they will be watching them in the mean time. As Xanathar taunted Gally, gloating over the torturous death of Blimpo, he saw Nihiloor lower a Mind Devourer to Blimpo's body. Legs sprawled from the brain, and it squirmed over to Blimpo's eye - squeezing it's way into his skull, boring through Blimpo's eye to occupy the space. In a few seconds, Blimpo's body stood upright again, his eyes now white - and he animated similarly to Blimpo. Xanathar saw the look of profound fear of Gally's face and smiled, saying his farewells, and well wishes, he banished Gally from the space.

Gally awoke in his room, and was traumatized by what he had just seen. Looking around the room, he expected to see Fel'Rekt lurking in the shadows, but was frustrated to see that there was no sign of his birth-mother. He decided that he would go downstairs to the tavern and have a late-night drink. Descending the stairs, he was surprised to see Fel'Rekt, sitting hooded at the bar, already helping himself to a drink. Gesturing for Gally to join, he notices that Fel'Rekt has opened a bottle, and prepared two glasses. Fel'Rekt turns out to be quite calloused toward Gally, and Gally is confused by why his mother is so cold. Fel'Rekt then asserts; "I'm not your mother, I can't *be a mother* - Because I'm not a woman, I'm a gunslinger - That's all I've ever wanted to be, and that's all I ever will be." Fel'Rekt tells Gally that even though it seemed no one was looking for him, that wasn't the case. And that he his drawing conclusions from pieces of a story he has no context on. Frustrated with having to constantly translate, and deduce what people's true intentions are versus what they say in Waterdeep, Gally stands from the bar and tosses the Dream Hat on the ground. With passion he asks, "If you don't want to be my mother, what do you want from me?!" Fel'Rekt finished her drink and stood from the bar, telling Gally that he and his friends are invited to dinner onboard his father's ship. As Fel'Rekt makes his way toward the door, he turns to Gally and says over his shoulder, "When you see you father...mind your manners." Gally takes several drinks, and having finished his rest, continues to drink until his friends wake.

Uhhg found himself in a large stone hall, standing before a slim, small-framed woman sitting on a throne atop a high alter; Merideth Ice-White. She extends a greeting to Uhhg, as he looks around the barren hall as she spoke, "I promised you a weapon, one deserving of my champion." Uhhg impatiently told her that he had been waiting to receive it, and noting Uhhg's impatience, asked him, "Sword, or Axe?" Uhhg did not hesitate - "Axe!!" With a wave of her hand, and a flash of light, Uhhg awoke in his chamber - spotting an impressive, massive axe tucked into the corner of the room. It was made of a dark, heavy metal, its shaft was an anthropomorphic representation of a thin skeleton with outstretched arms clutching the double-headed axe blade. The face of the skeleton had a frozen expression of agonizing pain, and on either side of the axe head was a dark skeletal face with green eyes. Uhhg leapt from his bed with excitement, running over to the axe, picking it up, and ran downstairs to show his friends. He first found Gally who had been drinking at the bar, still, and Uhhg showed the weapon off by cleaving a chair and table in two with a single swoop. Gally inquisitively looked at Uhhg, asking him where he had found it. Uhhg replied that, "The pale lady in the dreams, she asked me if I wanted a sword or an axe - got an axe!'" And he chopped another chair in two. Gally told Uhhg that any weapon he got from a dream, that just appeared in reality, is probably very fucking dangerous. To which Uhhg replied, "Yeah, I know - look." And he chopped at another chair.

MC made her way downstairs, joining her companions for an early meal, she noticed that Gally was visibly drunk this early in the morning (Near 8am). Knowing that he would be absolutely useless to the party in this state, MC sobered Gally up, and the three made a plan for the day. First order of business was going to meet the Blackstaff of Waterdeep, Vajra Zafahr, to see what she wanted of the party, and how she could help them with their mission to find the gold. Gally then tells the group of his interactions with Xanathar and Nihilloor, as well as his meeting with Fel'Rekt - MC now understands why he was boozing so early, and does her best to comfort him in a strictly platonic, non-sexual manner. With a plan to meet Vajra, head to the Yawning Portal to see Bonnie and Davil, and then have dinner with Bainrae that evening.

With their agenda set for the day, Uhhg, Gally, and MC set out into Waterdeep, heading toward the tower of the Blackstaff. As the group approaches the Market, they hear a growing commotion of what sounds like people shouting and fighting, and getting closer they see handfuls of people running out of the Market square, running for their lives. The sounds of shouts and cries grows to demeaning levels, as rounding the corner the party see three Basilisks turning people to stone, and devouring the statues. Looking up into the sky, they also see the Griffon Cavalry flying quickly to engage of a large, three-headed monster flying through the air. They also see a flaming circle of low purple flames in the northeastern section of the square. Assessing the scene, Uhhg, Gally, and MC noticed that although there were a few Griffon Cavalry Riders fighting the three-headed Chimera, the City Watch her fleeing from the Basilisks, or were frozen in place, petrified from fear - or from their gaze.

Drawing their weapons, our adventurers ran toward the fray, and immediate engaged the Basilisks, as the Chimera grabbed hold of one of the Griffon Riders, hurling him toward the ground below he plummeted into the earth. The body of the rider clearly mangled and lifeless, the Chimera landed on top of the Griffon; the Dragon head blowing flames through the air, the Ram's head flailing itself violently, as the lion's head brought the body to the ground and feasted on the griffon. Using the axe gifted to him by Merideth, Uhhg was landing devastating blows on each Basilisk he engaged, as Gally charged toward one, averting his eyes and attempted to charm the best. Managing to succeed, Gally then climbed on top of the Basilisk, and attempted to force it to look at one of the other Basilisks, however the one he tried to engage was distracted by the easy pickings of fleeing civilians. MC brought her spiritual weapons to the fight, but found that the creatures were very fast, and had impressive natural armor. As they three engaged with the Basilisks, a Griffon Rider flew

down, throwing javelins toward the Chimera, but missed. However, enticed by the challenge, the beast once again flew up into the sky, taking off to engage the rider.

As Gally and MC took on two Basilisks, Uhhg was able to kill one with the axe, landing a crippling blow on the animal. But suddenly, one the Basilisks caused Gally to stare into its eyes, and Gally felt his feet turning to stone, unable to move. MC then engaged the second Basilisk, but she too then felt her feet turning to stone, however she was able to resist the petrification. Unfortunately, Gally was not so fortunate, feeling the petrification crawling up his lower body and finally turning him to stone. The Basilisk that turned Gally, now looking at him with a salivating mouth, seeing this, MC called to Uhhg. Gally was about to be eaten, and MC shouted to Uhhg to save Gally - But Uhhg was nervous the Basilisk near MC would attack her. Assuring him she could handle it, Uhhg runs to defend Gally. Defeating the final two Basilisks, Uhhg and MC look to heal Gally, before hearing shrieks and roars in the skies above them. Looking up, the Chimera was flying straight down toward them, blowing its blast of dragon fire to hit both Uhhg and MC, several times. Although they were near defeat, and Gally was nearly eaten, Uhhg and MC managed to protect Gally's body, and defeat the Chimera - With Uhhg landing the blows to decapitate each of the three heads.

With the fight coming a close, MC and Uhhg look to save Gally from his statued form, with MC remembering from an old survival guide that Basilisk blood can be used to reverse the effects of petrification. Soaking some rags, and wringing them over Gally's statue, his form slowly reverts back to normal, and he is alive. Noticing that most that were petrified were either eaten or deformed by the Basilisks, Gally thanked MC and Uhhg for saving him, counting his blessings.

At this moment, MC notices Avitus Corringere with a handful of his Griffon Riders there to support the recovery effort. MC explains that she, Uhhg and Gally were on their way to meet the Blackstaff of Waterdeep, when Avitus gestures behind MC toward a young woman carrying a large Blackstaff: Vajra Zafahr. Introducing themselves and exchanging pleasantries, Vajra informs the group that the monsters they had just fought were teleported there by someone/something, and the flaming circle in the northeast seems familiar. She explains that this was the remanence of a teleportation circle used by an Arcanist Mind-Flayer, to transport beasts in an organized assault on the city. Explaining that she had been investigating the presence of Nihilloor for several months. She tells the party that there were coordinated attacks in the Dock Ward, Trades Ward, Southern Ward, and North Ward (The Market), with the Market being the most devastated. With the growing complexity of attacks, Vajra believes the group need to track down and eliminate Nihilloor as quickly as possible, especially with the added information that Nihilloor is now working with Xanathar.

Vajra asks the group to go investigate a man by the name of Meloon Wardragon, who is a Harper spy that had been tasked with infiltrating the Emerald Enclave, but who has since had a dramatic personality change. She feared the worst, and suspected that Nihilloor was somehow involved.

Vajra has been investigating Nihilloor for several months, and the Doom Raiders for a few months more. She was able to detail the Doom Raiders' internal operation, known as The Black Network, sort of a company within a company, and the overarching structure of leadership in the Zhentarim. However, Vajra believes that there is a higher power at play that is providing the DR's/Zhentarim/Black Network with their boldness.

## **Session 9: “Session 9: Sunday July 26th “Deldanbras, Bonnie, Meloon, Doom Raiders, Sea Maiden’s Faire - Oh My...”**

Our adventurers continued speaking with Vajra, about Nihilloor and his attack on the city, realizing that they had actually seen another one of his teleportation circles in the Xanathar Guild hideout. When they had saved Floon and defeated Grum'shar; Nihilloor vanished after casting a fireball onto MC, Gally, Uhhg, and Raener. Unsure of where this Mind Flayer was based, the group were hard-pressed to pick up his trail. However, they knew that the best method would be to follow the lead Vajra had given them: find and, “deal with” Meloon Wardragon.

But before venturing off to the Yawning Portal, every one of our adventurers were in need of a short rest - and so, realizing the market was as good a place as any - it seemed the chaos of the battlefield calmed the party. The clerics of the

City Guard went around the market square applying Greater Restoration spells to the petrified, and praying over victims to provide healing words.

In this brief calmness, our band of adventurers have their first real exposure to post-battle trauma on such a scale. Nearly a hundred civilians of Waterdeep laid strewn about the market square, writhing in pain as many of them had their limbs eaten by ravenous Basilisks while they were turned to stone. One cleric in particular was aided by Avitus Corringere to heal a mortally wounded half-elf man who had his leg broken off while he was petrified. Gally saw this and assisted the cleric with a subtle, yet inspirational tune. With that, and the help of Avitus' prayers - the citizen's leg not only began to heal...but regrow...Roughly fifty corpses were scattered about the square, people huddled together protecting loved ones and children; ripped apart, or burnt to char by the Chimera. And throughout the market, Gally, MC, and Uhhg look over dozens of piles of stones, rubble that constituted whatever was left of people, merely going about their day, shopping for themselves, their families and lovers. The casualties in the Market are nearly 200, and throughout the city it becomes apparent that although there were other simultaneous attacks - the market was the worst hit.

Once they felt as though they were rested enough, the party gathered themselves to move out toward the Yawning Portal. However, following some reflection on the recent events of the fight, Gally and MC felt motivated to investigate Uhhg's new, mysterious great axe. In studying it for magic, MC and Gally, notice that whatever magic energy dwells within this artifact, it is almost certainly incredibly dark, and very ancient. As Uhhg goes to hand MC the axe, he realizes that he cannot let it go. And then he hears a dark, husky voice saying, "Are you my champion, to wield me in battle, to feed me the blood of the vanquished?" Uhhg replied, and he and the axe carried on a conversation within earshot of Gally, MC, and Vajra; although they only heard his responses to the axe.

Uhhg, torn between embracing the axe as his new keeper, or relinquishing its power in favor of his friends; Uhkg rightfully decided his friendships were too valuable, and that his soul was not worth the price of the axe. And so, he asked Vajra to assist in getting rid of the demonic possession, to keep his soul intact. In attempting the second portion of the series of spells to save Uhhg from this axe, some intervened violently. Sending Uhhg rocketing backward into the ground like a farming plow, his limp body came to a crushing stop from the energy out of Vajra's palm.

Uhhg felt his body plummet into a shallow pool of water, feeling stonework beneath him, he brings himself to the surface. Seeing that he was inside a familiar looking throne room, he saw Merideth Ice-White sitting on the same massive iron throne atop a tall alter. At her feet stood her three Lieutenants; Deldanbras, Lannistall and Shiraneth. Deldanbras stood at nearly 9 feet tall, clad in skeletal styled plate armor, with the mask of his helmet down, his glowing green eyes peered through the skull-faced visor. Lannistall was a stout figure, holding two long swords, and dressed in black leather armor, he had a menacing, insane looking grin scarred across his face. Shiraneth stood holding a long wooden staff, his slim figure concealed in dark robes, and wearing an elk's headdress, with antlers decorated with keys, he stood hissing at Uhhg.

Stepping out of the pool, Uhhg saw there was snow inside the chamber, and six hearths lined along the walls of the throne room, the flames glowing a light blue color. As Uhhg approached, Merideth asked why he was dissatisfied with his gift - Deldanbras' axe. Uhhg told her that he actually really like the axe, but the issue came in when he realized he would have to sell his soul in order to keep it. Merideth explained that the choice was his, but that his soul is a simple price to pay for eternal life, by her side, doing her bidding and conquering all planes of existence. Uhhg tells her, "That all sounds really awesome, but I really just want the axe. I - could I pay you?" Merideth grew frustrated, and asked him plainly if Uhhg intended on joining her or not. Uhhg declined, thanking her for the opportunity, Merideth interrupted; "Shiraneth..." Merideth's favorite Lieutenant stepped toward Uhhg, and he was unsure what to do. Looking behind him he saw that the pool of water he emerged from was slowly freezing over. Shiraneth continued to approach, walking toward Uhhg he began raising his hand, and Uhhg looked back to Shiraneth panicked, and still unsure of what to do. Before he had another moment to think, he felt the same sensation Laerel Silverhand caused on him when he tried to touch the Masked Lord; and Uhhg was frozen in place, unable to move. Shiraneth raised his staff, gently placing it on Uhhg's chest, as a green light grew more brightly with each pulse of Uhhg's heart, before shooting him away from Shiraneth and across the room - Uhhg flew back into the pool, and with the force, he was expecting to bounce off the bottom of the pool - But he continued to fall, until he felt himself gently returned to his body, his vision cleared, and he was catatonic, his ears ringing.

Gally had been performing CPR on Uhhg the moment his body completed its impact into the earth, after the energy from Vajra's spell sent it rocketing through the air. After several moments, only slight responses from Uhhg, MC cast a few healing spells to no avail; she realized something more was needed. With Gally continuing CPR, MC knelt next to her longtime friend and prayed. She prayed to Dave to allow her friend the chance to live, and she felt his presence near. MC would even swear she heard Dave speak to her, telling her that Uhhg was gone. But MC said, "Fuck that!" And she

prayed again, with Gally's help, the two gave all they had to bring their friend back from the depths - and Uhhg gasped for breath! He was alive.

As Uhhg collected himself, he looked down to his new axe, and it began disintegrating into nothing. Uhlg was at first upset that he had lost such a powerful weapon, but after the reassurance from Gally, MC and Vajra, he eventually realized it was the best outcome. Especially considering that it nearly cost him his soul, and would have eventually cost the lives of MC, Gally, and everyone else that Uhhg would call a 'friend'.

Looking to repair his spirits, and given that they were in the Market, the party looked around for any potential blacksmiths nearby that they could go to find a replacement axe for Uhhg. With little effort, they managed to find a weaponsmith in the square, and all entered to pursue their wares. Uhhg was shown some basic weapons, and none real tugged at him as passionately as some of the others that he had come across in his life. However, after further inquiry, the party asked the Blacksmith if he had anything particularly special. The man revealed that he had a single item, that he had slaved on for years, and was planning on selling to fund his retirement - however he had given up hopes on finding a buyer, given the astronomical cost. Gally asked the smith how much the elaborate, and luxurious axe was, bowing his head, and removing his hat, replied, "3,000 gold, my Lord." Gally immediately paid the full amount, and the smith offered the axe to Uhhg.

Taking hold of the weapon, Uhhg saw that the axe was crafted of fine silver. Its shaft was constructed of solid silver, with intricate engravings of tall castles under moonlight, Kings kneeling before a weilder of a similar looking axe, and various adventurers slaying beasts - the head was also silver, with gold fletchings and decorations on it, and the blade was razor sharp. On both sides of the axe head, there were red jewels pressed into the silver. The smith explained that this axe also had the ability to cause the target to catch fire. He had enchanted the weapon with the exclusive help of the Blackstaff of Waterdeep, Vajra Zafahr. Testing it out, Uhhg diced through pig carcasses as if they were massive sticks of heated butter, and with each cut, Uhhg felt more confident in his new weapon; but a weapon without a name, rarely is the case for famous adventurers - it was up to Uhhg to choose one.

Following the purchase of Uhhg's new axe, the party made their way to the Yawning Portal to confront Meloon Wardragon, talk to Bonnie about her situation in the city, and to meet with Davil Starsong and the Doom Raiders. Walking through the doors of the tavern, the group noticed the Doom Raiders were in their usual booth on the second story balcony, having what appeared to be a hushed meeting. Tashlyn gave Uhhg a wink, and the others acknowledged the group's arrival with a glance. Durnan greeted some of his favorite customers with a flagon of wine. Taking a booth, Bonnie came over and took orders for food, and drinks, while Gally sent her a message to talk. Leaving to complete their order, the group looked around the tavern and clocked who they deduced was Meloon Wardragon. Sitting alone and drinking a horn of ale, the figure wore dark glasses over his eyes, and didn't speak to anyone in the tavern. Bonnie returned, slipping a note to Gally informing him that Meloon was dangerous. She then asked Durnan's new favorite regulars, Gally, MC, and Uhhg for their help changing a few keg barrels. Making their way to the taproom, Bonnie revealed her true form, and said that she and her four companions had managed to infiltrate various factions within the city and, one family in the Court of Lords. Bonnie's height grew from a modest 5 1/2 feet to roughly 6 feet, her clothes faded away, and her tall grey figure revealed no genitalia to speak of. Suddenly her feminine voice, and salty accent sunk away, and she spoke in a tenor voice, with a common accent - speaking plainly, and gesturing with stoic mannerisms, Bonnie stood before the group in her true Doppelgänger form.

She said that one of her friends, Egret, had managed to infiltrate the Zhentarim, while another, Carishtak had disguised himself amongst the ranks of Bregan Dearth. Another had worked very carefully to replace a high-ranking member of the Xanathar Guild; a Drow named, Narl Xibrindas. Finally, another had hidden among a family of the Court of Lords, and at first Bonnie was reluctant to reveal the identity of this individual. However, Gally and MC managed to convince Bonnie that she can trust them, promising to help however they could, but that they would need all the information to act accordingly. Persuaded, Bonnie tells the group that her friend had managed to take the identity of Laiba Rosse, known as "Nana" to the children of Lord and Lady Cassalander; Terenzio, and Elzerina. However, in the weeks since securing the position, Bonnie has completely lost contact with Laiba, worrying what may have happened. The party take the information, and thanking Bonnie, promising to follow-up once they deal with Meloon, and meet with Davil. Gally, MC and Uhhg return from the taproom, and Durnan gives a thankful nod toward the group.

Retaking their seats at the booth, the group called Bonnie back over, and politely order food for the table, making the additional request of a private tavern room. Bonnie walks the group down the far side of the tavern, down a corridor with four sets of sliding doors, two on either side. Bonnie slides the doors of one of the rooms, gesturing for the group to enter, stepping into the room, Bonnie closed the doors behind her. She tells the group that Meloon is a capable fighter, but

that he had been acting strangely recently. Whereas before, he would come into the tavern talk to people, buy drinks for friends, and join in nightly, drunken celebrations. But in recent weeks he has become secluded, and started wearing dark spectacles over his eyes. The party then hatched a plan to lure Meloon into their private room and ambush him, deciding it was the best course of action after Bonnie told them these rooms were soundproof. Additionally, Bonnie told Gally, MC and Uhhg, that Durnan thought highly of them, and everyone has noticed Meloon's change in character; essentially saying if a fight breaks out, Durnan will have their back. MC tells Bonnie to misguide Meloon by telling him they were a band of adventurers looking to hire another onto their crew, and that they'll pay handsomely.

Bonnie leaves and in the next few moments, Gally, MC, and Uhhg prepare themselves. MC decides to do the talking, Uhhg will wait for MC's signal, and Gally would conceal himself to provide Meloon with a false sense of security. A couple of minutes pass before the doors slide open again, and Meloon stands, heavily armed. Wielding both a short sword and a long sword, as well as a small crossbow on his hip, and three daggers. Meloon spoke in calculated phrases, and carried himself with an awkward, well-rehearsed posture. Taking a seat at the table, Meloon offered his services, inquiring on the mission, and the payment.

MC, Uhhg, and MC exchange subtle glances, as MC adjusted herself before solidifying her demenour, leaned on the table, "We're hunting Nihilloor, and we're here to tell him that his days are fucking numbered." Meloon began to chuckle, as he slowly removed the sunglasses from his eyes - "Well, you put that together quicker than I imagined you would. Frankly, if I were there instead of merely manipulating this sack of meat - each of you would already be dead. Soon." His eyes were completely white, nearly glowing white, and lifeless. Standing from the table, he drew his long sword, and crossbow making himself ready for combat.

Even though it was three on one, Meloon put up a serious fight for the adventurers, launching a series of devastating attacks and loosing several bolts. Uhhg had the chance to test of his new axe, and used it to brutalize Meloon, ultimately leading to his decapitation. After the battle, Bonnie came in to see what had unfolded and found Meloon in a barbaric pile of gore and viscera, following the vicious wounds inflicted by Uhhg, Gally and MC left his corpse almost unrecognizable. Bonnie agrees to help clean and conceal of Meloon, and learning that a Mind-Flayer had taken him, she is relieved to know he's dead. MC then searched Meloon, and found a note stitched inside the liner of his coat that read: "If you find this, I have been killed, or am not myself. I believe the contact I have made in the Emerald Enclave is a Mind-Flayer." As the pieces of Meloon are lifted into sacks, they became quite heavy from the dead weight, even Uhhg realized how heavy the sacks were. All were taken back, and utterly impressed, the moment they saw Bonnie lift three sacks, and swung them over her shoulder, effortlessly.

With the room cleaned up, and their meals set on the table, Gally, MC, and Uhhg sit down to have dinner, and take a breath following their fight with Meloon. A few minutes into dining, the doors of the room slide open once again, and Davil Starsong stood in the threshold, carrying a fine bottle of Exandrian wine. Joining the group at the table, Davil sits and expresses his relief that Gally accepted his invitation, to which Gally thanks Davil for the invitation in the first place. Davil informs the group that the Zhentarim have indeed been keeping an eye on their activities in the city, and they are most impressed with what they have seen. In a short amount of time, these three new-comers had managed to associate themselves with some of the most powerful individuals in the city. Additionally, the Doom Raiders had witnessed Gally, MC and Uhhg slay three trolls - they're been curious about potentially partnering up.

After several minutes, the doors slide open again, and the rest of the Doom Raiders had arrived downstairs to join in the meeting Davil had spurred. Tashlyn, Istrid, Skeemoo, and Ziraj all walk into the room and close the doors. Ziraj is the only one who doesn't join at the table, and remains on his feet, leaning against the wall by the door - his arms crossed, and an aggravated expression which seems unchanged from their last interaction.

Gally continues by asking what it is they really want, and Davil says that they want the gold - to which Gally says, "We wanna betray Laerel Silverhand." Which stunned the entirety of the room - everyone was shocked, then Davil exclaimed, "I fucking knew you were one of us!!" All shared in a moment of exuberant laughter at the prospect of their business partnership, then began discussing plans and strategy. Gally says that they've been tasked by Laerel and the Lord's Alliance to find and return the gold of Waterdeep that Dagult Neverember stole and hid somewhere in the city. Tashlyn says that they're on the same mission, but aren't being paid by anyone but themselves; meaning that the Doom Raiders intend to find the gold, and to keep it for themselves. With a plan to rob the city revealed, Tashlyn aggressively asks what MC, Gally and Uhhg can offer, with Skeemoo questioning whether or not they can even be trusted. Gally looked at Skeemoo with slight frustration, stating that they knew he was specifically the one tailing them around the city, and if anyone were to be distrusted here, it'd be the ones doing all the cowardly spying. Tashlyn and Skeemoo then traded words with MC and Gally, before Istrid interrupted everyone, telling them all to calm the fuck down. Apologizing for Tashlyn's

hotheadedness, and Skeemoo's unlikable nature; Istrid highlights the fact that separated they're rivals, but working together they're unstoppable. And in order to rob the capital of Acrema, they'd need to work together with the best skills they have. Agreeing to set their differences aside, and forgive mutual transgressions, an agreement is roughly made to move forward together, with a promise to share information pertaining to the gold. The group agrees, and Gally says that he will reveal to Laerel that they've infiltrated the Doom Raiders, and await further instruction. The Doom Raiders and the "PAWGs" then drank to their new alliance to steal the lost gold of Waterdeep.

Changing the subject from robbery to logistics, MC asks a question of the Doom Raiders; who's really in charge of them, who is pulling their strings, giving them their orders and authority? The Doom Raiders look at one another, and Istrid says that they all have different roles within the organization, but that Tashlyn is their leader. MC says that although Tashlyn is obviously a remarkable leader, it seems that there is someone more powerful that hired the Doom Raiders to be who and what they are. Tashlyn rejects the assumption that they take orders from someone else, taking it as an insult, as an assumption and insinuation of incompetency. While the conversation continues, Gally insinuates he would have difficulty trusting people that told half truths, and that if he and his friends, he would react violently. Davil, seeking to diminish Gally's youthful, hotheaded attempt to intimidate the Doom Raiders by looking around to his companions, pretending to forget how many Lich Lairs they had raided - At this instant, Ziraj spoke for the first time, "sixty-three." Davil thanked him for jogging his memory, turning back to Gally, and smiled. Istrid grew increasingly impatient at the constant dick measuring, and told everyone again, to calm down, be civil and drink to the future. They raise their glasses, and toast their very precarious alliance. At this moment, Istrid thanks MC, Gally, and Uhhg for their time, and states that the Doom Raiders had business elsewhere; however, she is truly excited about their partnership, and she looks forward to seeing them soon. And with that, she rises from the table, moving toward the door, with Skeemoo silently jumping from his chair and following her out. Davil stands and thanks the group for the time, and thanks Gally for the wine, and bids his farewell. Ziraj leans from the wall and emotionlessly, and wordlessly lumbers toward the exit. Tashlyn lingers for a moment, her hand on Uhhg's thigh as she asks what the plan is for the day/evening. MC, Gally and Uhhg look at one another awkwardly, as they are unsure how to get rid of Tashlyn. As they suggest to her that they were hoping on seeing their crew again, and that it was sort of an exclusive thing, Tashlyn didn't seem to take the hint that she wasn't invited. Uhhg sat silently, not moving, and not even looking in Tashlyn's general direction, sitting like a child in the principal's office. A few moments later, Istrid walked back into the room, grabbing Tashlyn by the forearm, and pulling her from the chair and out the door. As Tashlyn's tall, imposing figure was led across the room by the stout Istrid, Tashlyn looked back to Uhhg and gave a smitten wave, "Bye Uhhg..."

Finishing their business at the Yawning Portal for the time being, the group decided it would be best to return to their ship, The Bountiful Wolfsbane of Boris, and to reunite with their crew for a check in. Making it back to the docks, and to their ship with a leisurely and uneven toy jaunt, the group saw the crew on deck. Lewie was visibly drunk, and had dancing on the aft end of the ship near the helm as Horseshoe watched, certainly not sober himself. Gullet stood on deck, his head tilted far back, as he stared up at the sky, gazing at the few stars that appeared in the early evening sky. Thumper was sitting near Gullet, on the railing of the ship, cleaning his rifle, and checking the sights. As everyone approached and said their hellos, the party asked if at any moment it would be possible to take a handful of the crew into the city, which cause Roach to leap from his seat on the stairs to the helm. He immediately volunteered to go with the group and do whatever was needed, but MC thanked him saying that she was just curious if that were an option, but she'll let him know. The group told Lewie that they had returned to check in on them, and to deposit some gems from their main safe, which had been secure belowdeck. Gally then hatches a plan to sell some gemstones they had taken from the orc camp on their way to the city, and earned them a substantial sum of gold. Realizing the lateness of the hour, and remembering that they had to go to dinner with Gally's father, the group left the ship and began making their way toward the circus in the Dock Ward; The Sea Maiden's Faire.

Seeing a poster for the circus plastered on one of the buildings in the Dock Ward, the group learned of the specific times of the shows, and began walking toward the main tent. As they approached, they were skeptical of the quality of the circus, given the main tent wasn't all that impressively sized. Although it was decorated with vibrant colors, it didn't look quite as large as everyone was expecting.

Getting their tickets at the booth, the group makes their way into the tent, and by some magic, the tent opened up to massive levels. On the outside, it looked like the tent could hold merely, 50 people, maybe less; but not that they're inside they see that the tent could easily hold 1,500, maybe more. Finding their seats, they anxiously await the renowned Zardoz Zord to take the stage.

After a few moments, loud, triumphant music begins playing, as all many of creatures and characters began flooding the stage. Acrobats were swinging in the air, animals were parading the grounds, clowns were playing fools, and from the

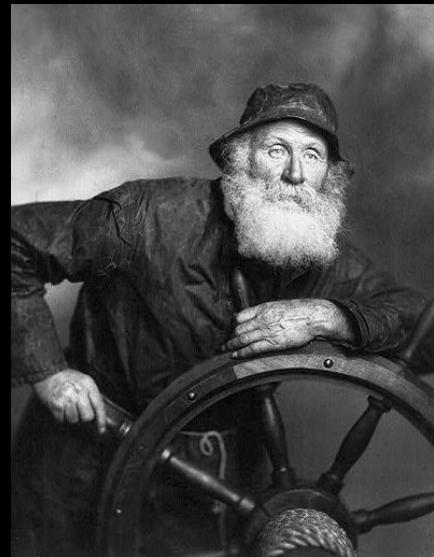
center; Zardoz Zord emerged from beneath the ground, standing on a rising pedestal into the air. The handlebar mustachioed ringleader was dressed in an emerald tuxedo, with a large top hat. He narrated the various ongoing below and above him; the acrobats, the animals, and the clowns as they all made the best of their performances. As Zardoz completed his introduction to the carnival, he invited the audience to enjoy, and amaze themselves at the sights. MC, Gally, and Uhhg applauded, and looked around the tent to see clowns interacting with audience members, people walking on stilts, blowing fire, and juggling swords. Suddenly a cloaked figure descended the wide stairs toward them, not in a threatening manner, but certainly with conviction. Looking up to see who the person was, the group saw a very handsome, bald headed human man in his late early 40's. Speaking in a somewhat familiar voice, "Gally, MC, Uhhg..." Gally immediately recognized the individual in disguise, and replied, "Hello Fel'Rekt." He then asked the party to follow him to the ships, leading them through the marvels of the circus, to the 'backstage' area of the tent. In this restricted area of the circus, and after walking past many of the performers, the group noticed that all the carnyes are astonishingly good looking, some of the most beautiful people they had ever seen. Continuing out the back of the tent, the group followed Fel'Rekt through a slit leading them to a secluded path underneath the docks of the Dock Ward, and toward a crew-less rowboat. Turning back toward the group, Fel'Rekt's form had reverted back to the familiar Drow, dark blue skin, and eyes flecked with silver and blue, "To the Eye-catcher." Climbing aboard the rowboat, the oars begin roaring autonomously, and the party and Fel'Rekt are ushered toward a large ship anchored off the coast of Deepwater Isle. Getting closer, the party can see that the Lal'Axle Black Dragons have clearly made the fortresses on Deepwater Isle, and on Stormhaven Island their homes, and are using these locations as their base of operations while they're in Waterdeep.

As the rowboat gets closer to the massive ship, the boat passes through an illusion, and three smaller ships sit anchored close together. The main ship, slightly larger than the other two, had a floating dock attached to it, with a rope ladder leading to the main deck fixed on the hull. Climbing up an over, Gally, Uhhg, and MC land on deck to see members of Bregan Dearth in rank and file, standing at attention facing straight ahead. Suddenly a theatrical voice rings from the helm deck, and strutting down the steps, arms outstretched, Bainrae Jarlaxle beckoned his long lost son, Timoti for a hug. Gally didn't feel very comfortable, and Bainrae understood, as Fel'Rekt informed him that his son had actually changed his name to Gally now. Not seeming to mind, Bainrae continued to flare his personality before his men, as Gally, MC, and Uhhg looked around suspicious of what they had walked into. Before venturing for dinner, Bainrae wanted to reintroduce a few old acquaintances of Gally - Not knowing what his father meant, he mentally prepared himself for the worst - However, Bainrae then gestured his arms to introduce Krebyg Masq'Il'Yr, one of his father's lieutenants and bodyguard, and another, Soluun Xibrindas. Both remember young Gally from his childhood, as these two, along with Fel'Rekt would have also been Gally's bodyguards by default. However, Gally knew growing up, he spent most of his time with Fel'Rekt. And although Fel'Rekt was the one who rowed Gally to shore from his father's ship that night; it was Soluun, Krebyg, and Fel'Rekt that shot and killed the three Fire-Brands that were attempting to kill, or at least kidnap Gally that night so long ago.

Not sure how to gauge Bainrae, he concludes his formalities, and invites the party below deck to enjoy the feast he had prepared for them.

# NPCs:

- **Lewie Storm-Worthy:** Leader of the Lost Crew, Helmsman to The Bountiful Wolfsbane of Boris, Lewie is the sworn crew chief for Galileo, Martha-Charlene and Uhlg. He is as loyal as they come, and trusts his leaders with his life, and the lives of his crew. Having flown over almost every continent, and sailed all the known Oceans, Lewie is a seasoned traveler. Decades of adventuring, and countless ship battles have not left him unscathed: he lost his left leg at the thigh, his right arm at the elbow, and his left eye was gouged from his skull. All sustained while at the helm in battle. Lewie is proud to say he's only ever foundered or crashed a ship thrice - and ironically in each crash, he emerged entirely unharmed, but for a minor headache, and ringing of the ears. A well-practiced Monk, though not as disciplined as he once was - time and experience have taught him the futility of such self-restraint, after being such frequent bedfellows with Death. He's time serving as a Merchant Marine, a Bounty Hunter, and a Pirate has left Lewie with some of the useful skills of Rogues. He's also an accomplished tinkerer and engineer. Although the mechanics of gunpowder, and other siege/melee weaponry, he leaves to his crew-mates; Thumper and Roach. His crew mates (Roach, Horseshoe, Scratch Thumper, & Gullet) are a mismatched band of Rogues, Rangers, and Tinkerers that filled the ranks of various crews Lewie helmed for. Initially deciding to follow Lewie for steady contracts, they have grown to trust no one else to lead them at the helm, and through life. After each of them were saved by Lewie - some more than once - they not only feel they owe their lives to Lewie, but they all look to him as an adopted father - lovingly calling him "The Old Man" amongst themselves. Lewie's crew are a loyal bunch - and Lewie is loyal to his crew. Although his passion, his reason for existence, as far as he is concerned, is to be the greatest helmsman the world has ever seen. And he will leap aboard any vessel, regardless of its intention, so that he can fulfill his purpose. Lewie has a couple of prosthetics as a result of his extensive travels onboard various ships of both sea, and air - but he moves surprisingly well. It appears the absence of those limbs hasn't impeded his movement at all, and without already knowing, one wouldn't notice he's a multiple-amputee



- **Horseshoe:** Cabin boy, and Lewie's protege, Horseshoe has been raised by Lewie after the crew saved Horseshoe from a near death experience during Lewie's second and final shipwreck. Horseshoe is loyal, and learning as much as he can from all that he can. Youngest member of Lewie's crew, and Lewie's adopted son. Brash and bold and 22, he is being trained to become a Helmsman like Lewie, also being trained in similar traditions of the Monk. But he is one mouthy little shit - but he is a loyal one, and does have his Lucky moments...



- **Thumper:** First mate to Lewie, the Captain's second in command, Thumper is also Lewie's best friend, having travelled to get her for nearly 50 years, the two have seen countless battles together, and survived a handful of impossible wrecks. Master Gunner and Siege Weapon Master. Thumper tends to serve as the Master at Arms on board the ships Lewie helms. He feels indebted to Lewie for saving Gullet from being marooned - he stopped Iago from tying a cannon to Thumper and throwing him into the sea after defending his brother,



protesting the sentence. Thumper and Gullet are close to Lewie's age, and along with Horseshoe, have been with Lewie the longest. Their loyalties are to Lewie first, Horseshoe second - and to their contracts, third

- **Gullet:** Considered to be the one who can fix anything, or make anything, Gullet is Thumper's older brother, and main gunner while onboard the ship. Gullet had his tongue ripped out while Lewie was a young Helmsman and First Mate to Captain Iago Goldfinger on the Hammerlocks Warship. After being nursed back to health by the captain that maimed him, Iago had plans to take the fully recovered Gullet, and maroon him. In the final moments before abandoning a mutilated Gullet, Lewie led the mutiny that saved Gullet from the harsh execution, and earned Lewie his first station as Captain - of a Dwarvn Ariel Warship.



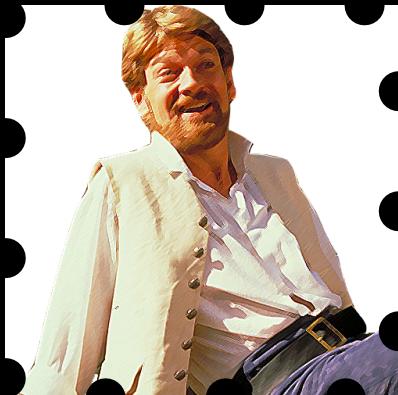
- **Roach:** A craftsman and talented fighter, Roach joined up with Lewie 20 years ago during the final year of Lewie's legitimate and illegitimate mercenary pirating aboard the Hammerlocks following the mutiny. Time would eventually catch up to them, when the Goldfinger's Naval and Aerial Cavalries found the Hammerlocks and crew on the northeastern coast of Fairaway. Attempting to flee, the ship crashed - nearly killing the crew, Lewie maneuvered the ship onto a cliff top farmhouse. The massive warship came to a slow, crushing crawl through the farmhouse, stopping feet from a two-year-old boy. Abandoning ship and fleeing the Dwarves, Lewie saw that the crash had destroyed the boy's home, killing his parents inside. The Dwarven cavalry landed on top of the wreckage in minutes, slaughtering all survivors of the crew. Lewie abandoned his ship, but couldn't abandon the boy, and took him with them to make their escape. In shock, the boy didn't speak for weeks. Luckily managing to get away, and barely survive, the crew dubbed the young boy "Horseshoe". Roach is loyal to Lewie and Horseshoe, and is a capable smith.



- **Scratch:** A strange alchemist that joined up with Lewie's crew about 5 years ago while they were Pirating with onboard Death Shepard. Lewie was the helmsman while the crew was contracted with the White-Flame, a band of pirates that fill the ranks of the Fire-Brands. Scratch helped cure a strange fever that took Lewie close to death, following Scratch's amateur amputation of Lewie's right arm. A bit of a shady character and a magnet of suspicion, the Captain of the Death Shepard, Therafin Phalaxle, accused Scratch of setting a plague on his Helmsman. Lewie was wrought with illness, and could barely speak, yet stood on deck and defended Scratch, proclaiming his innocence. Therafin wanted to be sure Scratch wasn't lying, so ordered a lash for each potentially infected crewman (299). As the order was being carried out, and fever was gripping Lewie, Therafin was convinced by the fourth lashing, Scratch was unchained from the mast - and Lewie collapsed on deck. Scratch soothed him back to health, nursing his amputated arm as best he could, focusing on his resulting fever.



- **Volothamp Gedarm:** Famous chronicler, and documentarian of Monsters and pertinent information for Adventurers. Although he has a reputation for withholding information when accompanying adventurers on Monster Hunts, he is a kind man with a few flaws; drinking among them.



Sometimes his quests lead no where, and the monsters he attempts to track turn out to be what they seemed like in the first place; baseless rumors, and stories from farmers, startled by the wind. Nonetheless, there are those rare occasions when Volo stumbles upon a quest for adventurers, offering his network of contacts in Waterdeep to assist those that prove themselves capable. He was tasked by Jalester Silvermane to find trustworthy adventurers to find the lost gold of the city, and sees a lucrative opportunity in joining his lot with Uhhg, Gally and MC - adventurers he heard about via reputation alone.

- **Durnan:** Owner of the Yawning Portal, a curious tavern in the northern section of the Dock Ward. Durnan runs quite the establishment, and one that is well known and well liked among adventurers within the city. His tavern is used as a 'posting board' for any quester seeking work, or looking to farm the latest gossip. There are a handful of well known adventurers that take residency in the Yawning Portal - such an opportunity is reserved for those that are 'high-earners' in terms of generating gold and contracts. The Doom Raiders, for example, have a residency at the Yawning Portal. Durnan has been living in Waterdeep for years, originally coming from Winterhaven when he was a young adventurer. His barmaid, Bonnie, helps run the tavern, and keeps Durnan filled in on happenings and gossip.



- **Bonnie:** Barmaid at the Yawning Portal, Bonnie holds a deep secret. Hiding with Durnan's protection, Bonnie is actually one of five Doppelgängers hiding in Waterdeep. She has come to trust MC, Gally, and Uhhg, and revealed her secret, as she is looking for protection, and has information to offer as payment. Her four Doppelgänger companions have managed to infiltrate, and hide within various factions of the city; namely, the Zhentarim, Xanathar's Guild, Bregan Dearth, and a House of The Court of Lords. Initially reluctant to reveal which house, Bonnie eventually told the party that it was House Cassalanter, and her companion has assumed the identity of 'Nana' to Lord and Lady Cassalanter's children.



- **Jalester Silvermane:** Regular at the Yawning Portal, and really an undercover spy for the Lord's Alliance - Jalester serves the Open Lord of Waterdeep, Lady Laerel Silverhand, directly and exclusively. As a Silvermane, Jalester's house has been sworn to serve house Silverhand for centuries, maintaining one of the oldest Nobel alliances in the city. Although Volo was first contacted Uhhg, MC and Gally about a contract in Waterdeep; Volo did so on orders from Jalester (on behalf of Laerel), who tasked him with finding a trustworthy, and capable band of adventurers to assist the city in dire circumstances. However, before the party could arrive, Volo had bungled things up enough, and Jalester stepped in to speak directly to his (Laerel's) contractors.



- **Laerel Silverhand:** Elected as Open Lord as Waterdeep fairly recently, Laerel has been tasked by The Court of Lords to locate and return Waterdeep's wealth that Dagult Neverember had stolen. Unable to trust any members of the Court of Lords, under close watch of The Masked Lords, and with no way to trust any faction or adventurer in Waterdeep - Laerel thought her best strategy would be to seek help outside of the city. She asked Jalester to find a band of trustworthy adventurers far from the city, capable of handling missions discreetly, and willing to serve Laerel, and the Lords Alliance. From an early age, Laerel earned a reputation for herself as a very capable wielder of the arcane arts. Born into one of the oldest houses in the city, much was expected of her, and she set off almost immediately to prove her worth and skill as a Wizard. In her younger years, she married one of her adventuring companions, Khelben Arunsun, who would later become the Blackstaff of Waterdeep, and held the position until Vajra succeeded him. Laerel's relationship with Vajra is complicated - given Laerel is much older, wiser, and much more powerful, she views Vajra as an insecure child. Additionally, Vajra wields the Blackstaff, which houses Khelben's soul - as well as those of all other Blackstuffs, bound inside of it. Although Vajra and Laerel often disagree, it is only because Laerel sees so much of herself in Vajra. And in fact, Vajra owes her position as Blackstaff to Laerel, who appointed her following her husband's death. Laerel loves Waterdeep, and will do anything to protect her city. Once the gold is returned, she plans to do everything she can to bring Dagult Neverember to justice.



- **Dagult Neverember:** Former Open Lord of Waterdeep, Dagult held the position for nearly nine years, and in that time managed to embezzle most, if not all of the city's gold, physically hiding it within the city. However, before he could complete his plan, and make his escape with the gold; his plot was uncovered. He fled to take his place as Lord of Neverwinter, his ancestral home, and given his powerful alliances there, extradition was refused. An ancient, mysterious artifact of Dagult's is being searched for by the Zhentarim, and Xanathar's Guild ~ The Stone of Gohlor - which Raener said was, "just an old paperweight Father had on his desk."



- **Raener Neverember:** Only son of Dagult Neverember, and proud citizen of Waterdeep, Raener was rescued from a Zhentarim hideout by the party while they were tracking Floon Blagmaahr in the Dock Ward. Raener has grown quite from old the Party, and truly wants to help them in anyway he can to complete their quest. Returning the city's wealth is something Raener feels duty and honor bound to do. He earned the trust of the party by helping him save his best friend, Floon, and has stuck with the group ever since. Reluctant to admit it at first, Raener has revealed to the group that he is a member of the Harpers.



- **Avitus Corringere:** Captain in the Griffon Cavalry, and the first Waterdavian to welcome the party to Waterdeep. Although, he happened upon the party through unsettling means - having been told of their arrival by Merideth Ice-White, the individual he attributes his faith in Dave to. Avitus is an honorable man, and one that has sworn to help Martha-Charlene, whom he regards as a renowned cleric of Dave, and respects profoundly.



- **Magistrate Pelleloss Hillstride:** As a Magistrate, Hillstride presides over the legal ongoing in the Dock Ward. As he is also charged with managing the docks, and ships that come and go, the part first met Hillstride when they docked their ship. Hillstride is a very tall High Elf that lives by the code of the law, and has a strict belief system of order. Although a bit callused, Hillstride is genuine, and sincere in his role and responsibilities. Like all other Wards, there is a specific Magistrate for each.



- **Floon Blagmaahr:** Best friend, to Raener Neverember, and general idiot, Floon is as loyal as they come. Rescued by the party from Grum'Shar, the Half-Orc wizard, and amateur torturer that was interrogating Floon about information on the Stone of Gohlor.



- **Xoblob:** A rock gnome that purchased The Old Xoblob Shoppe from Old Xoblob, selling trinkets and oddities. A bizarre shop, and a strange little creature, Xoblob maintains a dark secret: He is a spy for Xanathar, and through the eyes of the stuffed Beholder in his shoppe, Xanathar can peer through its dead eye.



- **Hayustus Stagget:** Captain in the City Watch, Captain Hayustus is a stout dwarf, but a casual guard. His charming personality, and laid back demeanor make him a poor candidate for an assertive job, but somehow he makes it work. Hayustus and his watchmen were the first on site at the Zhentil Hideout, following the ruckus of saving Raener from the Xanathar Kenku.



- **Grum'Shar:** Torture and Wizard apprentice that worked for Xanathar, Grum'Shar was killed in the Xanathar Hideout where the party rescued Floon, and first saw Nihiloor. It seemed Grum'Shar was only a threat to those tied up, unable to defend themselves. The party made quick work of him, cutting him down swiftly. The moment before they attacked, it appeared that Grum'Shar knew Floon had no information to offer, and was torturing merely for his pleasure, and the entertainment of Nihiloor.



- **Nihiloor:** A Mind-Flayer, apparently working closely with Xanathar to hunt for the stolen gold, and is terrorizing the city by releasing monsters on civilians. Nihiloor has already devoured the minds of Meloon Wardragon, and Blimpo - an initiate in Xanathar's Guild that Gally recruited - and it is unknown how many others the Flayer may have turned. A note left in the lining of Meloon's jacked indicated that he believed Nihiloor was his contact in the Emerald Enclave.



- **Xanathar:** Leader of Xanathar Guild, and a Beholder living beneath the city of Waterdeep - It has taken a strange liking to MC, Gally and Uhhg. Xanathar has clearly been busy, having formed an alliance with a Mind-Flayer, and is working to cause chaos and disorder in the city. The party realizes this strategy is an effort to cause mass distraction, while something else is going on. It is suspected, that Xanathar and Nihiloor aren't terrorizing the city strictly because of their innate malevolence; but that there must be an ulterior motive. And whatever it is the two are attempting to cover-up, they gather it has something to do with the missing gold.

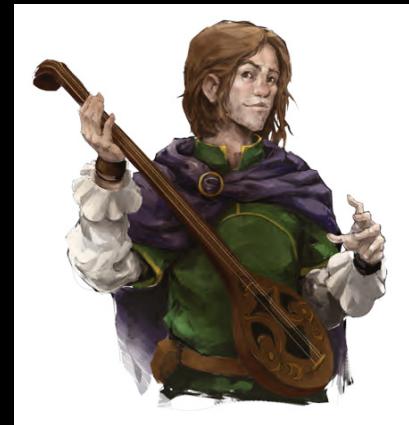


**The Doom Raiders:** (Listed Left to Right) Muscle of the Zhentarim, and known internally as the Black Network, the Doom Raiders are a famous band of adventurers that have a lot of connections within the city. Although most of their dealings are legitimate mercenary contracts, there are other aspects of their business that errs on the grey side of the legal spectrum - and some others that are outright illegal. But given the expanse of influence of the Zhentarim, the Doom Raiders sometimes receive special treatment. Vajra Zafahr has been investigating the Zhentarim for months, and has concluded that although the Doom Raiders act like they give the orders, someone more powerful is pulling their strings.



- **Davil Starsong:** Bard of the Doom Raiders, and one of the most famous bards on the continent, Davil is the charm, and face of their party. His ability to make friends earned him the position of Master of Opportunities and Negotiations in the Black Network, seeking out lucrative contracts and alliances for his party. Like many High Elves, he has an affinity for magic, but considers his grace and elegance his more redeeming qualities.

- **Istrid Thorn:** Regarded as the Black Network's Master of Trade and Coin, Istrid focuses her strengths on running an illegal lending operation out of a warehouse in the Dock Ward. Although she is a stout dwarf, she has a kind heart, and is considered to be the patience of the party, often keeping the more hotheaded companions in check.
- **Tashlyn Yafeera:** Master of Arms and Mercenaries, Tashlyn is regarded as the Leader of the Doom Raiders, and by default, the Black Network. As well as running the crew that is the Doom Raiders, she also deals with handling all details pertaining to the army of mercenaries the Zhentarim operate. Tashlyn demands obedience, loyalty, and fearlessness from those that follow her, and they offer it - or they die. To her own surprise, and that of her companions...she has truly fallen for Uhlg...often finding herself smitten in his presence...
- **Skeemoo Weirdbottle:** Master of Magic for the Black Network, Skeemoo runs a legitimate business as a cover; an apothecary in the Trades Ward, Weirdbottle's Concoctions. He is a dislikable rock gnome, and someone that often starts fights, with his friends there to finish them. He does well to look after his companions, treating them whenever they are wounded, and assisting with any magical research that needs to be done. Skeemoo is an aggressive, belligerent figure, that is skeptical and highly distrustful of others.
- **Ziraj the Hunter:** Wielding an oversized bow, and arrows about 5 feet long; Ziraj towers over most those he encounters. Holding the position of Master of Assassination in the Black Network, whenever the Zhentarim receive a contract of...darker...nature, Ziraj is "the one who knocks."



- **Three-Strings Mereg:** Bard at the Yawning Portal, Mereg isn't exactly all that he purports to be. He is secretly a member of Force Grey, and is watching over and protecting Bonnie.



- **Lif:** Former owner of Trollskull Alley, and even in death, could not abandon his life's work. He now serves as an ethereal butler in the Manor, assisting with little things at the party's request.



- **Tally Felbranch:** Owner of the Bent Nail in Trollskull Alley, Tally is a talented carpenter that can craft arrows, bolts, weapon handles, and knows general carpentry, but is mostly a 'fletcher'.

- **Avi & Embric:** Owners of Steam and Steel, Avi is a water genasi, and Embric a fire. The two are weapon and armor smiths living in Trollskull. The two have a fairly tumultuous marriage...



- **Fala Lafeliir:** Owner of Correlions Crown, and a talented apothecary, Fala can make potions, and provide healing to the party in Trollskull.



- **Viktor Trench:** A private detective by trade, and owner of Tiger's Eye, Viktor can help the party investigate leads, and generate leads. As a talented detective, he makes his living finding people that don't want to be found, and over the years, he has gotten very good at it. Although a bit of a recluse, Viktor is a good person, with good intentions, and loves his neighborhood.



- **Rishaal Nemnossis:** Owner of Book Wyrm's Treasure, Rishaal specializes in ancient texts and spell scrolls. As a talented Wizard he can help the party identify arcane items, perform research, or enchant weapons with Avi and Embric. Although everyone in Trollskull seems to be close with one another, Viktor and Rishaal are very evidently good friends, as one is virtually always with the other.



- **Damien:** Porter to Trollskull, Damien's duties are quite extensive. Everything from collecting rent, logging repairs, acting as a secretary for the landlords; to performing groundskeeping, helping settle disputes between tenants, organizing food and drink stores, and ensuring the security of the manor grounds.



- **Vittorio & Amalia Cassalanter:** Lord and Lady Cassalanter have earned themselves quite the reputation in the Court of Lords, having saved their house from financial ruin, and reestablishing themselves as one of the leading Houses in the city. Although one of the oldest Nobel families of Waterdeep, their House was on the verge of collapse, and virtually all their merchant businesses had gone under. However, they miraculously turned it around, and to the disbelief, and astonishment of other Nobels, they have generated so much growth, that they have long surpassed their original levels of wealth, power, and influence. Meeting with Lord and Lady Cassalanter's, the party found them to be very stuffy, uptight, and condescending - however, what wealthy people aren't. There was one curious moment, upon returning stolen property to Lady Cassalanter, Gally caught the most blatant expression of deception that had ever encountered. The group told Lord and Lady Cassalanter that they had recovered the possessions in a Zhentarim warehouse - Lady Cassalanter acted shocked, and replied with disbelief, while Vittorio added that the Zhentarim had been stealing from warehouses for months, and that they should all be eradicated like vermin. Gally saw Amalia's face, peering into her eyes - she was liar, and a very good one. They were both hiding something, although unsure of what it was, after some time, the party was sure they wanted to get far away from the Cassalanter's.



- **Vajra Zafahr:** Although barely out of her twenties, Vajra is an incredibly accomplished Wizard, and the youngest Blackstaff ever to hold the position. She is a passionate defender of Waterdeep, and strongly believer in the good that can come of all creatures. Vajra recently has been investigating the Zhentarim, and their activities in the city. Additionally, she has kept a keen eye on Xanathar's Guild, and has done her best to investigate both factions. Vajra has told Laerel of her suspicions that someone controls the Doom Raiders, and that they aren't the true leaders of the Zhentarim. Her hypothesis is that a very old, and very powerful wizard, Manshoon, is actually the one pulling strings. However, Laerel has told her that this is impossible, given Laerel had killed him years earlier. As the Blackstaff of Waterdeep, Vajra oversees a faction of adventurers and city watchmen known as Force Grey - but the organization is extremely limited in what they can do. Therefore, Laerel asks the party to help Vajra, as she too needs the help of a trustworthy, and discrete band of adventurers. Vajra and Laerel sometimes butt heads, however Vajra truly looks up to Laerel, and does her best to listen to her without being too critical.



- **Bainrae Jarlaxle:** Leader of Bregan Dearth, Ring Leader of Sea Maiden's Faire (Zardoz Zord), and Gally's father - Bainrae is a very theatrical, and very passionate person. He has worked hard to ensure his people are protected from judgmental eyes, and will do anything to build the world he envisions he and his people deserve. Bainrae is a very charismatic individual, and has many that would give their lives for his.



- **Fel'Rekt Lafeen:** First Lieutenant of Bainrae, and Gally's mother, Fel'Rekt believes himself to be the physical embodiment of what it is to be a Gunslinger. It is the only thing that he has ever wanted to be, and the only thing that he claims to be. Although originally born a female, in Drow society, females cannot be Gunslingers, because they are generally seen as inferior combatants. Fel'Rekt is so dedicated to dream of being a Gunslinger, that she is willing to sacrifice her gender. Before he was separated from his father's ship, Fel'Rekt was Gally's personal bodyguard ("Keeper") and the one who rowed him to safety, abandoning him on the shore. Something that still haunts Gally...



- **Soluun Xibrindas:** Second Lieutenant to Bainrae, and his true muscle. Soluun is a bit of a bully, and his younger brother Narl works for the Xanathar Guild, but the two do not get along very well. Soluun considers his brother a bit of a sellout, and believes Drow should stick together.



- **Krebbyg Mas'Q'I'l'Yr:** Soluun's number two, Krebbyg is one of the youngest members of Bainrae's crew, but his passion and fervor have earned him a high rank. Bainrae has always considered Krebbyg to be his adopted son.



- **Merideth Ice-White Stelaltulath:** “I seek to help those lost travellers wandering down lonely roads; abandoned by those they loved, betrayed by those they trusted.”



- **Deldanbras the Bold:** Champion of Merideth, an ancient being that lent Uhhg his axe for a time.



- Lannistall: ?



- Shiraneth: ?

