**Name:** Calder Mannix. Goes by Mannix.

**Adjectives:** Disillusioned, Curious, Confident, Judgmental, Suspicious

**Quirk**: Trust issues, suspicious of everyone

**Backstory:**

Ever since I can remember, I could read people. I could read faces like a book. Easier, even; you need schooling to read a book, but people came natural. You might imagine that would be advantageous to a young man growing up in the slums of Baldur's Gate, and sure, being able to spot a liar or violent intent came in handy at keeping my alive, it turns out that spotting everybody’s bullshit and calling them out on it is no way to make friends.

But stay alive I did, and as soon as I was old enough to hold my own, I found a vocation that made use of particular skill set. I started doing private investigator jobs; turns out knowing who to talk to and being able to tell if they’re lying is all you need to find most people. I started taking private contracts, tracking down runaways, cheating spouses, and even a few escaped criminals when the local guard didn’t have a clue (which they never did). But after years on the job, I was getting restless. It’s lonely work, I was getting sick of hiking through back alleys looking for lowlifes, and the jobs weren’t paying well enough to get the hell out of dodge.

So, when the dame walked through my front door last week, even though I knew right from the start she was nothing but trouble, I welcomed it. Something new, I thought. She was blonde, bold, and beautiful, with a fiery passion in her eyes and a deep blue cloak. There was definitely some elven blood in there as well. What I thought were odd freckles on her face turned out to be patches of golden dragon scales when she lowered her hood and stepped into the light. She told me to call her Xandala, and she had a small, cat-like dragon perched on her shoulders that she called Summerwise.

She said she had a job that would pay enough to get me out of town and then some; a simple missing person gig: find her missing father, a man named Artus Cimber. The name struck a nerve; it was hard to avoid to The Harpers in this city, and Cimber used to some kind of bigwig adventurer with them till he disappeared a decade ago, and none of their fancy magics could find him again. It was enough to go on; there were leaks in the Harpers, and I knew just where to squeeze to make them pour. I eventually came up with the name of a jungle filled chunk of land in the middle of nowhere ; Chult. I’d heard of it, and I knew it was bad news. The man-eating dinosaur kind of bad news.

But the pay was still too tempting, and Xandala was ecstatic at the development, offering to book my passage out of pocket. Should of known the dame was too good to be true; the next morning, she was gone. Turns out she’d gone straight from me to the docks, and hopped a boat to Chult, with nary a goodbye nor a coin of payment sent in my direction. I was angry, but I was also determined; the broad wasn’t gonna cheat me. I’d find her father first, and then she’d pay me what she promised. So now, I find myself looking for passage to a jungle that will probably kill me, to chase a lead that’s been cold for a decade, for a client that doesn’t want my services. On the plus side, I could use the sun.

On the evening of the first night….

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An imposing figure enters the frame, a gold dragonborn draped in plate armor. He appears disheveled, like he hasn’t slept in days. He appears to nod and begins to speak, his eyes sweeping over you.

**Kalinaar: “Undril, we have an importa - who the hell are these people?”**

Undril: “The rest of the reinforcements. Um, I think…?”

The dragonborn looks like he’s about to launch into an argument, then sighs and shakes his head as he addresses you all.

**Kalinaar: “I am Kalinaar, protector of the Dessarin Valley, Knight of Tyr, and Vindicator of the Order of the Gauntlet. And... I need your help. You were sent on this mission to reinforce Camp Righteous, but we have new information. It’s about the death curse.”**

He pauses to see if and of you react. Undril’s eyes widen.

**Kalinaar: “Several days ago we were...attacked here in the monastery. My lord’s….something of his was stolen. Something powerful. There are not many who could penetrate our defen-”**

Renwick: “It was Acererak, that arch-lich asshole!” A whispery voice interjects as another figure enters the frame. You all take an involuntary step backward as a skeletal face fills the projection.

”He who travels through dimensions as easily as you walk through a door. He harvests souls from planes of existences we’ve never even heard of. One of the most powerful beings of the multi-verse. He’s practically a god, and he stole my phylactery!”

**Kalinaar: “We’ve been doing some research-”**

R: “I’ve been doing the research! I’ve been pouring over arcane studies and ancient texts and discovered the theories of a powerful necromantic artifact that uses lich phylacteries. The Soulmonger is designed like a super-phylactery, drawing in dead and dying souls from a large radius. If it were big enough, it could encompass the entire world. To what purpose I do not know, but if Acererak’s behind it, it’s bad for us all.”

**K: “I contacted an old friend.** **There was a mercenary group hired by the Harpers that was operating in Chult over the last few months. The Company of the Yellow Banner. They were seeking an ancient artifact, I forget the name. Something that was supposed to help a friend of theirs.**

**“According to the Harpers, they were sending back regular reports as they made their way through the uncharted jungle. They stumbled upon the ruins of a lost city and saw terrible visions of the figure who destroyed it - Acererak [**ah-SAIR-ak**]. It’s thin, but it’s the only lead we have, and you’re the only ones we know heading to Chult.**

**“The Harpers have revealed their contact in Port Nyanzaru: one of the Merchant Princes, Wakanga O’tomu. He was the one communicating with the merc group. Meet with him and hopefully he can tell you more.”**