

*A Jacob Laden-Guindon homebrew creation*

# The Saint's Stolen Sword

*4-session D&D mystery adventure*

*What follows is both an adventure outline and documentation explaining how I crafted this adventure that I ran for 4 friends during the summer of 2024. None of the art included below is mine.*

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## Set Up

In this adventure, players play as compatriots from the different mafia-like crime families in the great city of Luminar. They spend the adventure trying to track down the long lost [Holy Avenger](#), a sword of incredible magical and political power.

## Designer's Problem

For this particular adventure, I didn't start outlining the adventure until I had input from the players on who their characters were. Before getting player input, all I had was a setting and a structure for a mystery adventure. The challenge in creating this

adventure was to tie the player's backstories to the setting and the mystery so that their motivations would align.

## Key Lore

Luminar is a theocracy, and all noble families wield executive power by virtue of their roles within the **Stalari Church** (see [Appendix D](#)). For **House Castellan**, this power comes from the **Intercessor**, a member of the Castellan family who has the legal and spiritual powers of a living saint. In order to become the Intercessor, a member of House Castellan must become the wielder of the Holy Avenger.

# The Player Characters



## Tish Dazre

*A protector who doesn't want to disappoint*

- Female half-orc barbarian
- Runs a glassware store that is secretly a storehouse for crime families' contraband



## Oggic Bonespine

*A runaway trying to save the friend he left behind*

- Male dwarf druid
- Escaped from a circus (in)famous for its exotic beasts and monsters
- Has a special psychic connection with a unicorn named Kali
- Kali is still in captivity in the circus



## Lon Squall

*A layabout looking for something better*

- Male mariner elf rogue
- Lon's father, Lillin, was in serious debt, and rather than bargain with the family Nefteyn, indentured Lon to one of the crime families' clubs

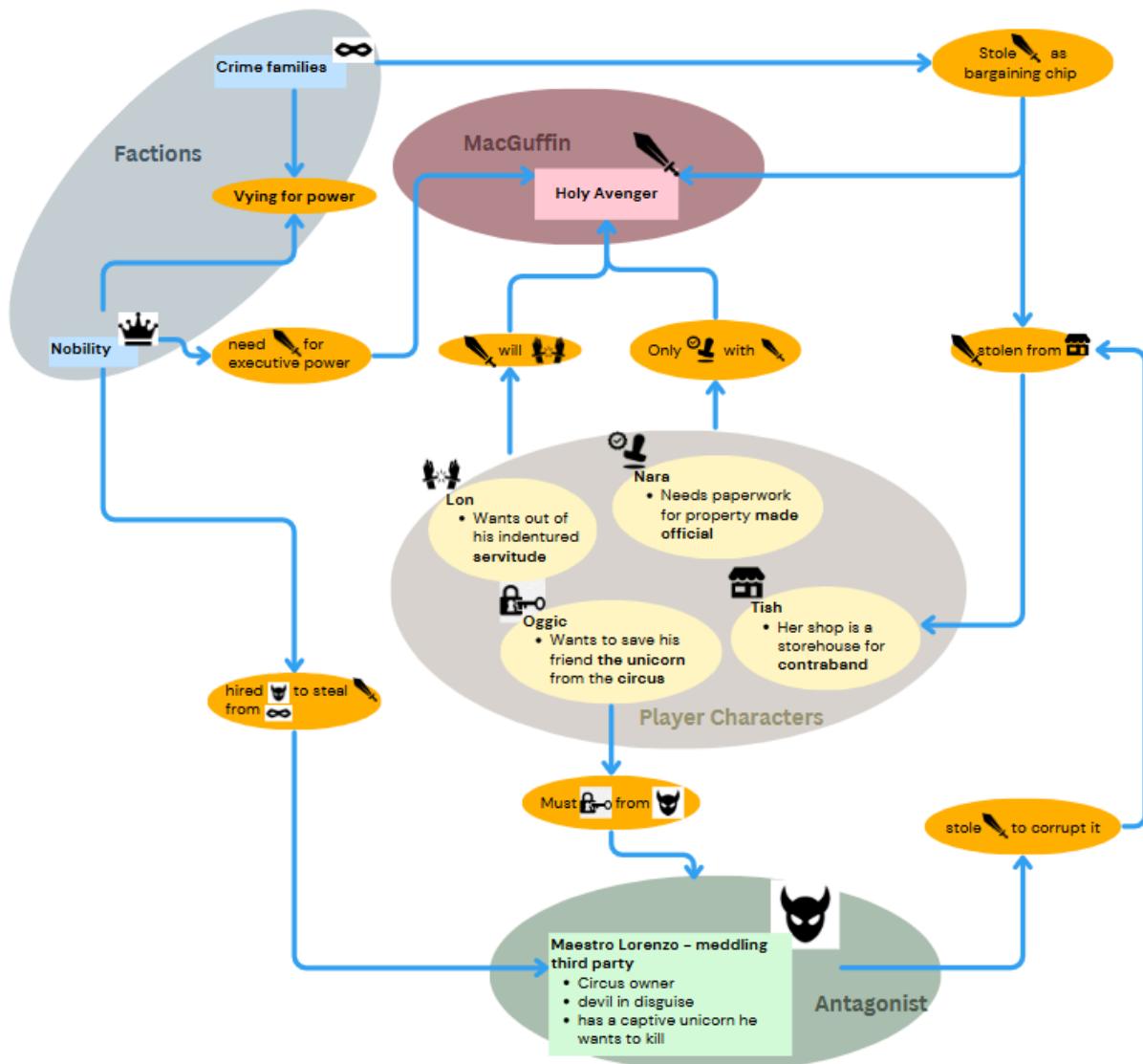


## Nara Bin'tong

*A washed-up dreamer too scared to go home*

- Male goblin barbarian
- Left for the big city to try to make it big
- Has a legal claim to a large estate outside the city, but unable finalize the paperwork
- Won't go home to his huge family until he has something to show for it

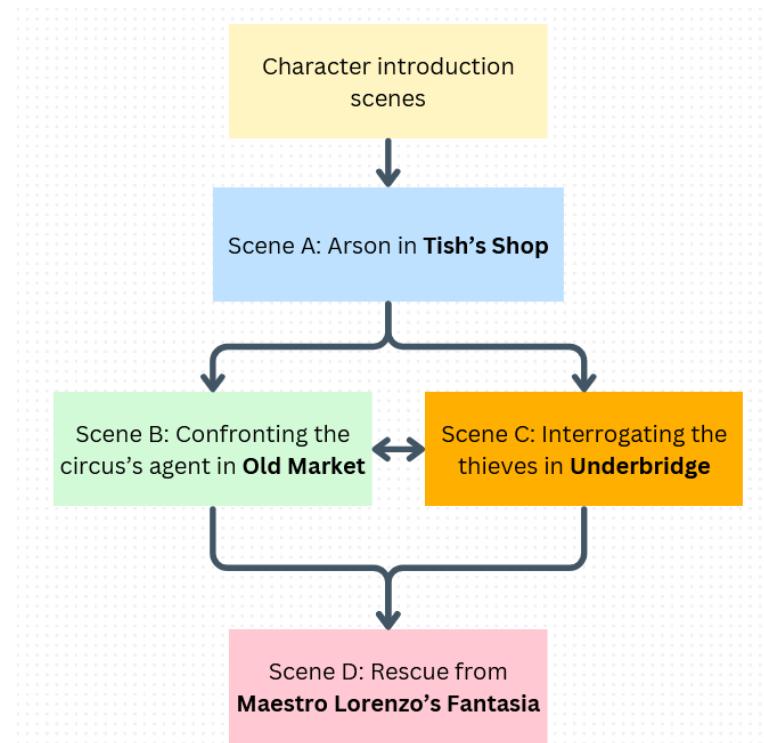
# Player Character's Connections to Plot



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# Adventure Outline

This adventure is made up of three locations where players collect clues and a final confrontation encounter. Each location contains at least three clues to ensure the players have some kind of lead to the next location in the adventure, regardless of how the players choose to tackle the encounters in each location. Before arriving at the first location, each player gets to roleplay in a small scene where each player character's motivations can be shown to the other players.



See [Appendix B](#) for a summary diagram of the entire mystery with the clues that lead to each scene.



# Character Introduction Scenes

## Tish's intro:

- Tish describes her shop
- Crime family smugglers come in for a delivery
- Someone comes to the front door, asks to be let in the back
- Crates, long rolled up bundle (carpet?), giant statue of a squid eating a man
- “Don’t ask, personal request of the Capa”
- Low level city watch comes in, asks to see her ledger; smuggler gets nervous
- End: “Going to your mom’s show tonight?”

## Nara's intro

- Goes to courthouse
- Witnesses someone being escorted out: “So the stories are true, you’ve lost your power!”
- “Sinyur, I’d suggest lowering your voice, unless you want to spend a night in the Fortaleza”
- Uber cheery dwarf attendant inside: “You need a Writ of Conference for that deed to be transferred”
- “That Writ needs an Intercessor’s seal, and there’s a severe backlog, maybe try again in 6-8 months”

## Lon's intro

- Lellin pulls Lon aside at the establishment where Lellin works
- “You keeping well?”
- “I’m trying to do right by you.”
- “A power play in the works, do you know what an Intercessor is?”
- “The sword is called Sunderer, Arm of the Law, Holy Avenger”

- “I have a contact on the ship that brought it in”
- “Being held by one of the Gritzi Fences, the Rivelara’s girl, what’s her name...”
- End: as Lellin leaves, someone insults him “Squall-Eater, more like Ball-Eater” and then gurgles

## Oggic's intro

- On a job with Trezza (see [Appendix A](#)), lookout in the rafters of the Via Bestoffa
- “How long you been working with Lellin’s crew?”
- “He’s crotchety, but he’s fair, the madames wouldn’t just hire me out to anyone”
- “You know the circus is hiring?” Points to Daryn Whitemane (see [Appendix A](#)) hanging out in front of a bar
- “Gave me this” coin with a face that either has dramatic stage makeup, or it’s monstrous
- If Oggic touches it, unicorn in his head will be unsettled
- “Come find me at the Vermillion sometime and I’ll buy you a drink”

Before moving onto Scene A, the players all meet up at the Vermillion, the club where Lellin works and Tish’s mother performs. As long standing drinking buddies, they all commiserate and share the information they gathered from the day. Right as they realize that the Holy Avenger was delivered to Tish’s basement, Tish’s apprentice, Mario, bursts in on them and exclaims, “Sinyura, your shop is on fire!”

# Scene A: Arson at Tish's Shop

## Encounter

When the players arrive, Tish's shop is actively burning. Unbeknownst to them, the Holy Avenger has already been removed from the cellar, and the theft is the reason for the blaze. One of the thugs sent to steal the sword is still trapped in the cellar under debris.

As soon as they enter the shop, players roll for initiative. Players can spend their turns moving through the burning building, looking for clues, or removing some of the ambient dangers to help their friends. The encounter is then divided into challenging and deadly rounds (see [Appendix C](#) for encounter map):

### Challenging rounds - round 1 and 2

- The burning debris causes makes all ground difficult terrain
- At the start of each player's turn
  - Take 1d4 fire damage from the ambient heat
  - Succeed on a DC 5 Con Save or be poisoned from the smoke

### Deadly rounds- rounds 3 and up

- On initiative count 20, DM rolls a d6, on a 5-6, collapsing masonry comes crashing down in a random space
  - DC 15 Dex Save to avoid
  - Restrained and 2d10 bludgeoning damage on fail; only half damage is success
  - DC 15 Str check to get free
- At the start of each player's turn

- Take 2d6 fire damage from the scalding air
- Succeed on a DC 10 Con Save or be poisoned from the smoke

## Resolving the encounter

Once the players exit the shop, they will be accosted by a detachment of the city watch captained by Visconte Virgilio Rabagia (see appendix A). The city watch will post guards around the ruined shop for the night, making it that much more difficult for players to return to search for clues. If players manage to extricate the thug from the burning shop, they will have someone to question about the location of the Holy Avenger.

## Clues

### Clues to Scene B:

- Thug in the cellar has coin from circus recruiter in **Old Market**
- Thug's lips are still red from a drink that can only be purchased in **Old Market**
- If saved, thug will confirm he was hired from circus recruiter in **Old Market**

### Clues to Scene C:

- Thug has an entrance token to see the shark gladiator fights in **Underbridge**
- Sooty print of a bare foot on ground, only the shark gladiators of **Underbridge** walk around bare-footed
- The thug has shark-bite marks on his arms, as if he tended the sharks in **Underbridge**
- If saved, thug will confirm that he was hired alongside a priest named Sister Eliana, and an **Underbridge** shark gladiator named "The Bloodfist" (see [Appendix A](#))

## Scene B: Confronting the Circus Recruiter in Old Market



### Encounter

The key to this encounter is Daryn Whitemane (see [Appendix A](#)), a talent scout for Lorenzo's circus. Daryn usually hangs out in front of the Abby, a bar in Old Market. Players will need to interrogate him to learn more about the Holy Avenger's whereabouts. However, if Daryn ever gets suspicious that the players are looking for the sword, he will turn into his were-raven form and try to escape. Players will then have to chase him through the winding streets of Old Market.

The chase can be run with regular combat rules, or with the chase rules from the 5e *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

### Resolving the encounter

If Daryn is overpowered and captured, he will grudgingly share what he knows about the theft of the Holy Avenger from Tish's shop (see Clues below). If Daryn escapes, players will have to investigate their leads in Underbridge. If players have already come from Underbridge, they should have the clues necessary to lead them to the circus.

### Clues

#### Clues to C: Interrogating the Thieves in Underbridge

- Uninvestigated clues from Scene A
- Daryn was supposed to hire a shark gladiator named the Bloodfist (see [Appendix A](#)), because she can misty step through doors
- As well as Sister Eliana (see [Appendix A](#)), because her presence would be unquestioned as a priestess. She usually hangs out in Underbridge

#### Clues to D: Rescue from Maestro Lorenzo's Fantasia

- Daryn receives a message from Lorenzo that delivery to the circus successful
- Daryn reveals that Lorenzo gave him specific orders to relay, like telling the priestess that she had to unwrap the sword during the theft
- Daryn explains how he had to bring the priestess to see Lorenzo and someone else on the docks

## Scene C: Interrogating the Thieves in Underbridge

### Encounter



Underbridge is an arena built around an underground lagoon, where gladiators are pitted against sharks. If players arrive here without saving the trapped thug from Tish's shop, they will need to overhear ambient NPC chatter to clue them into the two key characters of this encounter: the thieves who broke into Tish's shop.

The first thief is Sister Eliana, a so-called Grey Priest, mendicant members of the clergy who give succor to the downtrodden. Sister Eliana has been cursed as is slowly turning into a demon, specifically a capricorn (half goat, half fish). The second thief is Iona, a.k.a the Bloodfist, one of Underbridge's shark gladiators. The Bloodfist has become dependent on displacer beast meat, which enhances her performance and also lets her use [Misty Step](#). Her supplier for the meat is Lorenzo.

Sister Eliana will be spectating when the players find her. If the players ever overtly mention the Holy Avenger or the fire at Tish's shop, the priestess will become so anxious that she will transform into a capricorn and try to escape through the arena's

lagoon. The moment she does, the Bloodfist will be in the midst of a losing match against some sharks. The players roll initiative.

### Resolving the encounter

Iona will be allowed to exit the ring once all the sharks are defeated. She will also confront the players about stealing her spotlight. Sister Eliana will stay in her capricorn form until she reaches the water. Unless she is directly attacked by anything, she will then turn back into a human and begin drowning. If she is saved, she will be grateful enough to divulge some more information.

### Clues

#### Clues to Scene B:

- Uninvestigated clues from A
- Sister Eliana and Bloodfist will reveal they were hired by **Daryn Whitemane**

#### Clues to Scene D:

- NPC chatter: priestess has already been to **circus**
- Someone from the **circus** that Oggie recognizes is looking for priestess
- NPC chatter: someone saw the Bloodfist dive into the river and swim to the **circus** with something long on her back.
- If saved, Sister Eliana confirms she needs **Lorenzo**'s help with her curse
- If convinced, Bloodfist will admit she brought sword to **Lorenzo** the previous evening



## Scene D: Rescue at Maestro Lorenzo's Fantasia

### Encounter



At the end of the previous scene, Oggie will receive a panicked psychic message from Kali. She is in grave danger somewhere in Lorenzo's Circus.

The circus is on an island in the city's harbor. When the players arrive, the circus grounds are

deserted. After some expiration, they will find a hidden entrance to the catacombs of the temple that once stood on this island.

In the catacombs, the players will find a ritual in progress. Kali, Oggie's friend the unicorn, is chained with bindings made of infernal fire in the center of the room. Visconte Rabagia, wielding the Holy Avenger, is being blessed with holy water with the aid of a number of priests.

Lorenzo, off in a corner, has charmed the Visconte and his attendants, tricking them with illusions. To them, Kali resembles a malefic demon. Lorenzo has convinced everyone that, in order to be worthy to wield the sword, the Visconte must first use it to slay a monster.

### Additional Mechanics

- Kali's bindings can be destroyed if a creature uses their action to pour holy water over the bindings. Kal is bound with three infernal chains.
- If a creature uses the Holy Avenger to strike

Kali, the sword becomes corrupted and transforms into Blackrazor.

- When any creature charmed by Lorenzo takes damage, they can roll to break the charm by succeeding on a DC 15 Wis Save.
- As a legendary action, Lorenzo can summon a hell hound. Any creature within 5 feet of a hell hound has disadvantage on being charmed by Lorenzo.

### Ending the Adventure

Depending on the results of the fight, the adventure concludes in one of the following ways:

#### Acquiring the Holy Avenger

If the players manage to leave this encounter with an uncorrupted Holy Avenger, they can return to either the crime families or the nobility with an immensely powerful bargaining chip. They might also decide to keep it for themselves.

#### Saving the Visconte

The players might not manage to wrest control of the Holy Avenger, but might still prevent Lorenzo from corrupting the blade, saving the Visconte and his entourage in the process. The Visconte, now empowered as the Intercessor, wielder of the Holy Avenger, will grant boons to the players in return for saving him.

#### A New Dark Power

If the Holy Avenger is corrupted, the evil sword Blackrazor is now unleashed on the world. It will either turn the Visconte or one of his lackeys into a new villain for the players to overcome, or it might entice one of the players to turn down a path of evil.

# Appendix A: NPCs

*Collection of the adventure's primary NPCs with role-play notes, barks, and image reference to inspire the DM.*

## Visconte Virgilio Rabagia



**Quirk:** rubs his mustache when angry  
**Need:** Become Castellan Intercessor to purge corruption (zealot)  
**Conflict:** his family is constantly passed up, so always feel like he has to prove himself and make sure others do the same.

**Voice:** high, nasal

- “By the three, stand up straight man!”
- “I don’t see how this concerns the city watch”
- “Santiga give me patience, the depravity of the rabble”
- “Say that one more time, and I’ll make sure you never see daylight again”

## Greta Dazre (Tish’s mother)



**Quirk:** Fingers a jewelry flirtatiously when she’s talking  
**Need:** be the best at what she does  
**Conflict:** Genuinely cares about her daughter, but really into her art, all her spirits are pacified by it

**Voice:** low, slow, husky

- “I’m at the forefront of an artistic revolution”
- “I’m on in a moment, dear, can’t it wait?”
- “Oh if you insist, darling, but only because it’s you.”

## Auntie Zesh (Tish’s Ancestor Spirit)



**Voice:** Russian - drill sergeant/ballet teacher

- “Disgraceful showing, I was twice the woman at your age”
- “Motivation, no, no such thing, there is only the fear of failure”
- “I wrestled with giants, and you file your tusks, and buff your nails?”

## Lellin Squall (Lon’s Father)



Old pirate, tattoos, eye patch, patchy white facial hair, white hair along his ears

**Quirk:** squint

**Conflict:** had to put up Lon as collateral instead of ship, bc ship is too important

**Voice:** high, raspy, coughing

- “I’ve lived a fair bit, trust old Lellin on this.”
- “I’m not proud of what I’ve done, but I know what matters”

## Trezza



Jovial, flirty, bonne vivante, nonchalant

**Quirk:** touchy feely

**Conflict:** last sibling of poor family, wants recognition

**Voice:** Italian

- “The Watch? Please, they’re louder than the Clamour at sunrise.”
- “I like it up here, on top of the city”
- “If there’s a bottle of Mistelle at the end of this, I’m in!”

## Iona "Bloodfist"



**Need:** her prowess as a grimacire (see [Appendix D](#)) comes from her consuming displacer beast meat, she's addicted to it, and it's changing her body (at new moon, becomes cat like)- also has misty step fey touched - Dex barbarian

**Conflict:** she's terrified of the changes happening to her, but loves the fame too much

**Voice:** husky

- "Honey, I'm flattered, now get out before I break you"
  - (In the ring) "Do you want to see the bastard's heart?!"
- 

## Sister Eliana



**Conflict:** cursed and slowly becoming a capricorn

**Need:** breaking the curse

**Voice:** no special change

- "Please, I'm troubled, your prayers will fall on more attentive ears elsewhere."
  - "I will find a way to break this curse, I must."
- 

## Daryn Whitebrown



**Need:** recruit acrobats and rare (fantastical) beasts

**Conflict:** Lorenzo gave him a home, so he will not betray him, even though he knows Lorenzo is less than savory

**Voice:** low, resonant, slow

- "Hello, hello, hello, what rare beauties do we have here?"
- 

## Maestro Lorenzo

### Goals:

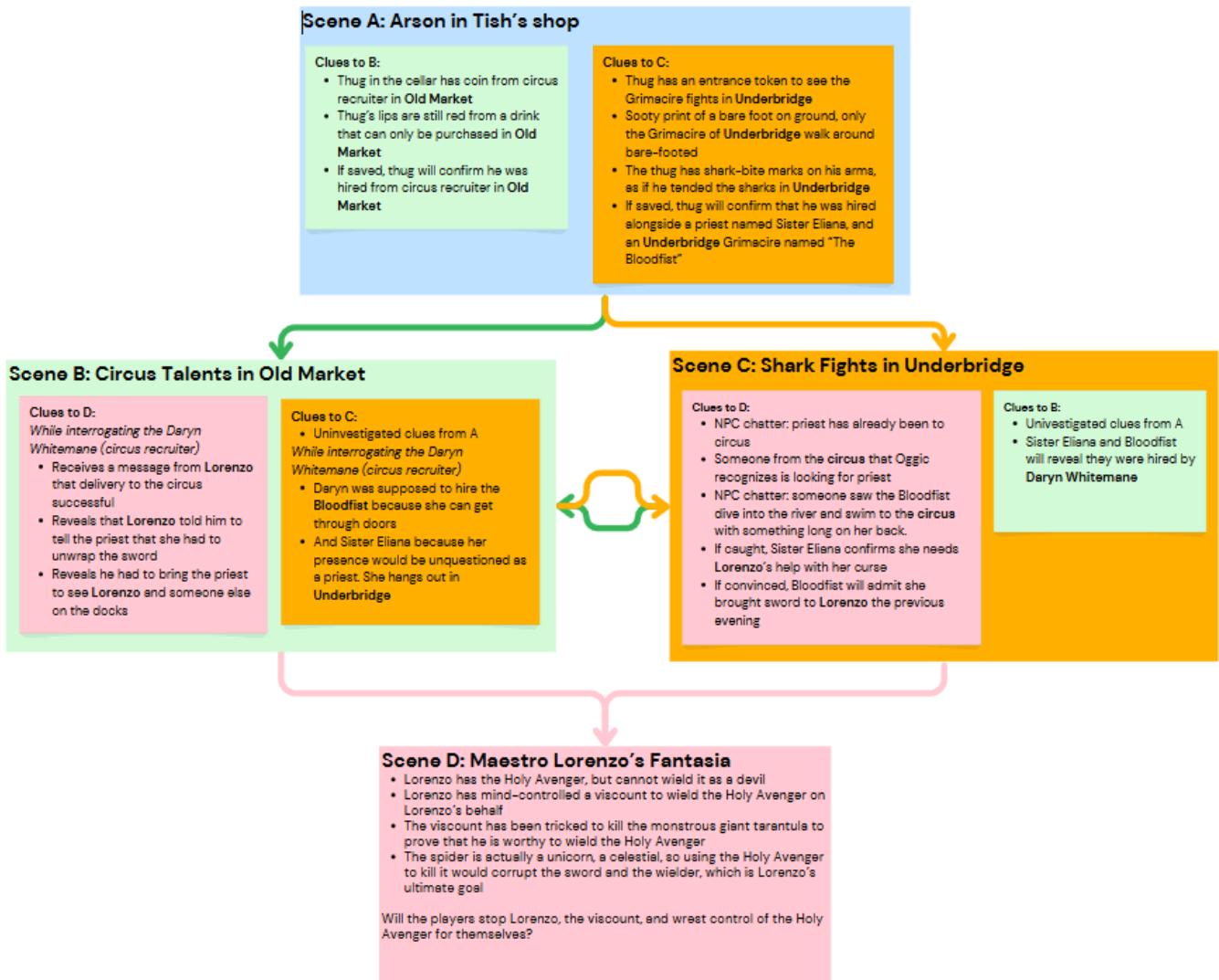


- Get Visconte to kill Kali
- Get someone else to use Holy Avenger to be used against Kali
- Get someone to betray someone they were sworn to protect

**Voice:** Raphael from BG3

- "I will deal with this rabble, my lord."
- "You dare impede the Castellan's chosen"
- "Strike down this monster, lord, fulfill your destiny!"
- "You must become the Intercessor"
- "Hound of hell, heed my call"
- "Your will is mine, insect, crawl before me and sting these vexing maggots"
- "Your bones will be ash"

# Appendix B: Adventure Flow with Clues



## Appendix C: Maps and Stat Blocks

### Scene A

#### Tish's Shop



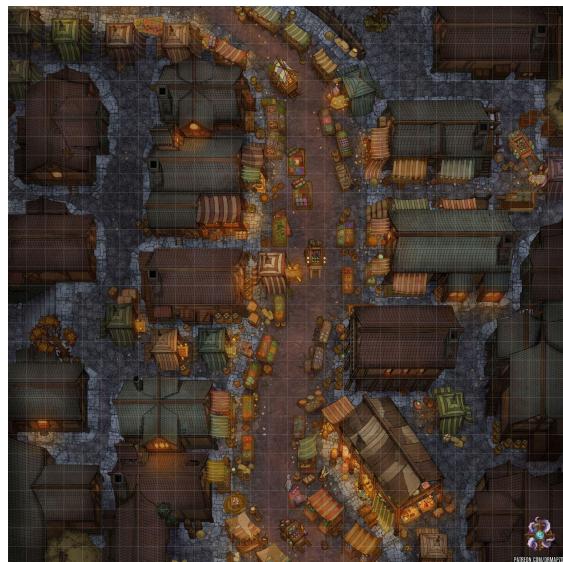
#### Tish's Basement



- [Thug](#)

### Scene B

#### Market Street 1



#### Market Street 2



- [Wereraven](#)

## Scene C

### Underbridge Arena



- [Giant Shark](#)
- [Hunter Shark](#)
- [Gladiator \(the Bloodfist\)](#)

## Scene D

### Catacombs under the circus



- [Cambion \(Lorenzo\)](#)
- [Hell Hound](#)
- [Blackguard \(Visconte and knight attendant\)](#)

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# Appendix D: Lore Glossary

## The Glorious City of Luminar

- Huge city on the **Beitos Sea**, built on either side of the **Ciamara River**
- Home of the holiest site for the **Stalari Church - Il Fornice**: a towering archway that contains a window into paradise
- Luminar is a theocracy where nobles are all associated with a religious shrine
- The ruler of Luminar and the Church is the **Successor**

## The Great Calamity

- 20 years ago, the **Sheersplit** tore through the land, leaving Luminar largely unscathed
- However in the following years, a great miasma called “**The Haze**” rolled in from the sea, causing a massive plague outbreak
- The Successor and much of the nobility fled to the countryside
- Luminar was ravaged by illness, anarchy, and attacks from pirate raiders called the **Sons of Lugh** for several years until small groups of mercenary families rose up to restore order
- These families are now known as the **Omerti** families and have weathered a dozen tumultuous years to restore a semblance of order to Luminar
- Over the last couple years, the nobles have slowly begun returning to the city to wrest control of the city back from the Omerti

## The Omerti

- The **Abbazia**: operate some of the largest entertainment venues in Luminar, from casinos, to cabarets, to courtesans’ palazzos. Though the return of the prudish nobility has curtailed the Abbazia’s operations most severely, Abbazia bruisers still proudly flaunt their garish kerchiefs in the streets of **Old Market**.
- The **Gritzi**: former pirates who are now responsible for smuggling most of the contraband in and out of the city. They still maintain esoteric traditions of sea folk, most notable of which is pitting gladiatorial **Grimacire** against sharks for sport deep beneath the city in the **Underbridge**.
- The **Barsavi**: drug traffickers and burglars with a penchant for filling your shoes with lead and dropping you in the Ciamara. Most of the rivercraft and canal boats in the city are still in the Barsavi’s pocket.
- The **Farrugia**: some call them profiteering thugs, others valiant saviors. Most of the shopkeepers in the Low City still pay the Farrugia protection money. Most of the shopkeepers in the Low City also haven’t had to complain about burglaries in years.