

DUNGEON

#128

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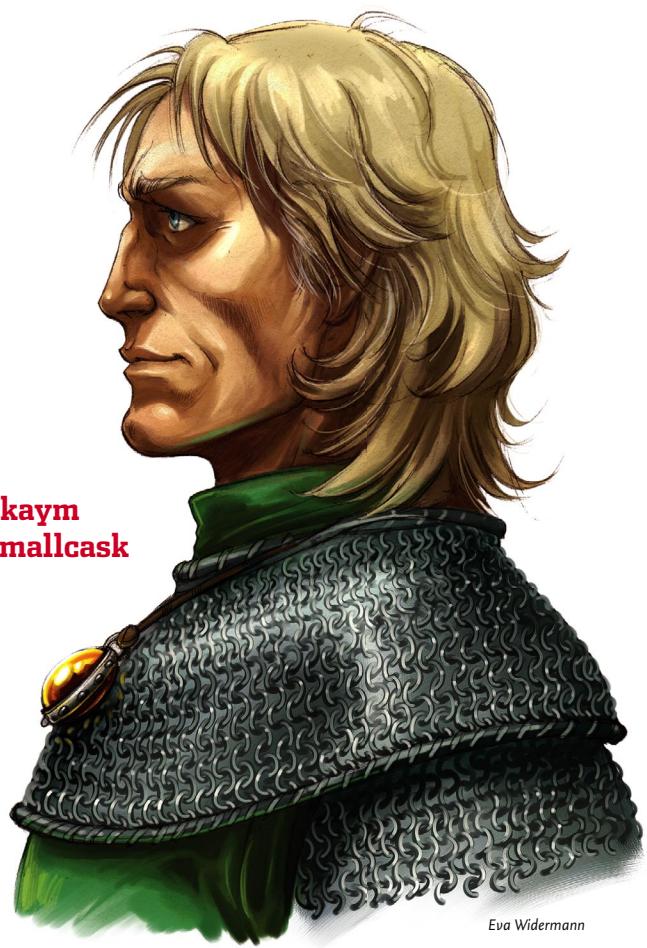
THE CHAMPION'S BELT

by Tito Leati

The Champion's Games are here! Gladiators from around the world converge in the Free City! Yet this year, something dire festers in the arena's foundations, for its director plots one of the final omens heralding the Age of Worms. An Age of Worms Adventure Path scenario for 9th-level characters.



Celeste



Ekaym
Smallcask



Okoral



Loris Raknian

Eva Widermann

Eva Widermann



Bozal Zahol



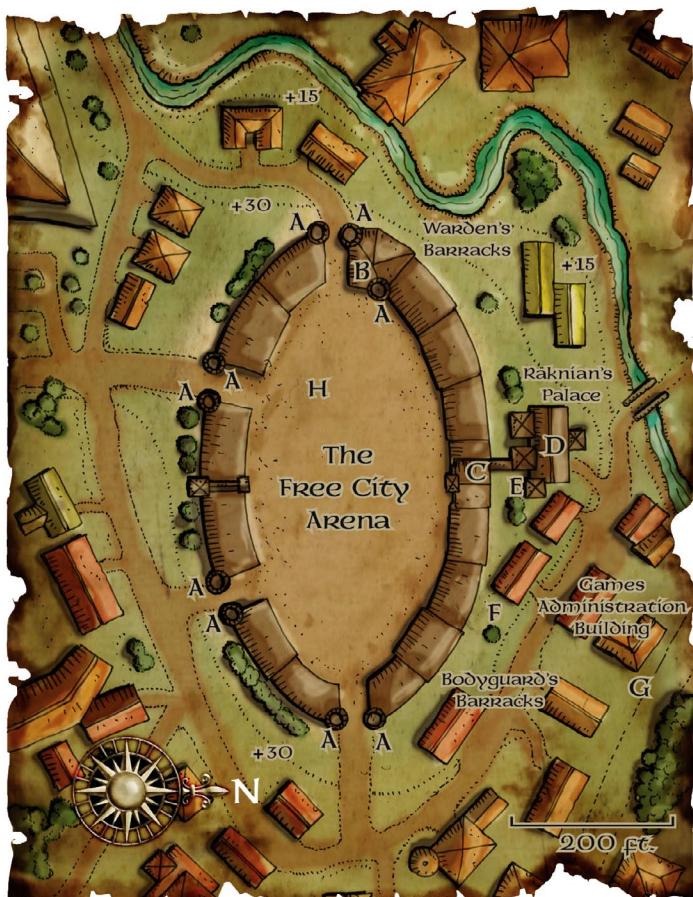
Froghemoth

Eva Widermann

Eva Widermann



Steve Prescott



Robert Lazzaretti



Robert Lazzaretti



Robert Lazzaretti



Robert Lazzaretti

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Arena Caverns

The Coenoby, The Titan's House, and The Old Caves



Robert Lazzaretti



Robert Lazzaretti

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RUNNING "THE CHAMPION'S BELT" IN THE FORGOTTEN REALMS

by Eric L. Boyd

Conversion notes for Waterdeep (Free City), Dagsumm (Eligos), and Kyrss Wands (Pollard) are given in the Realms conversion sidebar for "Hall of Harsh Reflections." Conversion notes for Theldrick, a priest of Bane (Hextor), are given in the Realms conversion sidebar for "Three Faces of Evil."

Field of Triumph

The Field of Triumph (Free City Arena) (\$77) is one of the chief attractions of the City of Splendors. This huge open-air stadium is the site of various spectacles staged for the populace of Waterdeep. From late spring to late autumn, thousands of people flood through the awe-inspiring Lion Gate to witness shows of magic, martial skills, horse races, and exhibitions of monstrous creatures big and small. The field also acts as a public forum for important public events such as the Open Lord's proclamations to the city and gatherings for foreign dignitaries. The Field of Triumph is closely associated with the church of Tempus (Kord). An old shrine of Tempus beneath the arena (now a shrine of Kyuss) has been abandoned in favor of the House of Heroes.

The Field of Triumph is mapped in *City of Splendors: Waterdeep*, page 99. The House of Heroes (\$58) (the primary church of the Lord of Battles in Waterdeep), is located just north of the Field of Triumph across Jelzar's Stride. Prendergast's Villa (Raknian's Palace) lies in the southeast corner of the block just west of the House of Heroes, across Jelzar's Stride from the Field of Triumph. The Games Administration Building, Prendergast's Bodyguards Barracks (Raknian's Bodyguards Barracks), and Raknian's Stables are the three adjacent buildings due west of Prendergast's Villa (with the stables actually opening onto the small alleyway that runs north/south through the center of the block). The chimney (area F) that leads up from the Coenoby kitchen (area 17) opens into the southern end of the alley in the block due east of the House of Heroes.

The Warden's Barracks and the west entrance into the Field of Triumph (not shown) face onto Seaye's March. The passage (B) from area 5 to Prendergast's Villa actually runs under Jelzar's Stride. The eastern entrance to the Field of Triumph is the aforementioned awe-inspiring Lion Gate. The south entrances into the Field of Triumph (not shown) open on to Julhoon Street.

All areas on the Hidden Shrine of Kyuss map marked "To Stream" (including those found in

areas 16, 21, and 22) are actually tertiary passages that connect with the secondary sewer passage (and its east fork) that leads north from the primary passage west of SF18, as shown in *City of Splendors: Waterdeep*, page 123. The nearest surface shaft is area SF18 (which corresponds to area G on the map), which is actually placed roughly south of area 20 on the map and opens on the surface in a cul-de-sac opening northeast of Toalar's Lane.

House Phylund

House Phylund has long been known for training and procuring fierce monsters. In the Year of the Turret (1360 DR), **Lord Urtos Phylund I** (Lahaka), the widowed patriarch of House Phylund and director of the Field of Triumph, fell for the charms of **Lady Aridarye** (NE female Tethyrian human aristocrat 7), who had moved to Waterdeep the year before as the consort of an Amnite trader and soon found herself at home amongst the parties and intrigues of Waterdeep's merchant nobility. After Aridarye set her sights on Urtos I, she quickly arranged the death of her former lover by setting him up to pay for some illicit goods in a Dock Ward alley with counterfeit coins. Aridarye married Lord Urtos I in the month of Ches and gave birth to a baby boy, Urtos III, in the Year of the Wave (1364 DR). During this time, Lady Aridarye was instrumental in orchestrating the sharp increase of House Phylund's fortunes.

In the Year of the Sword (1365 DR), two tragedies struck House Phylund. First Lord Urtos II (Ekaym Smallcask), eldest son and heir of Urtos I, fell victim to a wolf pack during a hunting trip to the Phylund Hunting Lodge in Ardeep Forest during the month of Alturiak and was presumed dead. (A servant in the hunting party seeking to curry favor with Lady Aridarye employed a scroll she provided to summon a huge pack of wolves, but the magic of the scroll "accidentally" consumed him as well.) A grief-stricken, sullen Urtos I fell soon after, having apparently grown careless while transporting a caged owlbear into a holding cell beneath the Field of Triumph. The cage wasn't locked properly, costing the patriarch of House Phylund and six beast handlers their lives. Aridarye, playing the grieving widow, laid her husband to rest and compensated the families of the deceased for their losses. She planned to have her young son named lord and herself named regent, giving her complete control of the Phylund family fortune.

Aridarye's plans unraveled eight days after the funeral of Urtos I, when Lord Urtos II (LN afflicted werewolf [augmented Tethyrian human] fighter 10) returned unexpectedly, two months after his disappearance. The mantle of lordship passed to Urtos II, and Aridarye was reduced to the role of tolerated stepmother.

Within a year of his return, Lord Urtos II married Lythis Mhairuun (NG female Tashlutan human aristocrat 5), sole heir to the Tashlutan merchant family's watchspider business. She bore him three sons, but the Lords of Waterdeep have barred any of them from inheriting the patriarchy of House Phylund (presumably because they fear the taint of lycanthropy that has infected their line). As such, Urtos III, half-brother of Urtos II and son of Aridarye, remains the heir. Urtos II is primarily involved with the raising of his young family and tending to the fortunes of House Phylund.

Although he keeps a civil relationship with his former stepmother, Urtos II recently discovered that the bones of his late father had gone missing from the family vault, renewing his longstanding suspicions that there was something mysterious about his father's death and that Aridarye might have been involved. As such, Urtos II has hit upon the idea of sponsoring a team of gladiators in this year's Champion's Games and using them to search for clues beneath the Field of Triumph. When Event 4 unfolds, Urtos II explains that his old friendship with Prendergast and complicated relationship with Aridarye make it difficult for him to search for clues beneath the arena. He implicates Aridarye, not Prendergast, in the murder of his father, and is unwilling to consider any implication that Prendergast might have been involved.

House Brokengulf

In addition to exploration and guiding, House Brokengulf has made its fortune hunting and procuring exotic beasts for sale in the City of Splendors. **Prendergast "Gast" Brokengulf** (CE male Tethyrian human fighter 13) (Loris Raknian), heir to the lordship of House Brokengulf and uncle of the current lord, fell to Aridarye's charms in the Year of the Wave (1364 DR). At the time, Lord Prendergast was a noted hunter and prominent gladiator with many victories on the Field of Triumph. Despite his close working relationship with Lord Urtos I and friendship with Urtos II,

Prendergast succumbed to Aridarye's wiles and arranged the accident that killed Lord Urtos I in the tunnels beneath the arena.

In the years that followed, Prendergast and Aridarye continued their twisted relationship, eventually marrying in the Year of the Banner (1368 DR). Despite his fear of aging and death, his all-consuming guilt over his misdeeds, and Aridarye's endless manipulations, Prendergast became director of the Field of Triumph and was instrumental in arranging the first Champion's Games (at Aridarye's urging) as a way to increase the market for the wares of House Brokengulf and House Phylund. During this period, Prendergast's narcissistic personality could not tolerate the inevitable decline of his mortal body, and as the once indomitable hunter and gladiator of a thousand fights watched his hair turn gray and felt his bones begin to ache, he realized time was the only opponent he could not beat. Prendergast secretly grew more and more jealous of the impudent, ambitious young gladiators who fought for glory in his arena. Yet he dared not endanger his public image, so he kept his jealousy well hidden. Over the years, this jealousy, coupled with his lasting guilt over his role in the death of Lord Urtos I, festered and ate at him from within. Prendergast began to use his vast resources to search for a method to restore his vigor and youth, but as one solution after another proved false, his fear only grew.

In the Year of the Unstrung Harp (1371 DR), Aridarye arranged a meeting between her aging husband and a mysterious cleric from the Inner Sea Lands named Bozal Zahol (referred to her by her former lover, Theldrick). Bozal Zahol spoke of secret rituals and potent prayers that, if offered to his mysterious god, could halt the aging process. Bozal Zahol told of how his deity held in his hand the keys to decay, and only he could exempt a human from old age. Although Aridarye was intrigued, Prendergast was naturally suspicious, and when Bozal Zahol wouldn't offer him proof or reveal the name of his patron, Prendergast had the cleric escorted from his villa—but not before accepting a small magic token that would allow Prendergast to contact Bozal if (when) he changed his mind. That would have been the end of the story, if not for the ever-changing whims of Aridarye.

In the Year of Wild Magic (1372 DR), Aridarye became involved with a handsome young gladiator named Auric, but word of their affair got back to Prendergast. Lady Aridarye coldly informed her husband that he was no longer welcome in her bed, saying he had grown too old to satisfy her and that he had rejected her efforts to find

a way to keep him young. Still consumed with guilt over his role in the death of Urtos I and morbidly depressed over Aridarye's rejection, Prendergast used the token to contact Bozal and convince him to return to Waterdeep. In his off hours, the director of the Field of Triumph spent much of his time with Bozal, learning more with each passing night of Kyuss and his dark promises. Under Bozal's direction, Prendergast began funneling much of his monthly income to back Theldrick and the Ebon Triad, unaware that in so doing he is funding one of his wife's former lovers. (Aridarye has caught wind that Prendergast is spending time and money on something, but she has yet to figure out where the funds are going.) Prendergast and Bozal began to secretly prepare the ritual to mark Prendergast as a favorite of Kyuss, since escape from decay was a favor granted only to the most devout worshipper of Kyuss. Such an unholy miracle also required a massive sacrifice performed by one of the Apostles of Kyuss, the "Blood of a Champion," and the bones of a victim murdered by the would-be favorite of Kyuss. To meet the last requirement, Prendergast had the corpse of Lord Urtos I stolen from House Phylund's family tomb and gave them over to Bozal.

Prendergast is now firmly in Bozal's clutches. The two have chosen this year's Champion's Games as the altar for their sacrifice to Kyuss, as Prendergast has come to believe that the gladiators scheme against him and wait eagerly for his demise so one of them can replace him as the younger, more handsome director of the Field of Triumph. One gladiator in particular, the fighter Auric, has become synonymous with Prendergast's paranoia, and if all goes according to plan, it will be Auric's blood that anoints the Apostle of Kyuss during the final game.

Lady Aridarye Phylund Brokengulf

Lady Aridarye Phylund Brokengulf is a viper in a comely human shell who expertly wields people and money as tools and has infallible trade instincts. She has played a key role in the ongoing familial intrigues of House Phylund and Brokengulf over the past fifteen years.

Often mistaken for a much younger woman, Aridarye has attractive, slender figure and hair that falls to her waist, though she normally wears it piled in elaborate coiffures confined by her favorite golden headdress. Her eyes are a warm chestnut brown, but many who cross her swear they turn scarlet with her fury. Her smile can dazzle a suitor or freeze the blood of an assassin. Aridarye wears expensive, form-flattering gowns and

dresses, favoring blue and purple, and is never without her ornate dagger.

Aridarye is the consummate businesswoman, able to foresee trends in the marketplaces of Waterdeep and the Sword Coast. She is far more practiced at bookkeeping and business than most other Waterdhavian nobles. Despite her appearance, Aridarye is a private woman, not prone to revealing secrets. Among the social-climbing, money-conscious nobility, she is noted for her flawless tact and grace. Her customers and fellow merchants comment on her good business sense. She is famous for her bell-like laugh, but always remains tight-lipped and in control while in public. To her servants, family, and close associates, she is a high-handed martinet with a great need to feel in control. When pleased, she carries the subtle yet unmistakable air of a promiscuous hedonist.

Aridarye is aware that something is afoot, but she remains ignorant of the depths of her husband's desperation or his renewed involvement with Bozal. She continues her affair with Auric during his infrequent visits to the city, while at the same time she tightens her control over the fortunes of House Brokengulf and House Phylund. Aridarye stays by her husband's side during the Free Dinner and subsequent gladiatorial events and remains a wild card in the throughout the adventure. She finds her former stepson's sudden interest in the games suspicious and worries that he is plotting to supplant Prendergast as director of the Field of Triumph. Likewise, she finds her husband's mysterious new commitments worrisome and wonders what is afoot. During the dinner, the PCs may observe Aridarye's close observation of both Prendergast and Urtos II with a DC 20 Sense Motive check.

Aridarye has informants among the employees of the Field of Triumph, and if they observe any suspicious behavior on the part of the PCs, word quickly gets back to Lady Aridarye. Aridarye then has the PCs watched, trying to determine what they are up to and what they have learned. She is not above attempting to seduce one of the PCs if there is no other way to obtain the information she needs. Eventually, Aridarye concludes that the PCs are a threat to her position, for they might expose her husband's crimes. As such, she does her best to undermine them, possibly by using inter-

mediaries to cast doubt on the motives and nature of Urtos II.

The Gladiators

Tirra is a member of the Shadow Thieves (Guild of Thieves), a newly resurgent thieves' guild outlawed over a century ago by the Lords of Waterdeep and now firmly ensconced in the power structure of Amn.

Arcane Auriga is composed of exiles from Everska (Celene).

Joren is a member of the Gray Wolf Uthgardt tribe and his team, the Spine's Revenge (Badlands Revenge) is named for the Spine of the World mountain range far to the north.

The Sapphire Squad hails from Calimshan.

The Hidden Shrine of Kyuss

The zombie made from the corpse of Lord Urtos I is also necessary to complete the ritual. It waits patiently within the Ulgurstasa Chamber (area 32, not area 29) and is clearly visible from the Pump Room (area 26). The Apostle of Kyuss consumes the zombie before bursting through the floor of the arena to attack Auric.

RUNNING "THE CHAMPION'S BELT" IN EBERRON

by Keith Baker

In "The Champion's Belt" the adventurers battle for supremacy in the arena of the Free City in the hopes of stopping Loris Raknian from making a terrible sacrifice to Kyuss. Here are a few ideas for converting the adventure to the world of EBERRON.

Who is Kyuss?

The Age of Worms is driven by the schemes of the Cult of Kyuss. But how does this group fit into Eberron? In this adventure, Eligos tells the party of the threat that lies ahead.

In Eberron, Kyuss is not a god. He is a wizard born in Sarlona over two thousand years ago, who was driven to Khorvaire by those who feared his dark magics. He established a city in the region now known as Q'barra, where he continued his study of necromancy. But Kyuss was not content with mortal magic. He learned of an ancient power of undeath: Katashka the Gatekeeper, one of the overlords of the Age of Demons. Kyuss pledged himself to Katashka and learned his terrible secrets, including the creation of worm-infested spawn. Ultimately Kyuss sought to become a physical vessel for Katashka's power, and he sacrificed his city of followers to accomplish this task. But somewhere along the way he had miscalculated, by joining his soul to the spirit of Katashka, he bound himself into the demon's prison. Kyuss had doomed himself for eternity.

However, with the return of the spawn of Kyuss and the reappearance of Kyuss' cult, it's clear that sages were too quick to dismiss the threat. The obscure prophecy of the Age of Worms had drawn little attention until now, but Eligos believes that it speaks of the release of Katashka-Kyuss and heralds an age of terror.

Eligos believes that fiendish servants of Katashka are behind the reemergence of the Cult of Kyuss, and that these Lords of Dust have also been manipulating the Ebon Triad.

Celeste and Manzorian

The Lords of Dust are not unopposed in their quest to reshape EBERRON, and their most implacable foes are the dragons of the Chamber. Manzorian is one such dragon, and Celeste is one of his agents. Despite their personal power, they are bound by draconic law and the dictates of the Prophecy: if Katashka-Kyuss is to be truly defeated, it must be accomplished using the tools of the Prophecy: the player characters.

Celeste could be left as an eladrin, a rare outsider who has chosen to leave her home plane to fight evil on Eberron. However, in keeping with her role as an agent of the Chamber, it makes more sense for her to be a dragon (CG female silver dragon) in human form.

The Arena

In EBERRON, the Free City Arena is replaced with the Hollow Tower in Middle Dura, mentioned in *Sharn: City of Towers*. Death-matches are not normally allowed under the Code of Galifar, but aggressive sports are fine as long as healers are on hand to care for the losers. However, accidents do happen and there have been less enlightened times in the past, allowing for the "spirits of those who died in the arena" to rise up in Part Four of the adventure.

While the arena is located in Middle Dura, it nonetheless still has the caves beneath it, along with the other chambers described in the adventure. The Hollow Tower is located in the district of Hareth's Folly, which is renowned for its bizarre architecture. In this case, the coenoby is not remotely natural; the mad architect Hareth ir'Talan created an artificial cavern beneath the arena.

The Thieves' Guild

Sharn includes a number of criminal guilds. Tirra is a member of the Boromar Clan, which is described in more detail in *Sharn: City of*

Towers; while run by halflings, the Boromars employ thieves of all races. The master thief is Saidan Boromar.

The Gladiators

The members of Arcane Auriga are exiles from Aerenal, expelled for their violent tendencies and misuse of magic. The gnolls of Badlands Revenge were recruited from the Brotherhood of Droam. Joren is a half-orc from the Shadow Marches, although his motivation is unchanged. Korush of the Sapphire Squad is an exotic traveler, as Janni are rarely seen in Khorvaire; he may tell tales of a fabulous city of Janni in the depths of Xen'drik, hidden from human eyes. Korush is sponsored by House Lyrandar, and is especially friendly to any member of that house.

The Froghemoth

The froghemoth was brought to Sharn from a vast, marshy region of Xen'drik; it's never been seen on Khorvaire before, but others could be encountered on future trips to Xen'drik.

The Shrine of Kyuss

This was previously a shrine dedicated to the war god Dol Dorn, and the desecrated symbols of Dol Dorn and the Sovereign Host can be seen throughout the area.

Bozal Zahol

Bozal is descended from fiends, but not devils or demons. The blood of his ancestors was twisted by traffic with the rakshasa. As such, Bozal does not have horns or hooves. His tail is the tail of a great cat, and his eyes are large and yellow, with vertically slit pupils. His dark hair has orange tiger stripes, and his ears are long and pointed. Mechanically, he retains the powers of a tiefling; but anyone who makes a DC 20 Knowledge (the planes) check recognizes his rakshasa ancestry.



BACKDROP: THE FREE CITY

by Richard Pett

Welcome to Midnight's Muddle, a lively Free City neighborhood packed with friends and foes alike. As the Age of Worms marches ever forward, the Muddle offers your PCs new contacts and a new home.



Tarquin





Forwell Hog



Ermelda Webb

MIDNIGHT'S MUDDLE IN THE FORGOTTEN REALMS

by Eric L. Boyd

The neighborhood known as Midnight's Muddle occupies one block within City Ward, just southeast of the Market. Midnight's Muddle is bounded by Bazaar Street, the High Road, Lamp Street, and the Street of Bells. Thanks to its close proximity to the Market, the neighborhood suffered some damage during the Time of Troubles, but not enough to be substantially rebuilt. As a result, Midnight's Muddle is a little more rundown than the surrounding area and is more akin to Dock Ward than neighboring North Ward. A single alley, Midnight's Muddle (Nevern Walk, Bobclay's Alley and Muddle Street) curves through the heart of the block, reachable via two narrow lanes connecting to the Street of Bells to the west.

Conversion notes for Waterdeep (Free City), Dagsumn (Eligos), and Kyrss Wands (Pollard) are given in the Realms conversion sidebar for "Hall of Harsh Reflections."

1. The Crooked House

The Crooked House lies at the northern tip of the block, at the corner of the High Road and Bazaar Street. Tarquin Shortstone XXVI is an old friend of Dagsumn and proprietor of the Crooked House. He frequently meets Dagsumn for a friendly game of lanceboard (dragonchess) at the Elfstone Tavern (C32).

9. Two-Boy Theatre

Ludwick, the wererat orphanage owner, is or was a member of the lycanthropic gang known as the Plague Rats. The ruins of his orphanage can be reached from Deloun Alley. (See *City of Splendors: Waterdeep*, page 57.)

10. Shortstone Wines

This building was formerly a shrine of Helm.

12. Ruined Shrine

This building was formerly a shrine of Tyr.

16. Tattoo Parlor

Jharan Hubris escaped slavery in Thay, where he learned his craft. (He has the Tattoo Magic feat, detailed in *Races of Faerûn*, page 170, and *Lords of Darkness*, page 189.) Since the Thayan's opened an embassy just north of the market (C70), he has kept a low profile, fearful that someone might recognize him and have him kidnapped and returned to his old master.

20. Shrine of the Weeping Woman

Forwell Hog purports to worship an obscure Ilmatari saint known as the Weeping Woman, the patroness of children lost in war.

29-35. The Muddle

The Muddle only occupies three buildings in Waterdeep (numbered 29, 30, 31). These buildings are owned by Kerril Husteem (Kerril Besk), a member of House Husteem and cousin of the current patriarch, Lord Orbos Husteem.

37. Cragsmere's (Web's) Rooftop Lanceboard (Dragonchess) Parlor

This building is owned by Ermelda Cragsmere (Ermelda Web), a member of House Cragsmere and paternal aunt of the current patriarch, Japhyl "The Hawk" Cragsmere. One member of Ermelda's regular clientele is "Hurlblar Corinthyn," who appears to be a book collector who dwells in modest upper rooms above Ragathan Furriers (N43). Further details on "Hurlblar" may be found in *City of Splendors: Waterdeep*, page 31. Hurlblar is friends with Ermelda and views her continued safety with parental concern due to his long-forgotten ties to House Cragsmere.

38. Shrine to Silvanus (Obad-hai)

This building is a shrine to Silvanus.



SHUT-IN

by F. Wesley Schneider and James Lafond Sutter

Not all evil spawns in ancient ruins or on fiendish planes. Sometimes, all corruption needs to take root is a jealous memory, cultivated bitterness, and a lonely place to bloom. A D&D adventure for 2nd-level characters.

Auraluna and Ceseli



Peck



Kieran Yanner

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Kyle Kunter



Kyle Kunter



THE FIREPLACE LEVEL

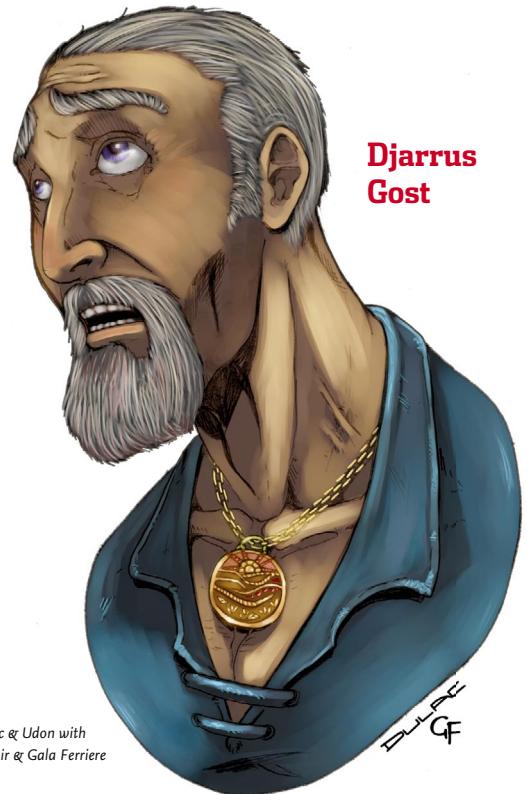
by Eric L. Boyd

As the party faces an ancient foe who has never been defeated, their hunt threatens to unleash the buried ghosts of a forgotten feud between two of Waterdeep's powerful merchant houses. The third adventure in the Vampires of Waterdeep Campaign Arc, "The Fireplace Level" is a FORGOTTEN REALMS adventure for 14th-level characters.

Arrik Kaarvol



Chad du Lac & Udon with
Mark Sinclair & Gala Ferriere

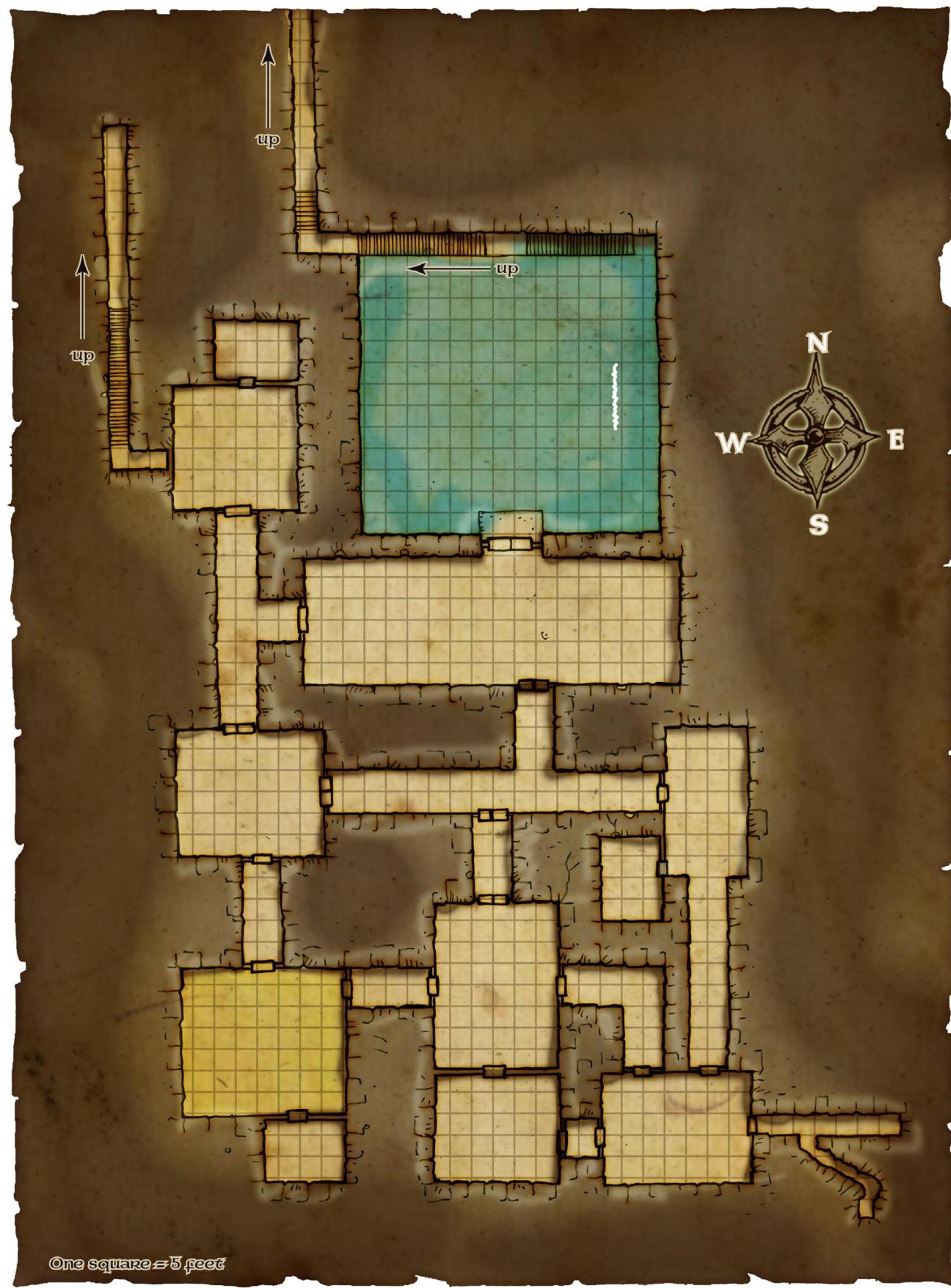


Fireplace Level



Robert Lazzaretti

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SEWER STRONGHOLD

of the THIEVES' GUILD

- 1 Sewer Tunnels
 - 2 Bridge
 - 3 Secret Passages
 - 4 Seneschal's Quarters
 - 5 Audience Chamber
 - 6 Guildmaster's Study
 - 7 Guildmaster's Quarters

KEY



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SEWER STRONGHOLD

of the THIEVES' GUILD



1 square = 5 feet



Chris West

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