

scouts and one **cult fanatic**). If all those foes were killed in that encounter, Szorrulax has two **bandits** with it—a pair of guards held back from previous encounters, and who are now the last survivors of the Six's forces.

In battle, Szorrulax uses *Mind Blast* on as many characters as possible, making sure that Bracus is in the blast if the lizardfolk is alive. The mind flayer prioritizes killing Bracus before turning to other targets, but it has no interest in a fair fight. It uses *plane shift* to escape if it can seize the components or if it is badly wounded, leaving its lackeys behind to deal with the characters.

TREASURE

In addition to the book, the study holds 30 gp, 150 gp, two pieces of pink coral (100 gp each), a small gold bracelet (50 gp), five +2 arrows decorated with green flames, a *dagger of venom*, an *immovable rod*, and two *potions of greater healing*. Bracus gifts all this to the characters if they save him, or they can loot it if things go the other way.

GETTING AWAY

When the fight is done, the characters can exit through the portal, return to the portal nexus, and leave *Dangerous Business*. If they want to explore *The Maverick* first, that enormous ship is crawling with elite Dran Enterprises operatives (use the **veteran** stat block), all of whom know to kill intruders on sight.



SZORRULAX

The Six? Don't waste my time with fables. Yeah, there are people who don't like Acq Inc. People with grudges. People with axes to grind. But they're not some sort of ... I don't know, cult or gang or whatever.

How am I so sure? Because I've been in this from the beginning. Do you have any idea what I know? What I've seen? The hits I've taken for Acquisitions Incorporated? If there were a cabal of subtle masterminds working the shadows, cunningly plotting the downfall of Acq Inc, they would have definitely recruited me by now.

—Viari

If Bracus is alive, all Dran Enterprises personnel have been magically ordered to allow the characters to leave the Luskan docks unharmed. If such a message is not received, the guards on the boat and the docks react badly to the party's appearance, and the characters must sneak, talk, or fight their way to safety. Once away from the docks, the characters can lie low for as long as necessary, then depart Luskan.

CONCLUSION

With their exciting portals-based adventures in Luskan done, the characters attain 5th level! Just as importantly, they've learned that Dran Enterprises isn't the real villain behind the attacks on Acquisitions Incorporated franchises. If the characters spoke to Bracus or obtained the book from the lizardfolk's satchel, they also have a solid lead indicating that Horn Enclave holds the final orrery component. If they failed to talk to Bracus and have not yet deciphered the book, see "Enter Flabbergast" in the next episode to bring them up to speed.

When the characters complete the journey from Luskan back to their headquarters, they find their half-orc majordomo in a great mood.

Gilda Duhn is all tusks, grinning from ear to ear. "I just heard word from Head Office! The bosses have been watching how well you run the business, and your mission in Luskan is all anyone is talking about! Our license has been expanded to cover a broader territory around Phandalin! And even better, I've been crunching the profit statements, and I think we're ready to expand this headquarters!"

FRANCHISE ADVANCEMENT

As the characters attain 5th level, the franchise attains rank 2! You and the players should all spend some time in the "Franchise Advancement" and "Company Positions" sections of chapter 2 to read up on the exciting improvements for the franchise, for its headquarters, and for the characters as their company positions yield even more powerful benefits.