



BRACUS

of assisting Dran Enterprises staff. He might ask what aspirations they have, or what it's like working for Omin Dran and Jim Darkmagic. Use the following points to guide the conversation:

- Bracus has been aware of the characters and their franchise since the first time any of them made use of the orrery components the party holds. (If the characters have not used any of the components, it's been the process of drawing them together that has enabled Bracus to get a sense of the party's activities through the orrery components in his possession.)
- Dran Enterprises normally views taking over failed Acquisitions Incorporated franchises as a sound investment decision, salvaging those franchises for parts and turning them into proper businesses. Nothing personal, of course.
- In response to talk of what brought the characters to him, Bracus says he understands how Acquisitions Incorporated might have come to believe that Dran Enterprises was responsible for the destruction of its franchises. Nothing could be further from the truth.
- The true culprit is an enigmatic group known as the Six. They seem to be linked to dark gods and the Far Realm. Dangerous stuff.
- The Six came into the possession of the *far gear* just over a year ago—one of the components of the *Orrery of the Wanderer*. Operatives of the Six are now actively seeking the orrery's other components, hoping to rebuild it for some dark ritual. But Bracus believes that even recovering a few components could be enough for the Six to accomplish their goals.

- In an attempt to foil the Six, Dran Enterprises secured two of the orrery's components—the *chronolometer* and the *dimensional loop*. Dran Enterprises also knows that the last unclaimed component, known as the *wheel of stars*, has been securely stored in the northern holdfast known as Horn Enclave, and is under the protection of the dwarves who dwell there.
- Bracus is aware that the Six are attempting to gain access to the headquarters portal, and suspects they will arrive at any moment.

Bracus takes the characters' measure during the conversation. However, as long as the characters stop short of killing the lizardfolk immediately, the imminent appearance of the Six convinces him that the enemy of his enemy is now his friend. Reaching into his hoardsperson *living loot satchel*, Bracus retrieves the *chronolometer* and the *dimensional loop*. He then offers both to the characters in exchange for them defending him when the Six operatives arrive—as they do only moments later. See “Operatives of the Six” below for more information on the fight with the mind flayer Szorlulax and its minions.

#### RIGHT ON TIME

If the party arrives at the same time as the Six, roll initiative! Szorlulax prioritizes killing Bracus during the fight, forcing the characters to try to save the Dran Enterprises employee. If Bracus is killed, Szorlulax flees with his *living loot satchel* and the orrery components at once. If the characters save Bracus, defeat the Six operatives, and force Szorlulax to flee, they gain the components and the information noted above. If Bracus dies, they might still find a valuable book and some treasure, as described below.

#### UNFASHIONABLY LATE

If the Six operatives arrive at the headquarters first, Szorlulax easily defeats and kills Bracus. When the characters arrive, Szorlulax is claiming Dran Enterprises' two components, having destroyed the lizardfolk's *living loot satchel* to empty its contents. Roll for initiative, but Szorlulax's first act is to *plane shift* away.

All is not lost, though. Once the characters defeat the remaining foes, they can investigate the cabin. In the spilled contents of Bracus's satchel, they find a book entitled *Great Dwarven Halls*, with a page turned down. It mentions the dwarves of Horn Enclave as being noted for their work of securing items of great value. Written in the margin is the note: “The wheel of stars, hidden by its creator.” They also find the treasure noted below, since Szorlulax doesn't have the time to take it.

#### OPERATIVES OF THE SIX

Szorlulax is the **mind flayer** the characters might have previously seen in the portal network. It has the iconic secretarian feature (see “Iconic Faction Features” in appendix B) and braids its tentacles together into a handlebar mustache. If Szorlulax kills anyone, it immediately drops a black business card set with unintelligible symbols onto the body as a calling card.

Accompanying the mind flayer are the Six operatives who survived the portal 6 encounter (originally four