

A sharp, icy wind whistles through South Gate as you enter Luskan. The shops and taverns lining the main thoroughfare of the City of Sails are as battered and weathered as the grim customers entering them. At first glance, the city's reputation as a den for pirates and raiders appears well earned.

Just ahead of you, a wagon has broken down in front of a tavern. The elderly human driver calls out for help, but passersby ignore her. As she calls out once more, the tavern door behind her opens and two guards toss a young male human in bright clothing out into the street. He tumbles into the old woman, sending both of them sprawling to the ground. The door closes, then opens once more as a mandolin comes flying out of the tavern.

If the characters want to lend a hand, they have ample opportunity to step up. Catching the mandolin requires a successful DC 13 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check, and if no party member tries to do so, it crashes to the ground at the characters' feet.

The tavern is called the Last Dregs, and the owners don't care for strangers. Allow the characters a quick look in if they like, but there are no leads to Dran Enterprises to be found here.

Failed Minstrel. The minstrel Noriel (NG male human **commoner**) has spent a rough month in Luskan. He believes that his father was once a pirate working for one of the Ships, but he's had no luck so far tracking him down. Noriel's poor sense of fashion, nervousness, and lack of musical skill have not helped his efforts. An impressionable (and starving) teenager, he faithfully serves anyone who takes him under their wing, and can provide comic relief as desired.

Having been thrown out of countless taverns, Noriel knows the general rumors talking of how Dran Enterprises has a secret headquarters somewhere in Luskan. He also knows the even more widespread rumors of how Dran Enterprises punishes anyone who talks about the organization's business. However, he has heard and shares that many Dran Enterprises employees wander the northern part of the city in their off hours.

WHERE IS THE ORRERY?

At some point before the party arrives in Luskan, ask the players whether their characters are bringing the orrery housing and any components with them, and if so, who carries the relics. If they plan instead to secure them elsewhere, ask about that location and their security measures. For the purpose of the adventure, it's best if the characters keep the orrery components with them, rather than leaving them at headquarters. (Certainly, reminding the characters of what happened to the last two franchise headquarters that held orrery components should be enough to inspire them to hold onto the components themselves.)

You don't need this information now, but it becomes relevant in episode 5. Asking now gives the players time to forget you asked!

ALWAYS BE BRANDING

As long as they're in Luskan, the characters might take the opportunity to try to extend their franchise's reach into the city. A formal presence in this far-flung territory is far beyond the scope of their charter of operations, naturally. And savvy franchisees might have heard rumors that Head Office is working to open a franchise in the City of Sails. However, clever players could work to increase their own franchise's notoriety and add a few more customers without unduly violating the terms of their contract. You might tie such attempts to future franchise tasks or downtime incorporating the shady business practice activity, as the characters try to keep an official distance from any Luskan opportunities.

Driver in Need. Dabahl (NG female human **commoner**) works as a wagon driver out of Neverwinter, and her hired help all fled after a failed bandit attack during her most recent run north. She made it safely to Luskan alone, but her wagon wheel has just given out.

Repairing Dabahl's wagon takes at least 1 hour and requires a successful DC 18 Strength (Athletics) or Wisdom (Survival) check. The DC drops to 10 if the characters spend 20 gp on replacement parts, or if any character knows the *mending* cantrip, or if any character is proficient with land vehicles.

Dabahl cannot afford the repairs or offer to pay the characters for their service, but in her gratitude, she can share that Dran Enterprises has a nefarious reputation. The location of their headquarters is a closely guarded secret, but the organization's employees are said to favor a tavern frequented by fishers. Dabahl sells her goods to Ship Kurth and could also introduce the characters to its merchants, though she does not have any influence with them.

THE BROKER

With a couple of initial clues at hand, the characters can start the search in earnest for the tavern frequented by Dran Enterprises employees. Unfortunately, most folk in Luskan are smart enough to not talk about Dran Enterprises too openly, and the characters are rebuffed or ignored during their initial inquiries. Eventually, though, the party is referred to Eriss (N female gnome **commoner**), said to broker deals between guilds and other organizations.

Eriss works with Ship Taerl, and can be found in a small but well-maintained curio shop on a busy street just north of the city's central bridge, Dalath's Span. An enormous half-orc **thug** named One-Tusk stands guard outside the shop. Eriss is inside, polishing bottles containing miniature ships. She claims that these were once real ships, forced into the bottles through powerful magic. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check suggests that this story isn't worth a ship-in-a-bottle's 100 gp sale price. However, Eriss answers the party's questions only if they buy one of the models or another equally expensive curio from her shop.

What Eriss Knows. Speaking with Eriss is not without risk. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check confirms that the gnome is a broker for criminal organizations, trading information and helping stolen goods