

# Baldur's Gate



GAZETTEER



# THE BALDUR'S GATE GAZETTEER

Even the most hardened adventurers watch their steps in Baldur's Gate, where lives hold prices in copper and greed proves deadlier than dragon fire. Baldur's Gate has a reputation for being a rough place, where crime and opportunity walk hand in hand, and where anything can be bought, sold, or seized at swordpoint. If something can be given a price, it's for sale somewhere in Baldur's Gate. Drugs and poisons sit on shelves alongside tinctures and remedies. Trade goods from Chult, mechanical wonders from Neverwinter, tomes of magic from Calimshan, and the most believable counterfeits of each can all be found in the city's stalls.

The Flaming Fist, a mercenary company paid for by the city, protects residents without the barest hint of civil delicacy. The Watch, the guardian force of the wealthy Upper City, exists only to serve the patriars—the city's detached upper class. Meanwhile, crime flourishes under the control of the Guild, which oversees almost every organized criminal act, from dockside gambling rings to blackmail at patriarch garden parties. Either under the Guild's auspices or in defiance of them, those who cut purses or throats make a decent living in the city, their talents traded as briskly—and often just as openly—as those of any other professional.

For all its shadows and dark dealings, Baldur's Gate is not without its lights. Some residents earnestly seek to make the city a safer place by banding together to make their own sort of imperfect but effective justice.

## HISTORY OF BALDUR'S GATE

Since its beginning as a quiet backwater community, Baldur's Gate has undergone a dramatic transformation, becoming the hub of danger and adventure it is today.

### FOUNDING BALDUR'S GATE

Centuries ago, the hero Balduran spent years questing in lands across the Sea of Swords and beyond. When finally he returned to his village of Gray Harbor, he brought fantastic wealth with him, much of which he gifted to friends and family. These boons greatly improved Gray Harbor's fortunes, launching businesses, expanding its docks, and seeing the creation of a defensive wall around the town. In honor of their heroic patron, the citizens came to call one of their new wall's passages Baldur's Gate. Within a

generation, though, the gate became synonymous with the community, and the settlement known as Baldur's Gate began appearing on maps of the Sword Coast.

The city's surprising growth attracted all manner of people. Peasants affected by raiding and war, farmers rendered penniless by famine and drought, pirates seeking a neutral port—all types saw a chance to put their mark on the rapidly growing community.

### ORDER IN BALDUR'S GATE

As the city swelled, questions of law and taxation arose. The community's eldest families—largely those wealthy enough to afford homes within the city walls—came to be known as patriars and grew wary of the influx of strangers settling beyond their walls. The creation of various additional taxes on trade and travel led to violence breaking out between the Upper City—behind the original walls of Gray Harbor—and the Lower City, built on the slopes leading down to the Chionthar River. Patriar houses were ransacked, family heirlooms were lost forever, and heirs were kidnapped, never to be seen again. Gold flowed like blood as families and guilds hired mercenaries to protect them. Only the election of a new group of rulers—known as the dukes and, collectively, as the Council of Four—put the matter to rest. These elected rulers have been a part of the city's governance ever since.

Another pillar of order in Baldur's Gate formed when the adventurer Eltan, a noted warrior raised in the area, returned home from exploits abroad. Seeing the chaos that had splintered his beloved city, Eltan united the city's independent mercenary companies under a single banner, that of the Flaming Fist. Eltan used the mercenaries to quash what pockets of disorder he found, punishing lawbreakers for their crimes. Though plenty of theft, blackmail, and assassination continued behind closed doors, the founding of the Flaming Fist marked a new chapter in the city's story.

### BHAALSPAWN

Over the years, Baldur's Gate has harbored countless evil schemes and conspiracies. Perhaps the most dastardly, though, was that perpetrated by Bhaal, god of murder, who foresaw his own death during the Time of Troubles.

While in mortal form, Bhaal conceived multitudes of offspring, plotting to have them resurrect him. They actively hunted and slew each other, with the survivors

collecting ever more of Bhaal's godly essence.

Sarevok, a Bhaalspawn and member of the Iron Throne merchants' guild, sought to spark war with the nation of Amn and become the new Lord of Murder. Another Bhaalspawn, aided by powerful allies, thwarted Sarevok's plan and brought stability, if not peace, to Baldur's Gate once more. Yet, Bhaal and his faithful have menaced the city ever since.

## BALDUR'S GATE TODAY

The original wall ringing the Upper City still stands, and a second defensive wall now rings the Lower City. The Outer City, a collection of hastily made structures and shantytowns, runs along the River Chionthar.

While the Outer City might seem the most lawless, every district of Baldur's Gate has its own threats. In the Upper City, patrician families and government officials jostle to secure their positions. Many are not above using private agents to acquire blackmail material, sabotage public appearances, or even frame innocents to secure power. The victims of these plots, and officials who want a fair and honest legal system, must resort to hiring their own agents to unearth conspiracies, break out unfairly imprisoned citizens, and obtain evidence the Flaming Fist cannot.

The Upper City's political intrigues and the Outer City's violence spills over into the Lower City, the city's middle ground. Rampant crime, class grudges, foreign threats, and economic pressures leave many Baldurians feeling trapped within their own homes. Flaming Fist patrols react to threats with indiscriminate violence, doing little to make citizens feel safer. As a result, in recent years many citizens have started banding together in crews. These counter-gangs align along professional or neighborhood affiliations, doing their best to protect their territories. While this has given some of the city's people a way of feeling more in control of their lives, it's also increased the number of armed citizens on the streets. Whether the Lower City is actually safer after the formation of crews remains an open question.

In the Outer City, all the world washes against the city's gates. Here crime and poverty are contrasted by wonders from afar and the riches of cultures across Faerûn. The mix of wanderers and refugees remains in constant flux, with communities forming and disbanding on a monthly basis. None can possibly keep track of all the foreign traditions or

### BALDUR'S GATE AND ITS COAT OF ARMS

**Population:** 125,000 (predominantly humans)

**Government:** Plutocracy, helmed by the Council of Four and Parliament of Peers

**Defense:** Flaming Fist mercenaries, the Watch

**Commerce:** Dyes, fish, imports from Chult, mercenaries, nautical supplies

**Organizations:** The Guild, neighborhood crews, trade guilds

**Religions:** Gond, Tymora, Umberlee, any other law-abiding faith, cults of the Dead Three

The Baldur's Gate coat of arms represents the city's role as a hub for river and ocean trade as well as nodding toward its namesake, the explorer Balduran. The symbol originated as a pirate emblem, though, and its components hold a double meaning today.

Originally, the alternating bands of water beneath the ship indicated the turbulent dangers of the sea, but also the rich rewards it can bring. The crimson flags of the ship referenced the brutal life of a pirate, blood spilled on the deck or in the water. The crisscrossing ropes and canted sail symbolized the web of secrets and intrigue that mark a pirate captain's life.

Today, some optimistic souls try to recast the seal, claiming its calm waters represent the city's desire to remain a peaceful power and the clear skies symbolize a prosperous future.

But those who know the city's history see the cunning and violence underpinning the emblem. For many, the contradictory interpretations make the city's coat of arms all the more fitting.

the dangerous—sometimes outright evil—religious practices observed in the Outer City. As a result, Baldur's Gate has widely adopted a “do no harm” policy when it comes to faiths and organizations operating in the city.

Any group is welcome to operate openly so long as the city's important citizens aren't harmed.

Beyond all its dangers, Baldur's Gate is an adventurer's city, a place where a sword-for-hire can find a rich patron, join a secret guild, stalk killers for a bounty, or come to the aid of desperate citizens. Good-hearted champions fight against corruption and bring murderers to justice, while less moral mercenaries find a good price for their services. The city offers opportunities as well as the most reliable and ruthless market on the Sword Coast. Information, treasures, secrets, and souls can be bought or sold for the right price.

As a great hero of Baldur's Gate once said, “Watch your step in the shadows. Watch your back in the light. Win a prize beyond your wildest dreams or disappear into forgotten history. Every day your life is on the line. Every day you could become a legend. Welcome to Baldur's Gate.”

## NEIGHBORS, RIVALS, AND ALLIES

Other cities and nations keep a watchful eye on Baldur's Gate, which is growing in wealth, power, and influence.

Baldur's Gate trades with the coastal cities of Waterdeep and Neverwinter to the north while contending with the aggressive mercantile nation of Amn to the south. Amn seeks to dominate trade on the Sea of Swords and views Baldur's Gate as a growing threat. Baldur's Gate joined the Lords' Alliance, a coalition of independent cities that includes Neverwinter and Waterdeep, largely because of disputes with Amn. Should Amn decide to attack Baldur's Gate, the city can count on the other members of the Lords' Alliance to come to its defense. This arrangement infuriates Amn, which is not prepared to test the alliance's resolve.

To the east, the nations of Elturgard and Cormyr view Baldur's Gate as a lawless cesspool that might have to be dealt with someday. These nations especially frown on the city's broad religious tolerance.

### CANDLEKEEP

To enter the great library of Candlekeep, one must furnish the library's monks with a book not already contained in the library's archives. Travelers on the way to Candlekeep often stop in Baldur's Gate, anticipating that they can find such a book in the city's markets. As such, Baldur's Gate does a small but bustling trade in rare books. Several merchants have a known policy of buying valuable books without question, selling them at a high markup. Travelers seeking a specific book also hire mercenaries or adventurers to venture into dungeons or ruins and bring back the prize.

If information can't be found in the whisper-markets of Baldur's Gate, then Candlekeep becomes a logical next stop. Adventurers are sometimes hired to guard a desperate traveler on the road south, or to guard the outrageously rare tomes scholars might carry to gain admission. The Guild knows the signs of a traveler headed for Candlekeep, and often dispatches robbers to steal books and resell them to the merchants of the city.

### ELTUREL

The holy city of Elturel—the capital of Elturgard—sits upriver on the Chionthar. Whereas Baldur's Gate is a cutthroat city policed by mercenaries, Elturel is a lawful city of pious folk watched over by knights of Helm, Torm, Tyr, and Lathander. The two cities couldn't be less alike.

Whenever Baldur's Gate has tried to seize too much territory in Elturgard's eyes, Elturel has responded by imposing a heavy tax on shipments headed downriver. This sort of economic brinkmanship coupled with radically different religious viewpoints has created bad blood between the two cities, though neither city has been eager to test the military might of the other.

### PORT NYANZARU

Baldur's Gate serves as one of the main ports from which ships depart for Chult, a peninsula far to the south. Port Nyanzaru, located on the northern coast of Chult, enjoys a respectful and mutually beneficial trade relationship with Baldur's Gate, and both cities are united in their dislike for the nation of Amn. Outside of Port Nyanzaru, Baldur's Gate maintains its own holdings in Chult. Fort Beluarian serves as a beachhead for the interests of the city, the Flaming Fist, and numerous patriar families in Chult. This small military hub oversees much of the exploration (and exploitation) in regions of Chult claimed by Baldur's Gate. It also serves as a departure point for smuggling the region's treasures back to the Sword Coast, as well as other ventures the Baldurians would prefer the native Chultans don't learn about. As a result, rarities from the depths of Chult, seen nowhere else on the Sword Coast, regularly trickle into the port and market stalls of Baldur's Gate.

The sea routes between Baldur's Gate and Chult are far from safe. Pirates, Amnian privateers, and sea monsters are common in these waters.

## GOVERNMENT

The Parliament of Peers, a group mainly composed of nearly fifty patriar members, makes recommendations on issues of law and governance. Once the parliament comes to a majority decision on a matter, usually after much heated debate, it presents its position to the Council of Four. Three dukes and one grand duke make up this ruling council. The council also votes on matters, and in the case of a tie, the grand duke's vote counts as two.

Common belief holds that many parliament members, and possibly one or more of the dukes, can be bribed for their votes. Corrupt parliament members don't wish to be caught taking payments, usually not out of fear of legal reprisal, but of being perceived as incompetent among their peers. The perception is that one who can't be trusted to receive something as simple as a bribe likely can't be trusted to manipulate the city's intricate social web. Such leads to the common farce of officials buying cheap

jewelry or fake art objects with their bribe money (usually in the form of platinum coins or jewels) hidden inside.

## COUNCIL OF FOUR

Comprised of four dukes, the Council of Four presides over the government of Baldur's Gate. Though the Parliament of Peers and the patriars hold a great deal of power, the Council of Four is the ultimate authority. It convenes in High Hall, a fortress in the middle of the Upper City, and controls the Flaming Fist, the navy, the tax collectors, and all public utilities, among other things.

### GRAND DUKE ULDER RAVENGARD

Ulder Ravengard is a fearless soldier who rose up through the ranks of the Flaming Fist to become its supreme marshal. Ravengard used his military position and influence to secure for himself a seat on the Council of Four. Following the deaths of two council members amid a cloud of corruption and scandal, he persuaded the Parliament of Peers to back his election to grand duke.

Upon ascending to the highest position in the city government, Ravengard refused to relinquish command of the Flaming Fist, making him the most powerful figure in the city by far. This decision has not endeared him to anyone, but Ravengard could care less about his popularity. His only concerns are the stability and prosperity of Baldur's Gate, and he doesn't trust any of the other dukes or anyone in the Parliament of Peers to put the city's interests before their own.

Ravengard rose to grand duke on a platform largely backed by idealistic commoners and enemies of the other established dukes. While he won election handily, Ravengard has struggled in performing his duties, finding his hands tied at every turn by both overt and invisible bureaucracy. Despite this, he's been a voice of reason and common sense on the Council of Four—if not the egalitarianism some hoped. He's also proven largely resistant to scandal and corruption, though many of his fellow dukes and those in the Parliament of Peers still regularly outmaneuver him politically. One of his only obvious pleasures remains the surprise inspections he regularly visits upon the troops at Wyrm's Rock.

### DUKE BELYNNE STELMANE

Once a vigorous and formidable politician, Duke Belynn Stezmane recently suffered a seizure that left her with a partially paralyzed face and slowed

speech. Given her current situation, Duke Stezmane is in no position to oppose attempts by her fellow dukes to seize the reins of power in Baldur's Gate.

### DUKE DILLARD PORTYR

Duke Dillard Portyr was once a respected businessman, but after a string of sour deals, he pulled back from his investments. Now he uses his time to enjoy the comforts that his wealth and title provide him. He lives alone in his manor, having outlived his two wives and three sons, and trades correspondence with his niece, Liara Portyr, who commands a Flaming Fist outpost on Chult known as Fort Beluarian.

Duke Portyr is conflict-averse and goes out of his way to avoid stress. He shows well in social situations, but is easily manipulated in the political arena. He is known for listening with concern, showing an earnest desire to help, making promises to look into things, and then doing nothing. As a result, a great deal of the citizenry's scorn lies heaped upon Duke Portyr's shoulders.

Duke Portyr expressed concern about Ravengard's diplomatic mission to Elturel, fearing what the Flaming Fist might do while Ravengard is away. If his worst fears come true and the Flaming Fist can't control itself, Duke Portyr plans to write a letter to his niece, urging her to return to Baldur's Gate and take command of the Flaming Fist in Ravengard's absence. It's literally the least he can do.

### DUKE THALMAMRA VANTHAMPUR

Acid-tongued, shrewd, and aggressive, Duke Thalamra Vanthampur is the matriarch of the Vanthampur family. Born with nothing, she spent years wallowing in obscurity, repairing and renovating the city's ancient sewer system. One promotion after another followed until she was named Master of Drains and Underways. By then, she had been married three times and given birth to three sons. Her lifelong goal has been to lift herself and her family out of the sewers and into high society.

Years of political dealing, blame shuffling, and bribery paid off when Thalamra was elected to the Council of Four. Although she has served on the council for the shortest amount of time, Duke Vanthampur is easily the most politically savvy council member. She speaks little during meetings of the council, preferring to further her political agenda through meetings in her private offices and at her family estate. When she does choose to debate, she speaks with a strength beyond what it seems like her age should allow, and is known for leveling insults that land unsettlingly close to (supposedly) hidden truths.



## MILITARY

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Baldur's Gate boasts two military forces: the Flaming Fist and the Watch.

### THE FLAMING FIST

The red and gold symbol of the Flaming Fist mercenary company has become emblematic of Baldur's Gate. The Council of Four funds the Flaming Fist, supporting it as the city's army. Grand Duke Ulder Ravengard is now its undisputed leader.

The Flaming Fist largely patrols the Lower City though it holds nominal authority over the Outer City as well. The company has enough to do maintaining order within the city walls without straying too far from its gates, though the Fist has been known to hire independent agents when its ranks are spread thin.

Thousands of soldiers currently serve in the Flaming Fist: in Baldur's Gate proper, at the fortress of Wyrn's Rock on the Chionthar River, and at remote outposts such as Fort Beluarian in Chult. The Flaming Fist offers employment and a sense of belonging to any who can lift a sword and follow orders. Native Baldurians, immigrants, former criminals, and retired adventurers can all be found within the company's ranks.

### THE WATCH

Watch officers can spend their entire careers within the Upper City. Bankrolled by the patriars, the Watch has a reputation as glorified bodyguards for the city's elite.

Orderly and regimented, the Watch maintains precise, predictable patrols. At dusk, the Watch clears the Upper City of everyone but residents, their household staffs, and guests bearing written invitations. Many Watch officers, born and raised in the city, pride themselves on recognizing every Upper City resident on sight.

The Watch operates out of the Citadel, a massive keep built into the Upper City's walls. In times of crisis, bells at the High Hall and the Citadel are rung simultaneously. If the pealing continues for more than a few minutes, every Watch member is required to rally at the Citadel or appointed guard posts. The function of the bells is common knowledge.

## LAW AND ORDER

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Everyone in Baldur's Gate is expected to hew to common law. Murder, theft, assault, blackmail, and fraud all carry severe penalties. Patriars, the wealthy, and the well-connected are given much more leniency than commoners. A noble heir who steals from a shop

might get away with a fine paid by a parent, whereas a commoner committing the same crime may be jailed or publicly flogged.

Both the Watch and the Flaming Fist have the right to dispense immediate justice, should they witness a crime in progress. In unclear situations, or when a person of influence is involved, the accused is jailed until a trial can be set. Patriars and other powerful individuals are usually placed under house arrest, except in dire circumstances. Commoners await their trial in jail. On occasion, a vigilante or hired mercenary will break an accused commoner out of prison in order to ensure the accused's safety until the trial date.

Minor crimes, such as creating a public disturbance, petty theft, or vandalism carry commensurate punishments. Time in the stocks, public humiliation, or a fine are the usual judgments. Some patriarch families consider petty crimes to be worse than major ones—they are a sign that one can't manage one's baser instincts. Patriars have been known to pay huge bribes or promise outsized favors to protect a rebellious heir from being charged with a minor crime.

Lawyers must belong to the Barrister's Guild to practice, and the associated fees means they prefer to represent wealthy clients. Poorer citizens often must throw themselves on the mercy of the courts, or scrape together what coin they can to hire an adventurer or mercenary to find evidence to support their plea.

### NOTEWORTHY LAWS

Of the city's nuanced and unreliably enforced laws, the following tend to be the most surprising to newcomers.

**Foreign Agents.** While traders and visitors to Baldur's Gate are always welcome, spies and saboteurs are not. Legitimate foreign agents, such as ambassadors, are required to report to the High Hall for an elaborate series of interviews and licenses. Visitors technically should do the same, but the law is rarely mentioned at the city's gates and even more rarely enforced. What distinguishes a visitor and a foreign agent can be unclear, and if an individual doesn't have a license marking them as one or the other, any duke or peer can unilaterally change a non-citizen's status, effectively sentencing them to imprisonment or worse. **Livestock Restriction.** By tradition, Baldur's Gate bans animals larger than a peacock within the city walls. Visitors determined not to surrender their beloved pets (or valuable animals they intend to sell) sometimes arrive at the city with large peacocks in tow, to prove their furred companion meets the legal requirement. This has led to a burgeoning, noisy, and particularly cutthroat peacock-breeding industry in the Outer City. Most travelers pay to stable oversize animals, either in Outer City liveries or at ranches outside the city. Some animals are simply surrendered at the gate, though, becoming property of the Watch (in the Upper City) or the Flaming Fist (in the Lower City), or sold during monthly auctions.

# CITIZENRY

The citizens of Baldur's Gate include many races and ethnicities. Though prejudices can exist among certain residents, Baldur's Gate as a whole is a diverse and unprejudiced—if not welcoming—city.

Many of the patriar families of Baldur's Gate can trace their lineage back for generations, but a significant portion of Baldurians were not born in the city. Most citizens began their lives in Tethyr, the North, the Western Heartlands, or other communities along the Sword Coast. Baldurians born in Amn, the High Forest, and nations bordering the Inner Sea are less common, but still present. Rarely, travelers from as far away as Chult, Mulhorand, or Luiren decide to follow the flow of trade and settle in the city.

## COMMONERS AND CREWS

Baldur's Gate can be a rough place for ordinary folk. Among the twisting streets of the Lower City, commoners have significantly fewer rights than patriars, with only the brusque mercenaries of the Flaming Fist to keep them safe. Even worse off are the poor residents of the Outer City, many of whom aren't recognized as citizens. With the Flaming Fist too

### PROMINENT PATRIAR FAMILIES

- Below are the names of and a few details about many of the other patriar families in the city.
- Belt** owns horses for sale and exchange.
  - Bormul** is related to the Bormul nobility in Amn and has interests in southern silver mines and vineyards.
  - Caldwell** owns most of the city's art museums.
  - Blusker** is nearly broke but maintains a textile mill in the Lower City and a few slaughterhouses in the Outer City.
  - Durinbold** is related to Waterdeep nobility and owns large sheep herds.
  - Eltan** has an ancestral link to the grand duke who formed the Flaming Fist, but sold its interests in the mercenary company to pay debts.
  - Eomane** owns the most elite perfumery in Baldur's Gate as well as fish- and whale-oil processors that make lamp oil.
  - Gist** controls much of the city's dye production.
  - Guthmere** owns butchery and tannery facilities.
  - Hhune** has ties to Tethyr nobility and the Knights of the Shield, as well as holdings in other major cities.
  - Hlath** owns several cafes in the city and is awash in gambling debts.
  - Hullhollyn** owns a merchant fleet and has a trade truce with the Irlentree family.
  - Irlentree** owns a merchant fleet, has a trade truce with the Hullhollyn family, and has membership in the Merchants' League.
  - Jannath** owns tin and copper mines.
  - Jhasso** is part owner of the struggling Seven Suns Trading Coster, a long-standing trade organization.
  - Linnacker** collects income from gem mines in Tethyr.
  - Miyar** supplies and repairs wagons and caravans, and has membership in the Merchants' League.
  - Nurthammas** invests in businesses involved in supplying ships for long voyages.
  - Oathoon** imports wine and spirits.
  - Oberon** owns most of the port's dry docks.
  - Provoss** is nearly destitute after losses to its cattle herds.
  - Ravensshade** trades in inks, dyes, gems, and jewelry.
  - Redlocks** has secretly financed piracy and smuggling for a long time.
  - Rillyn** runs a sword-wieldkding school, creating new generations of soldiers, mercenaries, and legbreakers.
  - Sashenstar** owns shipping, mining, and textile operations, and has membership in the Merchants' League.
  - Shattershield**, a family of shield dwarves, is the only nonhuman family among the patriars and was instrumental in building the city's original walls.
  - Tillerturn** owns and leases out many buildings in the city.
  - Vammas** controls the majority of trade from Chult.
  - Vannath** fled the city of Neverwinter after the eruption of Mount Hotenow and married into the patriars to elevate their status.
  - Vanthampur** specializes in civic engineering under the purview of family matriarch Duke Thalamra Vanthampur.
  - Whitburn** owns the slate quarry east of the city.

eager to punish criminal behavior by drubbing both accuser and accused, it's important that common folk have someone to watch their backs. That's why the

people of Baldur's Gate created crews—collections of likeminded folk who band together for mutual protection. Depending on the crew, this protection can range from taking someone's side in a tavern brawl or guarding each other's shops to price fixing or inter-crew loans.

Crews were the first to institute the common practice of burl. Under this system, anyone seeking shelter and safety—usually those fleeing from the Flaming Fist or some other danger—can approach a house or shop and give three sharp knocks followed by a heavier one. The residents are then obligated to take that person in and hide them. This applies even to members of opposing crews, though anyone requesting sanctuary from a crew other than their own incurs a debt, both personally and on behalf of their crew. Abusing someone who's granted burl is grounds for immediate expulsion from one's crew, and such "drowners" are universally shunned.

The dozens of crews calling Baldur's Gate home are as different in attitude and approach as the city's residents. For instance, everyone in the Lower City knows that if you need cheap muscle, you hire members of the burly Porters' Union or Stonemasons' Guild, and not even the Flaming Fist would willingly pick a fight with the blood-spattered Butchers' Block or the mercenaries and "security consultants" of the Bannerless Legion. Other crews, such as the Scribes and Sages or the Honorable Order of Moneylenders, would never dream of getting their hands dirty, while the Apothecary Alliance and Brethren of Barbers don't need to throw a punch to strike fear into rivals. From carpenters to grocers, the Forgeworkers' Lodge to the Wisewoman Weavers, nearly every profession offers some access to a crew. And not just legal professions, either; the Revelers' Union, made up of night-workers who sell drugs, companionship, and other recreations, is one of the most powerful in the city, thanks to the information it gathers from its clients.

Some crews are simply neighborhood-based, their association based on territory rather than trade, such as the Right Pashas of Little Calimshan, the Crossed of Wyrms Crossing, the Gravemakers of Tumbledown, or the Bloomridge Dandies.

By far the most important crew to travelers, however, is the Gateguides. Made up primarily of teenage lantern bearers, the Gateguides earn a living hiring themselves out to newcomers to show them the ropes of the city, help make connections with other crews, and offer some degree of collective protection.

## PATRIARS

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Patriars are the elite upper class of the city, a rank defined largely by money and lines of vague, increasingly inconsequential heritage. Many nobles claim generations of lineage, dating to the earliest days of Baldur's Gate. Their money funds industries and lines political pockets, but their names allow them to wield influence throughout the city.

Some patriars are economically-minded individuals who rise early and spend their days in meetings and negotiations. They fund expeditions into dangerous locales and hire explorers to map uncharted territories. Other patriars manipulate the city's power players through diplomacy and intrigue. They spend their days flitting from theater performances to private balls, while quietly making and breaking the alliances that underwrite the city's structures.

Patriars live and work in the Upper City. Their manor homes employ dozens of servants, along with contingents of personal guards. The wall surrounding the Upper City as well as the constant presence of the Watch—which exclusively patrols that district—goes far toward assuring their security. As a side effect, it also means many patriars go months without engaging with the city's common folk, their insulation leading to the spread of divisive rumors.

Patriars know the danger of the other districts, where their wealth is a lure and their names carry no weight. Patriars who have to travel the Lower City always do so with guards, and still risk robbery or worse violence.

Many patriar families hire proxies to carry out their business in the Lower City or Outer City. If circumstances force patriars to visit the Outer City personally, they typically travel in disguise, paying adventurers or mercenaries to protect them without drawing the attention of a uniformed personal guard.

Among the common folk and criminal element of the city, patriars have a reputation for callousness. Common wisdom holds that patriars are out of touch with everyday life and value citizens' lives cheaply. For some nobles, this assessment holds true. These patriars are class-conscious dilettantes who spend their money on frivolous bets, debauched entertainment, and risky business ventures. For this callous lot, the common people are nothing more than fools to be bilked, clods undeserving of comfort and wealth due to their lack of comfort and breeding.

For a few patriars, though, the inequality of Baldur's Gate is a serious concern. Blocked by a corrupt government and uncaring peers, these civic-minded nobles use unorthodox channels to distribute aid. They quietly fund vigilante action that protects the vulnerable groups. They stage robberies on their own property and secretly send the "stolen goods"



to sick houses and charities. These patriars know that to act openly is to invite scorn from their peers, which may edge them out of alliances and deals that could strengthen their standing. Worse, it makes them targets for corrupt elite who prefer the city's divisions as they are.

Some good-hearted but naïve patriars have been known to venture into the Lower City and even the Outer City to volunteer with the disadvantaged or share their wealth. Even in disguise, though, these nobles are usually quickly identified and become targets of the Guild or other criminals. More than one patriar on a mission of mercy has disappeared into the Lower City, never to be seen again.

## ECONOMY AND TRADE

With trade ways running north and south along the Sword Coast, a port on the Sea of Swords, and the Chionthar River leading inland, Baldur's Gate is perfectly situated for its role as a commercial hub. Craftspeople, merchants, traders, and smugglers all make a brisk living in the city, and many immigrants are drawn by the dream that anyone willing to work hard can be successful in Baldur's Gate.

Baldur's Gate has plenty of exports, notably fish, fish glue, and sea salt, but its main economic force is trade itself. The city boasts multiple large and well-connected trade guilds and a marketplace where wholesalers can exchange goods before moving up or down the Sword Coast.

The number of ships in port and traders making their way north or south mean that Baldur's Gate boasts one of the most expansive markets in the west. Coin trumps morals in Baldur's Gate, with profit being the ultimate good. As a result, nearly anything can be bought and sold in the city's shops, whether it be rare jewels, magic weapons, secrets, alliances, or even murder. People visit the city seeking imports from Port Nyanzaru, verdigris-covered treasures dredged from the sea, blackmail information on political rivals, or custom-brewed poisons.

Though the city has laws regarding the sale of stolen property, smuggling, and contract killing, such crimes are rarely reported and even more rarely enforced. Unless the complainant is a patriar or other powerful individual, law enforcement lacks the time and interest to pursue those engaging in mutually beneficial transactions. The unwritten law is do nothing that interferes with the city's economy and make your bargains in peace. Individuals who suffer due to morally questionable contracts must seek out private means of obtaining justice.

## PROFESSIONAL GUILDS

Craftspeople and merchants organize in professional guilds and follow official charters. Unofficial guilds are technically illegal, but in the Outer City, such informal guilds are common.

Most professional guilds operate in the Lower City, but prefer to provide their goods to the wealthy patriarch families of the Upper City. Commoners grumble that they can't even buy from their own neighbors, with the choicest items and freshest food traveling up the hill. A laborer might toil all day at a fishmonger's shop, then be forced to take their pay to the Outer City and buy yesterday's catch from an unlicensed seller.

In many cases, guilds intersect with crews. Such groups take an interest in their members beyond a professional level, working to assure that they're safe on the streets and at home so they can return to work the next morning. Those who mistreat a guild member might find themselves ostracized by all members of that profession, or even find themselves cornered by members of the guild's associated crew, their most menacing tools of the trade in hand.

## RELIGION

Baldurians are permitted to worship whatever deities they wish, so long as they refrain from violent acts and practices that disrupt trade. While multiple temples rise within the city walls, hundreds of tiny shrines sit along the twisted streets of the Outer City.

In the city proper, worship centers around a handful of well-known and generally respectable deities. Most established temples, with clergy and daily rituals, are in the Upper City, which precludes commoners from worshipping after dark, when only residents are allowed to remain in the Upper City. Since most commoners work during the day, their faith usually becomes secondary in their lives. Ostentatious adherence to religious rituals is seen as a privilege of the wealthy. Some Baldurians even think outwardly displaying one's faith is a sign of pretentiousness and insincerity.

Among the many deities worshiped in Baldur's Gate, a handful hold particular prominence.

## DEAD THREE

Bane (the Lord of Tyranny), Bhaal (the Lord of Murder), and Myrkul (the Lord of Bones) make up the Dead Three. While these deities have lost much of their power, their faiths still command respect and fear throughout Baldur's Gate. While open worship of the Dead Three is frowned upon in Baldur's Gate, their worship is not illegal—so long as worship remains

within the laws. Every now and then, rumors surface that a powerful political figure is a Bhaalspawn. These claims almost always prove to be smear campaigns with no basis in truth—though, in some cases, such claims have actually raised a figure’s standing in the public eye.

## GOND

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The High House of Wonders, located in the Upper City, serves as the city’s temple of Gond, a god of innovation and invention. Within the walls of the temple, clergy members are permitted to brew experimental potions and elixirs, build and test mechanical constructs, and hire locals to participate in controlled experiments—all in the spirit of invention and innovation.

High-ranking members of Gond’s clergy oversee a number of secret projects sponsored by wealthy patriars or the Flaming Fist.

## HELM

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In a city as dangerous as Baldur’s Gate, prayers to the Vigilant One are many. Members of the Watch and the Flaming Fist, mercenaries, bodyguards, and the fearful pray for Helm’s protection at his shrine, the Watchful Shield, located in the Upper City. Patriars who see themselves as protectors of the common folk pray to Helm for guidance as well.

It is rumored that The Order of the Gauntlet, a good-aligned faction devoted to Helm, quietly sponsors vigilantes throughout Baldur’s Gate. If a citizen prays to Helm and leaves a donation at the temple, the body of the criminal might be found dead with Helm’s holy symbol on them, or (maybe worse) carved in their still living flesh and left at the Flaming Fist’s doorstep.

## ILMATER

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Ilmater’s humble shrine stands in a quiet square in Heapside. The Shrine of Suffering provides free meals and a few coppers to the poor and destitute.

Even in the Upper City, some citizens feel their existence is one of secret torment and suffering. The idea that pain has nobility to it—that there can be a divine reason behind the trials that face Baldurians—comforts many.

Some patriars spread word of Ilmater’s faith not out of devotion, but to control their lessers.

If people believe their suffering is worthy, they are less likely to demand safer conditions, higher pay, or more rights.

In recent memory, cryptic notes have appeared on the gates of patriar estates, warning that “those who

falsely champion the Crying God will find their own suffering multiplied.”

## OGHMA

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An eye-catching, white marble pavilion in the Upper City known as the Unrolling Scroll serves as Oghma’s shrine. Pilgrims on the road to Candlekeep often stop at the shrine to purchase or trade rare tomes. Adventurers looking for work sometimes linger nearby, waiting to hire on to missions intent on recovering lost books of magic.

## SIAMORPHE

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Siamorphe, goddess of nobility and divine right, is not widely worshiped in Baldur’s Gate, but her image looks out from the alcoves of weathered noble estates and from behind vines within patriar gardens.

Long ago, many nobles of Baldur’s Gate worshiped Siamorphe. Legend tells that her temple was a wonder to behold, its nave decorated with crests of the most powerful ruling families of the time. A secret vault contained signet rings, family trees, and copies of important decrees, holding them in case of some calamity.

During one of the city’s early uprisings, the temple became a target for rioters and was burned to the ground. Where the temple stood has since been forgotten. However, rumors persist that the temple’s vault is likely hidden beneath a patriar home or even a different temple. Urban treasure hunters, desperate politicians, and disenfranchised nobles still sift through the unreliable records of ages past to find it.

## TYMORA

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Adherents of the goddess of good fortune maintain her temple in the Upper City. Given the number of people in Baldur’s Gate who rely on luck to make it through each day, her following thrives. Even cruel-hearted criminals turn to Tymora for luck, hoping the goddess recognizes their boldness and daring. Evildoers who work outside the Guild tip their hats to Lady Luck before going out on a job.

Citizens who must walk the Lower City at night, or who venture into the depths of the Outer City, usually whisper joint prayers to Tymora and Helm. They know that luck is almost as valuable as vigilance when it comes to staying alive in the city.

Tymora’s temple unofficially serves as a gathering place for adventurers seeking dangerous quests. Citizens with bizarre problems or in overwhelmingly

perilous situations come to the temple in hopes of finding the perfect aid to help them.

## UMBERLEE

No city as reliant on the sea as Baldur's Gate could do without a temple to Umberlee. Fisherfolk pray to the Queen of the Depths for good waters to ply their trade, and sailors beg Umberlee's mercy before embarking on their voyages.

Smugglers, too, pay homage to Umberlee. A great deal of illegal trade passes through the harbor in small crafts on moonless nights, and smugglers—particularly of dangerous beasts and kidnapped souls—know to drop a few coins into the water as they pass into the harbor to appease Umberlee.

Umberlee's adherents work out of the Water Queen's House, a magnificent structure on the city docks. They provide blessings to sailors and identify relics dredged up from the deep. When Umberlee is offended by the removal of an item from the sea, she expresses her displeasure to the clergy by sending them omens, urging the priests to advise the finder to return the plundered item to the depths at once—or else.

## DANGERS IN BALDUR'S GATE

Crime is a powerful force in the city. Fearsome creatures hunt along cobbled streets, and the worship of evil deities continues to rise.

## THE GUILD

The organization known simply as the Guild unites cutpurses, loan sharks, killers, thugs, con artists, grave robbers, cat burglars, and every other type of criminal in the city. The Guild operates under the noses of the Watch and the Flaming Fist by adroitly keeping its illicit activities quiet.

Each city neighborhood falls under control of one or more kingpins, crime bosses who report to the head of the Guild. These kingpins style themselves as elite criminals, often adopting memorable nicknames and distinctively decadent dress. Scores of common criminals work beneath each kingpin, with the most competent and cutthroat members rising to favored status.

Some kingpins keep strictly to the shadows, but others operate more openly. Particularly in the Outer City, citizens often know their local kingpin. A kingpin might receive requests for help from citizens, asking for loans or dealing with unauthorized crime, such as a thieving neighbor. A kingpin tracks these favors and

debts, calling them in when it suits them—often with interest.

Rivalries exist between kingpins, and their territorial borders shift constantly. As long as these internal feuds don't disrupt Guild business or draw the attention of the authorities, no one interferes. Recent rumors claim that an Outer City kingpin known as Straightstick is calling in all his favors to make a move on a Lower City turf. Crossing the wall is riskier than the average power play, and those in the know predict the coming conflict to be a bloody one.

Guild operations in the Outer City center on smuggling and gambling. Some violent crime and theft occur, but for the most part, Outer City residents are too poor to draw the attention of the Guild. Travelers and visitors do fall victim to pickpocketing, muggings, and assault, though. As the Flaming Fist rarely comes to the district, the Guild has long operated with impunity. In recent years, though, the interference of vigilantes and hired adventurers has been on the rise.

### PROMINENT GUILD KINGPINS

All Guild operations are overseen by kingpins, a handful of which are described below.

**Goblin Behnie.** Most are surprised to find Goblin Behnie looks nothing like his name or monstrous reputation suggest, the Bloomridge kingpin being a tall, polished-looking gentleman in his early thirties. The name comes from his ferocious ego, wild rages, and a propensity for biting off the fingers of those who disappoint him. Behind his viciousness, though, Goblin Behnie has a keen eye, making him and his forgers the city's best source of illicit Watch tokens (for passage into the Upper City), visitor licenses, and docking permits.

**Straightstick.** The kingpin of the Twin Songs Faithless runs one of the city's best smuggling operations, slipping goods into the city along the Chionthar River and over Dusthawk Hill. The seventy-year-old claims to have been attacked by the infamous (and doubtfully real) Ol' Cholms, a giant snapping turtle rumored to sleep at the bottom of Gray Harbor. To prove his story, Straightstick uses a splinted old ferry pole as a crutch. Recently, the kingpin has grown bitter about his position, believing he deserves a territory within Baldur's Gate proper. He's planning an attack on Brampton, the destination of much of his smuggling and the territory of his ex-wife, Diamond Urchin.

**The Whiskey Lady.** Few know that the last true heir of the Raddle patriar family died several years ago. Despite this, "Dowager Raddle" continues to throw lavish social events at her estate, though she never personally attends. Instead, her supposed relative welcomes guests, engaging them with sharp wit, hard liquor, political gossip, and political opportunities of "gray" legality. No one seem to know their host's name, though—a faux pas none would ever admit. As a result, the Manorborn neighborhood's politically active Guild kingpin is known only as the Whiskey Lady.



The Lower City serves as the heart of the Guild's operations. The locals here have enough money to make burglary and protection schemes worthwhile, and the Flaming Fist is spread too thin to address every instance of petty crime. The Guild's operations widen to numerous commercial ventures, such as gambling dens, animal fights, races, and brawling tournaments. Their traffickers also maintain routes into other districts, and guide individuals and illicit trade through them for a fee. Those who oppose the Guild—typically by going to the Flaming Fist—invite retaliation upon themselves and their neighbors. This makes most folk afraid to report crimes and pressures their neighbors to keep quiet as well.

In the Upper City, the Guild engages in burglary, extortion, blackmail, and confidence games. Patriars might even hire Guild members to gain (or plant) information about their rivals, involving the Guild in Upper City politics.

Only the most talented criminals dare to burgle patriarch estates, but the lower ranks of a kingpin's operation often work as pickpockets or try to con residents of the district. Here, the Watch zealously monitors for Guild activities and targets anyone threatening the peace. Kingpins can often come to an agreement with the Watch, though, offering bribes so that Watch officers look the other way. Every month, the kingpin makes their payment to the Watch and selects a new safe word. Guild members caught by the Watch utter the safe word to avoid arrest. Rival kingpins and unaffiliated criminals looking to work in the Upper City pay well for the month's safe word, though any member of the Guild found selling the information faces harsh punishment.

## NINE-FINGERS KEENE

The current leader of the Guild, Nine-Fingers Keene, disdains flashy garb and illusion magic. She appears to the world as she is: an unassuming woman of middling age and build. Her forgettable looks have proven her greatest asset as a thief, as her victims have trouble recognizing her even when they meet her again face-to-face. Keene's leadership over the years earned her a reputation of thoughtful pragmatism. When necessary, she seeks revenge for offenses against the Guild—provided doing so is profitable. Her methods are vicious when necessary, and she is as feared as she is respected.

Keene has become increasingly intolerant of the populous tide turning against her organization. While the occasional rabble-rouser has always impeded criminal business, the rise of organized crews and vigilantes is interfering with Guild operations. After a carefully coordinated attack on a patriarch's estate fell

to pieces when a vigilante clumsily alerted the estate guards, Keene declared open season on do-gooders of all stripes.

## THE DEAD THREE

The plots of patriars and the schemes of Guild operatives fill the gossip and whispers of Baldur's Gate. Yet, throughout the city, no names are as synonymous with dastardly acts as those of Dead Three. The demigods Bane, Bhaal, and Myrkul walk among mortals, personally seeking followers to their cause. More than once, it's rumored, the trio has even trod the streets of Baldur's Gate.

Nefarious patriars whisper prayers to Bane when they seek to gain power through coercion, intimidation, and forceful exaction of the law. Gang leaders, evil mercenaries, and others who rely on fear and control, also pay homage to Bane. Those who want to evoke dominance and ruthlessness favor wearing black gloves—a nod to Bane's holy symbol.

Myrkul claims a following among those who wish to learn from or command the dead. Those who plunder tombs for lost knowledge, grim entrepreneurs who see business sense in undead servants, even pragmatic necromancers seeking to conjure secrets from the wealthy dead of Cliffside Cemetery all whisper prayers to Myrkul. Of the Dead Three, Myrkul's base of power is the smallest. Residents of Baldur's Gate rarely fear death by old age—a grim fact of living in such a dangerous city. As a result, few desperate elders seek the blessing of the Lord of Bones. Those who do, though, tend to be both cagey and wealthy, which means that although Myrkul's worshipers are small in number, their resources have hidden depths.

Since the time when the Bhaalspawn Sarevok plotted to start a war between Baldur's Gate and Amn as a path to claiming Bhaal's power, awareness of the Lord of Murder's children has grown. Baldur's Gate maintains a grim draw for Bhaalspawn, whether due to some foul influence in the city itself, or merely because of Sarevok's lingering reputation.

At the same time, worship of Bhaal proves darkly popular in Baldur's Gate. Few openly admit to worshiping the Lord of Murder, but there is an unspoken assumption that anyone who benefits from violent death has some respect for Bhaal. Assassination and murder underpin many of the plots in the city, from the business of highly-paid killers on patriarch payrolls to slayings of opportunity committed by Outer City fanatics. Such bloodthirsty faithful rarely gather in numbers, but they typically mark themselves by carving a fresh gouge on their thumbs—spilling their blood in Bhaal's name while

creating a subtle mark that identifies them among allies. Despite the Lord of Murder's decentralized worship, some believe a temple to Bhaal exists near or under the city, possibly in an ancient chamber beneath the sewers or carved into Dusthawk Hill. Rumor holds that eleven red crystals on the wall of the temple grow brighter with every murder committed, gathering power for either Bhaal or one of his future chosen. Some claim that Bhaal himself regularly visits the temple, his presence contributing to the city's high murder rate.

While the Dead Three occupy a prominent place in Baldurians' fears, their faiths currently have only the shallowest roots in the city. Followers of the Dead Three have done more to incite dread than faith. As a result, their numbers remain relatively small. Their sinister reputations outstrip their actual influence, though, with gossip spreading quickly whenever the deities' ominous symbols appear in graffiti or the Flaming Fist cracks down on overzealous fanatics. Despite public fears and resistance from law enforcement, the cults of the Dead Three persist, causing many to darkly wonder why the servants of Bane, Bhaal, and Myrkul hold such interest in Baldur's Gate.

## MURDER

Blackmail and theft pay well, but murder is the preferred tool of the ambitious. Murder silences witnesses, disposes of enemies, and clears the path to power. Assassins never lack for work in Baldur's Gate.

In the Outer City, murder is practically a way of life. With neither the Watch nor the Flaming Fist to look after residents, criminals run free in the sprawling district. Criminals use murder to keep order among their ranks and remove threats to their organization. So-called "snuff streets" hold the bodies of the dead, dumped by their murderers in piles along the lane. The most desperate of Outer City residents prowl the snuff streets, hoping to find a missed copper piece or a salvageable boot to pawn. They strip the teeth from bodies, cut off hair that might fetch a coin, and sometimes—it is rumored—slice flesh from the corpses to stave off starvation. Recent reports of ghoulish activity in the Outer City likely have their origins in these snuff streets.

In the Lower City, murder is less common but remains a threat. Long-time residents know to travel in groups after dark. Those looking to earn a few coins sometimes linger outside of taverns, hiring out as escorts for drunken patrons. Revelers can stay as late as they wish and still get home safely, provided they hire someone trustworthy to guard their trip home.

Most murders in the Lower City have reasons behind them. The merchant found with his throat cut and pockets emptied, the husband murdered so his wife can marry her young mistress, the tyrannical shop owner stabbed by a desperate underling—residents understand these crimes. What frightens people are the senseless murders. The man found ripped to pieces with his pockets still full of gold, the woman slaughtered so viciously that her grieving husband is sent to the asylum, the shop owner who suddenly strikes down his faithful clerk—these are the crimes that lead to panic and wild rumors.

Some commoners claim that something about the city itself sparks violence in its citizens. A popular theory is that the spirits of the vicious pirates that once sailed the harbors still influence the city. Another is that the spirit of the long-executed serial murderer Alhasval Drenz, the Whitkeep Whistler, still stalks the city, possessing innocents to continue her unmatched killing spree.

It's unclear whether the rise of Bhaal's faith in Baldur's Gate stems from the frequency of murders, or if the murders spring from the worship of Bhaal. The Flaming Fist suspects a group of Bhaal worshipers behind a spate of recent similar murders, the victims stabbed to death and their own blood dribbled like a crown around their heads. The Fist's investigations have not yet resulted in an arrest, but officers suspect the murderers to be commoners with seemingly unremarkable lives covering their true, bloodthirsty natures.

In the Upper City, murder brings results. Muggings and crimes of opportunity are rare here. The Watch keeps Upper City residents safe from criminals and riffraff. The biggest threat to patriars are other patriars.

Bribery and blackmail can secure votes or sway an allegiance temporarily, but murder permanently changes the makeup of the Parliament of Peers. Several elite assassins exclusively take on political targets. The Watch puts little effort into tracking down expert assassins, knowing that arresting one means possibly exposing a whole cadre of powerful patriars. The wrath that would fall on the Watch isn't worth putting one assassin in the cells.

## CITY LANDMARKS

Today, Baldur's Gate is split into three districts: the wealthy Upper City on the hills above the docks, the bustling Lower City around the harbor, and the lawless Outer City (which includes all neighborhoods outside the city walls). Regardless of what district one might be visiting, certain features are impossible to

ignore, like the wash of Gray Harbor, the shadows of Dusthawk Hill, or the gates that contribute to the city's name.

## THE GATES

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Nine gates separate the districts of Baldur's Gate, providing the only points of entry to pass from the Upper City to the Lower City, or from the walled city proper to the Outer City and the wider world beyond. Baldurians, particularly if they do not wish to reveal a crew or family affiliation to a potentially hostile audience, often describe themselves by the nearest gate to their homes. Terms like "Gondgater" and "Dragongater" are widely understood as neighborhood identities, and are also understood as a way of eliding more troublesome connections.

The Watch guards gates leading to the Upper City, while the Flaming Fist oversees the rest. Guards assigned to Baldur's Gate and Black Dragon Gate stay at sharp attention and seldom accept bribes. Those assigned to the smaller and more secluded gates, however, can be less attentive, particularly when distracted by jingling coins.

Anyone entering the city must pay a nominal entry toll of 5 cp. While this is a small sum, it ensures that the truly destitute remain outside, consigned to the slums of the Outer City. Beggars and refugees crowd at the fringes of these slums, typically around Black Dragon Gate and Basilisk Gate, pleading for money to pay the toll and hoping that the guards won't drive them off for annoying more prosperous travelers.

When the city is not under lockdown, merchants pour through the external gates from morning till night, while peddlers, delivery carriers, and servants move in equally swift streams through the inner gates. Toll collectors work quickly but methodically to inspect incoming and outgoing trade goods, ensuring that commerce flows smoothly and the city gets its share at every turn.

The city gates are closed at night. At dusk, the Watch evicts anyone from the Upper City who is not a patriarch, bearing a patriarch's livery or permission letter, or carrying a Watch-issued token. The enforcement of this rule is one of the means by which the Upper City reinforces its snobbery over the other districts. More than one Lower City merchant visiting an Upper City restaurant or theater near sundown has been embarrassed by a Watch member's loud, public caution that the gates are about to close. While being seen hurrying toward the gates is an obvious embarrassment, being caught and escorted out would be far more bruising—both to one's ego and body.

The nightly closing of the gates ostensibly keeps the

patriarchs safe. Closing off the Upper City pushes street crime into poorer neighborhoods, or out of the city altogether. In the Upper City, patriarchs can walk down alleys with relatively little fear, but beyond its well-lit streets and tightly watched gates, the other districts become much more dangerous after dark.

## GRAY HARBOR

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One of the largest and deepest harbors on Faerûn's western coast, Gray Harbor is also one of the busiest. The city's independence and general laissez-faire attitude toward the types of goods and people flowing through its port—so long as the government gets its cut—means that the harbor throngs with both honest captains conducting forthright trade and pirate crews looking to fence their wares. Plenty of sailors also make their homes nearby in the Lower City.

The harbor's most immediately striking feature is its machinery, with dozens of enormous cranes and countless powered scoops and cargo carts dramatically accelerating the loading and unloading process. Though designed by the Church of Gond, these marvels are run by the Harborhands, the most powerful crew in the city thanks to the dockworkers' ability to shut off the city's economic lifeblood with a strike. Managing the whole affair is Harbormaster Darus Kellinoth, a lawful neutral male human noble who runs the port's operations and taxation from a small, heavily fortified brick building set well apart from other structures.

The port itself is a tangle of piers, floating docks, and anchorages, from the massive Freighter's Finger pier catering to the heaviest barges to the more ordinary slips at Northtree or Commonsdock. Not actually attached to shore, the chaotic Flotilla is the city's cheapest long-term moorage option, where boats are welcome to raft together around common anchor buoys, and where some houseboats haven't moved in generations. A special division of the Flaming Fist called the Gray Wavers patrols the harbor, yet it's no secret that the more expensive docks are safer than the budget options. Sailors and even whole ships have been known to go missing in Gray Harbor, and while some assume such disappearances are the result of local shore-based pirates, others speak of Ol' Cholms, a mysterious sea beast capable of dragging ships down to the river's lightless bottom.

## DUSTHAWK HILL

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East of the city, high above the scattered slums and cut-rate inns that stretch along the trade road, rises the steep yellow granite of Dusthawk Hill. This cliff-



skirted hill is one of the last known refuges of the Chionthar dusthawk, a once-common raptor whose numbers precipitously declined over the last century as regional turmoil and the ever-spreading slums outside Baldur's Gate consumed its habitat.

Local legend holds that the dusthawk was Balduran's favorite hunting bird, and that the Chionthar population is descended from his own personal hunting hawks. When the dukes of Baldur's Gate realized that the dusthawk was on the verge of extinction, they declared the hill, which included both the hawks' cliffside nests and their hunting grounds, to be off limits to unlicensed hunters. Despite the fences and cliffs that cordon off most of the hill, trespassers remain common, the demand for dusthawk hunting birds having exploded among the wealthy.

Many in the Outer City resent the hill being turned into private land. Several camps and slums were cleared as a result, their dwellers losing everything. The homeless resent the patriars for being willing to spend money giving hawks a home, but not them. Others resent the Flaming Fist guards who keep them from trapping on the hill. Stringy rabbits and scrawny quail made poor meals, but they were meals, and now many hunters have none.

Rumors hold that werewolves lair in the sea caves under Dusthawk Hill, pretending to be ordinary smugglers—or ordinary animals—while plotting against the city. Whenever a grisly murder captures Baldurians' imaginations, someone is always quick to claim that it must be one of the Dusthawk werewolves who did the deed.

#### GREEN LIGHTS IN THE FOG

Baldur's Gate has a couple interesting features not mentioned elsewhere in this gazetteer. **Fog.** One of the reasons why pirates find Gray Harbor attractive is the thick fog that shrouds the river, the docks, and most of the Lower City. The persistent fog makes it easy to conduct illicit business or commit a murder without anyone catching sight of the "interaction" through a spyglass. The fog sometimes creeps into the Upper City as well, but here it's much too thin to veil crimes.

**Green Lights.** In Baldur's Gate, lit lanterns fitted with panes of green glass are hung outside of permanent establishments to indicate that they're open for business. On foggy nights, these lanterns cast the city's lively taverns, brothels, dance halls, and festhalls in eerie green light.

## UPPER CITY

The Upper City, home to the patriarch aristocracy of Baldur's Gate, is a place of beauty and splendor, where magnificent public sculptures stand alongside historic

manors, upscale theaters and boutiques, and tiny stone-walled gardens tucked among the streets like hidden jewels. Flowers bloom along the tree-lined streets, ushering away any stray miasma that escapes from the less fortunate quarters below. Silks and velvets, gold braid and mink, water-clear diamonds and luminous pearls: these are common sights in the Upper City, and hardly glimpsed elsewhere except as cheap imitations.

Everything in the Upper City speaks of privilege and wealth. Magical lights illuminate the clean-swept streets, some bearing enchantments that hold back the river fog. Most of the city's major temples are located in this district, flagrant evidence of how the faiths value the city's wealthy elite over congregants with shallower pockets. The finest wine shops, ateliers, and jewelers are all in the Upper City, where the Watch's nightly ritual of expelling all non-residents reinforces their air of luxurious exclusivity. Those without either Watch-issued tokens or a patriarch's vouchsafe must leave at nightfall, without exception.

Residents of the Upper City feel great pressure to maintain outward appearances, and will keep their estate's facade finely maintained even at the cost of pawning everything within. Admitting to poverty in this district is admitting to shameful failure.

The patriarchs' unabashed snobbery fosters deep resentment among denizens of the Lower City and Outer City, who can see the good life enjoyed before their eyes but are excluded from all but the smallest tastes. The Watch is merciless about turning beggars and malcontents away from the gates, where an erratically enforced entry toll for non-residents and those without Watch tokens or escorts effectively bars the poor from setting foot within this district. A patriarch caught outside the Upper City after dark, therefore, is at high risk of robbery, beating, or worse.

## GATES

The Old Wall, built at Balduran's behest centuries ago, surrounds the Upper City. Six gates pierce it, channeling the district's visitors and commerce. Entering the Upper City requires either being a patriarch, having a patriarch's letter or livery, showing a Watch token issued to the Upper City's residents or licensed to its few inns for guest use, or paying an entry toll. Tokens and tolls are only accepted at Citadel Gate, Baldur's Gate, and the Black Dragon Gate, since the other gates are reserved for the exclusive use of patriarchs, their servants, and their guests.

**Black Dragon Gate.** Named for the dragon's head that a victorious knight once hung upon its arch, the Black Dragon Gate faces the road heading north

toward distant Waterdeep. The original dragon's head is long gone, but a stone replacement snarls above the gate's arch. Local legend claims that the stone head will magically spew acid at attackers if the city should ever fall under siege.

**Citadel Gate.** The only entrance to the Watch's fortress, Citadel Gate nestles into the Upper City's landward wall. The Watch maintains a small cavalry, nominally for defense and crowd control, but primarily for parades, honor escorts, and other ceremonial functions. Because of this, the Citadel maintains the only stable within the city walls.

**Patriar Gates.** The four gates known collectively as the patriar gates—Gond Gate, Heap Gate, Manor Gate, and Sea Gate—are smaller and are generally not accessible by the general public. They were built after the construction of the Lower City walls and were intended to offer patriars convenient access from their homes to their business concerns and back. Privately funded by the patriars, and thus serving as a display of their personal success, these gates are more ornate and tightly guarded than the public gates. Officially, none may use them without bearing a patriar's livery or letter of permission, although rumors persist that Guild kingpins and veteran servants among several patriar staffs know exactly which guards to bend. Regardless, the visible double standard imposed at these gates is a constant gall to Lower City residents forced to take longer routes through the public gates because they cannot use the ones in their own neighborhoods.

## NEIGHBORHOODS

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While most outsiders see only rampant luxury among the Upper City's streets, the district's residents perceive a wide spectrum of style and status. Wealth and taste as much as location serve to divide the Upper City into a variety of distinct neighborhoods.

**Citadel Streets.** The northern part of the Upper City is dominated by the Watch Citadel, where the Watch conducts training, maintains its barracks and stable, and keeps a few jail cells. Beyond the Citadel, this neighborhood includes many shops and the comparatively modest, though still grand, houses that belong to the few non-patriar residents of the Upper City.

**Manorborn.** The most palatial residences lie on the Upper City's west side. Most of the Parliament of Peers live here, as do the old, proud families who trace their lineages back to Balduran's day. Climbing gardens, fountained courtyards, and private orchards adorn many of these elegant homes.

**Temples.** Grand cathedrals and shrines shape the

skyline in this central neighborhood, with Gond's High House of Wonders foremost among them. Priests in ceremonial finery and congregants dressed for the public eye are a common sight in this part of the city. Humbler petitioners are rare, though some come doggedly day after day, paying the tolls for hope each time.

**The Wide.** The primary market and largest civic space in Baldur's Gate is the Wide, where sellers set up their stalls and put out their wares each day at dawn. Street music and noisy performances are forbidden, and every night the sellers who are not Upper City residents must pack up and leave. Bustling by day, the Wide is desolate at night, except on holidays and when hosting grand celebrations.

## THE OLD WALL

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The original wall built during Balduran's day, which encloses the Upper City and separates it from the Lower City, occupies an outsize place in the city's history and imagination. As the original relic of the city's first borders—and, more importantly for daily life, the physical embodiment of the division between patriars and ordinary citizens—the Old Wall is a symbol for much that Baldurians both admire and resent about their city.

Most of the Old Wall was rebuilt following revolts early in the city's history, then reinforced during every major period of tumult that troubled Baldur's Gate afterward. Each push for renewal saw a conflict between Gondan engineers advocating for new building techniques and materials, and patriars and preservationists striving to protect the original architecture. Meanwhile, smugglers and Guild agents bribed building crews, altered blueprints, and otherwise put their fingers in the plans at every turn to steer reinforcement efforts away from their own secret passageways or induce builders to make new ones.

After centuries of such unreliable maintenance, the Old Wall stands proud and strong, but only outwardly so. In truth, the barrier is riddled with numerous secret holes through—or, more often, underneath—its stones. Knowledge of such secret passages' locations is jealously guarded, and the hidden ways are used only sparingly, for the risk of discovery is too great to use them routinely. Nevertheless, if the Old Wall were ever to be seriously tested, its defenders might find it far less impenetrable than it seems.

## PATRIAR MANORS

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The great houses of the patriars are the wellspring of their pride and the center of high society. A manor

stands as proof that the family held anchor in Baldur's Gate when the Old Wall was raised, and that its line has remained prosperous and unbroken since. Even on the rare occasion that a patriar manor changes hands entirely, the new owner generally goes to great lengths to prove—or fabricate—some connection, however tenuous, to the previous holder's line.

Most patriar manors are townhomes rather than free-standing mansions, for the Upper City has always been constrained by its walls, and even the wealthiest families are limited to narrow footprints. In general, patriar manors have only small courtyard gardens, and rely on vertical arrangements such as espaliered fruit trees, trellised roses and wisteria, and vines trained along the house's walls.

Because of the manors' storied pasts and small spaces, most manors are crowded with heirlooms and treasures accumulated across generations. Occasionally, however, a manor's grand facade hides destitution. Estates are expensive to maintain, and dynasties are prone to decline. Although no patriar would ever openly admit to lacking money, quite a few are hunting marriages with wealthy outsiders who might bring an influx of capital and ambition to their moribund lines.

## UPPER CITY GAZETTEER

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Despite its well-policed streets and decorous homes, the Upper City harbors secrets both marvelous and scandalous. Some of its most notable locales are described below in alphabetical order.

### BORMUL HOUSE

Situated in the Manorborn neighborhood, Bormul House is an elegant three-story townhouse of yellow granite and slate with cream-colored roses climbing its garden walls. Last spring, a distant uncle came for a holiday visit, bringing a large load of baggage. The house servants acted strangely during his visit, though the Bormuls attributed this to a bout of shellfish poisoning that afflicted many households that spring. Days later, the uncle departed, leaving some of his curios behind. The Bormuls, lacking space to store these unwanted things in the manor, moved them to the family crypt beneath the house. There they lie now, largely forgotten.

Not long after, shantytown residents in the Outer City began suffering brutal attacks by a silent murderer wearing an archaic, threadbare patriar's cloak. Many have glimpsed this pale killer, but no one has ever been able to confront or follow the murderer to his lair, for he seems to melt into the city's fog after each slaying.

## DISTANT SHORES

Tendai and Khennen Shore are a married couple that runs a successful business importing dried meats, spices, authentic cookware, and traditional recipes from Port Nyanzaru, where the rest of Tendai's family lives. Their pre-mixed assortments of ajwain, coriander, ginger, various curries, and colored salts have done much to bring Chultan delicacies to patriar tables.

Despite their success, the Shores' business is straight forward and unpretentious, attracting attention from business prospectors interested in buying the couple out and expanding the business. The Shores have no interest in selling, despite numerous offers from patriar families and anonymous buyers. As a result, in recent weeks Distant Shores has suffered vandalism and the owners have received threatening letters.

## EOMANE HOUSE

The four Eomane siblings are notorious throughout the Upper City for the scandalous masked revels hosted at their manor. Nysene Eomane likes to extend invitations to hopeful social climbers from other districts, intending to trap them at her parties. Lacking Watch tokens, Nysene's guests face a night in the Citadel's cells or worse if they're caught in the Upper City after dark. They therefore have little choice but to let her and her friends make cruel sport of them until they can escape at daybreak. As yet, none of Nysene's playthings have suffered any real harm, but her games grow ever bolder and more vicious, and it's only a matter of time until someone is seriously hurt.

While Nysene's siblings—Dolandre, Rusorra, and Trenteller—view this behavior as embarrassing and unworthy of her station, they also don't care enough to stop her, since the victims are social inferiors whose welfare isn't worth interrupting their own revels. It's also likely that her siblings are in denial about the true extent of their sister's sadism. Some of the city's evil faiths have begun to take notice of Nysene's games, however, with Bane's faith seeing a talent worth cultivating in Eomane House.

## HALL OF WONDERS

This large, stately building serves as a quasi-religious museum for the magnificent inventions wrought in Gond's name. Unlike the similarly named High House of Wonders, which serves as both temple and workshop housing working prototypes not yet ready for public view, the Hall of Wonders is meant to showcase Gond's perfected inspirations. It holds marvels ranging from lockboxes cleverly disguised as ordinary furniture to unparalleled wonders such as a steam-operated



mechanical orchestra, a steam “dragon” powering a heavy engine for moving immense weights, and elaborate orreries and nautical tools. Small cards posted beneath each display indicate the purpose of these curious tools and credit the inventors and lands of origin, where known.

Persistent rumors hold that a hidden treasure vault, guarded by clockwork monsters, lies beneath the Hall of Wonders.

## HARBREEZE BAKERY

Famous for its whimsically painted cinnamon cookies and sugarbread loaves, the Harbreeze Bakery is a cherished neighborhood institution. The shop makes good use of the vibrant commerce that runs through Baldur’s Gate, showcasing rare spices in its wares and keeping a wide selection of exotic teas for its sophisticated clientele. It is a favorite place for patriars to gossip through the afternoon, and Ellyn Harbreeze, the plump redheaded proprietor, knows about every significant development in her clients’ social circles. Anyone seeking society gossip is well advised to begin at the Harbreeze Bakery.

## HELM AND CLOAK

The Helm and Cloak draws an unusual mixture of well-heeled but unpretentious patriars, traveling nobles, famed bards, and socially ambitious Lower City residents hoping to rub shoulders with the elite. The inn is unfussy, but conducts its service with flawless technique and the finest ingredients: it serves roast chicken rather than peacocks or partridges, and the fish never have that distinctive Gray Harbor film.

The establishment consists of two buildings joined as a single enterprise. The Helm is a rooming house with an entryway shadowed by an immense iron helm that supposedly belonged to a fire giant. The Cloak, slightly smaller, is signaled by the bright flutter of a Sunite cloak draped over its porch. Both buildings are decorated with adventuring trophies both exotic and mundane, including a bronze-horned marble unicorn bust in the Helm’s common room. Its horn, which patrons often rub for good luck, is as shiny as the day it was made.

The Helm and Cloak has long attracted idealistic sons and daughters from patriarch families. For generations, these young romantics, taking the god Lurue as their inspiration, have called themselves the Knights of the Unicorn. Over time, what began as a light-hearted lark became a real force for good in the world, and several of the early knights achieved renown for their heroics. Today, the Knights of the Unicorn continue to call the Helm and Cloak their informal

headquarters. The establishment is even run by two retired members, Vedren and Halesta. The couple’s presence shapes the inn’s clientele significantly, and the unicorn bust in the Helm’s common room honors their origins in this place.

## HIGH HALL

The High Hall is the center of almost all governmental activity in Baldur’s Gate. The Parliament of Peers and the Council of Four meet here, and each of the four dukes has a sumptuous office and discreetly appointed meeting rooms. Criminal trials, tax counts, and professional guild meetings also take place in the High Hall.

Most criminal trials are presided over by a proxy judge appointed by one of the four dukes, and most are resolved as a simple administrative matter that proceeds from arraignment to sentencing within minutes. Unless an impartial witness or evidence of questionable circumstances is brought to the court’s attention, the word of a Flaming Fist or Watch officer suffices to convict, and the judge has only to stamp a seal on the paperwork that the guards have already prepared. This results in a certain degree of corruption, naturally, which is compounded by the proxy judge’s near-absolute discretion in deciding whether to accept a conviction or exonerate a suspect. Bribery and influence-peddling run rife through the courts, where honest judges are rare and widely feared.

In addition to hosting trials, the High Hall holds libraries containing all local laws and ordinances, summaries of judicial decisions and trial outcomes, deed records, guild charters, census tallies, and family genealogies for all the noble houses and sufficiently important commoners. The records go back to the city’s founding, encompassing centuries of meticulously maintained documents. The libraries don’t share a common index, and sorting through their overlapping and idiosyncratically organized holdings can be confusing, so most people opt to pay one of the resident librarians to locate what they need.

Finally, the ground floor of the High Hall’s easternmost wing contains a museum to the history of Baldur’s Gate and a mausoleum for its many dukes and heroes. Statues of ancient notables, including Balduran himself, loom over caskets containing their dusty bones—or, in Balduran’s case, a glass casket containing all that lingers from the city’s vanished founder: the age-cracked remnants of his cloak, longsword, shield, and favorite spyglass.

## HIGH HOUSE OF WONDERS

This vast workshop is the center of Gond's religion in Baldur's Gate. Every day, the anvils and worktables that fill the High House of Wonders ring with the clamor of hammer and saw. Under the scrutiny of the meticulous High Artificer Andar Beech inventors work alongside priests and acolytes beside masters of all disciplines. Because the creations in these workshops are largely experimental prototypes, they are not deemed fit for public view. Gond's temple doesn't flourish in Baldur's Gate by simple happenstance. While there are certainly more industrious and academic cities along the Sword Coast, in few other places could Gond's faithful have access to more and rarer resources with less oversight. The city cares more about the clerics' innovations than the morality of those creations or how they came into being. Rumors claim that the High House of Wonders maintains a secret testing facility in or just outside the city.

Ostensibly, Gond's priests offer healing and other magical services to anyone willing to pay. However, priests often prove so caught up with their projects that they're reticent to attend to any but those with the most novel wounds and provocative ailments.

## HHUNE HOUSE

The power of the Hhunes waxes and wanes like the moon, but other patriar families maintain a healthy fear of them because the Hhunes have powerful connections up and down the Sword Coast that could make life difficult for would-be rivals.

The elderly widow Lutecia Hhune presides over this smallish manor. Lutecia has estranged siblings but no children, and faces the prospect of leaving her family home to a detested branch of the family when she dies. To prevent this, she has asked the librarians of the High Hall to search patriar genealogies for a more acceptable heir.

Lutecia's request was assigned to a Guild-connected librarian named Virmele who is entertaining bribes from Lower City merchants and underworld figures to fabricate a link to the Hhune family. More than the patriar estate itself is at stake, for Lutecia's late husband was an avid map collector and antiquarian whose personal library holds many rarities from far-off lands. Should Lutecia be cheated out of finding a proper heir, it is likely that both her family's legacy and the secrets hidden in her late husband's collection will fall into unscrupulous hands. On the other hand, if Virmele's corruption were exposed, the Guild might be irritated at the loss of a profitable scheme.

Lutecia's valet is Kaddrus a strikingly handsome man half her age. Kaddrus was sent by powerful

nobles in Tethyr to protect the Hhune family's secrets, which include a connection to the Knights of the Shield, a secret society.

## LADY'S HALL

Tymora's temple in Baldur's Gate is made of local yellow granite, roofed with slate shingles, and inconspicuously blended into the surrounding architecture. Recently added to the structure are beautiful mosaics depicting souls prevailing against ill fortune at sea.

Other than holding formal religious observances—which most of Tymora's faithful only attend on major holidays—the primary purpose of the temple is to accept requests, and large donations, from petitioners seeking the temple's intercession. For countless reasons, Baldurians are reluctant to trust the Watch, the Flaming Fist, or the Guild. When they find it necessary to seek aid from an influential organization, such people often turn to Lady Luck for help. The Lady's Hall is there to hear their pleas, and to accept their offerings in exchange. While such intercession often takes the form of blessings, magical or otherwise, clergy moved by a tale of exceptional injustice might be swayed to petition the church elders to intercede. Such happens rarely, the church being unwilling to jeopardize its standing by pitting itself against every specific injustice laid at its doorstep. Yet, members of the clergy often anonymously reach out to the adventurers that congregate near their temple, sponsoring small acts of justice whenever they can.

## RAMAZITH'S TOWER

Six stories high and built of weathered red brick in a cylindrical, pagoda-style structure, Ramazith's Tower is considered a unique landmark by some and a regrettable eyesore by others. It was built nearly a century ago by the eccentric wizard Ramazith, a sailor from faraway Durpar who acquired a vast knowledge of the deeps—and equally vast wealth. Ramazith had not been known as either an exceptional mariner or an exceptional arcanist before he came into enough money to build his tower, and the source of his success remains a mystery. Not long after the tower was completed, Ramazith died under suspicious circumstances. Some say he met his end after an ill-fated dalliance with a nymph, but rumors have always persisted that his death was linked to his unlikely ascent. One version holds that the nymph exacted revenge for some terrible crime Ramazith committed against her people to gain his power, while another rumor suggests his soul was itself the price of his bargain. Whatever the truth, Ramazith's tower stood

empty for decades before it was acquired a few years ago by Lorroakan, a young and short-tempered mage known for having expensive tastes and a perpetual shortage of funds. Lorroakan hails from the city of Athkatla to the south, and local gossip holds that he's a disgraced Cowled Wizard who may even be a fugitive from the powerful House Selemchant in Amn.

Lorroakan makes his living by enchanting clothes to repel moisture and mildew, a practical but humble pursuit that suggests his mastery of magic is not extensive. This, in turn, might explain why he has not reopened the tower's upper floors, confining his own activities to the first and a small portion of the second floor.

Lorroakan's ever-pressing need for money has led the mage to begin looking for hired hands who might be willing to venture into the long-shuttered heights of Ramazith's tower and uncover the secret of the late wizard's wealth. That Ramazith's secret may have brought him to an untimely end, and that Lorroakan is himself no more skilled—and perhaps significantly less so—than the tower's previous master does not seem to concern him.

## RILLYN HOUSE

Though one of the most honorable patriar families in Baldur's Gate, the Rillyns fell into poverty a few generations ago. Only recently have they revived their fortunes, the credit for their newfound prosperity going squarely to Yvandre Rillyn, a neutral female human veteran who returned to Baldur's Gate after many years serving with the Flaming Fist and other mercenary companies—a career that began in rebellion against her stodgy family.

Realizing that her family needed a long term source of financial support, Yvandre opened a sword-wielding school in a guest house adjoining her family's estate. The Rillyn School is about to graduate its first class of students, all of whom have trained with Yvandre for at least five years and have won her approval with their skill. As Yvandre is a hard teacher, this is an impressive feat, and her students are justly proud. She hopes that they'll spread her name throughout the region and win acclaim for the school. In the meantime, she continues to enroll young students, keeping those with promise and weeding out the rest. Some of those who failed to make the cut, embittered by their perceived humiliation, nurse grudges against Yvandre and her house.

## THREE OLD KEGS

Named for its sign, three lashed-together barrels hanging from a pole, the Three Old Kegs is popular

with current and retired members of the Flaming Fist. It serves simple and hearty meals, keeps a variety of good-quality but inexpensive wines and beers, and tolerates no rowdiness among its clientele. Rooms are available for both short- and long-term stays, and the Three Old Kegs offers laundry, mending, repair, and sharpening services to its guests. Its reasonable prices and welcoming atmosphere have led several retired Flaming Fist mercenaries to adopt the place as a full-time residence. These long-term regulars act as additional security, making the Three Old Kegs one of the safest places for visitors to stay in Baldur's Gate.

The proprietors, three wart-covered brothers in their late fifties known collectively as the "Three Old Toads," are named Alstan, Brunkhum, and Klalbroth Wintersides. The Three Old Toads are known to be soft touches for a sob story. All the cooks and servers at the Three Old Kegs are Flaming Fist widows and orphans, and the tavern regularly hosts fundraisers for the families of those crippled or killed in service. However, the brothers' kindness is not matched by their discernment, and the Three Old Toads frequently fall victim to grifters. Several times, these con artists have stolen enough money to threaten the Three Old Kegs with bankruptcy, and the brothers have been forced to find outside help to recover their lost funds and keep the tavern solvent.

## THE UNDERCELLAR

Beneath the Wide is a maze of storage chambers, ale cellars, and cobwebbed tunnels known collectively as the Undercellar. Archways, many with iron-barred gates and rusty but functional locks, connect one cobbled chamber to the next. Some tunnels ascend to street-level buildings, while others open through grates and sewer covers to the streets themselves. At least two dozen ways into and out of the Undercellar exist, although only a few are widely known, and some are deliberately kept secret.

Most Baldurians know of the Undercellar as a seedy speakeasy and brothel. The Watch and the Flaming Fist never police the Undercellar, leaving it to a gang of masked toughs who call themselves the Cellarers to enforce order. This near-total absence of the law makes the Undercellar a popular place of business for unsavory characters who would never risk being caught in the Upper City otherwise. Their "indulgence rooms" offer gambling, prostitution, exotic intoxicants, and pit fights between animals—such as giant sewer rats pitted against dog-sized spiders. Most ordinary citizens who venture into the Undercellar for a taste of danger keep to these areas.

However, those in search of more serious danger can generally find it. Several gray and black marketeers



hold heavily reinforced, Guild-approved secure rooms in the Undercellar, from which they deal in weapons, illicit disguises, counterfeit Watch tokens, rare poisons, and other contraband. Access to these dealers requires Guild approval or significant bribes to the Cellarers.

In addition to harboring illicit businesses, the Undercellar is rumored to run throughout much of the Upper City. Its secret tunnels wind beneath numerous patriarchal manors, banks, businesses, and even the High Hall itself, connecting through false walls in wine cellars and basements throughout the district. Some of the walls are supposedly thin enough for an eavesdropper to overhear all manner of sensitive plans and scandalous liaisons.

A gaunt, bearded man named Heltur “Ribbons” Ribbond rules the Undercellar with an oily, too-affable manner and a wide grin that only makes his scar-seamed face more menacing. Ribbons has never been seen to lose his temper, even when hurling knives and bottles with deadly accuracy at unruly guests. It’s taken as an article of faith that he must be a kingpin or otherwise high-placed within the Guild.

## UNROLLING SCROLL

Built of white marble, with an arched roof of vibrant red edged in gold leaf, the temple of Oghma stands out among the surrounding buildings. A wide reflecting pool rests in a deep basin under its roof, which is built with exceptional acoustics so that a speaker’s words project clearly and effortlessly across the assembled audience. This has made the shrine a popular place for weddings, dedication ceremonies, and other oaths.

Legend holds that bards and artists who study their own reflections in the basin for half a day, opening their minds to Oghma’s will as they do, behold a vision to inspire their next creation. The reflective period can be dawn to dusk, midnight to midday, or any other period. As the Unrolling Scroll stands in the Upper City, though, non-residents of the district are evicted after sundown.

## VANTHAMPUR VILLA

Vanthampur Villa is a stately stone edifice with a detached stable house. Both buildings have sloped rooftops covered with red clay tiles. A 12-foot-high stone wall encloses the villa.

Duke Vanthampur can’t stand the rank gossip that hangs in the air of the Manorborn neighborhood. Thus, her estate lies in the Temples neighborhood of the Upper City, as far away from the other patriarchs as one can get while still being visible to them.

## WATCH CITADEL

The Upper City’s guard force uses the Watch Citadel as training grounds, barracks, and organizational offices. A stable holds the Watch’s warhorses, while a few jail cells can host ordinary prisoners awaiting transport to trials in the High Hall or prison in the Seatower of Balduran.

High Constable and Master of Walls Osmurl Havanack, a dwarf with a deep loyalty to his constables and no taste for city politics, functions as the Watch Citadel’s castellan. Havanack ensures that the Citadel is provisioned, that pay is correctly disbursed by the purse master, and that the Citadel and Old Wall are properly maintained. He also disciplines Watch soldiers accused of misdeeds—accusations that he takes very seriously and does his best to investigate. High Constable Havanack is known to have no tolerance for misconduct in his ranks, but he is only one person, and much escapes his notice.

From the Citadel, the Watch runs regular patrols through the Upper City and staffs the Old Wall, day and night. Many Watch officers are patriarchs themselves, hailing from families with a long and proud tradition of service to Baldur’s Gate. As most live in the Upper City, members of the Watch are familiar with the city’s patriarchs and possess a well-developed ability to spot pretenders. Many Watch members interact with citizens from the other districts only at the gates, and then usually under tense and stressful circumstances that foster jaundiced views.

Because few of its members have ever lived outside their privileged walls, the Watch tends to be blind to the day-to-day hardships of life outside the Upper City. Watch soldiers can be suspicious if not outright contemptuous of those whose lower-class mannerisms mark them as “of poor breeding.” While most officers attempt to enforce a code of civility toward all Baldurians, a current of antipathy toward the poor runs deep through the Watch, though it more often manifests as condescension than outright hostility. Absent unusual circumstances, the Watch always gives the benefit of the doubt to a patriarch or Upper City resident, and never takes an Outer City denizen’s word over anyone else’s.

## WATCHFUL SHIELD

Helm’s shrine in Baldur’s Gate consists of a small chapel flanked by wings at its door and a vigilant eye inscribed in silver above the lintel. The chapel’s services are regularly attended by Watch members, Flaming Fist soldiers, bodyguards, and anyone else who feels the weight of responsibility to protect others. When called upon by the Watch or the Flaming Fist,

Helm's clergy aids in maintaining the city's walls and turning back those who would storm its gates. Although the God of Guardians and his faithful carry out their duties impartially and without concern for the city's politics, this role has nevertheless earned them considerable resentment in the Outer City.

Helm's clerics provide healing to any willing to make a donation in gold or arms. They uphold a long-standing tradition of waving this donation for those who suffer grievous wounds in the course of defending other. This leads to all manner of unlikely stories being told at the Watchful Shield's gates, explaining how roughed-up brawlers or Guild cutthroats actually suffered their wounds performing heroic acts.

## THE WIDE

By law, all commercial buying and selling not done in a licensed and taxed establishment must be conducted in the Wide, the city's most prominent civic space and public market. Every morning sees an influx of vendors setting up their stalls and taking deliveries from a small army of porters. Every sunset, vendors cart their unsold wares back out, or pay exorbitantly expensive warehouse storage fees. In the hours between, the Wide hosts a vibrant, crowded market where fortune-tellers and con artists sit beside dealers hawking spices, fish, furs, perfumes, and every other luxury good to be found across the continent and beyond. Despite its crowds, the Wide is well regulated, the Watch keeping a sharp eye out for pickpockets. Street musicians are forbidden on pain of heavy fines and expulsion from the market, so the Wide proves more subdued than the chaotic markets of the Outer City. Quiet performers, such as puppeteers and sleight-of-hand tricksters, are common.

Jedren Hiller, the Bailiff of the Wide, assigns stall placements to merchants each morning. Longtime regulars and merchants who reside in the Upper City get most of the prime placements, while those who are less established—or stingy with Hiller's expected bribes—get undesirable places in the less trafficked corners. The bailiff's corruption is legendary in Baldur's Gate, but few merchants see any alternative to greasing his palms, particularly as the profits from a good day's trade vastly outweigh the losses.

**Statue of Minsc and Boo.** For years the Wide hosted one of the city's most cherished landmarks: the Beloved Ranger, a statue of a powerful warrior in plate mail wearing a cheerful grin and cradling a hamster in his hands. Recently, though, the statue was revealed to be the Rashemi hero, Minsc, and his "miniature giant space hamster" companion, Boo, trapped under the effects of petrifying magic. When the magic was

dispelled, it freed the heroes to walk the world once more but robbed the Wide of a bit of its charm. The merchants complained loudly, and a replacement statue of Minsc and Boo was promptly commissioned and set atop the pedestal where the actual heroes stood for years.

## LOWER CITY

A crescent of steeply sloping neighborhoods plays home to the common folk of Baldur's Gate. The Lower City is a chaotic tangle of conjoined, slate-roofed buildings, its narrow cobblestone thoroughfares spanned by bridges and buttresses designed to keep overflowing tenements from tumbling into the streets. As cramped and noisy as the Lower City can be during the day, bustling with business from a thousand shops, the district turns eerily quiet at night. Though lit by street lamps and traversed by hired lantern bearers, the darkened streets are far from safe, and those citizens not running taverns or other late-night establishments tend to lock their doors and bar their colorful window shutters as the river's dense fog rolls in.

Nearly everyone in the Lower City is engaged in some sort of trade. Crime of all sorts is rampant, from petty smuggling to outright robbery and murder. Though the city government tries to curtail this by paying the Flaming Fist to patrol the streets, the mercenaries sometimes seem more like an occupying army than a true police force, better suited to indiscriminate head-cracking than delicate investigation. As such, while most residents are happy to shout for the Fist when beset by obvious criminals, they also band together into local crews to better watch each other's backs and settle more subtle scores. In such an environment, laws are often treated as suggestions, and while most residents are just ordinary folks trying to get by, there's truth to the old adage that everyone in Baldur's Gate has a secret to keep.

## GATES

The three gates of the Lower City are ripe with logistical, historical, and metaphorical significance. Though tokens are not required to pass through the gates connecting with the Outer City, using any gate comes with a 5 cp entry toll and erratic investigation of cargo and suspicious individuals.

**Baldur's Gate.** The oldest and least impressive of the city's gates, Baldur's Gate nevertheless remains the city's heart. As the only gate allowing ordinary people through the Old Wall, Baldur's Gate embodies the power imbalance between rich Upper City patriars and Lower City commoners. Once the sole gate leading

to the harbor, it's still the primary route by which the city's wealth flows from port to patriar.

**Basilisk Gate.** Piercing the city's eastern wall, this statue-lined gate connects the Lower City to the great Coast Way, stretching through the majority of the Outer City and then southeast toward Amn, Tethyr, and Calimshan.

**Cliffgate.** This foggy minor gate grants access to the Tumbledown neighborhood and its graveyards. Many stories claim that Cliffgate is haunted by the spirits of former citizens seeking reentry to the city and passage back to their homes, but locals know that any mysterious disappearances are more likely the result of a quick mugging and a long fall to the river below.

## NEIGHBORHOODS

General wealth, predominant profession, and traditions divide the Lower City into several neighborhoods. These divisions foster stereotypes and rivalries between city residents, some comical, some age-old insults that can quickly turn violent.

**Bloomridge.** The wealthiest and most fashionable Lower City residents gravitate toward the commanding views of Bloomridge, where townhouses squeeze in among upscale boutiques and cafes, their rooftop gardens and tiled terraces creating explosions of cheerful color.

**Brampton.** The easternmost Lower City neighborhood, Brampton is notoriously poor, its location making it the worst for residents seeking to serve Upper City denizens—but the best for smuggling in untaxed goods from Rivington.

**Eastway.** Home to the Basilisk Gate, Eastway is the city's primary gateway to the Outer City and the world beyond, catering to travelers with its profusion of inns, porters, and caravan supplies, as well as to Outer City residents looking for reasonably priced Lower City luxuries. The flow of travelers and strangers through this neighborhood makes it one of the most dangerous parts of the city, as criminals prey on those unfamiliar with the city and without local ties to avenge them.

**Heapside.** A solidly middle-class neighborhood, Heapside has its share of shops but tends to be more residential, catering to the city's workforce with ancient but reasonably priced homes and only a moderate likelihood of being stabbed in the street.

**Seatower.** Everything in this neighborhood revolves around the Seatawer of Balduran. The best armorers and weaponsmiths in the city can be found here, along with residences for Fist mercenaries and their families. Dance halls, fighting dens, taverns, and other delights jockey for position near the fortress's causeway, hoping to be the first place a carousing mercenary

stumbles into, and each Flaming Fist payday sees the neighborhood swell into the most boisterous corner of the city as soldiers celebrate with riotous good cheer and flagrant street brawls.

**The Steeps.** As the most direct route from the harbor to the Upper City via Baldur's Gate, the Steeps has a natural advantage in securing business from wealthy travelers, and many of the city's most successful merchants maintain lucrative storefronts along its dramatically steep thoroughfares. This also makes it the Lower City neighborhood most likely to be visited by patriars, and thus the Steeps sees more than its fair share of patrols by the Flaming Fist.

## CREW TERRITORIES

The fact that city's numerous crews can be based on both geographical and professional communities means that their territories often overlap or stretch beyond the borders of any particular neighborhood. The Harborhands, for instance, can be found across the Lower City wherever a neighborhood touches the water, but would rarely try to flex its claim outside of the actual docks and piers. More common is the situation of groups like the Greengrocers' Guild or the Brethren of Barbers, who operate out of all corners of the city and therefore claim no physical territory at all, banding together only in the interests of their trade. For many such crews, there's often no need for a formal meeting place—they meet whenever and wherever necessary, in shop stockrooms or around kitchen tables, and have little interest in banners and sigils.

Still, there's no denying that certain crews dominate certain corners of the city. Sometimes this is the result of a community forming its own crew in a direct attempt to control and protect its neighborhood. Such is the case with the Bloomridge Dandies, wealthy merchant scions who loudly proclaim that the Flaming Fist isn't doing enough to protect their neighborhood, and who relish the opportunity to display their bravery by patrolling neighborhood taverns wearing expensive swords and purple armbands. More often, physical territory is the result of a citywide crew having a natural local nexus, such as the Porters' Union and the Butchers' Block tending to dominate Eastway, as their members congregate near the Basilisk Gate for easy access to the stockyards and incoming caravans.

Unless there's active conflict between two crews, most members are content to work with members of other crews, and see little point in staking out physical turf. After all, a neighborhood needs many different professions to thrive—carpenters and cooks, grocers and apothecaries—and the fact that siblings



and spouses often belong to different crews helps keep inter-crew conflict to a minimum.

## LOWER CITY GAZETTEER

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Presented below in alphabetical order are some of the most noteworthy Lower City locations.

### BALDUR'S MOUTH

Patronized by all levels of society, Baldur's Mouth is the city's primary news service and gossip rag. Utilizing a small army of lantern bearers, the Mouth spreads news both by selling broadsheets on street corners and by shouting summaries of top stories at passersby. From the slums of the Outer City to the finest manor house sitting rooms, the Mouth is where Baldurians go to be informed, incited, and pleasantly scandalized. While some of the news—such as word of new laws passed by the Council of Four or official election results—is handed down directly by the government, most comes from freelance journalists, and official pronouncements often sit side by side with scathing editorials or unflattering political cartoons of those same officials.

Ettvard Needle runs the operation from a surprisingly modest converted warehouse in Heapside. The son of an established Lower City tailor, he had always rankled at the way Lower City residents were treated by haughty patriars, and started Baldur's Mouth as a way to empower the city's poor via what he saw as the greatest weapon of social change: information. In the beginning, he simply paid local lantern bearers to shout his stories of upper-crust injustices, but as enthusiasm for the practice built and more people began bringing him information, he began writing the stories down for his distributors—teaching many of them to read in the process—and then selling the notes directly. Today, Needle prints his broadsheets by the cartload, aided by mechanical scribes purchased from the Hall of Wonders and funded by advertisements from merchants across the city.

Though beholden to advertisers and tacitly sanctioned by the city government, the Mouth has never lost its populist bent. Needle carefully ensures that the paper is useful enough to the government that it's never in their interest to shut it down, yet devotes the rest of the paper to news the government might prefer hushed up, from aristocratic scandal and evidence of corruption to straight talk about various threats to the city, always with a healthy dose of anti-elite rhetoric. His editorials have a particular soft spot for his friend Rilsa Rael, the Guild kingpin of Little Calimshan. While Needle loathes the Guild, he sees in

Rilsa's egalitarian tendencies the potential for a hero of the people, and naively hopes she'll transform the Guild from a predatory criminal organization into a community police force serving the city's downtrodden.

Baldur's Mouth is a prime source of opportunity for adventurers in the city, as Needle is always looking to hire daring "investigative reporters" willing to investigate rumors of strange happenings or procure proof of corruption by the city's elite. Even just reading the broadsheet can present adventure opportunities via advertisements recruiting mercenaries, half-substantiated reports of monster attacks ignored by the Flaming Fist, and more. And of course, should adventurers succeed or fail in some high-profile venture, they might just find caricatures of themselves and stories of their exploits in the Mouth's latest edition.

### BLADE AND STARS

This comfortable inn was named for its original sign, an enchanted wooden shield. Painted black, the circular shield displayed an image of a curved silver saber gripped by a pale, slender arm. An enchantment on the shield caused glimmering, starlike motes of light to sparkle along the saber's blade. The former innkeeper of the Blade and Stars, a half-orc named Aurayaun, used to insist that the illusory effect was the shield's only magic, and that it did exactly what she intended it to do: draw in business. Still, it appears that there's more to the shield's story, for recently both Aurayaun and the shield disappeared. Since then, Aurayaun's worried wife Lupin (human) has been running the inn and loudly expressing her belief that the disappearance is the result of foul play. What kind of foul play, she has no idea.

While Aurayaun was quiet about her past, she had no enemies that Lupin knew about. Lupin furiously rejects the Flaming Fist's conclusion that her wife simply abandoned her. A local vagrant claims to have seen Aurayaun climb up and remove the sign-shield late on the night she went missing, then vanish into an alley with a cloaked figure. Since then, though, Lupin has received parcels containing pieces of the shattered shield, each bearing a tiny constellation upon it. Lupin is convinced it's a map, but to where, and whether that destination is terrestrial or the heavens she doesn't know. She's willing to pay to find out, though.

### BLUSHING MERMAID

Infamous up and down the Sword Coast, the Blushing Mermaid is known as the best tavern and inn in Baldur's Gate for those looking to get their teeth kicked

in, or to kick in someone else's. Always one spilled drink away from a brawl, the bar is the sort of place most don't visit unless they're well-armed or with a lot of friends—preferably both. The place takes its name from the life-sized wooden mermaid hanging above the incongruous reception desk, a dozen blackened and withered hands nailed to its body—souvenirs left by those who refused to pay their bill.

Beyond the combination lobby and common room, the Blushing Mermaid is a confusing maze of wings and oddly interconnected floors, hiding dozens of small and shabby rooms and at least four levels of cellars. Few people bother to sleep at the Mermaid, due in part to its operators' loud pronouncement that they aren't responsible for any losses, including those of life and limb. Instead, its plethora of back rooms and antechambers act as *de facto* offices for the menagerie of shady characters who spend their days drinking here. Ostensibly retired sailors, the bar's regulars are in fact contacts for a variety of unsavory organizations, from smugglers and bandits to fences, drug dealers, and panderers. Some work for the Guild, others for operations all along the Sword Coast. Those looking to do business with the Gate's underworld find that a handful of silver in the Mermaid can open doors, but the wrong word can find you dumped unconscious in the alley out back. While the Mermaid's criminal aspects are an open secret, the place is well connected enough that the Flaming Fist traditionally leaves it alone.

### CANDULHALLOW'S FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS

For as long as anyone can remember, the moon elves of the Candulhallow family have managed the city's small fleet of corpse carts. Though family members rarely push carts themselves anymore, their terse agents are a constant sight around the city, picking up the dead and using hand-drawn wagons to haul their shrouded loads to the Shrine of the Suffering or outlying cemeteries, funded by city stipends and tips from grieving loved ones.

### COUNTING HOUSE

This thick-walled fortress of commerce has been a center of trade in Baldur's Gate for centuries, acting as the primary location for banking and currency exchange. As much a bunker as a bank, the Counting House squats on the waterfront, its two windowless upper stories heavily guarded. Most ordinary patrons never make it past the ground-level offices, yet the majority of the Counting House stretches below, extending down into the mud like a cylindrical stone taproot. Here are the building's legendary vaults,

where the city's patriars and merchants from across the world store items too valuable to be trusted to lesser security. Only the most vetted of humanoid guards are allowed in the Counting House's depths. Instead, stone golems patrol the twisting lower corridors, while water elementals circle the outside in flooded channels, keeping thieves from tunneling into the magically warded vaults.

A gold dwarf named Rakath Glitterbeard acts as the bank's proprietor and key treasurer of the city's banking crew, the Honorable Order of Moneylenders. More importantly, he's also the Guild kingpin for the Steeps, controlling the lesser loan sharks and knee-cappers who cater to the city's more desperate credit risks, along with its outright thieves. Stolen treasures from innumerable heists reside in the Counting House's vaults alongside legitimate deposits, protected by the bank's walls and Rakath's web of political influence and predatory loans. Between the dwarf's sinister reputation and the bank's legendary security, few thieves would even contemplate trying to crack the Counting House—but anyone who succeeded would likely be set for life.

### EASTWAY EXPEDITIONS

Eastway Expeditions used to buy dubious exploration and dungeon-delving gear on the cheap—often from hollow-eyed early retirees—before marking it up to sell to optimistic would-be heroes. Scalm Shilvin, a tiefling woman, is the shop's slick, tail-coat-wearing tiefling proprietor. She made a decent living from her business, but all that changed when Baldur's Gate forged a lucrative trade alliance with the merchant princes of Port Nyanzaru in Chult.

Shilvin quickly capitalized on the growing interest in Chult, outfitting droves of green adventurers and directing them aboard ships headed south. Most never returned—leaving her uncertain of whether any of her “jungle-proof” or “dinosaur-deterring” equipment worked as she'd marketed. Eventually the local government got involved after several overly ambitious patriar scions vanished on ventures hastily outfitted by Eastway Expeditions. Now Shilvin can sell her modest selection of goods and any jungle-related gear only after a ten-day waiting period, helping to ensure that fewer citizens rush off to Chult unprepared. To make up for the resulting loss of business, Shilvin has made connections with several trading (and piratical) ventures in regular need of crew. Eastway Expeditions has since gained a lowkey reputation for helping people get out of the city fast, so long as they don't care overly much where they go.

## ELFSONG TAVERN

Despite its rough-and-tumble clientele, this tavern is one of the most popular in Baldur's Gate. From time to time, the disembodied voice of a female elf fills the tavern with a melancholy song, giving the establishment its name. The ballad isn't loud enough to disrupt conversation, but most patrons stop speaking when the elfsong begins, then resume only after it ends. Many customers frequent the tavern in the hopes of hearing it. Those who speak Elvish can understand the lyrics, which lament an unnamed lover lost at sea. No one is sure how the spirit came to haunt the tavern, just as no one can predict when it will sing again.

Alan Alyth, the tavern's current owner and proprietor, recently turned seventy-five years old and has run the establishment for decades. His elven blood through his half-elf mother has kept him alive this long, and keeps him looking better than most full-blooded humans his age. He runs a moneylending business on the side, offering loans to customers he trusts. He rarely gives loans to adventurers, knowing how flighty they can be, but he might offer them a free glass of elverquisst wine if he thinks it'll keep their swords sheathed.

## FELOGYR'S FIREWORKS

This four-story stone structure constantly streams smoke of unusual colors from various vents and chimneys. From the elaborate showroom spanning the bottom two floors, alchemist Avery Sonshal maintains his family's longstanding monopoly on smokepowder production in Baldur's Gate.

While smokepowder is reserved for the Council of Four and Gond's High House of Wonders, the shop sells a variety of lesser alchemical items to the public, from torches with colored flames to smoke grenades and fireworks, some of them enhanced with harmless illusions. While the windowless workshop filling the building's upper two stories is strictly off-limits, its stairwell blocked by a massive iron vault door and a thug hired from the Bannerless Legion, the mutton-chopped Avery is usually happy to chat with customers and other alchemical enthusiasts on the lower floors.

## GARMULT'S HOUSE OF MASTERY

Part school and part alehouse, this wide three-story building leans precariously over the street in Eastway. Run by an old, agender martial artist named Garmult, the House of Mastery offers both martial training of all sorts for the city's would-be warriors and a central hangout for the Bannerless Legion crew. Garmult assists crew leader Dezri "Guts" Lamouer

in matching clients with mercenaries. They also hire members to teach classes in the building's open-air atrium while other members lounge on the overlooking balconies. At any given time, there's usually multiple veteran mercenaries here swapping stories and waiting for contracts.

While anyone can pay Garmult to study in the House of Mastery, only those who've earned membership in the Bannerless Legion are welcome to socialize and find work here. Those who come around looking for such things are challenged to a friendly sparring match in the atrium, usually with Garmult. If they impress Garmult, they're welcomed with a laugh and a firm handshake, at which point Garmult is happy to hook the new members up with bodyguarding contracts and other work, taking only a nominal finder's fee. Though not everyone in the Legion is as welcoming of new members, Garmult allows only consensual, nonlethal sparring within their establishment. Few members challenge Garmult's authority for risk of missing out on future contracts.

### TAVERNS IN BALDUR'S GATE

No wise person walks the streets of Baldur's Gate or enters one of its taverns without a weapon or an armed escort. Anyone who has lived in the city for more than a tenday knows this from experience. Taverns might appear safe at a glance, but they are among the most dangerous places in Baldur's Gate—full of alcohol, tempting coin, and unscrupulous people. Volothamp Geddarm, a notorious raconteur known for his tavern reviews, encapsulates his Baldur's Gate experience as "hard on the stomach, especially when someone sticks a knife in there." Customers are expected to look after themselves when fights break out, and one shouldn't expect any help or sympathy from the Flaming Fist. Tavern murders are common, and usually end with the poor victim being dragged away and either left in an alley (to be picked clean by urchins, then eaten by rats) or tossed in the harbor. **Baldur's Bones.** Baldur's Bones is a popular dice game in the taverns of Baldur's Gate. Each player requires several six-sided dice. The rules are as follows:

- Each player puts the agreed ante in the pot.
- Each player rolls three dice. Play then proceeds clockwise around the table, with the host of the game going last.
- On their turn, a player can choose to "stand" or "roll." If the player stands, the next player can take a turn. A player who rolls takes an additional die and rolls it. If the total of their dice exceeds 21, they "bust" and are out of the game. Otherwise they can keep rolling additional dice until they either stand or break.
- After everyone has had a turn, the highest point total (excluding players who busted) wins the game and takes the pot.



## HARBORSIDE HOSPITAL

Generations ago, an outbreak of extremely contagious dancing croup—a deadly plague that caused those afflicted to cough themselves to death even as their limbs thrashed uncontrollably—caused many Baldurians to rethink their approach to medicine. Requiring individual victims to seek out healing from their respective clergies accelerated the disease's spread as the infected traveled to different houses of worship throughout the city, overwhelming the facilities at each. In the aftermath, the Lower City decided to consolidate. While patriars might still be able to afford house calls and personal priests and physicians, commoners funded the building of a single large facility where everyone could come for treatment. Eager to no longer have every worship service interrupted by contagious congregants, several of the city's temples were only too happy to provide clerics to work in the facility. Of course, coin still determines one's quality of care, the clerics rarely work for free, and those without sufficient funds generally end up in the ominously stained basement with the surgeons-in-training—but at least those in need know where they can go for help. Chronically understaffed, especially in those wards catering to poor Outer City residents, the hospital has constant security problems, from angry patients to spontaneously arising undead, unethical or experimental treatments by priests of non-good faiths, or excessive withdrawals from the stores of painkilling narcotics.

It perhaps says something about Baldur's Gate that city officials decided to build the hospital right next to Cliffgate, convenient to the graveyard and as far as possible from the wealthy neighborhoods.

## HISSING STONES

This low stone bathhouse in the Seatower neighborhood is one of the oldest buildings in the area. Built in the Chessentan style, it features heated pools, echoing halls, and gorgeous tile mosaics. The Hissing Stones hold a special niche in Baldurian politics due to its status as a neutral, safe, and private meeting place. Its longtime proprietor, a female moon elf named Marilyn Allaryr, ensures that clients enter the baths bearing nothing but the thin robes she provides, leaving all weapons and other possessions with her. Marilyn's reputation, and that of her highly capable attendants, is formidable enough that even rival crews or businesses engaged in the tensest of negotiations never violate the house's rule against violence.

This establishment's commitment to discretion also makes the bathhouse the prime venue for paid companionship in the Lower City. Many of the most

sought-after courtesans meet their patrons in the Hissing Stones' steamy private rooms, trusting to Marilyn's silence and the house's reputation for business meetings to deflect the suspicion of jealous spouses or gossipy wags. Unlike Marilyn, the Reveler's Union—the city-spanning crew of night-workers—isn't averse to selling secrets teased from the bathhouse's clients, and those looking to purchase such information need only whisper in the right ear here. Though this dichotomy keeps Marilyn herself from officially joining the Union, the crew uses the location as its *de facto* headquarters, regularly renting out and conducting meetings in its vast central pool.

## INSIGHT PARK

Forty years ago, a shield dwarf named Torimesh arrived home in the city after decades of adventuring abroad and purchased this small portion of the hillside. Too steep to build on, the area had long been an illegal junkyard, with locals standing atop a rocky promontory and dumping their refuse over the edge of the embankment. Instead of clearing the debris away, Torimesh used magic to nurture the local plants, causing a forest of green to grow up over the garbage, rusting away debris and creating soft lawns and thickets shot through with small recesses and tunnels where the old refuse had piled high. This revamped space he dedicated as a public park, arguing that the poor need to feel nature's touch just as much as rich patriars with their manicured gardens. Torimesh himself lives in a tiny hut backed against the jutting outcropping still known as Dumper's Rock.

The main appeal of Insight Park is the Drawing Tree. Planted by Torimesh and grown to full-size in a matter of days, the tree is of a species no one can identify, and Torimesh steadfastly refuses to say anything about its origins, yet everyone knows its power. When properly entreated by Torimesh, the tree's red bark cracks and curls like parchment. Pulling it carefully away reveals a prophetic scene rendered in bloody sap. These arboreal visions of the future are often cryptic, yet inevitably come to pass. As much as the city's elite would love to harness this power, anyone else attempting to peel the tree's bark or force a prophecy reveals only bark and sends Torimesh into a near-murderous rage. For his part, the druid refuses to work for money, peeling off prophecies only according to the unspoken whims of the tree, or in exchange for bizarre and dangerous favors.

## JOPALIN'S

After taking over from his father, a male half-elf thug named Jopalin transitioned this building

from a seedy dockside tavern to a thriving, upscale teahouse. Many were shocked by the growth of such a sophisticated establishment among the port's lowbrow customers, but no one can deny the addictive nature of the half-elf proprietor's special blend.

### LOW LANTERN

This old, three-masted ship rocks gently in the water alongside Stormshore Street Dock on the harbor's eastern side. A notorious festhall and tavern, the ship is no longer seaworthy and is in desperate need of repair.

On warm days and evenings, respectable clients can sit at tables on the upper deck beneath hanging lanterns, smoking and drinking between wagers, while a more raucous crowd congregates around bars and gambling tables on the decks below.

The Low Lantern is quiet during the day, with just a few patrons drinking and gambling below decks. The place comes alive at night, and is a popular site for conducting clandestine meetings with some of the city's least scrupulous inhabitants, including pirates and off-duty Flaming Fist mercenaries.

The owner and proprietor is Laraelra Thundreth, a middle-aged female human mage known as "the Captain" to her staff and regular patrons. Laraelra doesn't concern herself with the private affairs of her clientele, nor does she mind when visitors get rowdy or turn violent—as long as they're willing to pay for damages afterward. In public, Laraelra is often seen with her crab perched on one shoulder.

### MANDORCAI'S MANSION

The only blight in otherwise upscale Bloomridge, this mansion appeared out of nowhere in the middle of the night, taking over a previously vacant lot. Fully staffed with close-lipped servants, the imposing manse hosted a few lavish parties for the Lower City elite, presided over by an eccentric and brooding human wizard named Mandorcai. And then, just as suddenly as he had arrived, Mandorcai shut the manor's doors and vanished from public life. Curious locals who peered through the windows reported a completely empty manor, its furniture looking as though it hadn't been touched in years. Yet soon thereafter, individuals around the city began to receive invitations to visit, written in silver on black paper folded into pentagons.

Those who entered the mansion for the requested appointments never emerged. After a handful of such disappearances, a Flaming Fist squad smashed its way into the building. Only two of its members emerged, babbling about shifting rooms and blood-soaked abattoirs filled with writhing hooks and chains. With

no laborers willing to tear the place down, the Council of Four boarded up the doors but left the mansion standing. For decades now, no one has been observed going in or out. Whether the little black invitations that still occasionally appear on citizens' doorsteps are genuine or harmless pranks remains anyone's guess.

### SEATOWER OF BALDURAN

The headquarters of the Flaming Fist stands on a rocky islet in the harbor, its sheer walls erupting from the stone in such a way as to grant invaders from the sea few footholds. From the fortress's five stout towers, specially made Gondan trebuchets stand ready to hurl stones three times the distance of an ordinary siege weapon, giving the fortress command of not just the entire harbor but the opposite bank of the river as well. Any invading ships not intimidated by such death from above would also have to contend with the massive chain running from the Seatower to pilings under the easternmost wharf in Brampton. A capstan in the tower can raise the chain, stretching it across the harbor mouth and keeping anything larger than a rowboat from entering or leaving. As for land-based attacks, the 400-foot-long causeway connecting the Seatower's islet to the shore needs no gates or drawbridges, as any attackers foolish enough to charge along its length would be easy marks for the wall's archers.

Roughly a hundred Flaming Fist soldiers occupy the fortress at any given time, along with the residents of the Officers' Tower. In the central bailey, the organization's vast armory holds every weapon a mercenary company could need, along with trophies from campaigns abroad, a priceless library of war-related texts, and more. Rumors also speak of the Fist's treasury, kept in a lead-lined vault somewhere beneath the Officers' Tower and surrounded by yards of solid stone, the secret doors leading to its vaults hidden by clever mechanisms and cleverer magic.

In addition to defending the city, the Seatower also serves as the local prison of Baldur's Gate. Three levels of dungeons extend beneath it, the lower two below sea level and integrating part of a naturally occurring cavern system. This both keeps the prison secure and pacifies prisoners, as any who act out know that they can always be moved from the dry cells to the dank lower levels. Particularly problematic inmates end up in the Swimming Hole—a flooded and lightless shaft where prisoners must constantly tread water or risk drowning, while also fending off the blind, biting shrimp that dwell there. Though long-term incarceration is rare in the city, there are always a few inmates rotting in these cells, ranging from petty criminals to political prisoners locked away

on trumped-up charges.

Individuals who run seriously afoul of the law in Baldur's Gate might wind up in the Seatower. While the Fist treats the prison as something of an afterthought, any trying to break in or out of the dungeons still have their work cut out for them. Only the upper cells have windows, and anyone trying to break through the walls of the lower cells risks catastrophic flooding. Sentries are constantly on alert for ships drawing suspiciously near the island, and no one is allowed through the fortress's gate without a reason and an escort. Cells themselves have heavy steel doors with high-quality locks, with the keys held by Jailer Albrecht Little or his second, Jailer Cogrus Stonehammer. Soldiers are often assigned to "cell duty" as a temporary punishment—while this generally means rougher treatment for prisoners, the regular turnover might present a sliver of opportunity for anyone attempting a rescue.

## SESKERGATES

Once home to the Sesker merchant family, this tall, gaudy mansion was abandoned after the last member of the family died in it under mysterious circumstances several years ago. Shortly thereafter, a mage from Athkatla named Imbralym Skoond bought the place to use as his home and magical workshop, drawn there by stories of the structure's original builder, a smuggler who turned the place into a warren of secret passages, hidden rooms, false walls, and concealed entrances, most of which have now been forgotten.

Ambitious and thoroughly amoral, Skoond rose to prominence as the Council of Four's wizard, doing regular favors for the council to further his own plots. Though rarely home, he boards four alchemist lackeys in the building, along with several guards, using the secret passages to cover their comings and goings. Their only job is to uncover and map out as many of the building's secrets as possible—one of the histories Skoond read suggested that the building's original architect had died while smuggling a rare magical tome, leading him to suspect that it still lies hidden in the house's walls.

## SEWER KEEP

Like many port cities, Baldur's Gate has traditionally dumped its sewage downstream and let the river carry its problems elsewhere. As the city grew, however, this began to dangerously pollute the river, leading a coalition of druids and patriars to construct the Sewer Keep. A series of three towers built into the walls at the western end of the Seatower neighborhood, the facility was intended to treat the sewage just before

it enters the river, using vast enclosed holding tanks of magically augmented plants to purify the effluent. Though the facility was a marvel of magical ecological engineering, the public proved singularly unwilling to care about their waste, and funding quickly collapsed. Since then, the Keep has been a shadow of its intended glory, struggling to keep the worst of Baldur's Gate from the waterway.

Today, the facility still operates, but mostly as a headquarters and cover for the Sewerkeepers crew. Most of the "druids" and technicians running the plant are anything but—instead, they're a specialized thieving crew that uses the keep's position to pass unseen through the city's network of sewer pipes and cisterns. From this warren of tunnels, they can smuggle goods and conduct daring burglaries, as well as occasionally acting as subterranean monster-hunters and paid guides through the city's guts.

The Sewerkeepers' leader, Genamine Kopali, also acts as the Guild kingpin for the Seatower neighborhood. Along with a spectrum of ne'er-do-wells, her crew also contains several actual druids who keep the facility running and control the crew's several guardian beasts, including a number of sweet-smelling shambling mounds that live in the tanks, churning them as part of the purification process. Mortlock Vanthampur pays Genamine to keep him apprised of strange activities in the sewers. Mortlock, in turn, reports whatever he learns to his mother, Duke Thalamra Vanthampur.

## SHRINE OF THE SUFFERING

This simple stone shrine to Ilmater, god of martyrs and patient endurance, stands in a small, quiet square, the edges of its plaza thick with the pallets and meager belongings of the Lower City's homeless population. Here, poor Baldurians can come to receive free meals and enough coppers to pay their way through the city's gates, thanks to the ministrations of Brother Hodges, a male strongheart halfling. Supported by donations from all ranks of society and beloved by their community, the halfling cleric and his adult children Hansen and Sissa can inevitably be found here chatting with the city's downtrodden, offering what healing and alms they can.

The church's only source of non-donation income is a twisting series of crypts that extends down from an entrance behind the altar, at several points piercing the city's sewers. For a small fee, anyone can have a corpse brought down into the cramped tomb, where hordes of sewer rats flood in to eat the flesh, leaving (mostly) clean bones to be interred in the attached ossuary by Ilmater's faithful. While a somewhat ignoble end, it's often the only holy-ground burial the city's poor can afford, and Brother Hodges does his best to



bring quiet dignity to the practice. However, a fertile carrion crawler has recently slithered up from the sewers to feast on the corpses in the tomb, leaving a trail of squirming young wherever it passes. Brother Hodges is incensed by the desecration, but doesn't dare face the beasts himself, and the Flaming Fist has been slow to come to his aid. Though the church can't pay, he would gratefully offer free healing to anyone who dealt with the menace.

## SMILIN' BOAR

With its downright ribald menu of salaciously renamed breakfast foods, the Smilin' Boar was always intended to cause a stir in well-to-do Bloomridge. Yet the current buzz is more than owner Jentha Allinamuch, a female strongheart halfling, ever intended. For the past six months, bodies have been appearing in the alley just behind the halfling's café. More than a dozen have appeared so far, never with any witnesses as to how they go there. The victims have no apparent commonalities—being of all ages, races, genders, and social classes, and having disappeared from points all across the city—yet there's no question in anyone's mind that the same killer is responsible, as each is found with curved slices across their wrists and a heart-piercing wound. The whole district is astir over the murders, but so far the Fist hasn't been able to turn up any leads on what locals have fearfully dubbed the Sickie Man. With business plummeting, Jentha is as eager as any grieving family to find answers, and would happily pay independent investigators to help track down the killer.

## SORCEROUS SUNDRIES

A dome of stained glass roofs this tall, round shop, casting chaotic shafts of color down across several open-air floors that rise upon wooden pillars, connected by staircases and ladders. While the living quarters upstairs teem with rare plants and bookcases, the bottom floor acts as one of the most popular magic shops in the city. Inside its delicate-looking but magically warded walls, customers can buy and sell all manner of curios and common magic items from the eccentric shopkeeper, Rivalen Blackhand, a male human mage with a withered right hand.

## WATER QUEEN'S HOUSE

The oldest temple in Baldur's Gate, the Water Queen's House clings to its enormous pier like a monster of the deep, its stone walls trailing over the side and descending down beneath the waves and river mud. At the pier's tip, a huge fountain in the shape of a sinking

ship sprays water high, reminding faithful of the price of failing to appease Umberlee.

The intimidating Allandra Grey leads the temple's score of waveservants, most of them women widowed or orphaned by the sea. Ordinary Baldurians rarely see the waveservants, and never step inside the temple. When the faithful wish to make offerings, they must ring a bell by the door. Two waveservants answer the door, one accepting the offering inside while the other says a short prayer in the doorway. Once the prayer is spoken and the donation collected, they step back and close the door.

Though no outsiders know exactly how the temple's finances work, the dour waveservants buy little in the markets save essentials. The rest of the tithes are carried in solemn procession down crumbling, moss-covered stairs that cling to the outside of the temple and descend into the murky water. The waveservants disappear below the water for a few minutes, only to return empty-handed. What happens to the treasures is anyone's guess, with some suggesting they're hidden in underwater vaults. Others believe the gifts are borne away by Umberlee herself.

## OUTER CITY

Dirty and uncouth, the Outer City holds everything the elite of Baldur's Gate resist allowing within their walls: the poor, refugees, tanneries and stockyards, and other industries that offend highborn sensibilities. Stretching forth from each of the city's external gates, the Outer City sprawls in a chaotic tangle of shanties and shops, carts and tents lining the roads in hopes of bleeding off enough city trade for their owners to survive. And indeed, much of the commerce in Baldur's Gate happens in these unregulated markets, with even patriars shopping from inside perfumed litters.

While smaller neighborhoods such as Tumbledown and Blackgate squat outside their respective gates, the majority of the Outer City runs along the Coast Way as it curves around the foot of Duskhawk Hill, between Wyrms Crossing and the city proper. Residents of these neighborhoods are not technically citizens and receive no representation in the government, nor do they receive the benefit of the city's police forces. The Flaming Fist rarely patrols the Outer City, usually emerging only to pursue Outer City residents for crimes committed within the walls.

The Outer City's challenges lead to small, tightly knit communities, where a person's honor and social connections are the only things standing between them and a quick death.

## APPROACHING THE CITY

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Visitors approaching Baldur's Gate by road first pass through the Outer City's ramshackle neighborhoods, their traffic hemmed in by cook fires, market stalls, and industries too noisy or repugnant for more genteel citizens. Here travelers must leave any sizable mounts or beasts of burden at one of countless stables and caravanserais before paying the fees to pass through the gates into the city proper. Travelers from the south are twice blessed in this regard, paying once for the bridge at Wyrms Crossing and again once they've run the gauntlet of Outer City neighborhoods circling Duskhawk Hill.

Travelers arriving via the river wait in the center of Gray Harbor, under the watchful eye of the Seatower, until one of the harbormaster's agents approaches in a fast-moving skiff. Protected by coteries of Gray Wavers (Flaming Fist veterans), these customs officials assess the boat's cargo, collect taxes, and sell hourly berth assignments at one of the city's many docks and piers. Large vessels may also pay to make use of the city's marvelous mechanical cranes, dramatically accelerating their unloading process.

## NEIGHBORHOODS

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The following neighborhoods make up the Outer City.

**Blackgate.** The Outer City settlement beyond the Black Dragon Gate, Blackgate serves those traveling to and from Waterdeep on the Trade Way. Huge stables cater to travelers' mounts, while a community of shield dwarf ironsmiths draws even residents of the Upper City with their skill.

**Little Calimshan.** This walled community's Calishite inhabitants fiercely guard their home from the Guild and the rest of Baldur's Gate.

**Norchapel.** The quietest of the Outer City neighborhoods, Norchapel caters to those residents willing to pay more than the usual protection money to the Guild, in exchange for having their safety and security.

**Rivington.** This self-contained village of anglers and river-powered mills is the first neighborhood encountered by travelers approaching from the south. Dominated by a local gang called the Rivington Rats, it's also a haven for smuggling thanks to its river access.

**Sow's Foot.** Here, expatriates from dozens of far-flung nations mingle with races ranging from lizardfolk to svirfneblin among the scents of exotic food and the calls of strange animals, banding together against a city that views them as outsiders.

**Stoneyeyes.** Just outside the Basilisk Gate that gives it its name, this neighborhood is full of stables

and stockyards. Many Outer City residents who work within the city live here to be as close as possible to their places of business. Among them is a significant community of half-orc porters.

**Tumbledown.** Off by itself overlooking the river, this perpetually foggy neighborhood hosts the Cliffside Cemetery.

**Twin Songs.** Standing ready to welcome visitors as they cross the river, Twin Songs is renowned for its enormous diversity of shrines and places of worship, from tiny roadside altars and idols to home-based temples. While those in search of significant magic must still generally visit the larger temples in the city proper, no god is too foreign or obscure to be worshiped in Twin Songs' divine sprawl, where even non-criminal worship of fiends and the Dead Three goes unchallenged.

**Whitkeep.** This neighborhood takes its name from the white manor house at its center, which houses the city's largest enclave of gnomes. Free-spirited and home to hordes of artists, the neighborhood would likely attract trendy city folk and price out the resident radicals, if not for its odoriferous tanneries.

**Wyrms Crossing.** This massive bridge crosses the Chionthar River. Shops and homes gird the bridge's edges.

## OUTER CITY GAZETTEER

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Dreams both flourish and die in the Outer City, which many say holds the best and worst of Baldur's Gate. The following are some of the best known and most infamous Outer City locations.

### BALDURAN LOOKS OUT TO SEA

Shortly after Balduran disappeared for the final time, this statue appeared on the cliffs of Tumbledown. Twice the size of the actual man, the statue bears an uncanny likeness to Balduran, squinting west over city and river. While its sudden arrival created something of a stir, most assumed it was simply a tribute to the great man—until one morning several months later when passersby noticed that one of the statue's hands had risen to shade its eyes. Scholars immediately began studying the statue, learning that at sunrise on the first day of each new year, the statue flickers, changing its position in an eyeblink. Though it always looks west, the precise line of its gaze can change by up to thirty degrees, and it may peer through a spyglass, stand with hands on hips, point with an open hand, and so on.

For centuries, the predominant theory was that Balduran still lived somewhere far to the west, and the statue tracked his movements. Yet a generation

ago, a knight of Oghma vowed to follow the line of the statue's gaze as far as necessary to learn the truth. His journey was shorter than expected. In a wood just a few miles west of the city, he came upon a cylindrical stone building, its open doorway revealing stairs leading down into the forest floor. Atop the building, a smaller statue of Balduran stared back the way he had come. Prevented from entering by a pattern of magical lights he couldn't identify, the knight raced back to the city to gather additional scholars—yet when he returned, the structure was gone. Since then, the forested structure—which popular stories now refer to as Balduran's Tomb—has been discovered three more times in the same fashion, each time in a different location, yet so far no one has been able to enter.

### CLIFFSIDE CEMETARY

The value of land and sheer population density in Baldur's Gate means only the wealthiest patriars can afford to bury their dead within the city, interring them in catacombs beneath the city's temples or in family crypts on their own grounds. For everyone else, there's the ignoble Shrine of the Suffering or the scattering of cemeteries outside the city. The largest of the latter is Cliffside Cemetery, located in the Tumbledown neighborhood and employing many local residents as gravediggers, stonemasons, morticians, and professional mourners. Long ago, the graveyard was an empty estate owned by the mercantile Szarr family, with only a few family crypts near the cliffs. When a business rival murdered the entire family in their beds, no one was eager to move into their former manor, and the city decided to turn the estate into a single massive graveyard that acts as the primary repository for the city's dead.

The graveyard itself is a maze of crypts and monuments, its organization nearly impossible for outsiders to discern as the multi-chamber ossuaries of rich merchants and pirate lords loom over the simple plaques and rotting wooden holy symbols of the poor. Natural cavern systems have been expanded and shored up to create extensive crypts, yet over generations maps have been lost or poorly updated, and it's not uncommon for a gravedigger to find themselves striking the wood of a coffin where no coffin should be, or tumbling through into a forgotten stretch of tunnel. Rampant grave robbery by brigands and necromancy-obsessed followers of Myrkul only increases the chaos, as bodies get exhumed and reburied wherever it's convenient. Most significantly, a major landslide decades ago dropped a large portion of the cemetery's cliff into the river below, causing the remaining bone-houses and markers to shift

and lean, while also exposing numerous crypts and tomb-tunnels to the air, prompting a fresh rush of grave robbing. Though Baldurians rarely bury their dead with valuables anymore, and many of the easier pickings have been taken, it's common wisdom that some of the greatest treasures of past centuries still lie entombed with their heroes, their headstones wiped anonymously clean by wind and rain.

Watching over all of this is the powerful Gravemakers crew. Far more than simply caretakers and laborers, the Gravemakers guard the dead—and Tumbledown—from threats. With so much death concentrated in one spot, undead are a constant problem. Skeletons and revenants regularly claw spontaneously out of their graves, while ghouls and ghaunts burrow into crypts and catacombs, drawn by the scent of decaying flesh. Wights hide in their tombs by day, while ghosts and wraiths terrorize unsuspecting mortals. Putting down such threats before they can prey on citizens is the Gravemakers' primary job, and though rightfully proud of their prowess, their leader Leone Wen a female human servant of Torm, is always looking for fresh recruits or contractors to join them in their crusade. The crew operates out of the half-burned old Szarr Mansion in the cemetery's center, its moldering halls reputedly still infested by the ghosts of the murdered Szarrs—though stories remain split as to whether the ghosts prey on the Gravemakers or aid them in their duty.

### CHURCH OF LAST HOPE

This combined chapel and asylum in the Twin Songs neighborhood has long offered sanctuary for the depressed and mentally ill. The few attendants ascribe to the faith of no particular god, but extol the virtues of meditation and whatever calm faiths visitors might bring with them.

Few seek the church's services on their own. Rather, most who come to dwell at the church either have a room rented for them by concerned family or receive a somewhat mysterious—and usually unexpected—invitation from the institute's superintendent, Mother Aramina, a female human priest. Aramina is a former Candlekeep scholar who's moved her lifelong study of psychology from the academic to the clinical. How Mother Aramina learns of individuals' distress and under what circumstances she offers free room and board in her facility is something of a mystery, but as of yet, none have discovered any sinister angle to her work. In fact, Mother Aramina has been known to hire empathic intermediaries to help extricate the needful from destructive conditions. Despite its charity, though,



the Church of Last Hope is not universally loved. The Faithless, the Guild-associated gang in Twin Songs, see a trove of wealthy city-dwellers and wishy-washy non-priests in their midst, ripe targets for protection schemes, kidnappings, and all manner of other plots. Currently none of the Church's patients have been endangered, but Mother Aramina is cautiously looking for more permanent security solutions.

### DANTHELON'S DANCING AXE

This two-story shop sells everything an adventurer might need, from weapons and armor to rowboats and mobile monster cages. Presiding over the crammed shelves is Entharl Danthelon, a shield dwarf who claims to have been an adventurer once himself, as evidenced by the magical flying axe that guards his shop at night. Customers are inevitably treated to the story of the grateful elven princess who enchanted the axe for him as a reward for a daring adventure undertaken on her behalf. Yssra Brackrel, a female half-elf mage and brilliant hairstylist, rents out the shop's attic. Yssra's cantankerousness is as legendary as the shop's flying axe, and anyone seeking just her spellcasting is subject to a frank and unflattering critique of their current coiffure.

### GARYNMOR STABLES AND MENAGERIE

As horses and other beasts of burden aren't allowed inside the city walls, the Outer City overflows with stables and hostlers, ranging from muddy pens to barns nicer than most inns. Of these, the largest is Garynmor Stables, which offers the unique benefit of operating locations in both Stonyeyes and Blackgate; those travelers passing through have the option of leaving their beasts on one side of the city and picking them up on the other, after grooms have ferried them around the outside of the walls. The stables are also unusual in their willingness to rent mounts to city residents in need of transportation, cutting down on the need of city dwellers to own their own horses. Yet the true gem setting Garynmor Stables apart is its menagerie.

A former world traveler, Ubis Garynmor has long had a fascination with exotic beasts, and having already developed the infrastructure to take care of large numbers of ordinary animals, he found it easy enough to expand the scope of his establishment. His menagerie in Stonyeyes contains a variety of rare creatures both mundane and magical, from an aged cockatrice and two wing-clipped hippogriffs to an owlbear. Always on the lookout for new attractions, he happily pays adventurers for healthy specimens of rare creatures, sometimes reselling the smaller

and less dangerous species. While the menagerie is popular with city folk who pay a few coppers to view the creatures, many neighbors fear that Ubis doesn't take security seriously enough, and that his desire to coddle such dangerous beasts could lead to them breaking free and rampaging through the district.

### HAMHOOKS SLAUGHTERHOUSE

This huge complex of pens, barns, and abattoirs is the largest slaughterhouse and knackery in Baldur's Gate. Located in the Stonyeyes neighborhood so as to be convenient to the city's butchers, the facility has a generally adversarial relationship with neighboring establishments, as other herders and hostlers claim the omnipresent smell of blood makes their animals nervous.

### LITTLE CALIMSHAN

Generations ago, a fleet of Calishite refugees fleeing war in the south came sailing into Gray Harbor. Rather than opening their doors to the foreigners, the people of Baldur's Gate quickly hustled them out of the city, forcing them out the Basilisk Gate in the middle of the night and taxing them for the privilege. Desperate and weary, the refugees finally found succor in a caravanseraï run by a fellow Calishite in the Outer City. There they used what little wealth they'd been able to bring with them to construct a new home—a traditional Calishite settlement that would be precisely as friendly to Baldur's Gate as the Baldurians had been to them.

Though much time has passed since that ignominious beginning, tensions remain high between Little Calimshan and the rest of the city, particularly with regard to those Baldurians living in the city proper. Unlike most of the Outer City, where neighborhoods blend into each other and no one can quite say where one ends and another begins, Little Calimshan is sharply defined by brick-and-plaster walls, 15 feet tall, 5 feet thick, and topped with minarets in the classic Calishite style. These walls don't simply surround the neighborhood, either. Little Calimshan is built like a traditional Calishite city in miniature, with its interior divided into multiple drudachs (neighborhoods). Each drudach is walled off and inhabited by a particular family or tribe, with its own religious site, inn or tavern, marketplace, and places of industry such as smithies, armories, tanneries, or mills. While such an abundance of walls might make Little Calimshan seem fractious and standoffish, in fact the opposite is true: the thick wall walks act as elevated streets, with locals able to look out over the layout from above and easily pick a

path to their intended destination.

Second only to the Wide in the chaos and liveliness of its markets, Little Calimshan opens its gates to outsiders for just a few hours each day. Inside its warren of bazaars, local merchants have a near-monopoly on many southern imports, from silks and fine blades of Calishite steel to tomes of rare magical lore, thanks to exclusive trade agreements with various caravans. As soon as mid-afternoon arrives, however, shoppers are shuffled back out the arched gates, and the only non-Calishites still allowed within the neighborhood are those who've married into a Little Calimshan family or otherwise earned the sacred trust of a drudach's residents. While many residents of Little Calimshan venture into the larger city for business or pleasure, not even the Flaming Fist is able to force its way into the neighborhood-turned-fortress after hours except in the direst circumstances, and each drudach is instead patrolled by a militia of young unmarried warriors called amlakkars.

While Little Calimshan presents a unified face to the rest of the city, it has all the problems of any settlement. Income inequality is made all the more obvious by density, with paupers living literally side-by-side with wealthy genie-binders. Older isolationists clash with young folk eager for more interaction with the wider city. Yet by far the largest issue is the gang war currently ravaging Little Calimshan. Seeing the Guild as fundamentally an outsider organization, a Calishite gang called the Right Pashas seeks to oust Guild agents from Little Calimshan's underworld. The Guild's popular half-Calishite kingpin, Rilsa Rael, naturally objects to this insult, and each night residents bar their doors tight as a turf war of thugs and thieves rages across their rooftops.

Among Little Calimshan's most notorious locations is the Calim Jewel Emporium, widely regarded as the best jeweler in the city—and the best place to fence stolen gems, as it's also the local Guild headquarters. In addition to hosting regular public forums in her shop, Rael tacitly oversees the Garden of Whispers, a maze of wood-and-paper screens where people from across the city can buy and sell secrets with Guild agents and each other, speaking through the barriers so as to maintain anonymity. Also popular are schools like the Lamp of Learning and the Verdashir Academy (also known as the Dervish Academy), which train spellcasters and warriors in the styles of their ancestral homeland, allowing only the most talented outsiders to access their archives or join in their lessons. And, of course, every patriar in the city has visited the famous Oasis Theater, home of the city's most daring—and sometimes dangerous—productions.

## OASIS THEATER

Baldur's Gate plays home to a variety of small theaters and cabarets, but none can hold a candle to the epic spectacle of the Oasis. Theater owner and director Jonas Goodnight puts on shows even more outrageous than his magnificently crafted outfits. Productions involve everything from live monsters to powerful illusion magic, while also showcasing the most talented performers in the city. Actors and musicians perform their songs and monologues from atop flaming trapezes or human towers, while acrobats shock the audience with physical feats bordering on the supernatural.

Even lowbrow theatergoers unable to decipher Goodnight's artistic genius can appreciate his flagrant breaking of taboos, with risqué burlesque and satirical scripts mocking everyone from the dukes to Nine-Fingers Keene herself. The fact that these performances sometimes go terribly awry, with monsters breaking loose or a broken piece of equipment sending a performer plummeting into the crowd, only adds to the excitement, and patriars and common folk alike vie for seats at the theater's afternoon-only performances. Ticket prices are decided capriciously and on the spot by Goodnight, varying wildly between any given individual.

## RIVERVEINS

Just east of the city, where Dusthawk Hill rises along the Chionthar River, eddies captured by outcroppings have bored into the stone, carving a maze of meandering tunnels and draining into subterranean aquifers. Though hardly diverting enough water to impact the river's flow, the web of submerged chambers has become a source of mystery and legend for locals.

While most of the tunnels are submerged, changes in river height over time mean that some of the tunnels and caverns are dry or only half-flooded for long stretches, making them favored hideouts for fugitives, smugglers, aquatic predators, and particularly adventurous trysting lovers. Though rumors whisper that some tunnels lead directly under Baldur's Gate, to date all mapped caverns are accessible only from the river, and even just climbing into a tunnel mouth or steering a boat inside can be deadly as the current attempts to smash vessels against the cliffs. Stories of ancient treasure in the flooded caverns are only enhanced by stories of Ol' Cholms, a river monster, prowling the tunnels.

## WHITKEEP HOSTEL

In a city often thought to be dour and dangerous, the Whitkeep Hostel is a spark of light and levity. Built by

a wealthy caravan operator who lost their fortune to monster attacks, this white-walled manor house was quickly overtaken by squatters, and has now spent most of a century as an all-gnome artist's commune. Though only gnomes are invited to rent one of the rambling manor's thirty-seven studio apartments, Baldurians of all races are welcome to socialize at the place's infamous surrealist parties or attend its concerts and offbeat art happenings. As such, the hostel has become the central gathering point for the city's radicals and revolutionaries, as well as many artists and dreamers.

One of the neighborhood's more outspoken critics of the Gate's government, Pernilla "Prole" Cabrenock, a rock gnome woman, has teamed up with an oddball inventor and arcanist named Ardyn Deagle, a male rock gnome mage. Rumors spread by Prole herself suggest that they've almost completed a magical invention that will "finally strip away the bonds of capital and free the people to flourish," but security around the project has been unusually tight, keeping even many members of the commune in the dark. While most people assume this is merely some strange new critique of the city's patriars, both the Guild and the Flaming Fist would dearly love to infiltrate the revolutionaries' project and make sure it doesn't pose a threat to the status quo.

## WYRM'S CROSSING

This neighborhood is actually two enormous bridges, each spanning half the Chionthar River and meeting at Wyrms Rock, a tall, rocky islet in the center. While the Flaming Fist maintains a fortress on the island to tax travelers along the Coast Way and control city access in times of trouble, the bridges themselves are fair game for squatters. Ramshackle wooden tenements, taverns, and shops crowd both sides of the arched stone spans, leaning out over the narrow road between them. Even more cling to the sides of the bridges, anchored to each other or cantilevered over the water. The tendency of these latter structures to occasionally drop into the rushing river, pulling their neighbors down with them, is not enough to deter residents who hope to be the first to sell to travelers on their way into the city, or the last to pick their pockets on the way out.

Even among members of the Outer City, residents of Wyrms Crossing have a reputation as rakes and riffraff, and the neighborhood specializes in seedy dive bars and gambling halls where belligerent drunks can be ejected directly out over the river. At the same time, it also has a large and tight-knit strongheart halfling community, whose low-ceilinged tenements and lighter weight are perfect for the neighborhood's precarious

architectural style.

While the Crossing is renowned for cheats and criminals, the residents stick together, and a local crew called the Crossers ensures that all predatory practices are applied primarily to travelers, and never to fellow bridge-dwellers. For those who consistently refuse to play well with their neighbors, the answer is often Sweetjen's Spices, a precarious bridge-side shop whose halfling proprietor quietly sells some of the most potent drugs and untraceable poisons in the city.

## WYRM'S ROCK

This formidable fortress rises from the center of the river on an algae-slick islet, its sheer walls nearly impossible to scale. Built by the Flaming Fist on a rock once said to have housed a bronze dragon, the fortress is the first checkpoint at which Baldur's Gate taxes northbound travelers. Anyone seeking to cross the river via the fortress's two massive bridges must pay the 5 cp toll and pass through the fortress via a long central tunnel riddled with arrow slits and murder holes. Between twenty-five and fifty Flaming Fist soldiers staff the checkpoint, which operates only during the day. After dark, the drawbridges on either side of the keep are raised, halting all traffic and forcing latecomers to take shelter at one of the many bridge-top inns in Wyrms Crossing until morning.

The fortress has four levels: the bridge level, taken up by the gauntlet tunnel and offices devoted to traffic management; a second-story armory full of oil, javelins, and everything the soldiers need to withstand a siege; a third story for soldier's quarters; and a high-ceilinged dungeon level below the bridges to hold temporary prisoners and the fortress's supply of small boats (should the garrison need to sally through heavily fortified river-level gates). Soldiers stationed in the fortress tend to fall into two categories: those disappointed at being stuck on toll-collection duty so far from the city, and those overjoyed at easy work and a chance to carouse in Wyrms Crossing, with the latter ensuring that the Fist doesn't patrol their neighboring bridges too heavily.

The commander of Wyrms Rock, an old brute named Skorpin Crane, died in his sleep recently. Foul play was ruled out, and Grand Duke Ulder Ravengard was in the midst of finding Crane's replacement when he was called away on a diplomatic mission to Elturel. Until a replacement is found, the Mage Defender of Wyrms Rock, a shield dwarf mage named Gardak Horn, has taken command.