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| WATERDEEP BROADSHEETS |
| ADDITIONAL SUPPLEMENT |

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## Hammer

Furious northern storms hammer the City of Splendors, coating the streets and buildings with thick ice and making any travel dangerous for two tendays (assuming the windows and doors weren't sealed and frozen shut by the ice and sleet, trapping people indoors). With the bitter temperatures and sheer slipperiness of the streets, the Market becomes more skating rink than commercial center.

Many Waterdhavians of Southern Ward and Trades Ward are awakened for four consecutive nights at the end of the month by loud explosions heard from the direction of the Rat Hills, While nothing seems imme­diately amiss (as per the guard and the Dungsweepers' Guild), some adventurers and members of the Watch­ful Order of Magists & Protectors are dispatched to investigate.

## Alturiak

Nine hours after their entrance, the assigned party that has ventured into the Rat Hills dies mysteriously within the wasteland. A flurry of spell use and the sound of battle erupts quite suddenly. By the time a guard contingent tracks them down, all the adventur­ers and mages lie dead; three of the bodies are missing, but little else can be discerned (of their deaths or their attackers) as the garbage heaps catch fire and soon rage out of control! Soon, much of the interior of the Rat Hills is aflame. The fires burn powerfully for two days, but smaller fires smolder for a full tenday, the efforts of the Watchful Order to quench the entire inferno for naught. Waterdeep is engulfed in thick, choking clouds of smoke and soot from the Rat Hills Conflagration. The guard is kept busy, however, as the fires drive out many inhabitants of the area, including a small tribe of lizard men, a pack of leucrotta, a clutch of sea zombies, and even a previously unknown form of gulguthra (see the gulguthydra MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® entry). After the fires burn themselves out, the Rat Hills are reduced in size by more than 50%.

A small colony of aquatic elves is wiped out down in the south by a huge horde of undersea predators driven into a feeding frenzy by something; the twelve survivors (nine females, three males; two of each are children) settle with the mermen within Waterdeep's harbor and petition to join the guard as part of the contingent below. One of the females recalls seeing sharks working alongside sea- wolves and even an ixitxachitl or two!

Many folk in the city succumb to a mild plague caused by the smoke and debris carried over the city by what is now called the Rat Hills Conflagration. While no one dies of the plague, many in the sea trade get a late start at fixing up their ships in preparation for Fleetswake and the ship­ping season next month.

## Ches

Lady Hyara Talmost's celebratory gala the first night of the Fleetswake festivities is a smashing social success. The only disturbing news involves the disappearance of Jynnia Gundwynd's handsome but mysterious escort; she claims they were alone and asleep in an upstairs room, "resting to get our second wind for the party," but when she woke up, he was gone. The only evidence left behind is his coat, stained a bright red on the hem and tails.

Fleetswake and the Fair Seas Festival. The tenday-long fes­tival ends with its usual pomp and pageantry, and the donations to Umberlee's Cache are extraordinarily gener­ous (roughly 260,000 gold pieces). The high mermaid shaman Thur Aquarvol demanded the money be smelted down and sculpted into an undersea statue for Umberlee. The Lords refused this change, but added a commission for a marble statue next year.

## Tarsakh

Waukeentide. On Goldenight, whether by accident or by Halaster's design, four aurumvorax exit Undermountain into the Old Xoblob Shop and rampage into the Purple Palace festhall next door. By the time the animals are disabled, three patrons and four festhall girls (wearing naught but gold dust) are dead due to the animals' attack. The aurumvorax hides are each distributed to the victims' families (and the festhall) as little recompense. The owner of the Old Xoblob Shop is at a loss as to how the creatures weren't affected by his usual magical safe­guards, suggesting foul play to the watch.

A one-eyed sailor starts a brawl in a Dock Ward tavern, breaks the arms of four men, and proceeds to swing one man by his ankles, using him as a club. When the watch arrives, the sailor flees with two watch officers in pursuit. The two officers are found three streets down, both badly mauled and one with an arm missing. A trail of blood leads down to Smugglers' Dock, but the trail disappears and the miscreant escapes. The watch is offering a 50-gold-piece reward to anyone who catches this maniac.

Ten non-native Cyricists are arrested at the Plinth for disturbing the open religious services. The group of twelve have cast multiple darkness spells, surrounding the Plinth with utter blackness at highsun. Normally, this breach of ethics is overlooked and the worshipers are ushered out the River Gate; however, their services are interrupted by a number of devout Tyr-worshipers. The resulting battle of spells and steel ends with the death of two Cyricists and four Tyrites, as well as random damage to surrounding structures including the Plinth. Four Tyrites are arrested but are released when their fines are paid. No one has seen the Cyricists since the incident, though they did receive judgment from the Lord's Court; rumor has it they are now in Undermountain.

## Mirtul

Lady Cera Phaulkon is missing after her caravan is ambushed just south of Luskan. Nearly everyone is slaughtered and, worst of all, the heads are cleanly sev­ered from all the dead including Lady Phaulkon. Her youngest daughter, Jeryth, was traveling with her and is currently missing; scraps of her dress and a comb are found at the caravan site, indicating there was some struggle. Little has been found about this kidnaping and senseless murder, made more so by the lack of thieving involved—Lady Phaulkon's body still wore her diamond rings and emerald brooch.

Close to dawn on the 22nd of the month, the Cliffwatch Inn in North Ward is engulfed in multiple magical explo­sions that send gouts of flame far into the air overhead. Many claim to hear roaring and howling during the fires. When the flames die down, nothing is left of the inn, and its owner is missing. The area is surrounded by a high wooden wall and kept under constant guard surveillance (though whether they keep the curious outside the wall or keep something more malevolent inside the wall is unknown).Kythorn

Trolltide. Children about the city have small magical trin­kets that let them growl like trolls. Some of them, how­ever, actually turn children into trolls and a number of unfortunate deaths result from the transformations. Of the children that are saved and reverted to normal, none are charged with criminal wrongdoing, being not of their right minds, but the Lords are reportedly looking into this matter personally (and the Watchful Order is right­fully worried at this). For more on this, see "Trolltidings" in Chapter 6 of the Adventurer's Guide to the City.

Ships with the markings of Luskanite pirates sink two Waterdhavian rakers in waters north of the City of Splendors, but the High Captains desperately claim no responsibility for the damages. They confess that a num­ber of their own ships have been stolen by unknown par­ties of late and are busy harrassing shipping up and down the Sword Coast and heaping all the blame on Luskan. Luskan actually cooperates and allies with Waterdeep in hunting down these pirates.

A dead drow female is found in a midden in Sea Ward, just off the Street of the Singing Dolphin. Her cause of death appears to be strangulation, but various burns cover her black leather armor. A broken bottle is by her side, and some of its liquid has melted a hole in the stone pavement beneath it. In her right hand, the woman has a pendant in her death grip: A silver pendant mockingly similar to the symbol of Sune, goddess of beauty, with the head of an illithid and added tentacles wrapping around its head like hair.

## Flamerule

XFounders' Day. As some twisted form of celebrating the Lords' rule and the founding of Waterdeep, a disguised Zhentarim priest of Cyric raises the remains of the traitor Lord Kerrigan from the dead, setting a wraith in Lord's garb loose within the city. Kerrigan's wraith was pursued throughout the city, and it is brought low by Lord Pierge- iron, Vhonna Deepdell, and High Priestess Ghentilara in Kerrigan's Court once again. The Zhentarim wizard, though pursued by four watch-wizards, escapes into the City of the Dead, eluding his captors among the dimen­sional burial grounds until he makes good his escape from Waterdeep entirely.

Midsummer's Night sees one of the largest crowds ever in Waterdeep, with every possible dock slip occupied and twice the normal number of caravans crowding the streets of Southern Ward (as well as the plains just outside the walls). The crowd at the Three Pearls Nightclub is spared much of the pickpocketing com­mon to the rest of the city, but a performance by the half-elven Rheros Bladesong, the Fighting Bard from the Shaar, turns deadly. During his sword-dance (jug­gling long swords while dancing), one of his swords breaks away from his control and flies "as if possessed of evil intelligence" into the chest of a Sembian carpet merchant. Under arrest for the murder, Rheros swears none of his swords are magical (a detect magic test is made just before each performance), that he has no reason to kill the merchant, and that someone is fram­ing him. The only possible connection involves a troupe of traveling illusionists known as Maari Sithkess and her Familiars, all of whom are of Sem- bian birth, though none have any connection with the merchant.

The Kolat Towers (AQ8) are sealed on all sides by a glowing, translucent field of magical energy (an arcing wall of force running from the top of the towers to the top of the surrounding property walls) for two tendays imme­diately after Midsummer's Night. Whenever the wizards are seen during this time (and two months after), Duh- lark Kolat is distracted and quite surly, while the elderly Alcedor has his arm in a sling. It is soon found out that someone apparently entered the towers, overpowered Alcedor, and stole a number of scrolls and irreplaceable items, despite all the safeguards.

## Eleasias

With the arrival of the Moonshae ambassador, the city is abuzz over next year's visit of High Queen Alicia. In preparation, an embassy is established close to the Palace and Ahghairon's Tower. Noble galas are already in the planning stages for her arrival in Ches.

Waterdeep's navy, with some help from a late-arriving Luskar ship, manages to capture the last of the Sword Coast pirates' ships with much of the crew intact. The pirates are of all nationalities of the Sword Coast; their captains (and the controlling intelligence known as the Black Admiral) are all missing from the capture. As in previous captures, the captains and some other officers leap overboard and disappear into the ocean rather than allow themselves to be captured.

## Eleint

An uncontrollable magical fire ravages the northern sec­tion of Sea Ward near the Heroes' Garden, destroying a number of businesses and villas. Investigations later show the cause as a young mage's apprentice attempting a fire- based spell beyond his control; he set the central row- house of a block afire, consuming himself in the process. Sadly, a number of guardsmens' homes are also consumed by the fire, the Watchful Order's fire-fighters proving ineffective against the flames (though they did limit the damage).

Many new creatures are being encountered in the sew­ers by the Plumbers' Guild, and they are growing understandably nervous. The newest is quickly being called a sewerm, with its anaesthetic bite and leechlike abilities. The Guild wants someone to go clean out the sewers of such infestations, before any Guild members go missing.

Many rumors abound through the Dock Ward about the unification and alliance of a number of pirate crews in the past few weeks. Many say the former crews of the Black Admiral are pulling together to attack soon and take over Mintarn just before winter sets in. Others whis­per that the direction of the pirates comes from below ("from some new power in Skullport").

## Marpenoth

At Higharvestide, the new Knights of the Sword Coast stand collected and exit the city as caravan escorts for Lord Phaulkon's last trade caravan of the season. Its final destination is Cormyr and, due to the coming harsh win­ter, the Knights and the return caravan aren't expected until spring.

Gods' Day. The morning after the Gods' Day festivities, four watch officers and two guard officers are discovered stuffed into the garbage carts of the Dungsweepers' Guild, all decapitated. Curiously, the bodies are stone cold and cannot be identified without the heads, but none of the watch or guild posts report any missing patrolers. However, a laundry where some watch and guard members send their uniforms was ransacked the night before and a number of uniforms are missing. All watch and guard civilars and armars are keeping sharp eyes out for any strangers in their garb in hopes of catch­ing the killers.

Toward the end of the month, the legendary axe Azuredge magically returns to Waterdeep. Reappearing apparently in answer to a bard's ballad, Azuredge embeds itself into the main pillar of the Safehaven Inn's tap­room. Many capable warriors try their hands at removing the axe, but none succeeds until some unknown adven­turers claim it. The magic of Azuredge proclaims them the Company of the Blue Axe, causing much excitement within the Adventurers' Quarter.

## Uktar

Auril's Blesstide. The celebrations of the first frost on the 10th of the month are marred by the discovery of three bizarre ice sculptures on the Seas' Edge Beach. The three nude male figures appear frozen in fear and they are carved from solid ice. No one within the city can posi­tively identify the bodies, though a few folk recall seeing some braggarts in the Fiery Flagon the night before that looked like these men. Speak with dead magics prove use­less and no way has been found to restore the men to mobility.

Each full moon since fire ravaged Sea Ward in Eleint, a sad, lonely phantom appears to remind folk that life and love don't always end at death. At the former second story level of a villa (which no longer exists), a woman stands by her window, her form and the shape of the win­dow illuminated by the lantern that rests on the sill. Curiously enough, this apparation cannot be seen from the side or behind it, on Stormstar's Ride, but only when facing it on Phastal Street.

Khelben Arunsun has an uncharacteristic embarrass­ment on his hands. Some prankster has manipulated the Walking Statue of Waterdeep, walking it from its customary spot at the top of the Cliffride to Blackstaff Tower, and altering its stoic face and pose to that of a weeping child curled up in Khelben's front courtyard. While the Statue was swiftly moved back into its usual location and form, Khelben has yet to track down and deal with the prankster; while many see this solely as humorous, others recognize the danger of some unknown factor being able to control one of Water- deep's most powerful defenses.

## Nightal

One of the early snows falls on the city, but curiously all the snowflakes are deep green in hue. The following morning, the green snow has evaporated, but the many trees and plants about the city experience large growth spurts and, in some cases, crack surrounding pavement. Though it is the start of winter, all fruit-bearing trees magically produce new fresh fruit overnight for two nights in a row, causing a frenzy at the Market for fresh fruit this late in the season. No other results were noted from the green snows, but some speculate that next year will be a bountiful one due to this sign.

At the Lord's Court on the 15th of the month, one of the masked Lords stands before the people (four noble patriarchs and five guild masters are on hand in the court's audience) and takes off his helm, revealing him­self to be Khelben Arunsun! Everyone, including Piergeiron, is shocked, and in the surprised silence, Khelben says, "My fellow citizens of Waterdeep, I stand before you, revealed as one of the Lords of our fair city. For years, many have speculated that I sat among this august assemblage, and I admit it freely now . . . as I retire my position as Lord. I also hereby call my succes­sor, who shall take my place among the rulers of the city. Enter, Lord." With that, the doors to the Court open, and a masked, robed Lord strides silently in, bows to Piergeiron and the other two Lords in council, and finally takes a seat next to Khelben. Within days, the news spreads throughout the city, shocking many; the taverns buzz of no other news, and many speculate whether he actually has resigned from the Lords, or whether he's just acting out another convoluted scheme to draw out some enemy (since his revelation was not the greatest of his secrets . . . ).

WATERDEEP HERALD

# 1367 DR YEAR OF THE SHIELD

## HAMMER 1367DR

* Furious northern storms hammer the City of Splendors, coating the streets and buildings with thick ice and making any travel dangerous for two tendays (assuming the windows and doors weren’t sealed and frozen shut by the ice and sleet, trapping people indoors). With the bitter temperatures and sheer slipperiness of the streets, the Market becomes more skating rink than commercial center.
* Many Waterdhavians of Southern and Trades Ward are awakened for four consecutive nights at the end of the month by loud explosions heard from the direction of the Rat Hills. While nothing seems immediately amiss (as per the guard and the Dungsweeper’s Guild), some adventurers and members of the Watchful Order of Magists and Protectors are dispatched to investigate.

## ALTURIAK 1367DR

* Nine hours after their entrance, the assigned party that has ventured into the Rat Hills dies mysteriously within the wasteland. A flurry of spell use and the sound of battle erupts quite suddenly. By the time a guard contingent tracks them down, all the adventurers and mages lie dead; three of their bodies are missing, but little else can be discerned (of their deaths or their attackers) as the garbage heaps catch fire and soon rage out of control! Soon, much of the interior of the Rat Hills is aflame. The fires burn powerfully for two days, but smaller fires smoulder for a full tenday, the efforts of the Watchful Order to quench the entire inferno for naught. Waterdeep is engulfed in thick, choking clouds of smoke and soot from the Rat Hills Conflagration. The guard is kept busy, however, as the fires drive out many inhabitants of the area, including a small tribe of lizard men, a pack of leucrotta, a clutch of sea zombies, and even a previously unknown form of gulguthra (see the gulguthydra MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM entry). After the fires burn themselves out, the Rat Hills are reduced in size by more than 50%.
* A small colony of aquatic elves is wiped out down in the south by a huge horde of undersea predators driven into a feeding frenzy by something; the twelve survivors (nine females, three males; two of each are children) settle with the mermen within Waterdeep’s harbor and petition to join the guard as part of the contingent below. One of the females recalls seeing sharks working alongside sea-wolves and even an ixitxachitl or two!
* Many folk in the city succumb to a mild plague caused by the smoke and debris carried over the city by what is now called the Rat Hills Conflagration. While no one dies of the plague, many in the sea trade get a late start at fixing up their ships in preparation for Fleetswake and the shipping season next month.

## CHES 1367DR

* Rhalaglingalade, a soft-spoken, bearded archmage who recently settled in Neverwinter, has announced an important new creation: the sphere of summer. This enchantment is a series of complicated spells that brings into being a sphere of translucent force in which plants can be grown in warmth and controlled damp throughout the winter. Such spheres also allow the farming of tropical fruits and flowers in northern climes. Since announcing his discovery, the archmage has thrice been attacked by Calishite assassins (notable Thyruin of the White Flowers, who escaped and is though to be wandering the North in a savage mood) and survived capture attempts sponsored, it is whispered, by various merchants of Amn, Luskan, and even Thay. Rhalaglingalade has appealed to the Lords Alliance for protection, and has been assigned a bodyguard of hired adventurers (each of whom is paid 2000gp/month). Several of this guard have been slain already while repulsing attacks, but there seems no shortage of ready applicants, even from among the noble families of Waterdeep.
* Lady Hyara Talmost’s celebratory gala the first night of the Fleetswake festivities is a smashing social success. The only disturbing news involves the disappearance of Jynnia Gundwynd’s handsome but mysterious escort; she claims they were alone and asleep in an upstairs room, “resting to get our second wind for the party,” but when she woke up, he was gone. The only evidence left behind is his coat, stained a bright red on the hem and tails.
* Fleetswake and the Fair Seas Festival. The tenday-long festival ends with its usual pomp and pageantry, and the donations to Umberlee’s Cache are extraordinarily generous (roughly 260,000 gold pieces). The high mermaid shaman Thur Aquarvol demanded the money be smelted down and sculpted into an undersea statue for Umberlee. The Lords refused this change, but added a commission for a marble statue next year.

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* Waukeentide. On Goldenight, whether by accident or by Halaster’s design, four aurumvorax exit Undermountain into the Old Xoblob Shop and rampage into the Purple Palace festhall next door. By the time the animals are disabled, three patrons and four festhall girls (wearing naught but gold dust) are dead due to the animals’ attack. The aurumvorax hides are each distributed to the victims’ families (and the festhall) as little recompense. The owner of the Old Xoblob Shop is at a loss as to how the creatures weren’t affected by his usual magical safeguards, suggesting foul play to the watch.
* A one-eyed sailor starts a brawl in a Dock Ward tavern, breaks the arms of four men, and proceeds to swing one man by his ankles, using him as a club. When the watch arrives, the sailor flees with two watch officers in pursuit. The two officers are found three streets down, both badly mauled and one with an arm missing. A trail of blood leads down to Smuggler’s Dock, but the trail disappears and the miscreant escapes. The watch is offering a 50-gold-piece reward to anyone who catches this maniac.
* Ten non-native Cyricists are arrested at the Plinth for disturbing the open religious services. The group of twelve have cast multiple darkness spells, surrounding the Plinth with utter blackness at highsun. Normally, this breach of ethics is overlooked and the worshipers are ushered out the River Gate; however, their services are interrupted by a number of devout Tyr-worshipers. The resulting battle of spells and steel ends with the death of two Cyricists and for Tyrites, as well as random damage to surrounding structures including the Plinth. Four Tyrites are arrested but released when their fines are paid. No one has seen the Cyricists since the incident, though they did receive judgement from the Lord’s Court; rumor has it they are now in Undermountain.

NOTE: The following material intertwines greater and smaller events that occur within Waterdeep during the year of 355NR (1367DR), nine years after the Time of Troubles. The events herein summarize or add to the many stories of the NPCs within the City of Splendors boxed set. These entries come from the following official sources;

Campaign Guide (CoS), p.32-35

Running the Realms (2nd Edition box set), p.20 and 24

## ELEINT

* An uncontrollable magical fire ravages the northern section of Sea Ward near the Heroes’ Garden, destroying a number of businesses and villas. Investigations later show the cause as a younf mage’s apprentice attempting a fire-based spell beyond his control; he set the central rowhouse of a block afire, consuming himself in the process. Sadly, a number of guardsmen’s homes are also consumed by the fire, the Watchful Order’s fire-fighters proving ineffective against the flames (though they did limit the damage).
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## NIGHTAL

* One of the early snows falls on the city, but curiously all the snowflakes are deep green in hue. The following morning, the green snow has evaporated, but the many trees and plants about the city experience large growth spurts and, in some cases, crack surrounding pavement. Though it is the start of winter, all fruit-bearing trees magically produce new fresh fruit overnight for two nights in a row, causing a frenzy at the Market for fresh fruit this late in the season. No other results were noted from the green snows, but some speculate that next year will be a bountiful one due to this sign.
* Several travelers on the road south of Waterdeep have reported seeing a glowing, blue-white unicorn that came out of stands of trees to closely scrutinize them and others on the road. Its hooves made no sound — and one reoprt says they never quite touched the ground! Elzund Glimmercloak, a wandering priest of Mielikki then in Waterdeep, was very excited at the travelers’ tales. He says the unicorn could only have been a manifestation of Mielikki, and that all faithful of the Lady of the Forest must pray to her for some explanation of this sign.

        Glimmercloak has been sharply rebuked by Mhair Nalath, a wandering priestess of Lurue the Unicorn (one of the many splinter faiths known as the Beast Cults). She says what the travelers saw could only have been Lurue, her goddess, and that her appearance marks a rise in power and importance of the Unicorn in Faerun. The adventuring band known as the Blade of the Unicorn, who share Mhair’s faith, agree with her — and have already slain three orc raiding bands and a priest of Malar in the name of the Unicorn to celebrate this sign from the gods.

        In Daggerford, the druid Galass Tholt says the unicorn was merely a friend of his who had fallen afoul of a warding spell that left it aglow with faerie fire, and that it was looking for a kindly wizard to remove the condition. Tholt also says that priests are all too apt to make wild claims about happenings in Faerun before they look about, see, and think — and that much tumult and bloodshed could be avoided if they would all mend their ways, even as the gods did (in the Time of Troubles). Nalath denounced him as just “a crazy old druid,” but several merchants who heard his words replied “Amen to that.” The arguements bid fair to continue for some time.

* At the Lord’s Court on the 15th of the month, one of the masked Lords stands before the people (four noble patriarchs and five guild masters are on hand in the court’s audience) and takes off his helm, revealing himself to be Khelben Arunsun! Everyone, including Piergeiron, is shocked, and in the surprised silence, Khelben says, “My fellow citizens of Waterdeep, I stand before you, revealed as one of the Lords of our fair city. For years, many have speculated that I sat among this August assemblage, and I admit it freely now...as I retire my position as Lord. I also hereby call my successor, who shall take my place among the rulers of the city. Enter, Lord.” With that, the doors to the Court open, and a masked, robed Lord strides silently in, bows to Piergeiron and the other two Lords in council, and finally takes a seat next to Khelben. Within days, the news spreads throughout the city, shocking many; the taverns buzz of no other news, and many speculate whether he has actually resigned from the Lords, or whether he’s just acting out another convoluted scheme to draw out some enemy (since his revelation was not the greatest of his secrets...).

# 1368 DR YEAR OF THE BANNER

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## HAMMER 1368DR

* The adventuring mage Therasin of the Three Hands causes quite a stir in the taprooms of the city when he claims to have uncovered the location of Ordock’s Stroll, an ancient Netherese gate-road that leads to the Witherwhen, a safehold and extradimensional refuge reputed to be rich in gems, magic items, and spell-lore. Soon after word of his discovery spreads, Therasin is set upon by at least three ambitious mages seeking control of the gate’s secrets, but seems well-prepared for them, surviving easily and leading some to whisper that he planned the ruse to draw out and eliminate potential rivals. Therasin vanishes from his lodgings within a tenday, but not before dispatching two more spellcasters and three times that number of hired assassins.
* Midwinter. The String of Stars, a festhall located in the eastern reaches of Dock Ward, catches fire and burns during the night’s festivities. Local fire brigades are unable to quell the unnatural purplish flames that ravage the building, and all those trapped within are killed. The cause of the blaze is unknown, although more than one finger is pointed at the necromancer (and reputed Cyricist) Stavros of the Skulls, who is known to have coveted the property that the festhall stood on.

## ALTURIAK 1368DR

* Emerging from the city sewers bearing tales of illicit trade in magical items and human beings, the Hin adventurer Dimvel Stoutkeg and the Tymorite priest Jorynn Halstaff unmask the merchant Minzapur of Volothamp, an importer of rare blacksmoke obsidian from the Tashalar and Chult, as a member of an illicit slaving ring. Minzapur assaults the pair in front of the Lords Court assembly, attacking with the aid of magically animated flying daggers and heretofore unknown spellcasting powers, but is rebuffed with the aid of several black-robes and armsmen in attendance. His attempt at teleporting to safety foiled by wardsactivated by the Open Lord, Minzapur is struck down by the swordswoman Thazrae Embeldrynn, and his erstwhile slaver contacts at the Docks taken into Watch custody for further questioning. The adventurers also incriminate the Umberlant priest Meiritid Archneie in the illegal activities of the ring, but the Lords clear his name after the intervention of his mentor, Thaeryld Nornagul, the High Trident of Orlumbor.
* The visiting druid Janessin Forthright plants himself in the front court of the Quiet Place, transforming into a large maple tree with unusual golden foliage. Upon emerging from his vegetative state some two tendays later, the druid claims to have recieved a vision from Silvanus himself, and a prophecy regarding the treants of the High Forest. After some time spent consulting with the other nature priests of the temple, Janessin transforms into a large raven and flies off over the rooftops of the city, eastwards along the Dessarin river valley.

## CHES 1368DR

* Fleetswake and the Fair Seas’ Festival. Donations to Umberlee’s Cache are generous this year, and several sightings of a pod of killer whales outside the harbor during the week-long festivities are believed to augur Umberlee’s goodwill towards the seasons’ maritime ventures.
* Trumpets blare and pennants fly from the ramparts of the Halls of Justice — the Waterdhavian temple of Tyr Evenhanded — heralding the triumphant return to the city of Harkas Kormallis, the annointed Knight-Champion of the temple. Absent from Waterdeep since the past Feast of the Moon, the holy warrior enters the city gates with a full honor guard of temple acolytes, brandishing aloft the Viverant Warspear of Dughaldrannan, a weapon once bore by one of the human kings of the Fallen Kingdom, and considered a major relic of the Tyrran faith. The Halls of Justice and the Kormallis noble clan throw a celebratory gala for the Knight-Champion, and he is liberally showered with accolades by Waterdhavian adherents of the God of Justice.

## TARSAKH 1368DR

* Waukeentide. The spring thaws and arriving merchant caravans have brought rumors of the destruction of Zhentil Keep, far to the east, by a horde of giants, dragons, and other monsters. Many in the city gladly receive these tales, as the fell Keep was long known to be the seat of power for the evil Black Network. The following weeks see great chaos in the city as foes of the Zhentarim (especially the Harpers and the Knights of the Shield) seek to take advantage of their misfortune. Backstreet battles, assassinations, and corpses discovered stuffed into middens and left lying in secluded courts become commonplace through the summer months.
* The noble swordsman Ethaine Hawkwinter visits the taverns and hire-courts of the city, seeking to raise a host of spellcasters and ready swordarms. He plans to mount an expedition to the far-off land of Sossal, retracing the earlier steps of the ill-fated explorer Dabron Sashenstar. Those interested in signing on to such a venture are directed to inquire with one of Ethaine’s personal heralds (identified by blue tabards emblazoned with the young nobles’ personal crest — a grey hawk flying to the dexter above a crimson many-rayed setting sun).
* Greengrass. The highlight of the Greengrass festival is unquestionably the performance put on by two genasi courtesans from the palaces of far Tharsult. The pair, Asandril the Silken Flame and Chelna the Water Dancer, cause quite a stir during the annual Lords Court/Greengrass Ball with their magically animated depiction of the ancient "Dance of the Seasons." Their performance is so rousing, in fact, that a scuffle breaks out between clergy of the goddesses Sune and Lliira in attenance, with each side seeking to claim divine credit for the pair’s talents.

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## MIRTUL 1368DR

* As the result of a miscast find familliar spell attempted by the wild mage Jhoebryn Wonderstars, the entire region around her Castle Ward domicile is infested with snakes, toads, slugs, and gnats and stinging insects of all kinds, including the rare flying snakes and giant toads. The slimy, slithering creatures and clouds of swarming insects disperse within a tenday, but not before causing much irritation and disruption of traffic.
* The noted Mirabaran ranger (and reputed Harper) Tarnshar Stormraven visits the city, bringing tales of a new power gathering strength in the deep reaches of the Spine of the World. The woodsman tells the assembled Lords Court of stumbling across a conclave or gathering of white dragons, mountain orogs, and orcs bearing the colors of the orc king Obould Many-Arrows, and of being forced to flee before the might of a trio of demons summoned from the empty air. Tarnshar also reveals that the Grey Eminence, a mysterious warrior-priest of considerable power, has disappeared, as his cliff-side tower now lies empty and abandoned, sundered almost in half by an unknown force. After hearing the warrior’s tales, the Lords are rumored to send their scouting corps, led by the ranger Aluar Zendos, north to discern the truth of the matter for themselves.

## KYTHORN 1368DR

* Trolltide. As typical on this day, celebrating Waterdeep’s victory in the long-ago Trollwars, children of the city run through the streets in packs from highsun to dusk, growling and snarling like trolls, and performing minor pranks and other acts of nuisance.
* Towards the end of the month, citizens in Alamanther’s Host, a neighborhood of upper Castle Ward, are terrorized by what is called a prowling crag-cat, the fabled "eater-of-men." While never caught, the beast is seen slipping through darkened streets at night, and its’ paw-prints are found on muddy cobbles and dew-damp rooftops alike. Sightings of the creature disappear completely within a few tendays, along with victims, but in their place rise a number of rumors claiming that the feline marauder was actually a shapechanged mage or priest of Malar engaged in wanton slayings for mere thrills, or to please some dark god. Such tavern-tattle, while never proven, is nonetheless given credence by the fact that urban Waterdeep is far from the reclusive cats’ normal habitat.

## FLAMERULE 1368DR

* Founder’s Day. Festivities celebrating the Free City of Waterdeep’s founding include a military parade down the length of the High Road, as well as day-long competitions at the Field of Triumph involving jousting, chariot races, and archery contests. The jovial mood at the Field is dampened somewhat when two errant arrows strike the famed Ishaari horseback archer Ululynn the Tall and the swordswoman Thazrae Embeldrynn, seriously injuring the former and killing the unfortunate Embeldrynn. The incident is described by the Watch as an "ill-fated accident," although the Tymorite priest Jorynn Halstaff — whom Ululynn stepped in front of right before the arrows struck — insists that the shafts were fired as part of a premeditated assassination attempt.
* An adventuring band led by the warrior Thelric "Old-Sword" returns to the city, bearing vicious battle-scars and tales of fighting orc and ogre warriors in and around the ruins of Peleghost, a former mages’ keep of Low Netheril located deep in the Greypeak Mountains. The adventurers, the Men of Thelric’s Fist, arrive in the city to restock on provisions and additional spellcasters, as well as to assess their loot, which includes a number of wavy-bladed scimitars and several surprisingly well-preserved tomes full of strange, presumably magical, writing.
* Midsummer. Opening ceremonies are held for the Font of Knowledge, the city’s newly-completed temple of Oghma. The three-story wood and stone edifice is formally sancitified by the High Priest Sandrew the Wise, and the transfer of the temple’s Great Library — previously collected and organized at the Estelmer villa — is completed.
* Shieldmeet. The leap year festival sees huge throngs of people converging in the city’s markets, taverns, and courts. Lords Court is convened in the Castle, and a Lords Alliance meeting is held in the city of Silverymoon. Although the population of Waterdeep is nearly doubled, and includes members of nearly all civilized (and semi-civilized) races, the Shieldmeet holiday goes fairly smoothly, and the extra crowds disperse within the next few tendays.

## ELEASIAS 1368DR

* The Horndulk, a caraval out of Athkatla, is discovered foundering off the coast of Orlumbor. All hands aboard are dead, drained to mere husks by a crimson death found lairing in the ships’ hold. The creature is killed and the ship towed to harbor, where the terrible truth soon becomes apparent: the ship bears a magical curse/plague, which effectively bleeds victims to death and then transforms the unfortunates into crimson deaths. Labeled the "Crimson Death Plague," the disease and its attendant horrors runs rampant through Orlumbor and reaches all ports of call that link to the island, including Waterdeep, Baldur’s Gate, Neverwinter, Luskan, Mintarn, and Caer Callidyrr.
* In Waterdeep itself, the plague and the monsters spawned from it claim a number of Dock Ward inhabitants, including almost a third of the members of the Fishmongers, Watermen, and Dungsweepers guilds, and a number of watch and guard officers before it is put to an end.

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## ELEINT 1368DR

* The Feather Street manor-house known as The Cascade of Coins (so named for the illusory gold coins that continually stream down the front pillars of the residence, fading from sight just out of handsreach) burns to the ground, despite the best efforts of the watch and neighborhood fire brigades. The residence of Overgold-in-exile Haeleth Emeltharn (former high priest of the Waukeenar temple in Suldophor), the Cascade held numerous ancient tomes and wall-hangings of the Shoon Imperium, as well as mounds of treasure rumored to have been looted from the vaults of the Suldophan temple upon Haeleth’s leaving. Everything inside the building (including the former Overgold himself) is lost in the blaze, although rumors swiftly build that much of Haeleth’s hidden wealth was stolen by whoever set the fatal fire — variously rumored as Shadow Thieves, the infamous Black Viper, the Dragonmage Maaril, or southern assassins sent by the Olanger of Suldophor — and hastily stuffed down ornate corner downspouts and hidden on half-a-dozen rooftops in the ensuing confusion.
* Higharvestide. For years, there has been speculation about a hidden heir to the throne of Tethyr. Those rumors prove true at the Higharvestide celebrations. Crown Prince Haedrak of Tethyr arrives in the city amid great secrecy, his presence revealed at a large noble holiday gala in the Market where both Khelben Arunsun and Open Lord Piergeiron recognize him as the last true son of House Tethyr before the assembled noble clans of Waterdeep. For the next four tendays, Prince Haedrak confers with the Lords and with many an ally, consolidating an army that will, as he says, "allow us to support the peoples’ desire for just rulership and peace."

## MARPENOTH 1368DR

* It is obvious that Crown Prince Haedrak of Tethyr can have no official sanction or aid from Waterdeep as a political entity, but there are many folk within the City of Splendors willing to join or aid him. Lady Perendra Raslemtar is the first recruit and ally. Lord Maernos’ financial backing helps greatly. Lord Arlos Dezlentyr and his daughter, the Lady Corinna, donate their aid and the use of nine full ships and crews — the Lady Dezlentyr proves an excellent captain of the royal fleet, with an uncanny knack for gauging winds and currents. Lady Kyrin Hawkwinter is an expert horsewoman and calvalry instructor; her specialties lie in commanding calvalry and horse breeding. An unassuming druid, Yuldar Ilistiin, is revealed as a true noble of Tethyr and convinced to return to the land of his birth. Lord Holver Roaringhorn brings to the Army 1,000 foot soldiers for troops and 20 seige engineers; Lord Zelphar Thann and his family bring 200 calvalry and 2,000 pikemen. Lord Erktos Thann, Zelphar’s nephew, joins as well and soon proves to be an asset to Tethyr, though only nineteen years old. His grasp of battle strategies, seige engineering, and castle construction make him crucial to the successful seige of Myratma later on in the war.
* God’s Day. A holy day for the Lady of Mysteries, celebrating her rebirth and ascension atop Mount Waterdeep. As this marks the ten-year anniversary of the Goddess of Magic walking Faerun in the form of the mortal Midnight, the church is particularly visible. Church coffers are increased dramatically, and numerous magical items are donated to the faith by the city’s resident workers-of-Art.
* The Starfall Festival. The faithful of the Lady of Luck celebrate the sundering of Tyche and the birth of their goddess today. A number of new clergy are ordained and paraded through the streets, each bearing the results of a faerie fire or glitterdust spell.
* By the third tenday of the month, the combined calvalry forces of Crown Prince Haedrak leave Waterdeep, intent on marching overland to reach Zazesspur in Uktar and joining the rest of the army there.

## UKTAR 1368DR

* By this time, Crown Prince Haedrak has recieved the backing of the Waterdhavian clergies of Helm, Ilmater, Tyr, Torm, and Tempus, as well as a large number of their faithful who have joined his banner. By early Uktar, a fleet of ships leaves the city amid great fanfare (and much praying), and turns sail towards Zazesspur.
* Feast of the Moon. Celebrations in the area around the Plinth are subdued slightly with the discovery of a dead body slumped in a Hunter’s Alley doorway. The corpse is identified as Curthas of Goldenfields, a visiting acolyte of Chauntea, with the cause of death being strangulation. The killing is apparently magical in nature, judging from the blackish finger marks around Curthas’ throat and the failure of efforts to question the dead priests’ spirit, although the Chauntean was not known to have any enemies capable of engineering such deeds.

## NIGHTAL 1368DR

* Heavy winter snows batter the city, covering everything in deep drifts and thick coatings of ice. The bleak landscape presented inspires the sorceress Belshareen Azurean to sculpt the accumulated precipitation into fantastic ice-sculptures and to summon up carpets of unseasonal bluebright flowers around her North Ward domicile. The fanciful creations are the talk of the city, and make the Lady Mage of Lion Street in high demand among the remaining nobles of the city, who hire her to decorate their end-of-year celebrations.
* Winterride Ball. Winterride festivities are subdued this year, due to the large number of influential personages having left the city for the war in Tethyr and more southernly climes. Lord Piergeiron is present at the Ball, and two masked Lords appear before the assembled crowd before the end of the night — a rarity believed to be designed to reassure those in attendance that Waterdeep still stands vigilant and in good order, despite having a goodly amount of her magical and military might left for the battlefields of Tethyr.

# 1369 DR YEAR OF THE GAUNTLET

* Hammer 1: As a result of recent unrest across the North and the general activity surrounding the just-ended Shieldmeet, the city of Waterdeep is playing host to its highest winter-time population in decades. Many merchants, nobles, and others who would have wintered in the southern lands of Amn and Calimshan have stayed in the city, and there is already a high demand for goods and services, especially for high-quality food and drink, and other luxury items.
* Hammer 5: The well-known mercinary adventurer Hadrar "Hawksblade" Bruynnis returned to the city today, bringing news of the snowed-in cities to the north. Entering through the Northgate, wearing little more than a half-dozen oversized wineskins and singing dwarven war songs "badly, and at the top of his gods-blasted lungs" (as one unamused North Ward resident was heard to remark), Bruynnis proceeded to regale the crowd gathered at the taproom of the Inn of the Dripping Dagger with stories of his adventures. Of particular note was mention of high amounts of orc activity on the lower slopes of the Spine of the World, and even rumors of goblinoid attacks on the mining city of Mirabar, of well-organized sorties led by a being of fell intelligence. When pressed, Bruynnis admitted he had travelled no further north than Nesme, and only heard the news secondhand from a group of dwarven steel merchants passing through. He also noted that the number of giants plaguing the region around Nesme had dropped recently, and that many seemed to be headed towards the northwest instead.
* Hammer 7: Yet another devotee of the gods has been killed near the Plinth today, in a manner similar to several others in the last two months. Uldryn Suraedos, a Tethyrian native and an adherent of Lathander Morninglord, was found crumpled in a doorway off Hunter's Alley, just south of the Trades Ward landmark. Like the others, all priests of various gods, Suraedos' throat was mangled and scarred with blackish strangulation marks, and attempts at contacting his soul by acolytes at the Spires of the Morning inexplicably failed. In recent days, local wags and gossipmongers have dubbed this mystery killer the "Godstalker," due to his choice of victim. The Watch has issued a warning to any visiting priests to take caution when travelling the area around the Plinth.
* Hammer 11: Bragaster Raventree, younger brother of Lord Nandos Raventree, has sent runners to Virgin's Square and taverns throughout the city proclaiming a reward of 500 pieces of gold for anyone who can deliver three live, full-grown cathlyre to his townhouse on Waterdeep Way within the next ten days. Apparently, the birds are to be the "guests of honor" (after Lord Bragaster's hired chefs get through with them) at the party the eccentric Raventree is throwing to celebrate his recent divorce from the Calishite shaleira Beljuril Belaerra. Raventree, who shocked the city's noble circles when he married the flashy ex-pleasure girl, and then again when he ended their brief marriage in front of the Lord's Court, calling her a "screeching su-monster," is said to be deeply in debt and all-but-disowned by his family, leaving many to wonder how he is affording the lavish furnishings for his upcoming party.
* Hammer 14: A strange mold or fungus has been found growing throughout the city in recent weeks, clinging to the sides of buildings, statuary, and cobblestones alike. Faintly luminescent with a surprisingly pungent odor, the moss seems attracted to magical dweomers and enchantments (such as the polished facade of Halazar's Fine Gems, which has had to have been scraped clean twice already), and has led to a rash of illegal diggings, especially in areas where it has been found growing on back-alley cobbles or on the grounds of the City of the Dead. Would-be treasureseekers are warned, the Watch is taking an increasingly dim view of such antics.
* Hammer 17: One of a pair of stone statues flanking the front entryway of the Melshimber villa came alive today, scattering passerby on Grimwald's Way. The statue, a standing griffon carved of pink marble, reared up suddenly, roared once, flexed its wings and then quickly flew off over the rooftops to the northeast. It is unknown what could have caused the incident, as the carvings have stood at the archway since the construction of the villa, some centuries ago. A mage hired by the Melshimber family checked the site for signs of recent dweomers or magical tampering, but found nothing. As a precaution, the family ordered the second stone sentry taken down and demolished, lest something similar occur to it.
* Hammer 23: The arrival of a new vendor in the Market today caused quite a stir among shoppers and stall-keepers alike. Waeltho Reldarm, a gnomish merchant claiming to hail from far Lantan, unveiled a large selection of unseasonably fresh fruits and vegetables, including avacadoes, bananas, flamefruit, oranges, and pineapples. After drawing a huge crowd with his wares, the gnome was set upon by several irate vendors who destroyed his stall, claiming the goods were enspelled or cloaked in minor illusions to appear so fresh (a tactic sometimes used by shady or unscrupulous merchants). Saved by Watch intervention, Reldarm steadfastly denied any magical trickery, claiming the consumables were kept fresh with the aid of Gondian artifice from the workshops of Lantan. The Watch has sent samples of the foods to the Watchful Order to determine if magical tampering was indeed involved, but Reldarm has already been beseiged by agents of various wealthy citizens, seeking to restock their wintertime larders and dazzle dinner guests.
* Hammer 25: The dinner party of Lord Bragaster Raventree took a deadly turn late last night, ending with five people dead and a half dozen more wounded. After dinner and, according to reliable sources, more than a few snifters of firethroat brandy, it was suggested that those in attendance dress as "monsters" and "adventurers" and chase each other around the neighborhood. Somehow, through means still unknown, three of the costumes worn by partiers - an owlbear, a troll, and a troglodyte - were enchanted by fell magic, turning the unfortunates into the very creatures their costumes represented. With their humanity replaced by animal savagery, the three went on a rampage, and were only stopped by crossbow-wielding guardsmen. In death the enchantment was apparently broken, for all three returned to their human forms. Lord Raventree has been cleared of any wrongdoing by the Watch, although the man he claims the costumes were bought from, a streetside vendor in Sethma's Court, has apparently disappeared.
* Calendar Day - Midwinter: In taverns and festhalls across the city today, ale flowed freely and roaring hearths blazed brightly as citizens gathered to make agreements for the upcoming trade season, spin tales of heroes long gone and battles long fought, dwell on the latest gossip, and make predictions for the newly-born Year of the Gauntlet. A few notable highlights on the day;
  + In a solemn cerimony, the druids of Seatrees Shrine (the chapel of Silvanus) cut specially-blessed mistletoe from their indoor gardens. Along with Lord Piergeiron and Guardcaptain Rulathon (both bedecked in white-tabardded chainmail), and an honor escort of city guardsmen, the druids made a circle of the city, stopping at each massive city gate to ritually hang sprigs of the mistletoe (a tradition dating back to the days of the Fallen Kingdom, designed to bring peace to all within the city walls for the next year).
  + A madman dressed in beggar's rags wandered the Market today, raving about visions of doom and destruction. He was hauled off by the Watch for accosting a group of young noblewomen but escaped briefly, perching atop the stall of a spiced apple vendor and warning of "the scales and swords that gather in the deep waters," and "a watery death for the fools above." The Watch managed to subdue him once again, and order was soon restored.
  + For the second year running, the bard's school of New Olamn held its Silvertide Festival. Soon after nightfall, Olamn Square was set alight with colored lanterns and softly-glowing driftglobes. Costumed partygoers, wild dancers, Olamnite students and others took part in the wild festivities amid raucous music, pinwheeling Shou fireworks, and a seemingly endless supply of ale and zzar. While still lively, the celebration was subdued at bit after midnight, when the apparition known as the Brown Lady was sighted, walking near what was once the Fair Winds rental villa.

      The Brown Lady is often sighted along the length of Cliffride, a misty figure wearing a brown dress (hence her name) standing out over the waves crashing below in silent watch, or, more infrequently, walking the halls of the rental villas that now house the bard's college. Legend has it that when her beloved went off to fight in the Trollwars, the Lady pledged her eternal love for him. After he was killed in battle she threw herself off the cliff, dying of a broken heart. Her appearance is said to foretell great tragedy to lovers who cross her path, and she has become a frequent subject of many recent ballads composed by New Olamn bardlings.

## Alturiak

* Alturiak 2: Parts of Castle Ward were afflicted with a strange magical instability today. Effects included rains of fiery-red flower blossoms that materialized and vanished again minutes later, pockets of total darkness and unnatural silence, nimbuses of shimmering colors dancing and playing, blinding all within viewing distance, and harmless clouds of yellow-green and purple smoke rising from the ground. Upon further investigation, the magical chaos was found to be emanating from the Palfrey Lane domicile of Jhoebryn Wonderstars, a local mageling. Wonderstars has become quite well known in the Castle Ward district for her bizarre and often unstable spellcastings, and today's chaos seems to be no exception. The Watch has taken Jhoebryn in for questioning, but the Watchful Order of Mages, ever wary of such unstable "wild mages," is demanding that she be put in their custody.
* Alturiak 6: A barrel-race was held last night by the patrons of the Starry Jack and the Blue Snail, the two taverns that face each other across the top of Wastrel Alley. Apparently, after the race was over a fight broke out between the winner, Captain Bhaermul of the privateer Watermoon, and the loser, young Tam of House Gralhund.The entourages of the two men fought the length of Wastrel Alley, and by the time the Watch arrived, Tam lay bleeding on the cobblestones, and Bhaermul and his men had fled the scene. Tam's father, Irg Gralhund, has vowed to bring Bhaermul in to stand for the attack on his son. The Watermoon has been placed under watch, and Irg is rumored to be hiring men to hunt out Bhaermul and bring him to the Gralhund villa.

      A barrel-race, for those not familliar with the sport, is highly popular with the clientele of many taverns in Dock Ward. During the race, two or more contestants are placed in empty ale barrels and propelled down a hilly street. The first barrel to reach the finish line wins. Barrels that break or arrive at the line without their occupants (both rather common occurences) are disqualified. Barrel-racing is highly frowned on by the Watch, as it tends to be dangerous, both to participants and innocent passerby.

* Alturiak 10: Huge explosions and blinding lights rocked the night air around the Field of Triumph yesterday, after two rival mages chose the Field as the place to hold a spellduel. The Watch and Guard were held out by powerful magical wards, and by the time the mages of the Watchful Order could dispel the wards, the altercation had ended. The identity of one of the duelists, Baerelantyr "Blackskulls" of Nesme, is known, as his charred corpse was found on the ravaged field. The identity of any other participants is unknown, although the name of the Dragonmage, Maaril, is being widely whispered across the city.

      Damage to the Field of Triumph was extensive, and both Piergerion and the head of the Watchful Order, Maskar Wands, are said to be incensed over the matter. The normally reserved Maskar was even heard to make the statement that, "such lawlessness and disregard for Waterdeep's monuments will not be allowed to stand, so long as I draw breath in this city."

* Alturiak 11-12: Yet another snowstorm has hit the city, bringing with it a blanket of snow two feet deep in most places. Priests of Auril danced at the Plinth in the midst of the storm, drawing ill looks and mutterings from nearby citizens, but none were foolish enough to interrupt the cerimony and risk the wrath of the Frost Maiden.
* Alturiak 14: Rumors currently sweeping the snowbound city say that a high-ranking Luskanite official, most often said to be a mage of the Arcane Brotherhood, has fled Luskan for Waterdeep, offering vital information in return for Piergerion and the Lord's protection. Although continuing foul weather makes overland communication with the City of Sails impossible, the mage Nathlue of Spindle St., who maintains a sending service with the Luskanite mage Sheldendar "Longshanks," reports that Luskan is currently buzzing with troop and wizardly activities. Neither Piergerion or any of his fellow Lords are available for comment, and it is reported that they went into a secluded meeting mere hours before this rumor first broke.
* Alturiak 22: Citizens in Virgin's Square today were treated to a relief from the harsh winter weather. Two illusionists spent the afternoon turning the square into a vision of summer, complete with blossoming flowers, flittering butterflies, and warm smells. The mages, twin illusionists from the Border Kingdoms named Dhenlar and Qualen Carantlann, told onlookers that they were "weary of nothing but bleak, harsh tidings" and wished to bring a bit of their homeland to the city. Members of the Watch were on hand in case something happened, but the day went smoothly, with bardlings from New Olamn joining the crowd in an impromptu party.

      After the show Maskar Wands, ever a proponent of the judicial use of magic, censured the twins, pointing to the "useless waste of magical energies." The Blackstaff, who, with the Lady Laeral, was noted as being among the crowds in the Square, came to the defense of the Borderers, reportedly stating that such diversions were useful to "uplift the spirits of Waterdhavians during the long winters."

      As a side note, after their display Dhenlar and Qualen were approached by several nobles still in the city with offers to work their illusions at various parties among the noble villas, and a minor bidding war started on the spot for their services.

* Alturiak 26: The Scarlet Knave has struck again! Last night the villa of the Anteos family, currently wintering with distant relatives in Amn, was broken into by the legendary rogue, who made off with several choice pieces of Lady Anteos' jewelry. Servants and guardsmen in the villa were drawn to the back entrance by the appearance of a rampaging red dragon. By the time the illusion disappeared the Knave, who apparently entered through a high tower window, was gone, along with Lady Ranaya's jewels, including the ruby-and-diamond tiara that her husband gave her as a wedding present. The Knave's trademark red silk mask was left at the scene, the only proof that he was there at all. Several wards placed around the Anteos vault were still intact, leaving the servants to wonder how the Knave managed to enter and leave in the first place. Although the Anteos family won't return from Amn until early Ches, Renthos, captain of the villa guards, has already launched a search for the culprit, along with the Watch.

DM'S NOTE: The Scarlet Knave is a notorious rogue known for his daring thefts on almost every noble villa in the city. The Knave is really a gnome known as Ringhalade (CN[G],GM,T10/W[illusionist]11), a flamboyant and devil-may care thief hailing from Cormyr. He left Cormyr shortly after being cursed by the mage Entarn of Marsember. Entarn's curse caused Ringhalade to grow to human size, except for his nose, which retained its' gnomish proportions. Ridiculed by friends and family, Ringhalade left Cormyr for Waterdeep, and quickly acclimated to life in the big city. He is likeable and mischevious, as ready to steal from someone as he is to drink with them, but is never cruel or intentionally hurtful. He steals for the thrill of it, and may be baited into a trap by dangling rumors of a particularly tempting prize in front of him.

* Alturiak 29: Mother Tathlorn's House of Healing and Pleasure hosted its' first Annual Snowbound Festival tonight, touted as one last celebration before the rest of the city's population returns to Waterdeep from their various winter homes next month. Included in the festivities were dancing, contests of skill and strength, and a pageant to pick the first Lady Frost and Lord Icicle (something akin to "King and Queen for a Day"). Jhentaliya, a stunning beauty and the youngest daughter of Lord Silmerhelve, was crowned Lady Frost, drawing the wrath of her social rival Aalnethe Margaster, who was also in the competition. Aalnethe was heard to mutter several choice phrases as she stalked off the stage, and afterwards there was apparently an altercation between the escorts of the two ladies.

      Aside from this unpleasantness and a few rowdy drunks (who were quickly disposed of by others in the crowd), the night went smoothly, and Mother Tathlorn has promised to hold the Festival again next year.

## Ches

* Ches 5: The first tenday of Ches has seen a lessening of the constant winter storms, opening the way for many of Waterdeep's citizens who spent the winter vacationing in the Southlands to return home. The first nobles to make the return trip, the Hawkwinter family, entered through the city gates on the second and since then there has been a steady flood of arrivals, both citizens and newcomers. As usual, many of the nobles have returned early to begin planning their Fleetswake celebrations for later in the month.
* Ches 6: A delegation from the city of Luskan, surrounded by a sizeable mounted guard and not a few members of the Arcane Brotherhood, braved the harsh northen land routes and entered the city today immediately beginning again the rumors of a Luskanite defector and tensions between the two cities that first surfaced last month. The delegation, led by none other than the High Captain Suljack, rode straight to the Palace and were immediately granted an audience by the Paladinson.

      Rumors continue to filter down out of the Savage Frontier about military build-ups and troop movements in the area around Luskan. Many local merchants are holding off on plans to open their trading seasons with Luskan and other northern cities, in case war should break out.

* Ches 7: Along with the numbers of returning citizens to Waterdeep is a growing number of adherents of Kelemvor, the new god of the dead. At the Plinth there has been an increase in the number of Kelemvorites in worship and, while still modest, their numbers are believed to have grown to nearly 30, with as many as two-thirds that number having arrived in the past few weeks. The most senior of these priests, the Most Merciful Doomguide Raelar Hosthann, has also recently been seen in conference with Piergerion, arguing that the Doomguides (as the priests of Kelemvor are known) be given control of the City of the Dead and that they supervise all matters relating to the recently deceased in Waterdeep, including the preparation and interrment of citizens.

      The Paladinson declined Raelar's offer, stating that it was the Lord's position to keep the City of the Dead free from control by any one priesthood so that all many have use of it. Before stalking out Raelar reportedly told the Paladinson that stewardship over the deceased was granted to he and his followers by divine right, and that the mortal Lords would do well to remember that. It seems clear that this matter will come up again.

* Ches 12: The mercinary company known as the Blackfalcon Raiders returned to the city today after having spent the winter months in the city of Everlund fighting bandits, orcs, and other predators. They immediately sent a runner to Virgin's Square to declare themselves open for hire, and can be contacted at their offices on Tulmaster's Street, at the Sign of the Blackfalcon.

      In recent years the Blackfalcons, led by the ex-Flaming Fist Ghaundar Immelrune, have made a name for themselves in the competitive world of mercinary bands. Although they are a small company, numbering no more than 50 souls at the most, they are all hand-picked by Ghaundar for their experience and talents, and have defeated armies many times their size. The Blackfalcons are all experienced woodsmen and know much of the North intimately. Individual members can be hired out for caravan duty or bounty hunting, but they do not work cheaply.

* Ches 16: The patrons of the Yawning Portal were shocked tonight by the sudden appearance of the Lady Laeral in the midst of the taproom. She apparently entered from the depths of Undermountain in some haste, arriving amidst a windstorm that sent small objects flying and blew out all open flames. Said one onlooker, the veteran caravan master Geldorn, "She appeared a vision of towering rage, clad in tatters, her hair tangled and matted and the fires of the Nine Hells blazing in her eyes. She just appeared there, levitating above the lip of the well, surrounded by a maelstrom of swirling debris. ‘Twas truly an unsettling experience."

      The innkeeper Durnan quickly escorted the Lady into a back room, whereupon the chaos in the tap room subsided. Although the Lady Laeral was not seen again that night, Durnan soon emerged alone to stand guard over the well shaft until the early hours of the morning. Despite many curious onlookers and gossip-mongers nothing else emerged from the depths, and business soon returned to normal following dawnbreak.

* Ches 19: An increasing number of reports out of Trade Ward state that drow or drow-like beings have been spotted in the back alleys of the Ward. There have been as many as twelve unconfirmed sightings since sometime last month, but no proof. The watch is reportedly considering doubling its' patrols but, until conclusive proof can be found, most dismiss these reports as nothing more than a rumor.
* Ches 20-30: Fleetswake celebrations: The entire city has been gearing up for this last tenday in Ches, which is traditionally kicked off by the Annual Shipwright's Ball and then followed by countless nobles balls, guild galas, and neighborhood celebrations. The nobles and festhalls across Waterdeep are said to be spending an unheard-of amount of money on the proceedings, which promise to be the best in recent memory.
* Ches 20: The Annual Shipwright's Ball at the Shipwright's House was held tonight, and drew many of Waterdeep's rich and famous. During the celebration Bleskos Wavesilver and Royus Adarbrent, friendly rivals and heads of their respective clans, made a wager to see who could get a ship to the far-off lands of Maztica and back with a full cargo. By some accounts the betting was quite intense, and the wager reportedly went up to 50,000 gold pieces before the two agreed on terms of the bet.
* Ches 21: Tespergates Ball: Kicking off a round of noble parties, the Tesper and Dezlentyr families held a celebratory gala tonight, open to all. The party spilled out of both villas and into the street between them, and then onto Mendever Street. The highlight of the evening was the appearance of Silpara and Yulhymbra, the two Ghost Sisters of Tespergates who, as in the past two years, appeared over the table of Lord and Lady Tesper and gave them their silent blessings. All in the hall at the time cheered and saluted both the ghosts and the couple, wishing them all long life and health. After the two spirits took their leave, Corinna, daughter of the Dezlentyr clan, was heard to remark to Lord Tesper that the joint party was such a success that they should hold it again next Fleetswake.

      One other note of interest on the night; Breton Durinbold and Arundel Eagleshield, both thought to be bitter social enemies, were found in a disheveled state in a upstairs room, apparently "patching up" their differences. What this means for Goleria Nandar, Breton's fiancee, is unknown, but it is said that she didn't take the news gracefully, and that Breton is now nursing more than a simple hangover.

* Ches 24: The Fleetswake festivities were marred today by another apparent "Godstalker Slaying," as a young priest of Torm, identified as Belmennor of Mintarn, was found dead near the Plinth this morning with the now-familliar blackish strangulation marks on his throat. Two priests of Kelemvor, Daeren of Ordulin and Phulmyn the Scarred, were the first to find the body, and a minor scuffle broke out when Belmennor's fellow acolytes arrived and found the two Doomguides blessing the body in Kelemvor's name. The Watch quickly broke up the altercation and took the body in for further examination, over the objections of both groups. Later in the day the Watchful Order arrived to attempt a magical inspection of the area but, as has been the case before, nothing was found. The priesthoods of the city have been notified, and Piergerion has offered the use of the Watch to the various faiths, to act as guards and escorts.

      For the past four months, the city has been menaced by an apparent serial killer commonly known as the "Godstalker," for his habit of only killing priests. The death-toll so far stands at nine, with two priests of Milil, two Lathanderites, two priests of Deneir, and one each of Gond, Cyric, and now Torm having been killed. Most of the deaths occured in or around the Plinth, and there so far have been no witnesses to the killings. The Godstalkers' preferred method of killing is strangulation, as he leaves horrid, ugly, blackish finger-marks twisted into the victim's throat. It is evident that these killings are magical in nature, as the vicitim's souls are also taken somehow, eliminating any chance of resurrection or magical interrogation of the victim's soul.

* Ches 27: Spectators at the Naval Ship Race had a bit of a scare today, when the raker Waves' Edge accidentally ran into her sister ship, the Pride of Waterdeep. The Pride began taking on water and eventually sunk, but all aboard were safely rescued first. Due to the accident, the remainder of the race was cancelled.
* Ches 29-30: Fair Seas Festival: Fleetswake ended amid much pomp and pageantry, leaving the streets empty of all except the members of the Dungsweepers Guild, who were faced with the daunting prospect of cleaning the streets of ten day's worth of debris.

      The donations to Umberlee's Cache were an unremarkable amount this year, 205,000 gold pieces in all, no doubt due to the extraordinary amount of money spent on the celebrations leading up to the Fair Seas Festival.The high mermaid shaman, Thur Aquarvol, reportedly upset with the lackluster donations, demanded that the Lords add in a string of black pearls worth at least 60,000 gold pieces. The Lords are said to be unamused with Aquarvol's continuing additional demands to the Cache, and have sent an emmissary to work out a compromise.

## Tarsakh

* Tarsakh 1: A shocking discovery was made today by members of the Dungsweeper's Guild during the cleanup of the Fleetswake festivities. A headless, unclothed male body was found dumped in a midden near the palace, covered in a layer of refuse. The identity of the body is unknown and its' condition raises fears of a resurgence of the Unseen, a band of dopplegangers thought to have been driven from the city some years earlier.
* Tarsakh 2: The Luskan delegation that arrived in the city last month has set sail for home, accompanied by two Luskanite warships that arrived in the harbor last night. Now that land routes are opening to the north, travelers from Luskan are bringing with them reports that the city is under attack by a mixed force of goblinoids and giants under the command of a mysterious figure who calls himself the Ice Bear. Most travelers interviewed thought that the Ice Bear must be some sort of other-planar being or giant shaman of great powers to have gathered such a host of goblinkin.

      Apparently, both Luskan and Mirabar have been under intermittant attack throughout the winter and, now that the weather is stabilizing, the assault has begun in full force. The High Captain Suljack and his delegation made the trek to Waterdeep seeking military aid and supplies, both of which are in short supply in Luskan, apparently due to sabotage and harsh winter conditions. It is unknown what, if any, aid the Lords have promised, but it should be noted that the High Captain was seen to be in a foul mood shortly before setting sail home. Luskan's situation must be worse than thought, if her High Captains are forced to come asking aid of their nominal rival.

* Tarsakh 4: A convoy of 10 Tethyrian merchantmen under the guard of the warships Southward Sun and the Wavebreaker entered the harbor this morning, the first such to fly the flag of the new united Tethyrian nation. On board the Wavebreaker was the new Tethyrian ambassador to Waterdeep, Naelaur Dazlenn, a former member of the Council of Ithmong. The Ambassador was met by Piergerion and the Blackstaff, and escorted to his living quarters in Castle Ward.
* Tarsakh 5: As per the bet made by Bleskos Wavesilver and Royus Adarbrent during the Annual Shipwright's Ball last Fleetswake, the caravels Goldenharvest and Sea Nymph's Laugh set sail for Maztica, in a race to see which one can reach the New World and make it back again first.

      The trip to Maztica is no easy matter under the best of conditions, especially with a rise in piracy reported along the new trade routes, and a gradual lessening of Amn's iron-fisted control over the new territories. Nearly 70% of the ships attempting the voyage never return, although there is an incresing number making the attempt.

* Tarsakh 7-17: Waukeentide: Despite rumors of a war brewing to the north, the Waukeentide holidays arrive as usual, and are highly anticipated, especially by Waterdeep's merchant population.
* Tarsakh 7: Caravance: Although the first caravans made it into the city yesterday, spoiling the holiday a bit for most merchants, inns and taverns report doing a brisk business tonight, as the populace gathers at such establishments to party the night away.
* Tarsakh 8: Strange lights were seen in the night skies to the east tonight, over the general area of the High Forest. The lights, similar in form to a borealis, glowed with eerie blues and greens, and was shot through with lightning-like streaks of red and yellow.

      The light show lasted for almost the entire night, before vanishing with the rising sun. It is not known what could have caused this strange phenomenon, or what its' appearance means, although the taverns of the city are rife with speculation.

* Tarsakh 10: Goldenight: Waterdhavians tonight were treated to precipitation of a most unusual sort; just before the stroke of twelve bells a fine mist of golden particles began to rain down over the city, starting in Sea Ward and working its' way south through the city. The golden showers lasted less than an hour, but left many streets and buildings glittering with a dusting of gold.

      It seems that the temple of Mystra, along with several wizards of the Watchful Order, cast a dweomer designed to create clouds that rain down showers of fool's gold. This spell was created especially for Goldenight, and was done with the full approval of the Lords and the Blackstaff, who reportedly added in his own personal touch; rumbles of "thunder" that sounded suspiciously like chiming bells and clinking coins.

* Tarsakh 11: The Satyr Run Red tavern burned to the ground in Sea Ward early this morning, threatening to set neighboring buildings ablaze as well. The tavernmaster, Suldaphar Rendathyr, and his three daughters were the only people in the tavern when it went up, and they all escaped unharmed. None of the four seems to know how the fire started, and the Watch is looking into evidence of arson.
* Tarsakh 15: The multi-guild festival marking the Guildmeet holiday took place today, covering the entirety of the Market, the Cynosure, the Field of Triumph, and all areas in between. New Olamn gave its' students the day off, and many joined in the festivities as well. An impromptu drunken jousting match was formed in the middle of Julthoon Street, but was broken up by the Watch shortly after the young noble Kordanth Lanngolyn fell from his horse and broke his skull open on the cobblestones. He was rushed to the Lanngolyn villa where he was attended by priests of Lathander, but there is no word yet on his condition.
* Tarsakh 17: Marking the Leiruin holiday, all guildmembers in the city paid their guild dues today, as their elected heads met with the Lords to renew the guild charters. Shanandra "Manyjangles" Shemarsair, head of the Redlight Movement, was also in attendance as she argued for the Lords to create a new "Courtesan's Guild." The Lords agreed to consider the proposal, which is being fought against by many of the festhall owners in the city (who maintain their own individual groups of such men and women), but is favored by the vast majority of "hard-currency girls" on Waterdeep's streets, many of whom have joined the Redlight Movement.

      Also today, the Lords pilloried twelve men in front of the Palace on assorted crimes related to commerce, including theft or fraudulent business practices. Included among those in the stocks were a group of four men convicted in a notorious land-fraud scheme which robbed many of Waterdeep's weathier merchants and nobles; it is rumored that many of the coppers thrown at these individuals were actually lead covered with copper paint, a last bit of revenge by those they cheated.

* Tarsakh 23: Citizens in the streets of South Ward today were accosted by a crazed, robed man who stalked the streets near Caravan Court, wildly waving his arms and preaching the coming of someone or something called the "Forgotten One." When a Watch patrol arrived to take the man into custody, they were killed by strange tendrils of a greenish mist-like substance, that rose from the ground and left searing, pestulant wounds wherever they touched. After the watchmen were killed the robed man, most likely a mage or priest of some dark god, vanished suddenly, leaving behind the ghastly sound of his wild cackling. Neither the mysterious man nor anyone else speaking of the "Forgotten One" were noted in the city afterwards.
* Tarsakh 27: A major lightning storm roiled in from the Sea of Swords tonight, damaging several tall buildings in city and sending citizens scrambling for cover. The griffon eyrie atop Mount Waterdeep was especially hard hit, and will require several weeks to repair. Several small fires were also started by lightning, but no serious damage resulted from them.
* Tarsakh 28: A potential spellduel in Dock Ward was averted this afternoon by the club of Baerdarth, tavernkeeper of the Bouncing Hippocampus on Pressbow Lane. The altercation apparently started when a deal went sour between two rival mages, Bhaerdoum "The Black" of Athkatla and Emmeldyn Blaskadar, a rumored Zhentarim agent.

      Before spells started flying, the quick-thinking Baerdarth subdued the pair with his club, a huge piece of ironwood that he keeps below the bar. The Watch arrived to take the pair into custody, and the taproom soon returned to normal. It is not known exactly what set off the mages, but nearby patrons say that the pair were arguing about something or someone called "Yuthla, the Eye of the Beholder."

* Calendar Day - Greengrass: The citizenry of Waterdeep celebrated the Greengrass holiday today, marking the official beginning of spring. Flowers that had been grown in the inner rooms of villas and temples across the city were cast out onto the streets to bring rich growth in the season ahead, and the Annual Flower Fair was held in the Field of Triumph.

## Mirtul

* Mirtul 1: The city is abuzz today over news that Alicia, Queen of the Moonshaes, is planning an official visit two tendays from now. The Queen, a favorite among the citizens since her first visit in 1368 DR, is reportedly planning the visit as a "goodwill gesture" towards the city. The servants at the Palace are already making arrangements for a ball, and the Moonshae ambassador's offices are being flooded with nobles seeking to arrange for the Queen to attend their various parties and galas.
* Mirtul 2: Mounted Waterdhavian patrols have confirmed rumors of a huge goblinoid force besieging the city of Luskan. A convoy of Waterdhavian supply ships attempted to enter Luskan harbor yesterday, but were driven off by a deadly barrage of boulders thrown by frost and hill giants. One ship was critically hit, and three others suffered heavy damage.

      The leader of the attacking force, the mysterious figure known as the Ice Bear, still remains unseen, although reports from Mirabar indicate that either he or his underlings have potent magical abilities, including the power to summon fiends and elementals to do their bidding. Apparently, the Ice Bear's forces first attacked Mirabar in the depths of last winter but, after taking heavy losses, they moved westward, to the less-fortified city of Luskan.

      Waterdeep's northern patrols are being reinforced, but as of yet there is no indication that the Lords will aid Luskan with anything more than supplies. Said Helve Urtrace, the Senior Armsmaster of the watch, "Luskan is finally getting what it deserves. You'd not see me shedding tears if that whole den of thieves and pirates was run into the ground."

* Mirtul 3: Sulphon, a noted sage of the city, sent runners to Virgin's Square and many of the city's taverns today announcing that he is seeking to hire adventurers or mercinaries to procure rare ingredients needed to finish an experiment he is conducting. Sulphon's last two books, one on cryohydras and the other a treatise on the mating habits of remorhaz, were well-recieved by the learned community of the North, and led to Sulphon being awarded the Golden Quill, a high honor from the Vault of Sages in Silverymoon.

      What the ingrediants are, and what type of experiment the sage is working on were not disclosed, but interested parties were directed to Sulphon's domicile, the third door on Gothal Street off Calamastyr Lane.

* Mirtul 9: The Waterdhavian raker Winds of Glory was sunk today in a pirate ambush off of the Whalebones. Survivors, rescued by a passing Neverwintan merchantman, said they were attempting to help a fishing boat in distress when the ambush was launched. They went on to say that the pirate ships, which numbered three in all, all flew the flag of the Thelark, the self-styled "Baron of the Waves."

      The Thelark, thought to be a native of either Ruathym or Mintarn, is a fast-rising power among the pirates of the northern seas, having amassed a fleet rumored at over 25 ships. His flag, flown at the scene of many pirate raids, consists of a black claw crushing a golden crown (symbolic of the nations along the coast). Either the Thelark or someone under his command posesses magical powers, especially those of the sort used to conceal whole ships, and he himself is rumored to be favored of Umberlee, the Bitch Goddess.

* Mirtul 11: Lathanderites across the city today celebrated Rhyestertide, the holy day commemorating the life of Rhyester, first prophet of the Morninglord. Before dawn the Spires of the Morning were set alight with vibrant red and yellow faerie fire magics, and the dawnpriests fanned out across the city to help the needy or infirm.
* Mirtul 11: Dockworkers this morning found a warehouse full of dead bodies off of Net Street. The corpses, including several identified as Zhentarim agents formerly active in the area around Amn, were scattered throughout the warehouse, and signs pointed to an armed struggle. No evidence of any attackers was found, although most of the gossip currently spreading through the Ward has them pegged as members of Force Grey or the Harpers.

      The crates in the warehouse were apparently smuggled in from the Llorkh area, and contained close to 100,000 gold pieces worth of gold and silver trade bars. Authorities believe that the Zhents planned to use the bars to pay pirates and bandits along the coast to disrupt legitimate merchant traffic. The Lords have sealed off the area to search for further clues, and the crates have been confiscated.

* Mirtul 13: Nanthar Tarm, youngest son of the Tarm family, was thrown from his horse near Rassalantar and killed early this morning. The young noble lived for almost three hours after he fell, but never regained conciousness. The two guardsmen accompanying Nanthar say that his horse was spooked by a snake lying in the underbrush.

      Nanthar, a lieutenant in the Watch, had recently become famous for his uncovering of a smuggling ring operating out of the Rheldaryn warehouses, and was commended by Piergerion himself.

* Mirtul 19: On three successive nights now, will o' wisps have been spotted in the alleys and back streets around Naingate, the abode of the mage Nain, formerly of the Company of Crazed Venturers. Although they appear nonthreatening and have not yet harmed any passerby, two were destroyed last night by a watch patrol after they allegedly wandered into the nearby walled enclosure of the Melshimber villa.

      Nain himself has offered no public comments on these events, but reportedly had heated words for the Blackstaff on the incident. What the wisps appearance means, and what the mage's involvement with them is, is unknown.

* Mirtul 20: After many months of preaching in the market and holding services at the Plinth the Doomguides, led by Raelar Hosthann, have acquired enough money and parishoners (mainly undertakers and embalmers active in the city) to set up a shrine to Kelemvor. The site of the shrine is on Mhalsymber's Way, just opposite the main gate to the City of the Dead.

      Construction on the site (which formerly housed Vhaeruul's Perfumes and Exotic Scents, a now-bankrupt importer), is set to begin next month. Said the Most Merciful Doomguide, "This shrine is just the first step towards legitimizing the worship of Kelemvor in this city. Once we are fully established, the Lords will be forced to see that we, the guardians of the deceased, should hold sway over the City of the dead and its' environs." No comment was forthcoming from the Lords, although they are said to be well-acquainted with Raelar, who constantly seeks audiences with them to further the causes of his religion.

* Mirtul 22: Accompanied by two warships and an escort of Waterdhavian rakers, the Albatross entered the harbor this morning, carrying Queen Alicia of the Moonshaes and her court. After being greeted at the dock by Piergerion and the Blackstaff, the Queen was taken to the Castle for a closed meeting with the Lords.

      Later that night the Queen was the guest at a social ball at the Palace, which featured Mikhail Zereaid, a famed master composer of sweeping ballads (his "Lost Delzoun" is said to have moved Queen Alustriel to tears when she first heard it performed). Tonight Zereaid performed "The Stand at Freeman's Down," a specially-written tribute to the famous battle fought in the time of Alicia's father, King Tristan.

      The rest of the night saw dancing and feasting, with jugglers, illusionists, and trained beasts performing. Queen Alicia danced with Lord Piergerion, and it was quite evident to those in attendance that the Paladinson's affections for the Moonshae queen are still quite strong, even after her marriage (Alicia's husband, King Keane, remained at Callidyrr to oversee the running of the realm).

      One last note of interest; towards the end of the night the queen was seen talking quite amicably to Lady Bhaeryta Wavesilver, a half-elven noble of the Wavesilver clan whose high- elven skin and flame-red hair are the source of her nickname, "the Lady Rose." Bhaeryta is a recent addition to the Wavesilver clan, having married Andriol Wavesilver just a few summers ago. The wedding was the cause of much gossip, mostly centering around the bride's adventurous past, much of which took place in the Moonshaes. What the two talked of is not known, although endless rounds of speculation ran through the nobles at the ball.

* Mirtul 25: A historic meeting took place in Mariner's Hall today, between the Master Mariner's Guild and the Merchant's League of Baldur's Gate. Senior members of both guilds met to begin talks over pooling the resources of the two guilds, to the benefit (and greater profits) of all.

      For many years, the Mariner's Guild of Waterdeep has dominated maritime traffic in the North while the Merchant's League, led by many prominent explorers and trailblazers (such as the ill-fated Dabron and Iliatha Sashenstar), has risen as a strong, organized rival to land-based Waterdhavian costers. The heads of the two organizations feel that the pairing has great promise, especially in regards to the rich, largely-unexplored lands of the New World of Maztica. It is their hope that their combined resources can break the stranglehold Amn has over the new territories.

      It should be noted, however, that this alliance faces great challenges, especially from outside merchants and guild members unhappy with being paired with their nominal trade rivals, as well as Amnian interests, who would like to derail this threat to their monopoly. There have been strong rumors of assassinations at the talks, and security was tripled around the Hall today, with many hired mages of the Watchful Order in attendance.

* Mirtul 27: Another Godstalker Slaying rocked the city again today. Lieral Thundermace, an adherent of Tempus visiting the city from Tethyr with several of her fellow acolytes, was found dead, stuffed in a midden off Burdag Lane. As with the other killings there were no witnesses, and not even the guards Piergerion had stationed at the Plinth after the last killing saw or heard anything unusual.

      Lieral's comrades, a group led by the Battlemaster Arthag "Foehammer," vowed to find the killer, even if it meant "overturning every stone in this god's blasted place," but were quickly escorted out of the city by Captain Rulathon and a platoon of armed watchmen. It seems that the Lords were worried that Arthag might make good on his promise.

## Kythorn

* Kythorn 2: The children of the city celebrated the Trolltide holiday today by running through the streets, growling and snarling like trolls. In recognition of the holiday, many of the city's "body-artists" (artists, tattooists, and minor magelings who specialize in altering a customers various body parts) painted the children's hands and faces with green pigments for free.
* Kythorn 8: The adventuring group known as the Swords of the Lucky Lady returned to city in triumph today, after a successful expedition to the ruined city of Ascore. The warrior Elmaedar Snowmantle, leader of the Swords, regaled the crowd in the taproom of the Jade Dancer with tales of fighting a horde of undead and their master, a rotting, cloth-wrapped beholder.

      Apparently, Elmaedar's tales didn't impress a band of Ruathym mercinaries who were among the crowd, for a fight soon broke out between the two groups. Selcharoon Nrim, the Dancer's resident bouncer-mage, managed to force the combatants out the front door, but they continued their fight in the midst of Slop Street until the Watch arrived to subdue them.

* Kythorn 9: The reclusive Mage of Stars - rumored to be an incantatar (the rare male form of the incantatrix) - was spotted in the city yesterday. He is rumored to be searching for a female with "eyes of the truest green" for some unknown purpose.
* Kythorn 12: A caravan carrying a shipment of gold for the construction of the new shrine to Kelemvor had its' cargo stolen en route yesterday. The caravan, under heavy guard by Kelemvor's faithful, set off from the Tower of Skulls in Ormath last month with a full cargo, but entered the city today empty. Apparently no one saw or heard anything amiss throughout the trip, and the thieves entered and left the caravan undetected with several thousand gold pieces worth of trade bars. The theft sets the construction of the new shrine back considerably, and the head of the city's Doomguides, Raelar Hosthann, is said to have flown into a berserk rage when he heard the news.
* Kythorn 13: The Waterdeep authorities placed the Lantanese ship Queldor Vhul under guard this morning, after discovering an illegal cargo of smokepowder in the ship's hold. The Watch also arrested the ship's crew, including the captain, Gondsman Oralantyr Merelarn. The usual penalty for smokepowder smuggling is banishment to Undermountain but, to avoid a diplomatic incident with Lantan, Merelarn will most likely be simply sent home and forever barred from entering the walls of the city.
* Kythorn 14-15: According to the latest reports from hard-riding calvalry scouts, the beseiged walls of Luskan have fallen to the hordes of goblinkin surrounding them and fighting is raging in the streets. The city's defenders, on the verge of routing, were reinforced yesterday by a column of Waterdhavian calvalry. The Lords have apparently decided that Luskan is the lesser of the two northern evils. The battle still rages, and yet another column has left for the battlefield as of this writing, along with a matching force of troops marching out of Mirabar.
* Kythorn 20: The Nine Mouths of Halaster were spotted in an alley off of Sul Street tonight by two startled passerby. The Mouths, named after the mad mage Halaster, appear at random intervals, and consist of a ring of nine levitating human mouths framed by moustache and beard. They appear insubstantial, although they have been known to solidify on occasion, to bite or snatch up a weapon being wielded against them.

      The Mouths most often do nothing more than make an insane cackling sound, although upon occasion they speak with passerby, imparting cryptic bits of information or the answers to unasked questions. Far more sinister, the Mouths sometimes emit harmful spells (chain lightning and the tentacles from an Evard's black tentacles spell seem to be its' favorite), or even teleport an unlucky soul straight to somewhere in the depths of Undermountain.

* Kythorn 23: A rumor currently shaking the ranks of the Guild of Watermen and making the rounds of the taverns in Dock Ward says that Huldarn Braemoryn, lieutenant guildmaster of the Guild of Watermen, is gathering support to make bid for leadership of the guild. Huldarn, long a supporter of the current guildmaster Zzundar Thul, is said to be unhappy with recent activities within the guild, including a reduction of his own powers. Such a struggle could be nasty and drawn-out, and may result in a disruption of the guild's duties on the docks.
* Kythorn 23: The Waterdhavian raker Defender lived up to its' name today, as it saved two Orlumboran merchantmen from a pirate attack. The Defender spotted the burning sails of the Lucky Merchant, one of the Orlumbor ships, on the horizon, and managed to catch a prevailing wind. The two attacking ships, both flying the flag of the self-styled "Baron of the Waves," were engaged and one was critically holed before the attack was broken off. The two merchantmen managed to limp into Waterdeep Harbor for repairs, and the captured crew of the holed vessel was brought in to stand trial for piracy on the high seas.
* Kythorn 24: Citizens in Sea Ward today were treated to a manifestation of the goddess Siamorphe. The Divine Right (as she is sometimes called) appeared in the Chapel and Chalice of the Divine Right, her shrine located in the Assumbar villa. She took the form of a ghostly, shimmering chalice which then transformed into a vision of a noble lady. The goddess reached out to touch the brow of Lady Harlaa, who was in service along with several other adherents, and then proceeded to rise up through the roof of the shrine into the air above, where she was spotted by several passerby before disappearing.

      Although she won't give details, Harlaa's aunt, Lady Belkerri, did divulge that Harlaa had been given a vision or portent of some sort by the goddess, and that such a manifestation only served to add proof to her contention that Siamorphe favors the city of Waterdeep and its' citizens, and that all the nobles of the city should look to the Divine Right for guidance and direction.

* Kythorn 25: The battle raging around Luskan has ended, with the remnants of the goblinoid army retreating to the north. The High Captains have declared victory, though it is a pyrrhic one, for much of the city of Luskan lies in ruins and the Waterdeep and Mirabar forces have taken heavy casualties. The High Captains, ever distrustful of their neighbors, have demanded that the other cities' forces withdraw immediately, but the commander of the Waterdhavian forces, Chuldroon Sunspear, is reluctant to leave with the still-strong army of the Ice Bear lurking just to the north. Further tensions between the two forces seem likely.
* Kythorn 30: The villa of the Anteos family was thrown into chaos today as hundreds of snakes swarmed up out of the cellars and into the villa, spilling out into the courtyard and even onto the nearby streets. It is not known what caused the infestation, as most of the family was out at the time.

      Apparently, the serpents came up out of the deep wells, which connect with the deep ways of Undermountain. The Anteos family escaped unharmed, although three of their servants suffered snake bites, and one later died. The Watch was called in and by the end of the night the villa was cleared of living serpents. However, many of the slithering creatures escaped into nearby alleys and buildings, and it may be a while before they are all hunted out and killed.

## Flamerule

* Flamerule 1: Today marks Founder's Day, the holiday that commemorates the Free City of Waterdeep's founding. The Field of Triumph is host to illusory shows of the history of the city as well as various martial exhibitions, and many festhalls are sponsoring costume contests. At nightfall the mages of the watchful Order are scheduled to have a display of fireworks and magical pyrotechnics on the slopes of Mount Waterdeep, in commemoration of the victory at Luskan.
* Flamerule 3: Bands of humanoids are reported to be raiding farmsteads and small villages in the Ice Lakes and River Mirar regions. These bands are said to be highly-organized and efficient, not the disorganized raiders one would expect after the battle at Luskan, leading many to believe that the Ice Bear still has a firm grip on his forces, and may be gathering supplies for another attack on Luskan or Mirabar. In response to the raids the city of Neverwinter is reportedly strengthening its' northern patrols, and sending troops to join with the allied forces at Luskan.
* Flamerule 7: With Luskan in ruins and the northern goblin threat still looming, Mirabar has sent an ambassador to Waterdeep to facilitate military operations between the two cities. The ambassador, Mithril "Ebonhand" Deepshield, arrived this morning along with a full retinue, and was immediately escorted to a meeting in the Palace. With tensions rising between the forces of the three cities encamped outside of Luskan, Piergerion and the Lords are eager for a quick resolution to the whole matter, as they do not want to still be stuck in the mountains hunting out the Ice Bear's goblinoids when the first snows of winter roll in.

      Deepshield, a long-time explorer and adventurer, is famed in the legends of the North as the fourth surviving member of the Company of the Gryphon, the only one to enter the halls of long-lost Gauntylgrym and survive. It was in that delve that he lost his right hand to a remorhaz which, after having it replaced with a fully-functional ebon appendage, became the source of his nickname.

* Flamerule 9: The noted warrior and arms-tutor Deriam of the Nine Daggers was killed today on High Street, as the horse he was riding on transformed underneath him into a wizard, who proceeded to blast the old mercinary into nothingness prior to teleporting away. The attack occured so swiftly that few got a good look at the mage, but he is described as having a foul, skeletal appearance, with eyes that burned a hellish red color.

      Deriam's killer is thought to be the undead mage Kraelich ("The Undying One" in the old Moonshaen tongue), who lairs somewhere in the isles of the Korinn Archipelago. Deriam was the last of a band of adventurers who plundered the Undying One's crypt some fourty winters ago, making off with several valuable items. Ever since then, their numbers have steadily dwindled as old age or Kraelich's vengeance has fallen upon them.

      Upon hearing the news of their father's death, Deriam's two sons Rundar and Tharbolt vowed vengeance on their father's slayer, and are said to be hiring mercinaries for a planned expedition to the Archipelago. Interested warriors are directed to the Sign of the Bottled Beholder, a tavern off Ship Street in Dock Ward.

* Flamerule 10: The Goldenfields, the walled abby of Chauntea northeast of Waterdeep, is reporting an excellent growing season, with a record harvest being planned. Most strangely, the fields of the abbey have been plagued by the appearance of unusual, purplish-white mushrooms amidst the fields. Originally thought to be an ill omen, these mysterious fungi have turned out to be little more than a nuisance, although the attendant clergy at the abbey are said to be mystified as to how they came to grow there. Several bushels have been sent to naturalists and alchemists in Waterdeep to discern the properties, if any, of this new fungus.
* Flamerule 15: A monstrous sea serpent was sighted in the waters off Orlumbor two days ago by a passing Amnite merchantman, the Chanrael Sails. The captain of the Sails, Borul Chanrael of Athkatla, described the serpent as having scales of a bluish-grey, each "the size of a greatshield" in length, and a ridge of stiff, spiny protuberances along its' back. Since then another ship, the Neverwintan caravel Seven of Staves, has reported sighting the beast, again in the waters near Orlumbor.
* Flamerule 16: Waterdeep Harbor was graced by a visit today from the Schooner of the Seas, a floating temple of Valkur the Mighty. The Schooner, the largest and fastest sailing ship in the Realms, was met by a skiff bearing a group of representatives from the House of the Moon, led by the priestess Ameathra Lhauralynn. The allied faiths held a day-long conference and, although the exact details of their talks are unknown, most speculate that the discussion involved plans to build a temple of the Mariner's God in Waterdeep, perhaps as an addition to the temple of Selune.

      Ameathra and her retinue returned to land at nightfall, although talks are scheduled to resume at the House of the Moon at daybreak, and an additional meeting with the Lords is set for the following day.

* Flamerule 19: It was announced today that the recently deceased merchant-mage Blaedarun Sarelgost has left a large number of tomes, scrolls, and objects of art to the college of New Olamn, as well as a generous monentary donation. Blaedarun, who died last month in Zazesspur of a wasting disease, was well-known as a patron of the arts, and was one of the original contributors to the college's construction. The dean of New Olamn has ordered the construction of a marble bust of Blaedarun, which will be displayed in the new Sarelgost Wing of the college's library.
* Flamerule 22: Rumors of an assassination attempt against Lord Piergerion swept the taverns and tankard houses of the city early this morning. Unconfirmed reports of an explosion of some sort at the Palace are being tossed about, and it is known that the Palace was closed to all traffic by the Guard shortly after sunup this morning. Talk of the Open Lord's death was quickly stilled, however, when the Paladinson was seen to attend a meeting with the heads of the Dockworker's Guild at the Castle this afternoon.
* Flamerule 23: Strange lights, rumblings, and noises emanated from Dragon Tower of the mage Maaril this afternoon. The disturbances lasted for almost three hours before stopping suddenly, leaving nothing but silence. Maaril, a reculsive man by nature (and said by most to be a sorcerer of fell disposition), has not been seen about the city for several tendays, and there have been no signs of activity at the Tower since the disturbances stopped.
* Flamerule 26: The commander of the northern Waterdhavian forces was killed yesterday when an inspection of a nearby ford turned into an ambush by the forces of the Ice Bear. Chuldroon Sunspear and his twelve bodyguards held the ford while two mounted scouts raced to warn the camp. By the time reinforcements arrived only three of the guards still remained alive against a force which counted a handful of baatezu among its' numbers.

      Chuldroon's lieutenant, the ranger Aluar Zendos, has assumed command of the northern forces. Aluar, a quiet, unassuming man, first made a name for himself in Waterdeep fighting Myrkul's minions during the Time of Troubles. He joined the Guard soon thereafter, and swiftly rose through the ranks.

* Flamerule 27: Three grain warehouses on Dock Street mysteriously caught fire and burned early this morning. The mages of the Watchful Order were on hand, but were unable to stop the warehouses from burning to the ground, as their energies were concentrated on stopping the blaze from spreading to nearby buildings. Arson is suspected in the fire and Sarastul Elphrin, the merchant who owns the warehouses, has claimed that the fire was set by one of his rivals. The Watch is investigating the matter.
* Calendar Day - Midsummer: Tonight marks Midsummer's Night, and nobles villas and festhalls across the city are set to throw huge parties in honor of the holiday. The various priesthoods are said to have couples lining up to have marriage cerimonies performed, and the usual sundown restrictions on the City of the Dead is being relaxed to allow couples access to the grounds.

      Also on this night, the temple of Milil is holding a Grand Revel to celebrate the Lord of All Songs. The faithful are invited to gather for a night of feasting, dancing, and singing, and many of the best bards from New Olamn are said to be performing.

      As a footnote to the Midsummer festivities, the candlelit facade of the House of Light (the guildhall of the Chandlers and Lamplighters) was plunged into darkness for several hours tonight, despite the frantic efforts of guildmembers to re-light the assorted candles, torches, and lamps. Nothing the guildmembers tried would get the candles to light, and eventually the Watch and an on-duty mage of the Watchful Order were called in. The mage, Duldoum Blackalbrow, discerned that the wicks of the candles were magically enspelled, most likely with a cantrip, to remain damp and unlightable. Students from New Olamn were seen in the area shortly before the blackout, and are suspected of making the prank. The masters of the guild are said to be uniformly unamused, and have sent a messenger to New Olamn demanding an apology.

## Eleasias

* Eleasias 2: In a new attack by the forces of the Ice Bear a flight of white dragons swept down out of the northern skies and attacked the armies encamped on the plain outside of Luskan. The wyrms inflicted heavy casualties, although an early warning by Waterdhavian griffon scouts allowed many of the soldiers to escape the hail of frozen death.

      The wyrms, which numbered five in all, were driven off by the mages of the Arcane Brotherhood who unleashed their magical might, sending three of the dragons crashing into the sea. The other two, after making a final pass at the encampments below, wheeled and flew off in the direction they came from. This new attack has shaken the morale of the forces gathered at the city, especially after the recent Luskan demands for a full withdrawal. Fights and confrontations between members of the nominal allies are reportedly becoming more frequent, as are desertions.

* Eleasias 4: Castle Ward was rocked today by the news that an unidentified mage, possibly a member of the Zhentarim or some other evil cabal, entered the Spires of the Morning just as dawn services were being held, and unleashed a series of lightning bolts upon the faithful gathered there. The man teleported away before he could be stopped, leaving several dead and many seriously injured. Many of the Morninglord's priests were injured, and additional clerical healing from the nearby House of Heroes was required. As well as the human cost, the inside of the Spires was heavily damaged, and may take several months to fully repair.

      Ghanthar Emveltarune, an acolyte of Lathander present at the attack, reported that the mage, a man of indeterminate age dressed in plain black robes, shouted words of derision moments before his attack, including a short tirade against "those who support the tyrannical policies of the self-styled Lords of this city."

* Eleasias 8: Aleena Paladinstar, the only daughter of the Open Lord of Waterdeep, is currently the subject of wild gossip sweeping the city, from the nobles villas of North Ward to the taverns down on the docks. The Paladinson's daughter is romantically linked with Phaelar Roaringhorn, a young noble of the Roaringhorn noble family. The pair were seen arm-in-arm at the last Midsummer festivities and, according to hearsay, they have since spent time together horseback riding at the Roaringhorn ranch outside of Rassalantar.

      Phaelar, an officer in the Waterdhavian marines and a known fancier of racing horses, has spent much of the last few years at sea avoiding the usual noble intrigues and infighting. Both he and Lady Aleena deny any such romantic involvement, but rumor-mongers point to Phaelar's recent elevation to captain of the raker Fleetwind as proof of his favored status.

* Eleasias 11: Radaen Thrul, a teacher of history at New Olamn, has apparently disappeared, the third such incident in the last two tendays. He was last seen by acquaintances inside the college two nights ago, and has not been seen since. Sabraela Nurlarn, a long-time friend and fellow teacher, told the Watch that Raedan was intending to spend the night cataloging and researching the contents of the new Sarelgost Wing, donated to the college last month by the deceased merchant Blaedarun Sarelgost.

      Radaen, a quiet, friendly man, was reportedly well-liked by his students and others at the college, and authorities know of no one who held a grudge of any sort against him. Thrul joins an Amnite student named Thandul Vaerelantyr and a custodian named Maelar in having gone missing from the college. All three of the disappearances apparently took place at night, while the subjects were alone, and no hard evidence has been found as to the motives or identities of the killer or killers.

      New Olamn has issued a series of precautionary warnings to students and staff, and has requested that anyone on the campus after dark travel in pairs, for safety.

* Eleasias 12: Lhamara Velglar, a priestess of Loviatar, has become the latest victim of the serial killer known as the Godstalker. She was found early this morning in an alley several blocks west of the Plinth. Unlike the previous victims, Lhamara was still clinging to life when she was found. Mages of the Watchful Order, rushed to the scene, attempted to interrogate her, but the Loviatan died of her injuries before long. Before she died, Lhamara reportedly kept mumbling about "the scars" and "black, black claws." Further attempts to magically question her corpse proved ineffective, as with past victims.
* Eleasias 15: Aszundar Zul, a noted Neverwintan diplomat and long-time ambassador to Waterdeep, died in his sleep last night. His body is set to be brought back to Neverwinter for burial tomorrow, along with the condolences of the Lords. Said Piergerion, "Aszundar was a rare soul; a man who could discuss troop strengths, harvest quotas, and fine poetry all with expert knowledge. Both Waterdeep and Neverwinter are poorer for his absence." Until a replacement can be sent from Neverwinter, Aszundar's assistant, Mhaurin Geldaunt, will become interim ambassador.
* Eleasias 17: Three priests of Kelemvor were arrested by the Watch today as they blocked access to the City of the Dead. The Doomguides were protesting the Lords continuing refusal to grant them control of burial services and the City of the Dead. Raelar Hosthann, head of the Kelemvorites in the city, immediately protested the "unfair incarceration of three men who were only following thier divine mandate," but was reportedly turned down by the Lords, who re-stated their intention that the necropolis remain free to those of all faiths. Piergerion also reportedly remarked to Raelar that, if he kept inciting his followers, he would be swiftly escorted out of the city and permantently banned.
* Eleasias 21: Citizens of South Ward today got a bit of excitement as members of the Watch battled two monstrous purple worms along Coach Street. The worms, apparently gated in from somewhere, perhaps Undermountain, were reportedly twice the normal size. Although no one was killed, and only two Watchmen injured, much of the southern length of Coach Street was ripped up and trade was disrupted for the afternoon.

      For those interested, the corpses of the two worms are currently on display outside of the Full Cup, the tavern on the corner of Coach Street and Carter's Way. The proprietor of the Cup, Gulth Djanczo, is currently offering a special on "Purple Ale," a brew he claims is made from the blood of the worms (but is most likely just purple-dyed ale).

* Eleasias 24: Disturbing rumors have been filtering out of the North lately, of Luskan ships raiding to gain supplies and loot for rebuilding. Small coastal villages north of Neverwinter and along the eastern coast of Ruathym report being raided by ships bearing no discernable flag or device. Luskan authorities decry these rumors, casting them as "propaganda unleashed by the enemies of the city of Luskan and her fair people."
* Eleasias 26: The northern allied forces found and destroyed a large force of humanoids encamped in the Ice Lakes early today, scoring a critical victory for the allies. Aluar Zendos, commander of the Waterdhavian forces, sent a griffonrider back to the city with the news that the victory has crippled the Ice Bear's forces, cutting their strength by as much as half.

      Tensions at the main camp outside Luskan, eased since the morning's victory, rose again towards dusk as a pair of emmissaries from the Ice Bear, mounted on a white dragon, swept down into the city and gained an audience with the High Captains. Zendos and Calleron Whitemantle, commander of the Mirabar forces, were denied entry to the parlay, leaving both parties fuming at the continuing lack of Luskanite cooperation.

* Eleasias 29: At daybreak this morning, the allied Waterdhavian and Mirabaran forces found themselves surrounded by Luskanites and a large force of southern mercinaries, apparently hired a few days before. The High Captains, led by Suljack, met with the leaders of the other two forces and demanded an immediate withdrawal from "soverign Luskan territory." Also at the meeting was a hobgoblin of unusual stature, one of the Ice Bear's emmissaries.

      Apparently, at the meeting between the High Captains and the emmissaries three days ago, a truce was struck. The commanders of the other two armies, faced with an apparent end to the hostilities, were left with no choice but to begin their withdrawal. When word of the alliance between Luskan and the goblinoids reached the troops, several violent fistfights and other exchanges broke out. The Lords of Waterdeep, upon hearing the news, sent out a strongly-worded missive to the High Captains stating their displeasure with this turn of events and Luskan's treatment of its' erstwhile allies

## Eleint

* Eleint 3: Several monuments and tombs in the City of the Dead have been found vandalized this morning. The damages seem to be random in nature, and no distinguishing marks or symbols have been left behind to identify the culprits. Interestingly, some of the structures bear damages similar to those caused by lightning attacks, yet there were no reports of any unusual lights or noises in the vincinity of the vandalism last night.
* Eleint 4: The naval barge Seaworthy collided with the caravel Murathann's Magic in Waterdeep Harbor this morning, holing the Magic and forcing an emergency evacuation. The Magic, registered out of Almraiven in Calimshan, lost its' entire cargo of valuable silks, and the captain of the ship has vowed that his patron, the ruler of Almraiven, will seek reparation for the incident. Naval officials are looking into the circumstances around the collision.
* Eleint 7: The wealthy socialite Myrana Jesthrund announced a 10,000gp reward today for the rescue and safe return of her son Borelthann. Borelthann, heir to the Jesthrund shipping fortunes, was last seen descending into the depths of Undermountain with his companions, the noble twins Erol and Cyldan Ilvastarr, five days ago. Yesterday, the twins returned to the city above, telling of fighting manspiders in the depths, and of getting seperated from their companion in the melee and ensuing flight.

      Thus far, the Company of the Flying Sword, the men of Zalantyr's Band, and the noted Underdark-tracker "Brighteye" Deladrier have announced their intentions to descend into the depths to search for the missing heir.

* Eleint 10: Violence erupted at a street fair in South Ward this afternoon, killing four people and injuring twelve others, including two members of the Watch. The area of the fair, centered on Caravan Street, has become home to a large number of Tethyrian immigrants, and is commonly referred to as "Little Ithmong."

      The fight was apparently between supporters of two former rival factions to Tethyr's throne, the recently crowned Queen Zaranda and the Baron-in-exile Thanra Alcanthe. Local rumors say that Thanra's faction started the altercation, and that they are backed by the Knights of the Shield, who are rumored to control much of the shadier elements of Little Ithmong. Undercover officers of the Watch are said to be infiltrating the area, in order to locate and root out such criminals.

* Eleint 11: The merchants of the city are gearing up for the upcoming gathering of the heads of the Lords Alliance, scheduled for early next month. Security in the city is also being heightened, as various rulers and other dignitaries travel to the city for the council.
* Eleint 16: Today marked the sudden end of a four-day rainstorm that battered the city, flooding many cellars and driving the caravan trade to a virtual standstill. The unseasonal (and quite unnatural) rains wreaked havoc with trade, shutting almost all of the stalls in the Market, and forcing both ships in the harbor and caravans outside the walls to wait until today to leave.

      In perhaps another sign of the storm's unnaturalness, no priests of Talos stepped foward to claim it as a sign of their god's divine power, as is usual with such destructive events of nature. In fact, no Stormlords have been sighted in the city since the start of the storm four days ago. A delegation of known Talosians staying in the Gentle Rest Inn near the Plinth seems to have disappeared completely, leaving behind their belongings.

* Eleint 17: The hedge wizard and purveyor of potions Veralen Mornd was found dead in his shop on High Street this morning. There was no sign of a forced entry, and the cause of death is so far unknown, but magical means is suspected in both cases. Veralen was known to have recently acquired a sizeable amount of chardalyn, a rare and magical mineral highly prized by wizards. A search of his abode was undertaken by the Watch, but the chardalyn seems to have disappeared, most likely stolen by those responsible for Mornd's death.
* Eleint 23: Bellmen across the city are announcing the opening of a new play in New Olamn. "The Star and Crescent," a tragedy based on the little-known Harpstar War, is written by the acclaimed bard and devotee of Finder Wyvernspur, Jhelan Sarsorel. Lord Piergerion is said to be planning an opening-night attendance, although Khelben Arunsun is said to be highly unamused with Sarsorel's choice of subject, and has reportedly called the play, "a ridiculous bit of fluff that exists only for Jhelan to call attention to his obscure deity."
* Eleint 26: The Baroness Chelthorea Crownsilver of Cormyr arrived in the city today, accompanied by her entourage and her constant companions, two honey-gold tressym. The baroness is in Waterdeep to meet with Lord Piergerion over matters of trade between the city and Cormyr, and to act as Cormyr's liason at the upcoming Lord's Alliance talks.

## Marpenoth

* Marpenoth 1: Tremors rocked part of Castle Ward today, shattering windows and causing at least two buildings to collapse from the vibrations. When emergency crews arrived on the scene they found several bodies crushed in the rubble. According to members of the Plumbers' and Cellarers' Guild, these corpses were of dark-skinned, elf-like humanoids. The site was quickly cordoned off by the Watch, and a guard was posted by decree of the Paladinson. What all this means is unknown, but the Blackstaff and Lady Laeral were seen among the ruins later that same night, surrounded by a ring of glowing driftlights and searching through the rubble.
* Marpenoth 5: Lord's Alliance meeting. The heads of state and ambassadors of over a dozen city-states arrived at the Palace this morning. Most came by horse-drawn carriage, although the Tyrant of Mintarn, Tarnheel Embuirharn, made a rather splashy entrance, arriving at the Palace on a flying carpet from his ship in the harbor. Security around the Palace was heightened to wartime levels, and access was severely restricted, but several main points of the five-day conference were made known;
  + The main talks centered around a rising tide of banditry and lawlessness in the Western Heartlands, brought on by an increase of trade with Tethyr and Maztica, and of renewed Zhentarim efforts in the area west of the Sunset Mountains.
  + Attention soon switched to the North where (of particular importance to Neverwinter and Mirabar) the alliance between Luskan and the forces of the Ice Bear looms. Mithril Deephand, the Mirabaran ambassador, reported an increase in attacks on trade and isolated settlements south of Mirabar and east of Port Llast. Aluar Zendos, commander of the Waterdhavian forces stationed in Neverwinter, corroborated Ambassador Deepshield's reports, and added that roving bands of hobgoblins and other humanoids have been spotted moving south into the northern portions of the Neverwinter Wood.
  + On the third day, the Tyrant of Mintarn addressed the Alliance, expressing concern about the continued menace of the pirate-lord known as the Thelark. The Thelark, whom the Tarnheel continually accused of being in league with the island-nation of Ruathym, has stepped up his attacks on ships in Mintarn waters, and the island has suffered recently as a result. Lord Piergeiron agreed to shift some of the Waterdhavian naval forces stationed at Orlumbor to Mintarn waters to help fend off future pirate attacks, although Baldur's Gate declined Piergeiron's plan to gather a fleet to hunt down the maritime menace, as the Thelark has not yet struck that far south.
  + On the last day of the talks the representatives of Baldur's Gate and Elturel, whose cities have feuded in recent months over boundary disputes and claims of broken treaties, almost came to blows and had to be physically restrained. The representatives, who had barely spoken to each other the entire talks, went so far as to draw daggers on each other but were immediately restrained by the Blackstaff before blood could be shed. Lord Piergeiron was reportedly furious at the incident, and stormed out of the conference room. The feud between the two cities bodes ill for the stability of both the Lord's Alliance and the entire Chionthar region.
* Marpenoth 7: Several figures were found frozen solid in an alley off the Street of Smiths today. The men, apparently Calishite from their dress, were found still sitting on their horses, seemingly frozen in mid-stride. The frozen figures are extremely delicate, and one of the men's arms broke off when the Watch attempted to remove them from the scene. The identity of the men, and who (or what) is responsible for this act is still unknown, although the Watchful Order is currently investigating the scene.
* Marpenoth 7: Patrons of the Nine Anchors Tavern in Dock Ward were entertained tonight by Deiron Mhalystar, Berdusk's ambassador to the Lord's Alliance. Deiron, a former adventurer and renowned bard, regaled the crowd with songs and tales of his adventuring days. The ambassador also challenged several of the larger taverngoers to contests of strength and wrestling.

      According to several patrons present at the time, the festivities grew rather boisterous, and the Watch eventually had to be called in to disperse the gathered crowd. Upon leaving, Ambassador Deiron reportedly gave the proprietor a large pouch of gems, more than enough to cover the tab and the incidental damages that were incurred.

 Marpenoth 10: The Lord's Alliance talks ended today, as the various dignitaries and heads of state began to take their leave of the city. The Neverwintan ambassador stayed at the Palace, apparently to further discuss northern security issues with the Lords. It is known that Sheiraya Blaskarn, a high-ranking priestess of the Red Knight, attended these later talks, as did Ambassador Deepshield of Mirabar and Aluar Zendos, commander of Waterdeep's northern forces.

      The presence of these figures at the Palace lends credence to rumors sweeping Castle Ward of another military strike to the north, this time against both the city of Luskan and the Ice Lakes region currently controlled by the Ice Bear. Waterdhavian officials worry that, if left unchecked through the winter, the forces to the north could grow too strong to be stopped later in the spring.

* Marpenoth 12: The source of a series of strange disappearances and unexplained phenomena in New Olamn has finally been uncovered; an ancient Imaskari statuette recently left to the college by the merchant Blaedarun Sarelgost was discovered to by inhabited by an ancient, utterly evil spirit. It is believed that this malign spirit was responsible for the deaths of several Olamn students and staff, including the late Radaen Thrul.

      The haunt was ultimately banished by the bard Dalcimer Silvernote and his companion, the mage Belshareen "The Breathtaking" Azurean. Due to these events the Sarelgost Wing of the college has been closed pending a more thorough inspection of its' contents by the Watchful Order.

* Marpenoth 15: Today marks God's Day, the anniversary of the end of the Time of Troubles and the ascension of the mortals Midnight and Cyric to godhood. All through Waterdeep shops and businesses closed in rembrance of those who died fighting the minions of the god Myrkul, and a military parade of Guard and Watch units wound through the city, along the length of the High Road.

      The Church of Mysteries celebrated the holiday as the rebirth of their goddess in the form of a mortal. A huge festival, a precursor to the Starfall festivities, was held at the Tower of Luck, and ended in a magnificent fireworks display that went on long into the night.

      As usual on this day worshippers of the entity known as Ao gathered at the Plinth to celebrate, and to preach the tenants of their faith. Unlike last year, there were no full-scale riots at the Plinth, although there was a small clash between the Ao-worshippers and a band of Cyricists also present at the shrine. The Watch, alert for any possible disturbances, quickly broke up the fighting, and several members of both faiths were arrested and taken away for trial.

* Marpenoth 16: The Old Xoblob Shop, a popular curio store in Dock Ward, was ransacked last night. According to the proprietor, Dandalus "Fire-Eye," nothing of real value was taken. In fact, the only thing that seems to be missing is a foot-tall scepter, chased and worked into a scene of flying birds and leaping dolphins. The scepter bears a minor everbright dweomer, and doesn't corrode, tarnish, or react with any substance.

      Dandalus gained the scepter some months ago from a band of adventurers fresh out of Undermountain. It came with several other pieces, which all had greater dweomers on them, but were left untouched by the thieves. The adventurers who sold Dandalus the scepter, the Fellowship of the Nine Rings, are currently out of the city, and could not be reached by the Watch for comment.

* Marpenoth 19: The merchant caravel Endless Horizon was attacked by two reavers south of Leilon yesterday. The captain of the Horizon, the merchant-mage Enebryl of Tharsult, destroyed one of the attacking vessels with a meteor swarm, but his own vessel was also set ablaze as a result. The second pirate ship fled the scene soon after, and the Horizon managed to limp into Waterdeep Harbor by nightfall.

      Enebryl reportedly told guardsmen at the docks that the reavers bore the flag of the Thelark, the self-styled "Baron of the Waves."

* Marpenoth 21: Strange opalescent orbs, most about the size of a human head, appeared in Jester's Court this morning, drifting around in a slowly rotating pattern. Although initially harmless, at least half a dozen passerby were injured when they touched the globes, unleashing octopus-like tentacles which shot out and caused horrific burn marks on whatever they touched. The mysterious globes disappeared from the Court at sundown, as suddenly as they had come, and have not been seen since.
* Marpenoth 22: Today marks the most holy day of Tymora, the Festival of the Starfall. At the Tower of Luck, the worshippers of Lady Luck gathered to celebrate the date of their goddesses' birth. Jorynn Halstaff, a rising star in the church heirarchy, gave a rousing speech to the gathered faithful in which he charged them with carrying out Tymora's will across Faerun and beyond, and with rooting out and destroying the "foul, blasphemous evil of Beshaba." In apparent proof of Jorynn's divine favor, a shimmering nimbus surrounded the priest at the end of his sermon, causing more than one of the faithful present to drop to their knees in awe.

      After Jorynn's sermon, the zzar flowed freely, and the festival continued with riotous feasting and merrymaking. Hired illusionists worked their Art, turning the courtyard of the Tower of Luck into, among other things, a sunlit forest glade, the deck of a massive ship at sea, and the hall of an elven prince. Rare and exotic beasts, including a pair of snowcats tithed by Royus Adarbrent, were paraded past the crowds.

      Most of Waterdeep's more adventurous and reckless souls were on hand for the festival and, as in past Starfalls, many plans of adventure and exploration were laid by the close of the evening. Adherents of Tymora passed through the millings crowds with tithe plates, and by the end of the night the church coffers were overflowing with donations.

      Other points of note on the night included the eldest sons of the Tarm, Majarra, and Phull families departure immediately after Jorynn's service to "find the Lady's favor in the dark depths of the Undermountain," and a drunken charge into the cold waters of the Trackless Sea. This midnight dip, led by Mirt "the Moneylender," included much of the then-inebriated crowd, and brought a close to the festival.

* Marpenoth 25: The sage Methos of Neverwinter is selling a king's tear he gained from adventurers several months ago. The adventurers, the Bold Blades of the Griffon band, reportedly gained the rare gem from a crypt deep in the Neverwinter Woods, in an area known to be controlled by hobgoblins. After selling the king's tear, the Bold Blades traveled north to fight in the recent war against the forces of the Ice Bear, where most of their members were killed.

      King's tears, also sometimes referred to as "frozen tears" or "lich weepings," are rarely found and highly prized. Clear, teardrop-shaped, and harder than steel, they are said to be the crystallized tears of long-dead necromancer-kings. In each gem can be seen that which the weeping king loved long ago.

      The tear in Methos' posession shows a pool of clear, sparkling water surrounded by sward of wildflowers and a ring of ancient oak trees. In the middle of the pool, an incredibly beautiful elven maiden can be seen bathing. The sage is offering the gem for 50,000gp, or highest offer. Interested buyers are directed to his offices in Turnback Court, Castle Ward.

* Marpenoth 28: The Watch raided a townhouse in Castle Ward this morning, breaking up a ring of suspected smugglers. The owner of the townhouse, Pharastul Greycloak, was arrested, as was Laenar Osprail, a young noble of the Nesher family present at the scene.

      Pharastul is rumored to be in league with the Kulchak clan, a powerful Ankhapurian noble family with ties to organized crime and several yuan-ti slaving operations. Kulchak activities in Waterdeep gained noterity some months ago when one of their operatives allegedly assassinated a visiting Amnian official in Castle Ward. A mysterious hooded figure that escaped the sting is believed to have been an agent of that family, and is now loose in the city.

      The young Nesher nobles' relationship to the smuggling ring is unknown, although Laenar has claimed himself innocent of any wrongdoing and his family rode straight to the Castle to protest his detainment when they heard the news.

* Marpenoth 30: A great dragon was sighted flying low over the coastline north of the city today, creating a small panic and setting off a stampede of livestock at the North Gate. Although the wards placed around Waterdeep by the Blackstaff prevent such dragons from flying directly over the city proper, the Griffonriders of the Watch were mobilized and spent much of the rest of the evening patrolling the skies in case the wyrm returned.

      Several bystanders reported seeing one or more figures atop the dragon's back, although more reliable sources in the Griffonriders have denied any such rumors. The wyrm flew off due north, and talk sweeping the taverns tonight has it as an agent of the Ice Bear, reconnoitering the area for a possible invasion.

## Uktar

* Uktar 1: The Baroness Chelthorea Crownsilver of Cormyr was found dead in her chambers at the Silver Rain Inn this morning, the apparent victim of an assassin. Chelthorea, an ambassador of the Forest Kindom, was sent to negotiate trade agreements with Waterdeep, and to act as Cormyr's liason during last months Lord's Alliance talks. She was not known to have any major enemies or rivals who would engineer such a deed, and the assassination occuring right in the shadow of the Palace has raised serious security issues.

      The Baroness was due to leave Waterdeep at the end of the Lord's Alliance talks, but she extended her stay for personal reasons. Rumors making the rounds in noble circles whispered that the widowed Baroness had fallen in love with Zandoun Kormallis, a member of the Kormallis noble family.

      Zandoun, a leading figure in the current Mariner's Guild/Merchant's League talks, is known to have visited the Baroness in her quarters several times, and officers of the Watch have brought him to the Castle for questioning. Scuttlebutt at the Castle revealed that the Watch is questioning Zandoun about several past and present business dealings, to discern if the Baroness' death was in fact arranged by person or persons upset at Zandoun.

      Regardless of the truth of the matter, the assassination of such an important figure is a serious diplomatic matter. Cormyrian officials were immediately notified via sending spells, and Castle Ward was swarming with Watch investigators and Diviners of the Watchful Order by mid-afternoon.

* Uktar 6: A squad of griffon-riders flew low over the city this morning, trumpeting the arrival of the first winterfrost and the holiday of Auril's Blesstide. The occasion passed without major incident, although the Spires of the Morning, the temple of Lathander in the city, was set alight with vibrant faerie fire magics, in apparent defiance of the Icemaiden and her power.
* Uktar 7: Citizens in South Ward were sent fleeing in panic earlier today, as a spellbattle erupted between a cloaked spellcaster and a group of armed men. At least seven people were killed and over a dozen more injured when a mage unleashed a flurry of explosive magical meteors in the middle of crowded Coach Street. The Watch, aided by a nearby mage of the Watchful Order, arrived quickly and prevented much of the resulting fires from spreading, but the assailant escaped before she could be apprehended, and is still at large. Several eyewitnesses reportedly described the spellcaster as a female drow or other dark-skinned elf.
* Uktar 9: The famed bard Revendar the Far-Traveled visits the city today. He is scheduled to address the students of New Olamn today, and the Open Lord has arranged a banquet for him at the Palace tomorrow night. Revendar is perhaps best known for his poem, "Rhyme of the Road," which he penned in 1357 DR, but he has established quite a body of work in his travels. An early journal of his travels and poems is said to have inspired the infamous bard and travel-guide writer, Volothamp Geddarm. Geddarm is scheduled to introduce Revendar at New Olamn this afternoon.
* Uktar 11: There has been a rising tide of assassinations and clashes in the city, as a result of talks between the Merchant's League of Baldur's Gate and the Mariner's Guild. At least six bodies, most of them Amnite assassins, have been found floating in the harbor in the last tenday, and many prominent merchants in the city have taken to hiring extra guards. The merchant Riyataivin, a prominent member of the Waterdhavian delegation, has publicly accused Amnite merchant concerns of attempting to derail the proposed alliance between the two guilds in a recent speech to the Lords.
* Uktar 15: The circle of Tyche was found burned into the doors of the Tower of Luck, the temple of Tymora, this morning. No amount of magical or mundane effort could remove the sigil and the doors, twin bronze-banded portals of ebonwood brought from Chult, were immediately taken down by order of the high priestess, Seenroas Halvinhar. It is unknown just how or who placed the brand on the doors, but many underpriests present at the scene believe the mutilation to be the work of agents of Beshaba, the Maid of Misfortune.

      Once widespread in the North, Tyche's Circle has not been used since the days of the Fallen Kingdom. It is primarily found today on old, overgrown plinths and shrines located by forgotten and little-traveled forest trails or mountain passes.

* Uktar 19: A raving madman was found wandering the back alleys of Trades Ward this morning. He apparently accosted several nearby passerby and shopkeepers. Those so encountered reported that the man kept raving about something or someone called the "Eye in the Deeps." The witnesses also stated that the man was dressed only in the tattered remnants of noble finery, and that he apparently carried a fistfull of gemstones, which he repeatedly tried to give away.

      The man was eventually apprehended on Book Street by several individuals claiming to be members of the Watch, and has not been seen since. However, an investigation by the reporters of the Herald has discovered that no one at the Castle is aware of any such arrest, nor were any Watchmen near that area when the arrest allegedly occurred!

* Uktar 23: The first winter snows hit the city today, bringing a light dusting to the rooftops and streets of Waterdeep. Although the snow was light, no more than a coating in most places, the Spires of the Morning recieved an unusual amount of precipitation. Hail and pieces of ice, found nowhere else in the city, pelted the Morninglord's temple, shattering two windows. The temperature around the complex became unnaturally cold, and many nearby plants and trees died from the sudden frost. It is believed that the bizarre weather around the Spires was the Frostmaiden's revenge for being slighted by the Lathanderites during Auril's Blesstide earlier this month.
* Uktar 25: The first nobles left the city today, heading south to warmer climes for the winter. Unlike previous years, Tethyr now seems to be the vacationing spot of choice, as many former refugees and exiled natives seek to re-assert their presence in the newly-united land. Other nobles see the winter exodus as a chance to expand their influence in the realm, and to make new business contacts.

      The Assumbar clan in particular was noted among the first wave of exiting nobles, as Lady Belkirri and her fellow lay brethen seek to meet with the scattered adherents of the goddess Siamorphe in Tethyr, and revitalize the worship of the Divine Right in that land.

* Uktar 28: The Kiss of the Goddess has been returned to Waterdeep! Missing for over twelve years, the Kiss was presented to the assembled Lords at the Palace this morning by the new Luskanite ambassador to Waterdeep, Neruudan, who claimed that the gem was captured from a bandit encampment by Luskanite soldiers. Although grateful for the return of the gem, the appointment of Nerrudan as ambassador is seen as a not-so-subtle snipe at Piergeiron and the Lords, who banned the man from Waterdeep several years ago for trying to set up a spy/smuggling ring in the city.

      The Kiss of the Goddess is a great gemstone named for Sune, the goddess of love and beauty. It was originally presented to the Lords in 1356 DR by the archmage Nairith Irizar, the Sultan of Volothamp, in reparation for an attack on a Waterdhavian merchant ship off the coast of Tethyr. Shortly thereafter, the Kiss was stolen from its' heavily-guarded and warded vault in the Castle, and has not been seen since.

      The gem is enchanted with a unique magical dweomer, which is conferred upon anyone touching it when it periodically flares into radiance. The first soul to touch the gem when it glows is healed of all wounds, cured of blindness or illness, and generally left refreshed and invigorated.

      It is thought that the return of the gem on the eve of the Feast of the Moon heralds good tidings for the coming months.

* Calendar Day - The Feast of the Moon: Throughout the city today in taverns, festhalls, and private houses alike, the dead are remembered and tales are told of great heroes and valiant deeds far into the night. Also most holy day of Kelemvor, the priests of the Lord of the Dead today gathered in the City of the Dead, to commune with their god and with the spirits of the deceased until the stroke of twelve bells that night.

      As usual on this day, many of Waterdeep's undead denizens rested uneasily, and reports of spectral sightings came in from all Wards. The Ghost Knight alone was spotted by several different citizens.

      However, perhaps the biggest surprise today came at nightfall, when the blue orb of the Moon Sphere winked into existence. Patrons of the nearby Jade Dancer festhall were shocked to see the Sphere already occupied by several dozen people, in various states of corporeality and many of them wearing outdated styles of dress. Miritai Aeouna, the dowager of House Lathkule, was said to have fainted dead away as she recognized one of the dancers as her grandfather, Ultath Lathkule, dead for almost a century! The spirits danced silently until dawn, occupying the Moon Sphere until it faded away, whereupon they did likewise.

## Nightal

* Nightal 3: An apparent assassination attempt was made on the life of Rulathon, Captain of the Watch, today. He and several other members of the Watch were making their way towards the Castle when they were ambushed by rooftop snipers in Watchrun Alley. Their assailants used crossbows whose bolts were coated with a particularly virulent poison, widely used among the thieves' guilds of the southern lands. Three Watchmen died from the lethal hail, but Rulathon and two others managed to find shelter beneath a nearby wagon. By the time aid arrived, the assassins had fled, apparently into the sewers underneath the city. The Watch is investigating the incident, and questioning residents in the vincinity of the attack.
* Nightal 5: Several bloody, severed human feet were found by a shopkeeper in Watchrun Alley this morning. The feet were found outside of Brazadoom's Sundries, near by the spot where the Captain of the Watch was ambushed only a few days ago.

      Such grisly mutilations, and subsequent public display, are an old form of punishment once used by the Thieves' Guild. That, coupled with the type of poison used in the assassination attempt, have led investigators to believe that the Guild was involved in the attempt on Rulathon's life. It is likely that the assassins were punished for their failure, although what the motives behind the attack were, are unknown.

* Nightal 8: One of the last merchant caravans of the year was ambushed north of the city late this afternoon. The caravan, bound for Yartar with a load of textiles and glassware from the city-states of the Chionthar Valley, was set upon and destroyed south of Rassalantar. The marauders removed all traces of their identity, although Waterdhavian scouts found a wide trail of mixed mounted and foot tracks leading westward from the scene, towards the foot of Mount Helimbrar. The Lords have ordered a large unit of Guardsmen to the Mount, to search for and root out any new bandit encampments or goblinkin lairs before the winter snows make such efforts too hazardous.
* Nightal 12: A mutilated human corpse was found in a midden off Quill Alley today by members of the Dungsweeper's Guild. The victim was later identified as Rinzoun of Athkatla, an Amnite merchant wintering in the city. The cause of death was determined to be from multiple slashing and gouging attacks, similar to those made by a large predator.

      Although they are still investigating, the presence of a single, bloody bear claw at the scene has led the Watch to look into the possibility that Rinzoun was the victim of a ritual hunt-and-slaying by the little-known Cult of the Dancing Bear, an obscure beast cult whose origins date back before Waterdeep's founding, to the barbarian tribes of the North. The Cultists are suspected in several similar slayings over the past few years, most of them visitors or non-natives of the city. Unfortunately, the Cult of the Dancing Bear was shattered several decades ago, and driven so far underground that they have successfully avoided the long arm of the Watch since then.

* Nightal 17: Stallkeepers and patrons in the Market this afternoon were startled by the sudden appearance of a balloon-like contraption in their midst. The craft, which belongs to the mage Amelior Amanitas of Secomber, landed suddenly atop the stall of Harvendhas Drult, a purveyor of Yartaran pottery. Amanitas seemed quite confused as to how he ended up in Waterdeep, and told the Watch that he was last in the Graypeaks, attempting to use "high-altitude air currents as an aid in 'directional teleportation,'" then found himself in the Market.

      The mage and his assistant were arrested, and the balloon impounded by the Watch, but all three were soon released into the custody of the Blackstaff.

* Nightal 20: The naval raker Morningstar made history today by being the first Waterdhavian naval ship to be outfitted with bombards, a new form of weapon recently developed by the island-nation of Lantan. Similar to a Thayan bombard, the new Lantannan version is less powerful, but more portable. Such devices are already finding favor in the navies of Calimshan and Amn, especially in the New Territories of Maztica.

      The Morningstar fired the bombards at target barges in the Harbor. Piergeiron and Rulathon, on hand for the demonstration, were said to be impressed with the power of the weapon, but will retain the more traditional balefire catapults and ballistae for the foreseeable future. The Open Lord cited high costs, a susceptibility to fire, and high maintenance as the main reasons for his decision.

* Nightal 23: The ghost of Chelthorea Crownsilver has been spotted for the third time this month, haunting the site of her death, the Silver Rain Inn in Castle Ward. The Baroness, who appears in undeath much as she did in life, was assassinated by unknown agents last month. Her haunt has so far appeared twice in the room where she was killed, and once at the top of the flight of stairs that leads to the upper bedrooms. Her silver-streaked hair appears disheveled and unbound, and a horrible gash across her throat pumps spectral blood and gore down the front of her nightgown. She is surrounded by a pale golden nimbus, and holds out a hand to any living beings nearby, as if imploring them. Those so encountered report feeling a horrible chill in her presence, and an irresistible urge to flee in terror.

      After her assassination, Chelthorea's two faithful companions, a pair of honey-gold tressym, seemingly adopted the Inn as their new home. Although generally sedate and lazy, the winged felines seem to be able to sense when the spirit of their former mistress is about to appear, and will suddenly give a violent start, hissing and spitting. They then seek to fly out the nearest open door or window, not to return to the building until the spectre has vanished.

      After this latest sighting, Lord Piergeiron has asked the Spires of the Morning to assign a priest of Lathander to the common room of the Silver Rain. The Open Lord hopes to make contact with the haunt should she again appear, so that investigators may learn the identity of her killers.

* Nightal 25: The annual Winterride Ball was held at the Palace tonight, and all of Waterdeep's remaining noble or influential personages were on hand. In addition to the attending nobles, there were also officers of the Watch and Guard, ambassadors of various countries and city-states, wealthy businessmen, socialties, the heads of several guilds, and many honored heroes and famous artists.

      The Ball, which marks the ending of the old year and the beginning of a new one, began promptly at sundown. The evening opened with a display of new magics and unusual creatures in the Lord's Court. After that, those in attendance were treated to a massive banquet, complete with musical accompaniment by an orchestra of New Olamn's finest musicians. After the dinner, many danced in the Great Hall, or broke into smaller groups (many of which seemed to congregate around the punch bowl - an amazing sight in itself, being an etched crystal basin large enough to serve as a giant's bathing tub!). The evening ended with an aweing pyrotechnical display by the mages of the Watchful Order, which no doubt lit up the night sky as far away as Neverwinter. A few highlights of the evening;

* + Several new spells were demonstrated in the Lord's Court, under the vigilant eyes of the Blackstaff, Maskar Wands, and a host of Watchful Order mages. Those presenting new magics included Thyriellentha Snome, the Mage Civilar; the enchantress Ololya Blesskill of Turmish; and Gemidan, the young ex-apprentice of the Blackstaff. The wildmage Jhoebryn Wonderstars attempted to display her spells but, due to the unstable nature of her Art, was prevented from entering the Court by Maskar Wands. After arguing unsuccessfully with Wands for a good half-hour, Jhoebryn declared "a pox on the stuffy, small-minded workers of Art that infest this city," and stalked out of the building, much to the relief of the assembled (It should be noted that Jhoebryn is now suspected in an incident outside the Palace later that same night. A bronze statue of the Paladinson standing outside the Palace was altered, changing it into a donkey-headed, overweight Calishite pleasure-dancer).
  + After the Lord's Court and the banquet, the Paladinson was little seen tonight. His attention was kept with the Blackstaff and the Neverwintan ambassador for most of the night, although he did emerge from a private council chamber once to dance with his daughter, Aleena. Indeed, many of the young men present seemed quite smitten with the beautiful Paladinstar, although the constant presence of Madeiron Sunstone, the Open Lord's bodyguard, served to deter most of them.
  + Maledrio Deepwhistle, the Lantanese agent who recently demonstrated Lantan's newest weaponry to the Naval Guard, was seen talking at length to Neruudan, the new Luskanite ambassador to Waterdeep. Although it is unknown what they talked of, it would be most troubling for the city if her nominal rival to the north gained this new Lantannan technology.
* Nightal 29: The first major snowstorm of winter hit the city today, bringing the city to a standstill and sending citizens scurrying to the warmth of their fireplaces and neighborhood taverns. The storm, which began around mid-morning and lasted until well into the night, piled almost two feet of snow onto the streets and rooftops, and generally foiled attempts by the Loyal Order of Street Laborers to clear passages through the drifts, many of which were piled waist-high in spots.

      As is typical in such storms, faithful of Auril were spotted dancing through the blizzard, looking like ghostly haunts or spectres, as they wore nothing more than simple white shifts in the freezing temperatures.

* Nightal 30: In the aftermath of yesterday's snowstorm comes the news that the Lady Nleera of House Tesper has finally given birth, to not one, but two healthy baby girls. Nleera's long pregnancy, which prevented her and her husband, Armult Tesper, from travelling south for the winter, was long and complicated, and many felt that either she or her children would not survive the birthing.

      According to a reliable source, Nleera actually went into labor in the middle of a dinner party that she was giving for the Blackstaff and his wife, the Lady Mage Laeral. She then had the high honor of having the Lady Laeral as an impromptu midwife! After the twins were delivered, the scene was further blessed by the appearance of the two Ghost Sisters of Tespergates, Silpara and Yulhymbra. The phantom sisters reached out to touch the brows of the newborns, and then silently faded away. In honor of the spectral guardians of the House, and for their part in bringing them together, Armult and Nleera decided to name their two children after the Ghost Sisters.

# 1370 DR YEAR OF THE TANKARD

## Hammer

Hammer 2: Arshal Abardan, a retired cleric of Gond and semi-successful inventor (the various metallic inks and cleaning solutions he developed are still widely used in the North by scribes and armor-wearing warriors, respectively), was found murdered in his home on Book Street this morning by Thaerond of Red Larch, a long-time acquaintance.

Although envoys from the House of Inspired Hands and investigators from the Watch quickly sealed off the scene, some details about the murder have become known. The floor around Abardan's body was apparently inscribed with a pentagram and strewn with various paraphernalia of a semi-religious appearance, and the word "Daerosdaeros" was carved into the dead man's chest. No further details are known at this time.

Hammer 4: A team of three Lantannan investigators arrived in Waterdeep early this morning, apparently by magical means as the Sea of Swords is still unsafe for passage. The trio headed straight for the House of Inspired Hands with some haste, and even recieved an official Watch escort to clear the streets for them. Rumors swirling through Castle Ward say that the three are special agents from the Ayrorch (the ruling council of Lantan), and are in the city to take over the investigation of the recent slaying of Arshal Abardan, a cleric of Gond.

Upon contacting Meirshal Feladryn, a Lorekeeper of Deneir and pre-eminent expert on the various Faerunian religions, the Herald has learnt that the word "Daerosdaeros," allegedly found inscribed on Abardan's chest, is one of the Six Secret Names of Gond, little known to any but the highest-ranking of His clergy. Further, Feladan told reporters that two similar ritualistic murders had been comitted lately; the inventor Jhorlass in Baldur's Gate, and Haldreth Havershar, a priest of Gond in Illul, Lantan. Found inscribed on the two were the words "Arnaglaerus" and "Balateng," two more of the Six Names. It is unknown why the Names were used in killings so far apart, but the ritualistic nature of the murders and the religious power of the Six Names led Feladan to warn that three more murders were likely forthcoming, involving the remaining three Names; "Klannanda," "Mrangor," and "Tattaba."

Hammer 8: The Western Light, a caravel out of Athkatla, was set alight in the early hours of the morning. Despite valiant efforts by the Harborwatch, the ship burned to the waterline before finally sinking to the bottom. The Light, watering in the Harbor for the winter, is owned by Thelmarl Zendroun, an Amnite merchant specializing in southern wines and other exotic liquors. Several crewmembers staying aboard were able to escape the blaze, but provided the Watch with little in the way of possible suspects or other evidence.

Hammer 11: In North Ward today, some sort of golem or other magical automaton rambled down Delzorin Street, sending nearby citizens scattering and creating havoc. The construct stalked westward, never pausing or deviating from its' course towards the ocean. When it reached Seawatch Street, the golem crashed straight through a house two doors down from the Fiery Flagon tavern and then onto Westwall Street, where it pounded through the city wall, oblivious to the blades and arrows of the Watch. It continued its march onto the beach, where it was soon submerged by the sea. At last report from the mermen of the Harbor, the golem was still continuing westward, into the depths. It is unknown where the golem originated, who activated it, or what its' purpose is, but the Watch is said to be investigating.

Hammer 14: A vortex of shimmering snow and ice crystals appeared in Virgin's Court at Highsun today, swirling to life right in the midst of a throng of people. Although, aside from a few cuts and scrapes suffered from the ice shards, no one was injured, the Watch sealed off the Court for the rest of the evening. As the rays of the setting sun touched the crystalline swarm, it swiftly began to melt, until it had vanished, almost as suddenly as it appeared.

Hammer 17: The sky over Waterdeep today was host to a most unusual sight; a flight of giant eagles, their great wings blocking the sun from the sky, flew over the city, heading west over the Trackless Sea. Although the Griffonriders were mobilized soon after the birds were sighted, the eagles passed without incident, and the streets of the city soon returned to normal.

Interestingly, both members of the Griffonriders and some sharp-sighted observers on the street swear that the eagles carried armored elven or elven-like figures on their backs. Where the eagles' destination lies in unknown, although many rumors making the rounds of the city taverns say they are headed for the legendary Evermeet of the Elves.

Hammer 19: Two ragged, bloodied men appeared in the cellars of the Hanging Lantern festhall early today, as if from thin air. The men, members of the adventuring company known as Zalantyr's Band, told the staff of the Lantern that they had been exploring the passages of Undermountain when they stumbled upon evidence of a sizeable drowish community, allegedly located near the legendary pirates-haven of Skullport. In the chaos that followed, the other members of the Band were killed, and the two, the fighter Dekaryn Silverhorn and the mage Orblal of Neverwinter, survived only by stumbling into a hidden gate. Although most patrons scoffed at the notion of a city of drow existing in the Deep Ways right under Waterdeep, the adventurers were adamant in their tale, and warned those thinking of delving the depths to reconsider.

Hammer 22: Trades Ward between the High Road and the Court of the White Bull was thrown into a panic today, as a skeletal, hooded figure stalked the alleys. The being attacked and slew the noble Aldanorm Ulbrinter and his companion Dlaerguth Coreth, and pursued a third man, Jlannan Boldfolly, into Deloun Alley, where it was finally driven off by the spells of a nearby watchmage.

The mysterious assailant left blackish strangulation marks on the throats of all three men, and rumors swiftly spread through all corners of the city that it was the work of none other than the serial killer known as the Godstalker. Watch investigators, however, are still skeptical as to these rumors, as this attack differs from previous ones, occuring in the midst of a crowded street, and focusing on targets of a non-priestly nature (though it should be noted that Aldanorm, at least, was widely known as an adherent of the god Valkur the Mighty).

Currently, the Watch is focusing on a possible political motivation behind the attacks. Both Jlannan and the late Dlaerguth are high-ranking members of the on-going Mariner's Guild/Merchant's League meetings, and the Ulbrinter family is an outspoken proponent of the talks.

The Mariners-Merchants talks, a proposed alliance between the Mariner's Guild of Waterdeep and the Merchant's League of Baldur's Gate, has been plagued from the beginning by vicious infighting and assassinations, which show no sign of abating soon.

Hammer 23: The mystery of the alleged "Godslayer" attack in Trades Ward yestereve has apparently been solved. Members of the Loyal Order of Street Laborers uncovered a dead, robe-covered body in a midden off Sorn Street matching the description of the attacker. The charred, skeletal corpse was identified as the mage Baerelantyr "Blackskulls" of Nesme, a noted invoker. Baerelantyr was killed in a still-unsolved spellduel in the Field of Triumph in Alturiak, and was thought to have been laid to rest in the City of the Dead. Investigators of the Watchful Order have identified lingering dweomers on the corpse as the spells used to animate and attack with, but have so far failed to trace them back to a point of origin.

Calendar Day - Midwinter: In taverns and festhalls across the city, ale flowed freely and roaring hearths blazed brightly, as citizens gathered to make agreements for the upcoming trade season, spin tales of heroes long gone and battles long fought, dwell on the latest gossip (news that Chynna Hothemer, eldest heir of the reserved Hothemer noble family, is smitten with Terl Fadesmar, a lowly Dock Ward watchmage, is especially the source of much speculation), and make predictions for the newly-born Year of the Tankard. A few notable highlights on the day;

A small circle of Auril-worshippers gathered on the slopes of Mount Waterdeep at daybreak, clothed only in short shifts and appearing deep in prayer. As the first rays of the sun crested the Mount, soft nimbuses of bluish light enveloped the gathered faithful and, moments later, a light snowfall began. Shortly thereafter, the Frost Maiden's supplicants ended their prayer and disbanded. The snowfall continued for some hours afterwards, but never gathered in any appreciable amounts in the streets of the city.

In a solemn cerimony, the druids of Seatrees Shrine (the chapel of Silvanus) cut specially-blessed mistletoe from their indoor gardens. Along with Lord Piergeiron and Guardcaptain Rulathon (both bedecked in white-tabardded chainmail), and an honor escort of city guardsmen, the druids made a circle of the city, stopping at each massive city gate to ritually hang sprigs of the mistletoe (a tradition dating back to the days of the Fallen Kingdom, designed to bring peace to all within the city walls for the next year).

In what is fast becoming an annual tradition, the bard's school of New Olamn held its Silvertide Festival. Soon after nightfall, Olamn Square was set alight with colored lanterns and softly-glowing driftglobes. The centerpiece of the Square, the eerily-lifelike Three Giants statue, was lit in vibrant, multi-hued faerie fire, which crawled up and down the length of the statuary until daybreak. Costumed partygoers, wild dancers, Olamnite students and others took part in the wild festivities amid raucous music, pinwheeling Shou fireworks, and a seemingly endless supply of ale and zzar. The centerpiece of the festival was the performance of The Lords Ugluckle, a bawdy satire involving the Lords of Waterdeep, and accompanied by larger-than-life illusions of the goddesses Beshaba and Tymora.

At Mother Teshla's Turret Club, the regular patrons were treated to an unusual scene; the reading of the will of Narthon Darlaurl, a recently-deceased gem merchant of no small fortune. The gathered folk, adventurers and mercinaries all, were read several cryptic words and phrases that, if unravelled and disciphered correctly, would allegedly lead to hidden spots around the city where Narlon hid portions of his wealth. The individual or individuals who found these caches would then receive piece-by-piece instructions to the hiding place of the merchant's greatest treasure; the Beldenbar Egg, a priceless gem-encrusted sphere of mithril said to have been made in legendary lost Delzoun.

In the moments after the reading, Mother's Teshla's was virtually emptied in a surge of shouting, hurried swordsmen, each sure that they alone knew the correct directions and eager to claim their prize. On viewing the scene, the Old Wolf of Waterdeep, Mirt the Moneylender, was heard to remark, "To think that such moon-wits may well be the future Lords and Ladies of Faerun. Ah well, at least we shall not lack for excitement in this new year..."

## Alturiak

Alturiak 5: The search for Mad Narthon's Horde continues, with dozens of adventurers and sellswords turning the city upside down in their attempt to decipher the clues left in the deceased merchant's will. The Watch has been put on increased patrols since an ugly incident involving the mercinary adventurer Hadrar "Hawksblade" Bruynnis and an unknown mage started a brawl that set afire an entire row of boarding houses along Slop Street. Lord Blackstaff himself has threatened to personally shove anyone involved in "this idiotic lunacy" down the well of the Yawning Portal, but both he and the Lords seem unable to halt the would-be treasure seekers, especially since three of Narthon's treasure caches have been uncovered already.

Alturiak 9: A rash of strange markings has arisen in the city recently, especially in Dock and Castle Wards. The runes, almost like a sort of graffiti, have been found on the cobbles and walls of many alleyways and courtyards, even on the walls of Castle Waterdeep itself. Although they do not radiate magical energy of any sort, the sigils have been identified as some sort of mage-script by several watchmages. Upon questioning from the Lords, Athlannan Yultune, ranking illusionist of the Watchful Order, confirmed that the markings were indeed ruthalek, the secret runes tought only to mages of his kind, but refused to speak further on the matter. Herald reporters have learned that a wizards meeting is scheduled tonight at the guildhall of the Watchful Order, but could not confirm whether or not it was due to the bizarre symbols.

Alturiak 13: Another vicious lightning storm raked the city last night, bringing the total so far this winter to 7. Although it has been an unusually mild season with regard to snowfall, the bizarre storms have caused major property damage and kept volunteer bands of citizen and Watch fire brigades scrambling through the icy streets. As usual, priests of Talos have been active in the city, proclaiming the violent weather the work of their patron. Interestingly, faithful of the goddess Auril have also been vocal, claiming that the Ice Maiden controls all winter weather not just the snows. Several local sages postulate that the unusual weather is a result of Auril trying to widen her powers at the expense of the Stormbringer. They warn that the Snow Queen's actions could lead to increased conflict between the faithful of the powers, as two minor skirmishes have already been reported between the factions.

Alturiak 15: A disturbance at the Plinth today between rival orders of Tyr-worshippers was swiftly broken up by a vigilant Watch patrol. The fight was apparently started by members of the Knights of Holy Justice, who are accused of accosting another sect known as the Belarrans. The Belarrans are a branch of Tyrrans who venerate Belaros, the Mortal Hammer of Tyr, a "holy smith" who dwelt around the Lake of Steam some 4,000 years ago. The Belarrans, accomplished swordsmiths whose creed is that justice can only be found at the end of a blade, are a little-known sect of the Lawgiver, and their somewhat fanatical ethos is apparently what drew the ire of the more traditional Knights. No serious casualties were reported, and both groups were given summons to appear before the Lords Court in three days before being escorted to their separate rooming houses.

Alturiak 17: The noted Mirabaran ranger and rumored Harper Tarnshar Stormraven stumbled into the city today, bearing the marks of recent combat. Before seeking the healing services of the Tower of Luck, he told the guards at the Northgate of stumbling across and fighting a sizeable band of orcs just northeast of the Rat Hills. To verify his claim, Stormraven produced a string of orc ears and a badge he claimed the orcs were all wearing; that of a circle of swirling stars surrounding a leering skull. The presence of any such humanoids, let alone an organized warband, so close to the city walls is extremely unsettling, and the guard has doubled their northern patrols and dispatched a search party to the Rat Hills to seek out any possible menaces.

Alturiak 24: A large amount of gold coinage, most of Calauntan origin, has been turning up in taverns and festhalls across the city in recent days. Herald sources report that the coins are coming from a number of grey-cloaked men, many of whom have Vastan accents. Reports of their activities, however, are conflicting; several sources say the coins are going towards information on trade routes and plans for the first caravans of the trade season, while others swear the cloaked strangers are hiring all available sellswords in the city for some unknown purpose. Less credible, but more common rumors making the rounds in the taverns say the men are attempting to discern the identities of the Lords, and even that they are involved in the search for Mad Narthon's Horde.

Alturiak 30: The Second Annual Snowbound Festival was held tonight at Mother Tathlorn's House of Healing and Pleasure, drawing many of the upper class still in the city. Touted as "one last festival" before the bulk of Waterdeep's richer inhabitants return from their southern winter hideaways, the event was deemed a success, surpassing last years festivities. As before, the highlight of the evening was the contest to pick a "Lady Frost" and "Lord Icicle" (something akin to "King-and-Queen-for-a-Day") from among the contestants. Rivaelia Maernos, a daughter of the Maernos family, won Lady Frost on the strength (or lack thereof) of her attire, a daring outfit little more than a swirl of strategically-placed, multi-hued snowcrystals. Darion Sulmest, spokesman for the Order of Cobblers and Corvisers, won Lord Icicle, mainly (according to common consensus) due to his having recently been seen on the arm of the Open Lord's daughter, Aleena Paladinstar.

Another contestant for the title of Lady Frost, Aalnethe Margaster, apparently did not take well to losing for the second year in a row. The youngest daughter of House Margaster was finally escorted out by security after causing quite a disturbance, not the least of which was revealing to the crowd just how flimsy Lady Rivaelia's outfit really was!

## Ches

Ches 3: Another lightning storm raked Waterdeep yesterday, sending the city into chaos. Beginning around nightfall the storm, easily the most intense one thus far, pounded the wards of the city with lightning, lighting up the night sky and making the very air feel as if it were charged with electricity. Although the Watch and volunteer citizens brigades began to mobilize to take on any fires started by the storm, they were soon overwhelmed by a greater threat; amidst the hail of lightning began appearing mobile, elemental-like beings of pure energy which rampaged mindlessly through the city streets. As the fury of the storm increased so too did the number of these creatures, forcing the Guard to take to the streets. Eventually many of the city's mages, including the Lords Blackstaff and Wands, gathered atop Blackstaff Tower to work a shimmering barrier over the city, from which further lightning strikes and elementals were harmlessly repelled. The Watch and Guard regrouped and engaged the creatures remaining inside the city walls, but were still outmatched until the early hours of the morning. As the storm overhead abated, so too did the elementals, which immediately began to waver and fade away, leaving no trace behind.

The origin of the lightning-creatures is still unknown, although some sages are claiming that the nights' events are proof of their theories of increased conflict between the portfolios of Auril and Talos. Maskar Wands, still in deep counsel with the Blackstaff and Lord Piergeiron (whose bandages bore testimony to his defense of the city), was heard to postulate that the sheer intensity of the storm itself may have caused natural rifts in the fabric of the Weave, opening a gate to a quasi-elemental plane from which came the lightning-creatures. Rumors flying through clean-up crews and tavernfolk alike this morning are more down-to-Faerun, mostly involving sorcerous meddling by the Arcane Brotherhood of Luskan or the Zhentarim. Also, the name of the Dragonmage Maaril, not seen or heard from since last Flamerule, is being whispered with increasing frequency across the city.

Among the casualties of last nights activities is the House of Purple Silks, one of the most famous pleasure palaces of the Sword Coast and a Sea Ward landmark. Although untouched by the storm raging around it, the festhall was severely damaged in a battle between one of the lightning-creatures and two adventurers who happened to be in attendance. The House is currently a burnt-out ruin, although the proprietress, Jathaliira Thindrel, has promised to rebuild "even bigger and better than before - perhaps in blue silk this time." The men involved in the fighting, identified as the noble Malgyr "The Torch" and his halfling companion Lanaly Farwanderer, have disappeared and are currently wanted for questioning by the Watch.

Ches 7: Orlar Thammas, speaker (contact) for the Watchful Order, has not been seen for almost two tendays, and is now officially listed as missing. Two of his fellow guildmembers, Hlannadar of High Street and Llaryn Gellanin, went to his domicile on the Street of Silks but found no trace of the speaker. They did, however, manage to activate some defensive wards and were forced to make a hasty retreat back out into the street with an activated helmed horror on their heels!

According to gossip sweeping the halls of the Order, Orlar was recently involved with a tall, regal woman with a shaven head (a Thayan, most agree), and had become withdrawn and moody. He was also known to be investing heavily in southern trading ventures of dubious success, and is rumored to have lost large sums of money. Both the Watch and the Guild have launched investigations into the speakers disappearance.

Ches 11: A moments entertainment turned sour for a crowd of Waterdhavians today. About twenty citizens stopped at the corner of the Street of Whispers and Grimwald's Way in Sea Ward around highsun to watch the performance of a man calling himself Thundroum Boldskill, "Jester and Magician Extraordinaire." Boldskill kept the crowd enthralled for several minutes by juggling many palm-sized crystal globes filled with multi-hued, swirling mists he called his "baubles." According to onlookers, Boldskill then dropped one of the globes which shattered, unleashing a billowing cloud of smoke that obscured vision and irritated the nose and throat. When the smoke cleared, Boldskill had disappeared - along with the purses and jewelry of all in attendance! One of the unfortunate onlookers, Lady Thiona Ruldegost, was robbed of a garnet pendant given to her by her deceased grandmother, and is offering a large reward to any who recover it.

Ches 15: Many of the city's nobles have returned from their winter holdings in the Southlands, and North and Sea Wards are again bustling with activity - especially that of the Carpenter's and Stonemason's Guilds, who are kept busy repairing the storm damage of many a noble villa. As always, in between renewing social feuds and planning for the Fleetswake festivities later this month, new fads and fashions gained in the South are being displayed. This season, it seems the hottest trend was brought back by those wintering in Amn; the fashions and foods of the New Lands of Maztica. Colorful beads and feathers have sprouted from the bodices and hair of many young women, and it has become a popular sport among the menfolk at villa parties to challenge each other to firepepper-eating contests. Thalia Urmbrusk, dowager of the Urmbrusk clan, even entered through the city gates atop a platform of floating featherwork, a treasure she reportedly paid no less than five pureblooded asperii mounts for!

Ches 20-30: Fleetswake celebrations: The entire city has been gearing up for this last tenday in Ches, which is traditionally kicked off by the Annual Shipwright's Ball and then followed by countless nobles balls, guild galas, and neighborhood celebrations.

Ches 20: The Annual Shipwright's Ball at the Shipwright's House was held tonight, and drew many of Waterdeep's rich and famous. Designed with a decidedly Maztican flavor, it featured partygoers in fancy feathered masks and exotic delicacies such as coffee and chocolates. Most of the latter found their way into the ample bellies of Mirt "the Moneylender" and Kelvar "the Old Captain" Helmfast, who were in a duel of sorts to see whom could consume the most candies and alejacks of zzar. Unanimously proclaimed winner of the contest after Kelvar slipped from his chair in a stupor, Mirt spent much of the rest of the night atop a banquet table, swinging a giant candelabrum about and dramatizing the story of his battle against "Old Zzrauldyna, the Three-Mawed Terror of the Troll Hills," much to the delight of a gaggle of young noble ladies gathered about him.

Ches 21: The Horn and Hounds, a Waterdhavian diplomatic ship, was attacked and sunk by pirates south of Leilon early this morning. All hands aboard were lost, including Mhaurin Gheldaunt, the Neverwintan ambassador. A nearby Amnite merchantman, the Golden Dreams, witnessed the Horn go down on the horizon, but came upon the scene too late to help. The captain of the Dreams, Orlyn Jhamluuth, later reported to Waterdhavian authorities that the attackers bore the flag of the Thelark, the self-styled "Baron of the Waves."

Ches 23: The latest news in noble circles is of Dalziel Vreldorn, a southerner claiming to be heir to the throne of the city-state of Ormpur. The recent death of the High Suikh Helbareim "The Storm Wind" Alanasker and the long-ago disappearance of his daughter have left the Vizier Barane in power. Vreldorn is backed by the Cragsmere, Lanngolyn and Hunabar families, who have introduced him into Waterdeep's social circles and are pushing the Lords to recognize him as rightful heir of the Shining Sea city-state. Meanwhile, in the event that diplomatic methods fail, Vreldorn is said to be contacting mercinary outfitters and adventurers in preparation for a more direct path to power.

Ches 25: The mage Nathlue of Spindle Street, who maintains a regular sending service with Tuljack "Twoflasks" Lhaeroun of Mintarn, is reporting that a band of elite Waterdhavian marines raided a festhall in the island-barony early this morning, apprehending a number of wanted pirates, allegedly including the Thelark, Scourge of the Sword Coast.

While it is confirmed that an armed battle broke out in the Golden Lantern Festhall in Mintarn's port district, Waterdhavian officials are denying any involvement in the altercation. Although the Tyrant of Mintarn, Tarnheel Embuirharn, expressed his concern at the pirate activity in the Sea of Swords during the last Lord's Alliance meeting, his isle is a widely-known "safe-haven" of sorts for such individuals, and it is likely that he will not allow such an action (if confirmed) to go unremarked on.

Ches 26: Since sunrise this morning the new Luskan embassy, located in Castle Ward near the Palace, has been surrounded by a detachment of the Guard under orders to let no one pass in or out. Information gained by the Waterdeep Herald indicates that the situation began shortly before sunup, when a squadron of Waterdhavian marines escorting the nefarious pirate leader known as the Thelark entered the city from a Neverwintan warship docked in the Harbor. Although it is still unknown exactly how, the Thelark ended up at the Luskan embassy instead of the Castle dungeons, where he was to await trial on charges of piracy on the high seas and murder of a diplomatic official (Mhaurin Gheldaunt, the late Neverwintan ambassador).

The Luskanite ambassador Neruudan has reportedly contacted the Lords, claiming that the Thelark is a legitimate freebooter allied with the City of Sails, and acting under Letters of Marque to "engage and harass enemies of the independant city-state of Luskan." He went on to state that "the High Captains of Mighty Luskan are deeply saddened by the accidental attack and sinking of the warship Horn and Hounds and the death of the Neverwintan ambassador, but retain the authority to deal with the offending captain as according to the laws of Luskan, not our neighbors to the south. We demand that the individual in question be delivered into our custody to await trial."

This missive was greeted with scorn and snorts of derision at the Palace, for, while Luskan is known to have issued Letters of Marque to several independant "freebooters" of the Sword Coast during their short war with the island-nation of Ruathym in 1357DR, the City of Sails has not declared war on any other government since then. Although reluctant to take the first step towards armed hostilities by storming the embassy, it is widely thought that the Lords and their ally Neverwinter will not allow such an affront to go unpunished.

Ches 27: Preparations for the Fair Seas Festival, now darkened by the sounds of sabre-rattling between Waterdeep and Luskan, continue in the city today. The blockade of the Luskan embassy continues as messengers shuttle back and forth to the Castle, though sources report that little progress has been made in the stand-off. Continuing the fall-out from the last few days, Mintarn this morning closed its harbors to ships of Waterdhavian origin in response to an armed Waterdhavian incursion into Mintarn territory two days ago. The Tyrant of Mintarn has sent the Lords a communique stating, in part, that "it pains me to deal so with a valued trade ally, but such a blatant disregard for the soverignity of Mintarn and Her authority has left me with little choice but to deny access and succor to those ships of Waterdhavian origin that seek it."

Ches 28: Castle Ward this afternoon is crawling with investigators of both the Watch and the Watchful Order after the Dread Wavelord Hazenlyn, a high-ranking priest of Umberlee, was found dead in his chambers. Hazenlyn, in the city to officiate at the Fair Seas Festival tomorrow, was killed by a quantity of green slime which lay hidden in the mattress of the Dread Wavelord's bed. Several dweomers used to hold the slime in stasis until Hazenlyn lay down and to muffle the sounds of his ensuing screams have been identified by the Order, but they have so far been unable to trace them back to their caster.

Ches 29: The Fairs Seas Festival began today under a heavy cloud from the possibility of an upcoming war and the murder of the Dread Wavelord Hazenlyn. In his absence, the Festival's duties fall to Shalmeira Thelthryn, a junior priestess from Ruathym. Possibly in part to appease the Bitch Goddess over the loss of her high priest, donations to Umberlee's Cache have been especially generous this year, totalling close to 400,000gp. In addition, the Lords have finally acceeded to the mermaid shaman Thur Aquarvol's demands and added a string of black pearls reportedly worth almost 50,000gp to the offerings.

Ches 30: Roiling waters and choppy seas heralded the arrival of the Storm Prelate, the roving "holy inquisitor" of Umberlee, today. Surrounded by a circle of calm water amidst the turbulance, his ship arrived in the Harbor just past highsun. As soon as the Prelate and his bodyguards, the elite Slashing Tentacles enforcers disembarked, the waters of the bay returned to normal, much to the relief of nearby seacaptains. The Prelate, who was met by a party of Waterdhavian officials and guardsmen, including Guardscaptain Rulathon and Wavewatcher Thelthryn, is reportedly in the city to begin an investigation into the assassination of the Dread Wavelord Hazenlyn. After a brief meeting with Piergeiron and the Lords at the Castle the Storm Prelate and his men began their search accompanied, at Piergeiron's insistance, by the watchmage Carolyas Idogyr (ostensibly to act as the Lord's representative, but more likely to keep an eye on the notoriously overzealous Slashing Tentacles).

## Tarsakh Edition

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Tarsakh 2: There was a skirmish today between two Luskanite warships and the Waterdhavian naval raker Fleetwind, but few casualties were reported. Tensions are still running high between Luskan and the allied cities of Waterdeep and Neverwinter, but there are signs that the Lords are trying to defuse the situation by setting up talks between the two sides. In taverns throughout the city, the popular opinion is that it would be highly unlikely that the Lords would initiate any major hostilities during the tenday-long Waukeentide holiday, to avoid disrupting the start of the trade season.

Tarsakh 3-13: Waukeentide: Despite rumblings of a war brewing to the north, the Waukeentide holidays arrive as usual, and are highly anticipated, especially by Waterdeep's merchant population.

Tarsakh 3: Caravance: Inns and taverns reported doing a brisk business today, as newly-arrived caravanfolk and locals alike gather at such establishments to party the night away. In homes throughout the city many parents hide small gifts, supposedly left for their children by the mythical peddler "Old Carvas" (always in multiples of three, a tradition dating back to the days of the Three Kings of the Fallen Kingdom).

Tarsakh 6: Goldenight: Perhaps the most successful bash of the night was to be found at a party thrown by Jathaliira Thindrel and the staff of the House of Purple Silks. Since her festhall was burnt down during the lightning strikes last month, Jathaliira arranged to hire out the Helmstar Warehouse for the night. The entire outside of the structure was scrubbed clean and covered in gold paint, while bolts of gold cloth hastily imported from Calimshan decorated the inside. Fully half of the city's noble population was said to be in attendance, and the crowd grew so large that the festivities spilled out into the nearby wharves of Dock Street (luckily, Thindrel had enough foresight to rent two illusionists from the Watchful Order to cast temporary coloring spells on the outside cobbles and surrounding buildings). Copious amounts of zzar and Tashlutan amberthroat kept the partygoers warm, although one wonders how the dancers and serving-girls, who wore little more than showerings of gold-dust, managed through the night!

Tarsakh 8: Thanks to clear night-time skies, the citizens of Waterdeep were treated to a spectacular meteor shower that lasted most of the night. The entireity of the House of the Moon was cloaked in pale,ghostly faerie fire by the priests within, and faithful of Selune packed both the temple and the Moon Sphere to celebrate the occaision.

Some of the city's denizens saw the meteorlogical phenomenon in a more sinister light, however, including one robed man who spent much of the night atop a waterbarrel in Virgin's Square preaching loudly about the imminent end of Toril and the resurrection of some dark god or other. He was eventually driven off by thrown chamberpots and a band of drunken Uthgardt barbarians, but not before managing to wake much of the neighborhood.

Tarsakh 11: Guildmeet: The multi-guild festival marking the Guildmeet holiday took place today, covering the entirety of the Market, the Cynosure, the Field of Triumph, and all areas in between. New Olamn gave its' students the day off, and many joined in the festivities as well.

Tarsakh 13: Leiruin: Marking the Leiruin holiday, all guildmembers in the city paid their guild dues today, as their elected heads met with the Lords to renew the guild charters. Members of the Ancient and Revered Order of Merrymakers (more commonly known as the Jester's Guild) were also on hand, to again request their instatement as an official organization. Their last petition for official status ended in an unfortunate incident involving the Blackstaff and a pig bladder filled with ale. Gaspar Throgbottom, "guildmaster" of the Order, convincingly argued that their petition was unfairly turned down as a result of Lord Khelben's now-revealed status as a member of the Lords, but most likely hurt his own chances when one of his fellows cast a cantrip on the assembled guildsmen and masters, causing them to emit various unseemly noises and bodily odors. Order was returned to the Lord's Hall only after Throgbottom and his compatriots were removed from the building by a platoon of guardsmen.

Tarsakh 15: The latest crisis between the allied cities of Waterdeep and Neverwinter and the northern citadel of Luskan has apparently come to an end today, the result of several days of secret meetings between representatives of the three powers. In an agreement brokered by Alustriel, Queen of the fledgling nation of Luruar, Luskan has agreed to conduct a public trial of the notorious pirate-captain known as the Thelark, holding him accountable for crimes committed on the high seas. In addition, Luskan will pay a were-geld to the families of the Thelark's victims.

While many in Waterdeep are breathing a sigh of relief over the resolution of the standoff, several palace officials have been heard to state that the City of Sails had already achieved its true goal, which was a disruption of the increasing trade and military ties between Waterdeep and the independant island-barony of Mintarn. With a cessation of diplomatic ties and Mintarn's harbor closed to all ships of Waterdhavian origin, the alliance between the two powers has been all but sundered, allowing Luskan to maintain its powerful presence in the waters to the south of Waterdeep and around Orlumbor.

Tarsakh 23: The softly gurgling fountains and leafy bowers of the Hawkwinter Gardens were burst asunder in a spellduel last night, signalling an abrupt end to the night's festivities. The assembled Waterdhavian high society was left reeling after the revelation that Dhenlar and Qualen Carantlann, twin illusionists hailing from the Border Kingdoms, were secretly agents of the feared Cult of the Dragon. The twins, in high demand among noble circles for their spell abilities at parties and balls, were revealed when a meeting with another unmasked Cultist, the wealthy gem-dealer Inther Malhayan, was interrupted during last nights' ball. The Hall of Clouds was turned into a battlefield as the three Cultists fought with a pair of masked, rapier-wielding swordswomen and several bravos of the Hawkwinter clan. Malhayan was apprehended, but the twins escaped into the sewers. The masked ladies disappeared as well, leaving rumors swirling in their wake that they were members of the Harpers or the mysterious Red Sashes.

Also that night, the heads of the Sultlue and Thunderstaff clans chose to renew a long-simmering rivalry between their Houses stemming from several sour business deals and an affront to the daughter of Lord Sultlue. Both men accused each other and their respective retainers of taking advantage of the chaos by unleashing various killing spells hoping to eliminate their rival. The nobles were forcibly restrained by wand-wielding Hawkwinter maidens, who icily removed the two entourages from the Hawkwinter compound and forbade them to return "until thou gentlemen wouldst learn both manners and the proper forums for the usage of such foul magicks."

Tarsakh 24: Lord Bragaster, the eccentric younger brother of Nandos Raventree, head of the Raventree clan, has sent messengers throughout the city today proclaiming his offer of 5,000gp to any mount swift enough to beat his champion racehorse, Crownhearted Victory. Victory, a Hanovaeren thoroughbred, was the winner of last year's annual Goldencup horserace in Scornubel, where it won against the heavy favorite Wandering Rhodes amidst charges of magical tampering. Bragaster, best known for his brief marriage to the famous Calishite shaleira Beljuril Belaerra, denied the charges and an official investigation was dropped after the owner of Wandering Rhodes, a Sembian trade consortium, was found to be controlled by agents of the Black Network. However, the younger Lord Raventree's reputation was still tarnished by the accusation, and he was barred from participating in future races. Interested parties are directed to Bragaster's Castle Ward townhouse, the third door down from the Guildhall of the Order, on Waterdeep Way.

Calendar Day - Greengrass: Today marks the Greengrass festival, heralding the official beginning of spring. Flowers that had been grown in the inner rooms of villas and temples were cast out onto the streets to bring rich growth in the season ahead, and the Annual Flower Fair was held in the Market. Many of the city's nobles used this day as an excuse to throw a party (not that many of the nobility need a reason), and the streets of North and Sea Wards were brightly lit by the colorful lanterns and glowing globes of noble villas.

As they have since their founding, the priests of the nearby Goldenfields held a festival in the Field of Triumph. Entering the city at sunset through the Northgate amidst much fanfare and blowing of horns, the proccession travelled down the High Road and Julthoon Street, gaining a steady flow of local dancers, costumed partygoers, and minstrels sporting panpipes and hand-drums before entering the Field. Once inside a great bonfire was lit, and casks of minty Icewine were offered to all. As the night wore on the festivities gradually became wilder and more decadent, encouraged by the faithful of Chauntea who view the Greengrass holiday as a fertility festival in all aspects.

A smaller, more reserved gathering was held across town at the Market Hall, guildhouse of the Council of Farmer-Grocers. Members met to discuss crop plantings and the harvest prospects for the season, and to set tentative prices for the rest of the year. According to reports, members of the guild are expecting an excellent harvest but are troubled by the number of monsters being driven out of the Evermoors into the farmlands of the Dessarin Valley. Zelderan Guthel, head of the Council, is expected to petition the Lords sometime next month for increased military patrols in the affected areas.

## Mirtul Edition

1370DR/Year of the Tankard

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Mirtul 2: A number of late-night streetwalkers and other citizens report sighting the Lonely Piper wandering Trades Ward again last night. "Meleveryn's Ghost," as he is also known, is a ghostly, white-clad figure often spotted walking the back alleys and courtyards of the city at night, playing a mournful tune on his pipes. His melody is so sad it is said that even the undead apparition known as the Ghost Knight once stopped in its endless journey to listen.

Never seen up close or confronted directly, the Piper seems to favor playing "Solace of the Morning's Light," a mourning ballad written by the famed Illuskan composer Meleveryn. Widely rumored to be a ghost himself, or perhaps a mad priest of Kelemvor attempting to bring solace to the city's legions of restless souls, there are also those who accuse him of being a harbinger of death and an ill omen (it should be noted that, though there have been no deaths directly linked to the Piper, there have certainly been some attributed to him by those who wish their involvement to remain unknown).

Mirtul 5: High society in Waterdeep is currently abuzz over the upcoming gala at the Brossfeather villa. Organized by Lady Katya Brossfeather, it is rumored to be the largest party so far this year, with exotic delicacies and entertainers being imported from as far away as Lapaliiya and the Tashalar. The occasion is the safe return of the three youngest Brossfeather sons, who recently mounted an exploratory expedition into the Star Mounts. They are rumored to have acquired a number of strange devices, some of them magical in nature, which will be on display at the ball. The exact nature of these treasures is so far unknown, but Lullannyn Brossfeather, youngest of the three siblings, was spotted in the Quaffing Quaggoth displaying one of his trophies, a miniature clockwork beholder that levitated and responded to simple verbal commands.

Mirtul 11: Lathanderites across the city today celebrated Rhyestertide, the holiday commemorating the life of Rhyester, the first prophet of the Morninglord. Before dawn, the Spires of the Morning were set alight with vibrant red and yellow faerie fire magics, and the dawnpriests fanned out across the city to help the needy or infirm.

Mirtul 15: Brossfeather gala: Lady Katya's ball got off to a smashing start, despite an ugly rumor believed to have been started by Aalnethe Margaster, claiming that the Brossfeather sons weren't brave enough to enter the depths of the High Forest and merely purchased their trinkets from a vendor of esoterica in Silverymoon, that made the rounds of the attendees early on.

Among the performers entertaining the crowd were a handful of minor workers-of-Art who put on a series of minor magical displays for those in attendance (harmless illusions, bright colors, and the like). The final entertainer of the night was a tall, silent mage who kept his face and entire body covered in layers of iridescent, shifting gauzes. To the amazement of those in attendance, he created a miniature three-dimensional star-by-star replica of the Jester, one of Faerun's nighttime constellations, in the middle of the Great Hall. However, the amazing feat soon turned deadly, for as the last glowing "star" was put into place it apparently acted as a trigger of sorts, causing the other points of light to erupt in a deadly hail of killing energy. Before the House's guards could fight through the confusion to the Hall the mysterious caster had disappeared, along with many of the items recovered by the Brossfeather sons from the Star Mounts. A search of the grounds was undertaken, but no sign of the man or the items were found.

Later that night the mage Nain Keenwhistler, in attendance at the time of the attack, was heard to theorize that the magical star construct was likely some variety of spellweb, an Art little used since the days of fallen Myth Drannor. Lady Katya Brossfeather, who was uninjured in the attack, immediately sent runners to the courts and taverns of the city, offering a 5,000gp reward for the apprehension of the thief and the return of the Star Mount items.

Mirtul 16: An altercation between two vendors in the Market today was ended by the Watch, but not before the contents of no less than three stalls were upset and a series of blows were exchanged. According to onlookers, the fight was started by the merchant Alauryth Zvull, a purveyor of blocks of brilliantly-colored pastel chalks imported from Chondath, the kind favored by artists and children of the city's upper classes. Alauryth accused his neighbor, the merchant Djasth of Everlund, of hiring a witch or other hire-spell to cast a curse on Alauryth's wares, making them dull and brittle, and even causing some to collapse in piles of useless powder at the slightest touch. Djasth denied Alauryth's claims, and accused the other merchant of suffering from dementia. The Watch hauled both combatants off to jail, and the matter has been brought to the attention of the city judiciary to resolve.

Mirtul 21: For the last few tendays, swift-runners out of Yartar have brought rumors of fighting in the depths of the High Forest, of running battles between the elves of the woods and their allies, and orcs of unusual cunning and forestry skill. These tales were confirmed last night in the taproom of the Ten Tales Told tavern in Trades Ward by none other than the legendary Mintipur Moonsilver, recently returned from dealings in the region. The master bard reported that many of the orcs were armed with good metal weapons, even some of mithril make. More troubling, Mintipur reported that the orcs seemed to be united in a holy war of sorts and that captured orcish warriors spoke of their god, the "Wild Hunter," walking among them, urging them on. Finally, bands of elves and adventurers from Silverymoon and the fledgling confederation of Luruar are said to be heading towards the woods to aid its beleaguered defenders, though Queen Alustriel and the ruling council of the Moonlands are not known to have offered any military aid or supplies thus far.

Mirtul 24: The caravan master Gelthorm Haendlarr returned to the city yestereve bearing the remains of a creature he claims to have found along the coastline south of Daggerford. The beached carcasses of various aquatic denizens are nothing new since the beginning of the troubles along the Sword Coast, but this corpse astonished all those present in the Court of the White Bull. The lower portion was of a scaled, greenish serpent, while the upper half appeared to be the torso and arms of a human male, and where the two sections met the flesh flowed and warped like sculptors clay. However, the most disturbing part was the creature's head - an exact replica of the face of none other than the Open Lord, Piergeiron Paladinson!

A squad of guardsmen led by a Magister quickly arrived to take both Gelthorm and the creature to the Castle for further investigation, but word of the find has already spread like wildfire through the Ward, as have wild rumors of "sea-devil shapeshifters," and plots to replace the Masked Lords with undersea agents.

Mirtul 25: The moneylender Jurisk Ulhammond was found dead in his shop on Slut Street this morning, victim of an apparent assassination. A red sash, of the kind used by the little-seen vigilante group of the same name, was displayed prominently on the victim's body, and a blood-stained note directing its' owner to "The Mouths on Melshar's Street" was found clutched in his hand. It is not known if Jurisk was killed by the Sashes for some misdeed, or if he was discovered to be a member of that group by unfriendly factions, but opinions on either theory have been making the rounds of the taverns this afternoon.

The "Mouths on Melshar's Street" is a colorful, commonly used nickname for the building on the corner of Melshar's Street and Trader's Way. "The Mouths" refers to the many hand-sized faces carved into the roofline of the building. Local legends say the faces are enchanted and seem to shift from time to time. Also, if one stands underneath a face and utters the right password, it is said that the statuary may disgorge a key, cryptic note, wardtoken, or other bauble left there by someone. The owner of the building, a retired adventurer-turned-merchant named Emmerlund "Brighthands," has repeatedly denied the rumors of the faces, calling them "simple statuary, not some sort of bizarre ball-and-shell game." Emmerlund could not be reached for comment this afternoon, although two Watch investigators were later granted entrance to the premises.

Mirtul 27: The latest uproar in noble circles has to do with the dress-maker Maelynn, a South Ward commoner claiming to be the daughter of Lord Thandios Artremel. Such claims of blood are not uncommon among noble families, although the startling news is that Lord Thandios has openly admitted the connection, and has brought the girl to live in the family villa. Many have said that Lord Thandios is unhappy with the posturings and petty intrigues of his current brood, and that he is looking to pass control of the house to a more suitable heir (privately, most agree with Lord Artremel's assessement of his children, but it is his definition of "suitable" that has the rest of the nobility either in shocked protest or snide snickering). These actions, if proven true, would most certainly lead to strife among the rest of the city's noble families, many of whom have similar skeletons hidden in thier closets.

There has been no word of the reaction of Lord Artremel's legitimate children, although passerby on Vondil Street have reported the sound of screaming and breaking objects coming from the upper floors of the South Tower, the quarters of his eldest daughter, Lady Amanitrya.

Mirtul 30: A greedy scramble for loose coinage gave way to chaos in Trades Ward today, as a man dressed in the vestments of the clergy of Waukeen and topped with a jester's cap brought shoppers to a halt on Snail Street. Throwing handfuls of silver and gold coins into the throng of onlookers while extolling the virtues of the goddess of trade, the man managed to gather quite a crowd of onlookers around him before his sermon took a dark turn. Upon uttering the last verse of his sermon, which, according to onlookers, was "But beware, for the accumulation of riches leads to deceit, and deceit begets strife, and strife is the province of the One True God, Cyric!," the various coinage given away dissolved into an acidic cloud, burning leather coinpouches and the flesh off quite a few fingers, irritating the nose and mouth when inhaled, and momentarily obscuring vision. When the smoke cleared, the mad jester-priest had vanished, leaving behind only a medallion of Waukeen, branded over with the image of the Dark Sun, Cyric. The Watch is currently investigating the incident.

## Kythorn Edition

1370DR, Year of the Tankard []

Kythorn 2: The children of the city celebrated the Trolltide holiday today by running through the streets, growling and snarling like trolls. In recognition of the holiday, many of the city's "body-artists" (artists, tattooists, and minor magelings who specialize in altering a customers various body parts) painted the children's hands and faces with green pigments for free.

Kythorn 5: A circle of unknown mages attacked a home on Shield Street last night, igniting a spellduel that damaged several surrounding homes and ended only with the arrival of a platoon of guardsmen accompanied by three watchmages. The owner of the residence, the wizard Ormithar "Mage of Many Rings," fought off the attackers with the aid of two former apprentices, magically summoned to his side. The attacking mages did not identify themselves, but one of the corpses has been positively identified as Nleen Faerimuth of Luskan, believed to be a member of the Arcane Brotherhood.

Kythorn 11: It has become apparent that there is some sort of evil being lurking around Cod Lane in Dock Ward in recent weeks, as a third person has been found dead by passerby in the morning. Dryl Threnn, a dockworker and member of the Guild of Watermen, was identified as the latest victim of the mysterious killer. He was killed in the same manner as two others, having his insides somehow sucked right out of his body, leaving only a heap of skin and bones behind, and was only positively identified by the silver guild ring on his left hand. Citizens are warned to avoid travelling the alley after dusk, and the Watch has doubled the frequency of patrols in the region.

Kythorn 14: The Duchess Chanczlara Velmborn of Sespech has sent runners to taverns, courts, and festhalls across the city today, issuing a reward of 300 pieces of gold for the capture of the rogue Belzandan Morinshin, also known as Ophar Blackbuckle. She is also offering an additional reward of 700 gold pieces for the return of several family heirlooms and pieces of jewelry, stolen from her summer villa in Sea Ward by Morinshin.

Belzandan, a halfling importer of dubious character, was pilloried in front of the Castle last Leiruin by the Lords for passing off common squidmeat as rare aboleth tentacle (currently all the rage at noble balls and fetes). Posing as Ophar Blackbuckle, a hairdresser and manicurist to the "royal families of far Luiren," Belzandan apparently gained the Duchess's trust and then broke into the contents of her jewelry boxes. He is believed to have left the city on a caravan heading south, perhaps for the cities of Amn. All interested parties are directed to the Duchess's rental villa, on the north side of Ivory Street across from the Wavesilver family villa.

Kythorn 18: Swift-riders out of Red Larch and Beliard have reported to the Lords that flights of griffons have been spotted in the region recently, attacking farmsteads and harassing travellers on the Long Road. These griffons are unusually fierce, having attacked a fully-manned caravan out of Nesme, and have an unusual coloration, being a dark greyish color rather than their usual golden-tan. The folk of the two towns are asking the Lords for aid and several local landowners have put out calls for hireswords in Virgin's Square.

Kythorn 19: The Festival of the Dancing Goat brought trade and traffic to a halt along the length of the High Road and Waterdeep Way today, as partygoers dressed in leering goats-head masks and others costumed in fat, slovenly mockeries of the Hidden Lords danced wildly to the raucous music of hand-drums and ninepipes. The festival is popular with many of the Waterdeep's lower classes and poorer citizens, perhaps more for the copious wine and wild abandonment than anything else, and it ended in front of the Castle, where several demagogues railed at the "injustices" of the Lords, and a virtual caravan-load of rotten vegetables and eggs were hurled against the Grand Gates and the unfortunate guards stationed in front. Several arrests were made by the Watch, including one crazed rabble-rouser who attacked the carriage of a passing noblewoman with a knife, but for the most part the event ended without further incident. The upper classes of the city sneer at the festival, taking issue with the many insults and oaths hurled their way as well, and many whisper that it has darker roots involving foul gods and late night, secret human sacrifices.

Kythorn 23: A flight of animated swallow corpses attacked the local minstrel Elyrid Llaryn in Spendthrift Alley today, scattering the vendors doing business there and sending shoppers scrambling for safety. Elyrid was aided by the merchant Jesshyra of Daggerford, a vendor of perfumes and aromatic sachets, who stood revealed as a spellcaster of some ability, and together the pair fought off the agressive avians. The use of this particular type of bird in the attack is most likely a twisted reference to Elyrid's nickname, "The Silver Swallow." At least one of the animated birds bore a red sash tied around it's neck, perhaps a sign that the attack was made by the same person or persons that killed the moneylender Jurisk Ulhammond in his shop last month. Both Elyrid and Jesshyra disappeared after the attack, and have not been seen since. The Watch is currently investigating the incident as an isolated attack, although many in the city believe that an enemy of the vigilante Red Sashes has discovered their identities, and that more attacks will be forthcoming.

Kythorn 25: The crews of three ships anchored in the Harbor mysteriously vanished last night without a sound, leaving behind no signs of struggle. The Merchant Venture out of Athkatla, the Fair Winds out of Velen, and the Aloushan's Pride of Neverwinter were found uninhabited this morning by the Watch, their cargoes intact and with no signs of a battle or other disarray. All three merchantmen were headed for the town of Vilkstead in the Purple Rocks. Their cargo registries were listed as foodstuffs and other perishable goods, although Watch investigators later discovered hidden caches of weapons and armor aboard all three. The hidden blades were all newly minted, and bore a rune of a many-tentacled squid upon their hilts. During the course of the Watch's investigation, several mermen of the harbor surfaced to report that the seafloor bore unusual markings, as though a large creature or group of creatures had crawled into and out of the confines of the harbor last night. Both merfolk patrols and the harbor guards report no sightings of any such activity, however.

Kythorn 27: The yearly Rite of the Stag Lass in nearby Amphail degenerated into armed chaos today, as members of several noble families fell to fighting over a revealed artifact of some power. As this year's maiden, the young Sarabreene of House Ilzimmer, reached the bar of the Stag-Horned Flagon and drained the traditional antlered drinking cup, she discovered not the usual piece of mundane jewelry, but instead what was soon identified as the artifact known as the Yuthla, or the "Eye of the Beholder." The taproom of the Flagon was soon filled with ready weapons and hurled spells as the armsmen and nobles of several Waterdhavian families contested for ownership of the magical item. The battle ended with the townsfolk of Amphail having fled and many of the combatants lying dead or dying on the floor. Only powerful wards against fire magicks saved the Flagon from being immolated in the struggle. The Eye of the Beholder vanished in the chaos, as have several of the battle's participants. The Watch is currently attempting to locate their whereabouts, as well as ascertain just how such a powerful magical artifact ended up in the drinking cup to begin with.

## Flamerule Edition

1370 DR/Year of the Tankard

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Flamerule 1: Today marks Founder's Day, the holiday that commemorates the Free City of Waterdeep's founding. The Field of Triumph is host to a number of performances retelling the history of the city as well as various martial exhibitions, and many festhalls are sponsoring costume contests.

Flamerule 5: Several trade caravans from the south are currently overdue at the city gates, some by as much as a month. The caravans all seem to have made it past the ruined stones of Dragonspear Castle only to have disappeared before reaching the city, leaving no sign of them or any wrongdoing in the process. While the trade routes of the Sword Coast are always unpredictable and a number of merchant caravans succumb to raiders, prowling monsters, or the vagaries of nature each year, the utter lack of any indications of what happened make these recent cases a bit more sinister. Southern Waterdhavian patrols sent to investigate the matter believe that either a powerful mage or a dragon of fell disposition is behind the abductions, although it should be noted that there have been no signs of any such being taking up residence in the region lately.

Lord Orbul Brossfeather, the main investor in several of the missing caravans, has become the most vocal critic of the Guard's conclusions. In the days since the Lords announced their conclusions, Lord Brossfeather has been active in both the Lords Court and noble circles, lobbying for action against those whom he deems the "true culprits" in the matter; the reclusive elven inhabitants of the Misty Forest. Lord Orbul claims that the elves must be stopped before they wholly disrupt merchant traffic with the South. Many in the city believe that Lord Orbul has singled the elves out due to several Brossfeather expeditionary sorties that met their ends in the depths of the Misty Forest recently (due to the Brossfeather's looking to plunder the tombs of ancient elven kings, many whisper), but his exhortations have begun to find favor with a number of merchant and noble houses allied with House Brossfeather, as well as those who lost money over the disappeared caravans.

Flamerule 6: Three nightmarish tangles of eyes, tentacles, and fanged maws burst forth from the cellars of the Blackhorse Lane Tavern late this evening, sending patrons fleeing and even swallowing a few unfortunates whole. Later described by the sage Enthault Zrymn, in the tavern at the time, as "gibbering mouthers of a most unusual size and quickness," the three monstrosities escaped into the city, and their current whereabouts are unknown. Watch patrols have been sent out to hunt down the beasts, aided by tracking magicks from the Watchful Order.

The Blackhorse Lane Tavern is a relatively new establishment, having been built on the former site of Ehaeravuul's Envocations, a dealer in rare perfumes and body glim-magicks. The tavern's name comes not from its' address (the Blackhorse lies on north Snail Street, three doors east of the Golden Horn Gambling House) but, rather, from the lettering on the huge, scarred and flame-scorched, waypost that hangs behind the bar, allegedly salvaged from the ruins of fell Ascore by the owner of the establishment, the ex-adventurer Oblenn "Dragonbold." Oblenn has been linked to rumors of many cached magical items and servitor creatures hidden under the tavern and about town, and the Watch spent a great deal of time questioning him about his knowledge of tonight's events. He steadfastly denied any involvement in the incident, and kept muttering about the "Mad Mage" and his "damned sense of humor." When pressed for more details, Oblenn refused to elaborate.

Flamerule 10: The acclaimed Taum Brothers musical troupe will perform a series of evening concertos at New Olamn through the next tenday, beginning tonight. The Taums, dwarven performers out of the Great Rift to the far south, play wide, shallow-bottom gongs, made of specially-treated beaten copper and turned on their sides. In a darkened room, the Brothers surround the audience in a semi-circle and, as they strike the bowls, the metal gives off sparks of varying color and intensity (depending on where and how hard the bowl is struck). From a low, murmuring start evoking a passing Mirtul rainshower, the concert builds to a dazzling crescendo playing out the titanic myths of the Battle of the Gods, and the Forging of the Dwarven Race. The Taum Brothers last played at the Lady's Palace in Silverymoon, and were recieved quite well by Queen Alustriel, who is said to have showered them with expensive gifts and accolades.

Flamerule 17: The citizens of Waterdeep were treated to unusually vivid northern lights over the rooftops of the city last night. While the various temples were quick to claim evidence of godly doings (the church of Tempus was particularly vigorous in its tales of the war-god doing holy battle with some worthy opponent), the Lords today are said to be strengthening their outrider patrols and keeping close watch on areas of known recent goblinoid activity. Orcs in the North believe that when the Borealis glow red, as they did last night, it is an encouragement of their fell gods to take up arms, or a signal of an outbreak of war. Of course, such tidings are to be expected, as orcs take almost all unexplained phenomena to be such a sign of war, but the Lords remain vigilant nonetheless.

Flamerule 20: The nobles of House Thunderstaff announced their plans today for a Midsummer's Gala to top all previous such festivities. Hired heralds and trumpeters across the city revealed Lord Baerom's plans to rent the Field of Triumph from the city and hire mages from the Watchful Order to flood it with water, setting schools of colorful fish and trained dolphins to swimming beneath hundreds of imported lilies, lotus flowers, and floating trees. Guests will be served in the upper tiers of the Field, and also be transported from one side to the other by swan-shaped gondolas.

After news of the Thunderstaff fest spread, many of the city's Sea and Castle Ward clothiers reported a run on suitable attire, especially exotic party-hats winged like seabirds or crested like the fins of bright fish.

Flamerule 24: The storied Bells of New Olamn, high in their tower above the former Marblehearth rental villa, have been stolen! The Bells, recovered from the ruins of legendary Olamn, namesake of the current bard's college, were discovered to be missing by members of the Bellringer's Guild this morning during their customary morning rounds. There are no signs of forced entry into the tower, and the sheer weight of the apparatus has led investigators of the Watch to suspect magical means of removing the Bells. The Council of New Olamn and the Bellringer's Guild are said to be forming their own investigation into the matter, aided by many of the city's itinerant bardic population, many of whom are shocked by the theft. Since their arrival in the city, the Bells and their loud peals marking the passing hours have become the pre-eminent symbol of the growing college.

In earlier days, bellringing was mainly the province of the lords and nobility of Phalorm, one of several realms now commonly referred to as the Fallen Kingdom, brought into vogue by the mingling of human and dwarvish culture. The first "ringing societies" were founded during that time, and served much the same purpose as the gentlemen's clubs of today do. These societies largely died out in the chaos of Phalorm's fall, and bellringing reverted to an individual pasttime, used by noble households to announce weddings, births, holidays, special gatherings, and other notable occasions.

The concept of a ringing society was first brought back by students at the Lady's College in Silverymoon. It was soon taken up by rival colleges and schools in the city, until a series of "ringing contests" were eventually organized, to see which college could out-do the others. It became so popular in fact, that schools with inferior or no belltower lost many of their students as a result.

Bellringing was brought to Waterdeep with the founding of the Bard's College of New Olamn. It caught on quickly with the students, and the "Bellringer's Guild" now boasts many bardlings, young nobles, and even some of the city's more renowned sages. The Guild scored a huge coup when the Lady's Fortunate Fellows, an adventuring company formed of sons of noble houses, returned to Waterdeep bearing the ring of twelve handbells from the ruins of the original Olamn college. They are rumored to be enspelled with various protective magicks by the Bard's Gods of Oghma, Milil, and Denier, and seem enchanted to resist the effects of time and the elements.

Flamerule 26: Near highsun today a grand flying galleon of southern design soared over the rooftops of the city and anchored itself to the tower of the Watchful Order, causing even the most jaded Waterdhavians to stand agape and crane their heads upwards for a better view. A shimmering bridge or carpet of magical energy unfurled from the bow, and several robed figures were seen to cross into the tower.

The cause of the magical galley's sudden visit is unknown, as it soon broke anchor from the tower and swung westward out over the expanse of the Trackless Sea, too swiftly to have loaded or unloaded any cargo. Its path took it over Castle Ward and Mount Waterdeep, drawing nervous mutters from many citizens, but a squadron of griffonriders flew aloft to escort the departing ship, veering its course away from the Castle and the Open Lord's Palace.

Flamerule 27: The crumpled and quite bloodied corpse of the "Black Baron," Olhin Duthttever, was found in Buckle Alley south of the Tower of the Watchful Order this morning, the cause of death apparently being a lengthy fall. Duthttever, an outspoken member of the Suldown Street Society (a gentlemen's club whose members refer to themselves as "The Boars" - thus leading to local wags snipes such as "The Bores," and "The Bores of Suldown Street"), liked to fancy himself as a man of many secrets and powerful connections, but was not known to have made any enemies who would commit such a deed. Duthttever actually was a titled Baron, having won the rights to a backwater cabbage-and-rutabegas village and some lands southeast of Westbridge, off of a down-on-his-luck nobleman in a high-stakes card game.

The body was found lying in one of the small former garden-areas that front all of the older houses on this block, an architectural oddity dating to the mid-1100's DR, when the neighborhood was more upscale and terrorized by the "civic sensibilities" of the lady Demelda Blaen, a resident during that period. Lady Blaen, an eccentric philanthropist, outspoken community activist, and self-appointed "Magister of Good Taste," became famed for once chaining herself to a pillar of a house under construction until the builders agreed to add a small front garden and street-trees out front, to match the other houses along the block. Now derisively known as "Blaenbuckets," these cobble-and-dirt cubicles have largely fallen into disrepair and have been used variously as Thieves' Guild lookouts or middens, or rented out by the tenday to itinerant peddlers and "swift-stalls." The severity of the Baron's injuries suggest that he was thrown from a greater height than the nearby rooftops, and the timing and nearby location of the visiting sky-ship yestereve have led many to whisper that the Baron was purposely thrown off the deck of the flying galleon, for some unknown (yet obviously sinister!) reason.

Flamerule 27: Speaking of the mysterious sky-galleon, the Herald has learned that is was none other than the legendary Blue Diamond, the Queen of the Skies. Said to hail from the Utter East, or perhaps the southernmost coast of all Faerun, the Diamond has appeared in the North only a handful of times in recent memory. It is said to trade rich cargo such as rare spices, sparkling gemstones, exotic perfumes and minor magic, and to be crewed by fearsome magical guardians and powerful mages.

The purpose of the Blue Diamond's brief visit is still unknown, and the few individuals known to be present in the Tower of the Watchful Order yestereve are keeping quiet on the subject. Maskar Wands, whose carriage was seen leaving the tower shortly after the skyship disembarked, even allegedly threatened to turn one overcurious questioner into something that "squishes, squiggles, and squirms all at the same time" if he continued to pester the mage. Wands' threats may not be enough to quiet the rumblings growing in New Olamn and the surrounding taverns and taprooms of Castle Ward, where it is increasingly being whispered that the stolen Bells of New Olamn were hastily loaded aboard the Blue Diamond and whisked away to destinations unknown in return for some magical trinket or other desired by the Order. When told of the rumors, Mage Civilar of the Watch Thyriellentha Snome, also known to be at the Tower during the Diamond's visit, was heard to scoff at such "preposterous notions," but it is evident that others are not so sure. There has even started to be talk in musical circles of boycotting the grand Thunderstaff Gala, due to Lord Baerom's close ties to the Watchful Order.

Calendar Day - Midsummer: Tonight marks Midsummer's Night, and nobles villas and festhalls across the city are set to throw huge parties in honor of the holiday. The various priesthoods are said to have couples lining up to have marriage cerimonies performed, and the usual sundown restrictions on the City of the Dead are being relaxed to allow couples access to the grounds.

Also on this night, the temple of Milil is holding a Grand Revel to celebrate the Lord of All Songs. The faithful are invited to gather for a night of feasting, dancing, and singing, and many minstrels and harpists from New Olamn are said to be performing.

The Grand Thunderstaff Gala: The Gala officially began at sundown, although a steady stream of entertainers, serving staff, and lightly-clad dancing girls entering into the Field throughout the day drew quite a crowd of onlookers in itself. As the setting rays of the sun hit the crest of Mount Waterdeep, a parade of horse-drawn carriages began to pull up to the gates of the Field of Triumph and disgorge virtually all of Waterdhavian high-society, from the heads of noble houses and guilds to a horde of socialities and flamboyantly-dressed dandies. Taverns in Castle and Trades Wards are rampant with rumors that many of the uninvited are turning to back-alley hirespells of dubious character to cast scrying spells enabling them to observe the proceedings from afar. One blemish on the night was the noticeable absence of many of the city's musicians- for-hire, who followed up on their threats of recent days and boycotted the event over their growing certainty (despite any evidence to support it) that the Watchful Order arranged and carried out the theft of the Bells of New Olamn. The Taum Brothers, touted as the centerpiece of the night's musical accompaniment, were absent as well (likely having been pressured not to attend by the college itself), leaving Lord Thunderstaff to turn several shades of purple when he recieved the news. It is not known how far the whisperings and accusations will go, but it seems that matters between the Order and the city's bardlings are soon to come to a head unless the Watch resolves the matter of the missing Bells quickly.

## Eleasias Edition

Eleasias 1: A number of petty baronies and holdings have arisen in the foothills near Citadel Felbarr and under the eaves of the Coldwood, due largely to the fall of the orc-held Citadel of Many Arrows and still-infrequent patrols out of Luruar. Many village burghers and councilmembers have made the trip to Waterdeep, seeking either to come under the protective arm of the Lords Alliance (still seen as a viable alternative to the endless bickering and legislative maneuverings of the allied cities of the Moonlands), to hire ready swords to depose self-elected "warbarons," or to enlist defenders willing to protect their lands from marauding monsters and neighboring fifedoms. The Council of Luruar is said to be unhappy with Waterdhavian meddling in the region, and has sent dignitaries to the city to address the issue.

Eleasias 3: Lord Bragaster Raventree today announced his engagement to the lady Aalnethe Margaster, of the noble House Margaster. The engagement is widely seen as a move to improve the younger Lord Raventree's financial fortunes, which have suffered greatly after being disowned by his family and several disasterous business ventures. Lord Thentias Margaster is said to be quite unamused with the pending union, and has allegedly forbade his daughter from marrying Bragaster.

Eleasias 8: Irym Sulanheer, the self-titled "Master Mage of Mintassan," has been spotted in the city recently, scouring the hiresword-markets of Virgin's Square and the Court of the White Bull. He is rumored to have found the location of the Sundered Drumlin, a mage-lord's crypt from lost Netheril. According to the noted tracker Lezoul of the Great Oaks, the Master Mage is in the city hiring ready swords and strong backs for an expedition into the depths of the Drumlin. Lezoul himself is an expert on the terrain of the High Forest, leading many to suspect that the crypt lies somewhere deep within the woods.

Eleasias 14: Lord Bragaster Raventree and the lady Aalnethe Margaster have disappeared from the city sometime late last night, apparently eloping after Lord Thentias Margaster forbade his daughter from marrying the scandal-plagued nobleman. They are believed to be heading south to Tethyr, where Lord Bragaster has several acquaintances and business associates. Also missing is the Eloene Staff of the Margasters, a valuable magical artifact, and several other pieces of jewelry and Margaster family heirlooms. Upon hearing the news, Lord Thentias is said to have sent runners across the city, seeking to hire bounty-hunters to track down and return the couple and their stolen goods.

Eleasias 21: Disturbing news continues to filter out of the island-realm of Mintarn, brought by southern trading ships and Mintannan natives fleeing the island due to what is being called the "Tyrant's Madness." In the months after a diplomatic incident that lead to the Tyrant of Mintarn, Tarnheel Embuirharn, closing his realm to ships of Waterdhavian origin, the island to the south of Waterdeep is said to have become a place of madness and chaos. Many of the Tyrant's political enemies and others who displeased him are said to have been killed in orgies of door-to-door violence, and the Tyrant himself is said to have become mad, determined to install himself as some sort of hero-deity.

The latest news from merchants brave (or foolhardy) enough to put to port in Mintarn say the Tyrant's self-deification efforts have become so oppressive that it has even become a capital offense to sneeze, spit, or expel any other bodily fluids near a statue of him, to carry a ring or coin bearing his likeness into a privy or brothel, or to express an adverse opinion upon any utterance or act of his.

It is not known exactly what caused the Tyrant's drastic changes, although most outside of Mintarn claim the influence of some fell artifact or Zhentarim mage. A few, speaking softly, point to the tattoo of a many-tentacled purple squid, similar to that borne by the Axe-Lord of Ruathym, that appeared on the arm of the Tyrant shortly before his edict banning Waterdhavian ships from his ports. The truth of the matter is so far unknown, and the Lords seem powerless thus far to prevent their former strategic ally from spiralling into chaos and strife.

Eleasias 22: The mage Orblal of Neverwinter was found dead in his Keltarn Street lodgings this afternoon, killed in a horrific manner. According to the watchmage Dichara Stormheart, one of the first to view the scene, Orblal's death was part of an elaborate set-up and lasted for several hours. His killer cast what has been identified by Stormheart as a "Jheldanyr's Manymorph" spell, little known outside of fallen Netheril, causing Orblal to rapidly (and painfully) shift forms, until he was little more than a blob of maws, tentacles, and useless, stunted appendages. The killer then exposed Orblal to the magic-seeking moss that briefly infested the city in Hammer of 1369. The moss slowly covered Orblal's writhing body, slowly suffocating the mage.

Orblal, one of two surviving members of the adventuring fellowship known as Zalantyr's Band, recently retired from crypt-delving and tomb looting to concentrate on his magical studies. His other surviving companion, the warrior Dekaryn Silverhorn, is believed to be residing in Nesme, and could not be reached for comment. As in any time a worker of the Art is killed in the city, the mages of the Watchful Order soon arrived to seal the crime scene. According to Dichara Stormheart, Orblal's residence was ransacked, presumably by his killer, but what, if anything, was taken is currently unknown.

Eleasias 25: A large host of mercinaries and swordsmen gathered at the South Gate early this morning, awaiting their orders to begin marching for the confines of the Misty Forest. The expedition, led by the Brossfeather, Sultlue, and Zun families, has been assembled after weeks of agitation by Lord Brossfeather and others convinced of the elves' involvement in a number of missing trade caravans. Although opposed by the Lords, the operation has attracted a number of glory-hungry nobles and treasure-seekers alike, as well as the support of the churches of Tempus and Tyr. Indeed, in a rare display of religious "one-upsmanship," the church of Tyr has lent not only a cohort of battlepriests, matching that of the church of Tempus, but also the services of Harkas Kormallis, the Knight Champion of Tyr. The military force, nearly 300-strong, is already being dubbed the "Champions of Waterdeep" by the aspiring New Olamnite bardlings milling around the assembled throng. The "Champions" are expected to reach the eaves of the forest within the next tenday, despite a refusal of ecomomic and military assistance from the Dukes of Daggerford, who issued a warning against "agitating and assaulting the peaceful inhabitants of the woods."

WHAT THIS MEANS: Just what it sounds like. Aside from a brief battle with the inhabitants of the ocean depths, Waterdeep has faced no serious challenges to her military and economic supremacy for some time now. Encouraged by their successes in Tethyr, the noble houses of the city have been spoiling for a chance to flex their military muscles and to have songs written about them, like those for their forebears. Unfortunately, they are seriously misguided in their choice of targets. And while the Lords would rather see the nobles expend their energies elsewhere rather than in the confines of the city, they strongly disapprove of the current target. While they do not wish to ignite a revolt or noble uprising by stopping this expedition with force, the Lords are not above warning the elves of the forest or using their own covert operatives to foil the expedition.

As for the plans of Hlaavin and the Unseen, they have just had an unexpected opportunity fall into their laps. When Hlaavin learned that Harkas, whom Zandoun-Ulandyr had been tiptoeing around for four months now (aided by an amulet of obscuring alignment), was being considered to aid the expedition, the wily doppleganger put all of his resources towards making that goal a reality. Harkas, a champion of the god Tyr and designated heir to the Kormallis family, has always been the main stumbling block in the Unseen's plans for Zandoun. With Harkas gone from the city for the next several months, Hlaavin is confident that he can frame, besmirch, or otherwise ruin the paladin before he returns. And who knows, perhaps Harkas will catch an unlucky arrow or swordblade in the back during the fighting. Stranger things have happened...

Eleasias 27: Surbryn Bent-Back, an itinerant peddler and tinsmith out of Nesme, entered the city in some haste today, causing quite a stir in the taproom of the Open Arch tavern. He told the gathered patrons of a terrifying encounter at Hobb's Pool, a watering hole along the Long Road south of Rassalantar. Surbryn swore that four maidens bedecked in fine fluted elvish armor hung in mid-air above the Pool, silently wracked by purplish lightnings crackling up from the depths of the pond. He claimed that, as he dallied, the surface of the waters began to bubble and heave, as though something was emerging from the depths. Not wishing to meet whatever was holding the maidens in such torment, Surbryn turned and fled for the safety of the city walls.

Later travellers into the North Gate were told of Surbryn's tale, but unanimously denied seeing anything out of the ordinary in the vincinity of the Pool. However, two separate travellers did give an account of feeling great unease as they passed the Pool, with one mentioning that he thought he heard softly moaning female voices as he rode past.

Eleasias 29: What first appeared to be a fairly ordinary traffic accident turned into a deadly ambush yesterday afternoon at the intersection of Buckle Street and Sahtyra's Lane in Trades Ward. As a carriage bearing Ardelan Phelzsphor, his wife, and two other acquaintances stopped to avoid two overturned produce wagons, masked figures bearing crossbows and hand-pots of flaming pitch appeared on the nearby rooftops and rained death down upon the helpless inhabitants of the coach. According to eyewitness accounts, Ardelan did manage to stumble out of the flaming ruins, pierced by no less than three bolts, but was set upon immediately by one of the "drovers," who dispatched him with a knife to the back. After their quick, vicious assault, the masked assassins retreated and disappeared before the Watch arrived.

Ardelan, a native of Murann to the south, was a shrewd investor and an influential broker for the Raventree family. His assassination is said to have been retaliation by the Margaster clan for the "abduction" of Aalnethe Margaster and several valuable family heirlooms by Lord Bragaster Raventree earlier this month. Members of the Margaster clan scoff at this theory, saying that their family would never stoop to such "dastardly, villainous methods to achieve revenge, even if that revenge is surely due to us." Lord Venzan Margaster, in particular, has been quick to point out that Ardelan loved to flaunt the mistresses and unhappy wives of his competitors on his arm at balls and other fetes, a dangerous habit that easily could have got him killed by such a rival. He also insinuated that shady business dealings by the Raventree family were to blame, as Ardelan was known to have extensive contacts in the lands of Amn and Tethyr, and the crossbow bolts the killers used were coated with a poison commonly used by the thieves guilds of those lands.

## Eleint Edition

1370DR, Year of the Tankard

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Eleint 4: The ornate wrought-iron fence on the western side of the House of Wonder was found festooned with the corpses of six unidentifed men this morning. The grisly remains were transfixed by the alternating fleur-de-lys spearpoints and upward-pointing hands that top the ironworks, although the multiple smaller stab wounds on each body suggests a method of death other than impalement. The clothing and general appearance of the corpses appears to be Amnian in nature, and each was found with a copper piece placed in their mouth. The Watch is investigating the matter, to determine the identity of the bodies, as is the clergy of the Mystran temple.

Eleint 6: Several swift-riders out of Silverymoon are reporting that the contents of a merchant caravan en route to the City of Silver have disappeared, presumably some time yesterday when the wagons were stopped for the night. The contents of the wagons included gargoyle heads, downspouts, cornices and other decorative stonework bound for the soon-to-be completed High Palace of Silverymoon. The caravan master, Baeram "Bullshoulders," claims he personally checked the contents of the wagons before bedding down for the night, and the outriders and night guards universally swear that nothing untoward occurred on their watches. Magical means of theft are suspected and the new ruler of Silverymoon, Taern "Thunderspell" Hornblade, has personally sent mages to investigate the issue.

WHAT THIS MEANS: The construction of the High Palace will be set back a bit by the theft, but should finish on schedule by the Feast of the Moon. More troubling is the methods used; no small amount of Art is required to quickly and silently move several hundred tons of stone and then stave off discovery until the next day. Either one very powerful mage or a number of middling-level casters would have to have lent their efforts to succeed.

WHAT THIS REALLY MEANS: Relations between Waterdeep and Silverymoon, the Lords Alliance and the Confederacy of Luruar, and the competing merchant guilds of the two realms are already growing further strained as Luruar continues to grow into a new power in the north, and old alliances and trade routes are altered. As incidental as it seems, the loss of the caravan contents, meant as an act of goodwill by several Waterdhavian guilds, could act to further strain relations between the two city-states.

Eleint 11: Four acolytes of Selune were found dead in their chambers at Swanstar Court this morning, the Mark of Shar ritually carved into each. There are no signs of forced entry on any outside windows and the seneschal of the Court, Melain Thannsdan, told Watch investigators that the belarjacks on duty reported no one entering or leaving the premises through the main gate.

Swanstar Court is the trio of row houses located just south of the Fiery Flagon tavern on Seawatch Street, Sea Ward. Also known as the "Three Sisters," the interconnected dwellings were built in the early 1320's by the wealthy heiress Talshona Swanstar as wedding gifts for her three daughters, who all later met tragic ends. The buildings are currently owned by the Moonstar noble clan and are used to house visiting family and initiates of the House of the Moon. The Watch is investigating, and the temple of Selune has issued a strong statement vowing "eternal vigilance against the actions of the Night Whore and her loathsome followers."

WHAT THIS MEANS: The ongoing battle between the Sisters of Light and Darkness shows no signs of stopping just yet, with this round going to the forces of the Lady of Darkness. The Selunites will undoubtedly launch a search for any faithful of Shar active in the city, in order to enact some "divine vengeance" and start the cycle anew.

WHAT THIS REALLY MEANS: In his crusade of vengeance against House Moonstar, Vanrak Moonstar (see \_Powers and Pantheons\_, p.156) has found a new, unwitting ally; Haradel Moonstar, cousin to Helve, the current House patriarch. In return for Vanrak's promised support in claiming control of the family, Haradel delivered one of the seneschal's pass-keys to the Dark Ranger. Although he would have liked nothing better than to have slain any of the twelve Moonstar relations currently quartered at the Court, Vanrak realizes that it is better to wait patiently and see just how far Haradel is willing to go before he openly slays family members. In the meantime, sacrificing a few adherents of Selune goes a long way towards keeping oneself in the good graces of the Dark Lady...

Eleint 14: Stone gargoyle heads of varying sizes, shapes, and facial expressions have been mysteriously popping up in locations throughout the city in recent days. Most have been identified as part of the contents of the Silverymoon-bound caravan that were stolen at the beginning of the month. It is believed that the others were taken from the Tower of the Arcane in Luskan and Castle Never in Neverwinter, although that has not yet been verified. It is still not known who is responsible for the theft, nor the meaning behind the seemingly random placement of the carvings. A corner freize, fully as large as three men and depicting the goddesses Selune, Shiallia, and Lurue, is currently blocking traffic at the intersection of the High Road and Waterdeep Way. Lord Piergeiron is reported to have even recieved one of the leering faces in his own garderobe!

WHAT THIS MEANS: While it is doubtful that anyone could penetrate the security of the Open Lord's chambers, the claims of statuary appearing across the rest of the city are true. Either someone has a very strange sense of humor, or there is a more sinister method behind the theft and distribution of these pieces of stonework.

Eleint 17: The noble Venzan Margaster of House Margaster was slain today in a sudden attack outside the House of Good Spirits, in Trades Ward. According to onlookers, as the noble prepared to enter into the tavern a large human mouth formed on the door. The apparition unleashed a sheet of raging flame upon Venzan and his two compatriots before vanishing as suddenly as it had come. All three men were immolated instantly. Lord Thentias Margaster, Venzan's uncle, immediately laid blame on House Raventree, with which his family has been feuding since Lord Bragaster Raventree eloped with Thentias's daughter Aalnethe Margaster and several valuable house artifacts last month.

The death of Venzan closely resembles a rash of unsolved magical attacks that plagued Waterdeep several centuries ago. An unknown individual was apparently casting a modified magic mouth spell on the doors of taverns, private abodes, festhalls, and even one of the jakes of the Blushing Mermaid festhall. When activated, a bearded human mouth would appear upon the portal, utter the words "Well met, Felnagus," and then spit forth a gout of flame or acid upon the unfortunate who triggered it. The caster was never found, and eventually came to be known as "Mad Felnagus," a source of considerable urban lore, especially in Trades Ward, where many of the attacks occurred.

WHAT THIS MEANS: Venzan was not well liked in the city, but he was a noted member of House Margaster and his death is sure to bring further reprisals from the Margasters, despite certain intervention from the Lords. More troubling is the question of whether Mad Felnagus has truly returned, or whether some other individual is copying his legend to commit new acts of violence.

WHAT THIS REALLY MEANS: There has not been open warfare between two noble houses for quite some time now, and it is not something the Lords would like to see happen again. However, it may be unavoidable unless Bragaster, Aalnethe, and the missing Margaster items are recovered and brought back to the city.

Eleint 21: Thorvas Thereghul, a noted merchant and land-owner and frequent sight at noble balls and parties, was found dead in his up-Ward domicile on the Street of the Singing Dolphin this morning. The body was found by servants who immediately called the Watch, and the residence was soon shuttered and warded by the investigators. The nature of the man's death and his killers identity is unknown, although rumors flying throughout city taverns say he was found stuffed to bursting with diamond dust, so much so that one poke from a Watch investigator caused his corpse to burst, showering the room with sparkling powder. Others say it was not diamond dust the merchant was filled with, but night soil, and still others say it was tiny balls of musk, ambergris and incense, the kind sold by Thereghul's social rival, the merchant Elberyn of Baldur's Gate.

Eleint 21: There is talk everywhere in the city these days of the deeds (or should one say, misdeeds) of Harkas Kormallis, heir to the Kormallis noble family. Everything from an inappropriate relationship with his squire to whispers of secret cult worship and hidden torture rooms have been bandied about in the taprooms and bazaars of the city. These rumors are being vehemently denied by the Kormallis clan, especially Zandoun Kormallis, the younger brother of Harkas. Today Zandoun was quoted in Lord's Court as stating that "the efforts to besmirch the noble and good name of my brother in his absence from the city, are nothing more than the craven and cowardly acts of those opposed to either my family or the church of Tyr. The Kormallis family stands fully behind Harkas and are confidant that he will clear this stain on his reputation upon his return from the campaign in the Misty Forest." The church of Tyr, as well, has issued a statement supporting Harkas and condemning those spreading such "lies and untruths."

WHAT THIS MEANS: The dopplegangers of the Unseen have been busy, and the fruits of their labors are paying off. Since it would seem extremely odd for Zandoun to remain silent on the issue, Hlaavin has ordered Ulandyr into a more visible stance, preaching the righteousness of his brother. It is risky exposing Zandoun-Ulandyr to the spotlight, but Hlaavin reasons that it will make Zandoun's eventual condemnation of Harkas that much more believable in the end.

Eleint 22: In recent days, merchants and travellers entering into Waterdeep through the South Gate have brought disturbing news of turmoil in the southern lands. Rumors are flying through Trades and South Wards of the nation of Amn splintering in civil war or being invaded by legions of goblinoids or giants from the mountains. While many in the city wait for confirmation of these rumors, there are some reports of panic and strife among the Amnian population of the city, which includes a large number of merchants and shopowners. The Lords have not yet commented on these events, but sources at the Castle are reporting that a sizeable force of Waterdhavian soldiers will be heading south to the ruins of Dragonspear soon, ostensibly to guard the trade roads against "brigand incursions."

WHAT THIS MEANS: Any major conflict in the lands to the south is both good and bad for the citizens of Waterdeep. Southern strife invariably means disruptions in trade; higher prices and shortages in some goods are sure to occur, especially with the continuing unreliability of the sea-routes. Also, with the restoration of the monarchy in Tethyr, many of Waterdeep's noble families have recently been investing heavily in the South and may feel compelled to defend their interests. Such an action, if taken by several Houses at the same time, could potentially draw the city itself into the chaos.

WHAT THIS REALLY MEANS: However the events of \_Lands of Intrigue\_ play out, Waterdeep should be feeling the effects for a long time. Aside from the obvious trade disruptions and shortages, there is the certainty of refugees fleeing to the northern cities. Baldur's Gate, still rebuilding from Iakovhas's invasion, will be ill-equipped to handle them, and Waterdeep is their next logical stop. Finally, hired swords will be at a premium, as will be the opportunity for aspiring war barons to carve out a realm of their own.

Eleint 27: There are whisperings among the ranks of the Guild of Stonecutters, Masons, Potters, and Tile-Makers that someone newly-arrived in the city has ordered a number of blocks of fine basalt and marble to be delivered to a warehouse in Dock Ward, and that several master stonecutters have also been hired by the same individual, all paid for with coin of southern origin. Many who have heard the rumors believe that a foreign mage of some power intends to have the master craftsmen carve the stone into golems which he will then enchant, creating an instant army to depose the Lords and seize power in the city. Veteran guildmembers scoff at these rumors, however, cautioning that similar whisperings come up every time a noble or wealthy merchant orders statuary for their gardens or mansions.

Eleint 29: Thaesal's Fine Tashal Fashions, an upscale Sea Ward clothiery catering mainly to noble and wealthy patrons, has announced sales on a surplus amount of clothing made of or trimmed in the fur of northern winter wolves. Such fur, rare in the best of times, is usually only sold in the early months of the year, after being procured by hunters in the depths of the northern snows when the wolves are most active. An ugly rumor, most likely started by the clothier's enemies, says that the opalescent fur is actually nothing more than polymorphed sewer rat carcasses, a charge Thaesal vehemently denies.

## Marpenoth Edition

1370 DR/Year of the Tankard

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Marpenoth 1: The city today is graced by the presence of Astleon Lorastaff, the Wandering Seed of the Goddess, highest-ranked travelling clerist of the church of Chauntea. Following the Higharvestide holiday, which Astleon spent in the Goldenfields presiding over the harvest celebrations, the Wandering Seed has arrived in the city to discuss matters with the Lords and the heads of the allied churches of Lathander, Mielikki, and Silvanus. In addition, the noble families Ammakyl, Durinbold, Kothont, and Zun have all announced grand galas for the occasion, each hoping to curry favor with the representative of the Harvest Mother.

WHAT THIS MEANS: While the city itself does not boast a large number of farmers or followers of the Bountiful Goddess, high-ranking clergy of Chauntea are nonetheless well-respected by those citizens who realize the importance of the numerous freeholds and farming communities of the Dessarin, and the foodstuffs they supply to the City of Splendors.

The above-mentioned noble families all have extensive interests in farming and herding, and are each hoping to gain the blessing of Chauntea by wining and dining Lorastaff. They may not be above subtly spoiling or sabotaging the other families' fetes to make themselves look better.

Marpenoth 6: The young noble Laenar Osprail and his companion Elek Ilstryn were killed in the taproom of the Thirsty Sailor tavern this evening by a dark-bearded mage who appeared out of thin air, and vanished just as suddenly. The mage, later identified as one Kordeerlar "Krakenhand," unleashed gouts of acid upon the pair and paused just long enough to scoop up a number of jewels and other baubles lying upon the table before vanishing into thin air. Elek, a suspected sneak-thief and thrice-convicted in Lord's Court of false dealings, left behind no known next-of-kin, though Laenar was a member of the Osprail noble family. A troubled youth once implicated in a smuggling ring, Laenar was believed to be all but disowned by his family and living in poverty in South Ward.

WHAT THIS MEANS: While this is a simple matter of wizardly justice, some in the city may believe that the mage was hired by either the Kulchak clan of Ankhapur, the source of the smuggling ring Laenar was involved with, or even that Kordeerlar was sent by the Osprail family, to rid themselves of such a public embarassment. In truth, Elek was unfortunate enough to have stolen a number of minor posessions, including an enspelled roguestone, from a vacant Castle Ward house secretly rented by Kordeerlar. When the mage discovered the theft of his belongings, he used a gemjump spell to transport himself to where the thief and his partner were dividing up the loot.

Marpenoth 9: Swift-riders out of the Misty Forest are reporting that the fighting there has turned against the Waterdhavian forces, with the scattered elven defenders inflicting serious casualties and forcing numerous retreats. It has even been rumored that Bowman's Rest and Eltenwater, two walled farmsteads near the eaves of the forest which have been commandeered as headquarters for the Waterdhavian forces, have been attacked and heavily damaged by elementals and other sorcerous creatures summoned by the elves. Public opinion in the city, which was running high at the outset, has begun to turn sour recently, with no real military gains to speak of and the Lords and their allies speaking out against the operation on a regular basis. WHAT THIS MEANS: The elves are indeed winning this conflict, by fighting a guerilla war against the larger Waterdhavian force. In the beginning, the elves were alerted to the arriving legions by both the Dukes of Daggerford and the Lords of Waterdeep, who sent the bard Danilo Thann to warn them. Also, the elves have recieved covert help from the likes of Laeral Arunsun, who was resonsible for conjuring up the creatures that ravaged the command encampments. The Lords have determined that the noble houses need to be taught a humbling lesson, lest their victory in the forest lead to ambitions of noble rule in Waterdeep or empire-building in the North.

Marpenoth 10: Today marks the beginning of a visit to the city by Count Zelphar Thann of Tethyr, sent by Queen Zaranda to negotiate several new trade pacts and tariff levies with the Lords. The Count is also expected to bring news of events in Amn, where a humanoid army of surprising numbers has laid seige to the eastern reaches of the nation.

Zelphar is a native of Waterdeep and member of the Thann noble house, and his arrival is widely expected to bring a round of balls and fetes in the Thann villa and other houses allied with the Thanns. However, the Lords have ordered increased security for the duration of the count's stay, as there are those who are less than pleased with the Thann family's good fortunes. Many of the city's noble houses participated in the restoration of Tethyr's monarchy, and not all of them were so well-rewarded. The Lords fear an assassination plot which, if successful, would not only anger House Thann and their allies, but bring the wrath of the entire nation of Tethyr as well.

Marpenoth 15: Today marks God's Day, the anniversary of the end of the Time of Troubles and the ascension of the mortals Midnight and Cyric to godhood. All through the city, shops and businesses closed in rembrance of those who died fighting the minions of the god Myrkul, and a military parade of Guard and Watch units wound through the city, southward along the length of the High Road, ending at the gates to the City of the Dead.

After the procession, the Open Lord held a cerimony in the burial Ward, on the steps of the Warrior's Monument, choosing the day to commemorate not only those who died during the Troubles, but those members of the Guard and Watch who perished more recently fighting against the unleashed denizens of the Sea of Swords. At the completion of the cerimony a new addition to the Monument, that of a sahuagin falling outwards with a spear through its' torso, was added by the Mages of the Court, including Maskar Wands and the Lady Laeral.

The Church of Mysteries celebrated the holiday today as the rebirth of their goddess in the form of the mortal, Midnight. The religious observances of the Mystrans were rather subdued, although hazy, ethereal mists and sparkling motes ebbed around the House of Wonder after dark, and many passerby later recounted seeing familiar faces or eerie landscapes in the strange vapors.

As usual on this day, worshippers of the entity known as Ao gathered at the Cynosure to celebrate, and to discuss the tenants of their organization. Greatly reduced in numbers in the years since their formation, the Aoites have recently begun reforming as a society of mercantile concerns, led by Ilighryn Delzagus, a wealthy southern merchant and socialite of quiet (some would say sinister) disposition.

Marpenoth 16: In wake of Godsday a number of persons bearing symbols and religious regalia of the dark god Cyric have been found slain in various locations throughout the city, primarily in Trades and South Wards. The slayings appear to be religious in nature, judging by the arrangement of the corpses, and a symbol, that of a black hand pierced by two slitted eyes, was found magically burned into the forehead of each. The hand-symbol has been identified by several sages as the Mark of Xvim, a little-known deity in the North who is rumored to be the offspring of the dead god Bane. It appears that the two churches are engaged in a holy war or conflict of some sort, with the Xvimites using the day of Cyric's ascendance to strike at his faithful.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED: Much as it appears. The upsurgent church of Xvim is currently seeking out and slaying Cyricists across Faerun, and the affront of carrying out the killings on one of the Dark Sun's holy days was simply too much to resist. Also, it has been almost exactly one year since Fzoul agreed to limit Xvimlar expansion to the east of the Thunder Peaks; while killing a few Cyricists does not break the bounds of that agreement, he cannot resist subtly reminding Khelben that the terms of their pact will run out one day, soon after which the all the Western Heartlands will feel the iron grip of Xvim...

Marpenoth 18: The Ulmharp, a minor magical item and heirloom of the Thongolier clan, has been reported stolen from the vaults of the family's Sea Ward villa. The Ulmharp, a handharp of gold-inlaid precious wood, floats in an exquisite crystal globe the size of a human head. The identity of the thief is so far unknown, as is the method of entry into the warded vaults, but the names of potential culprits being bandied around town include the masterful Scarlet Knave and the sewer-dwelling Black Viper. Needless to say, Lord Bilaerus the Second is offering a rather substantial reward to any who retrieve the item or offer information about the thief and his whereabouts.

Marpenoth 21: The Sea Shadow, a merchantman out of Neverwinter, was reported run aground off Alsapir's Rock this morning by a patrolling Waterdhavian raker. Survivors fished out of the waters off Mount Sar told the crew of the raker that the Shadow was attempting to outrun a pair of raiders flying the flags of the island-kingdom of Ruathym. Waterdhavian naval patrols reported no signs of Northman raiders in the region, but note the sinking of the Sea Shadow as a growing pattern of harassment by the privateers of the island kingdoms.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED: The Sea Shadow was indeed set upon by "privateers" out of Ruathym, part of a number of probing attacks currently being made against seaborne shipping and small coastal settlements by the First Axe and his underlings. During the war against the Ice Bear, Luskan sent the bulk of their naval fleet to Ruathym when the walls of the city were breached. First Axe Aumark Lithyl, feeling that the political alliance struck between the two realms in 1358DR had outlived its' usefulness, treacherously killed the crews of the Luskanite ships and claimed them for his own. During the invasion of creatures from the depths the sealanes grew too unsafe for large-scale naval activity but, now that the waters have calmed and enough crewmen have been conscripted and trained, Aumark and his generals are set to begin a lengthy campaign against the scattered islands and coastlines of the northern seas. Their plans will likely be held until the following spring though, hence the early trial raids.

Marpenoth 22: Today marks the most holy day of Tymora, the festival of the Starfall. At the Tower of Luck, the worshippers of the Smiling Lady gathered to celebrate the date of their goddesses' birth and to cerimonially reward several outstanding members of the clergy.

Marpenoth 25: An ancient marble statue in the Lesser Flith Gallery of the Palace was found vandalized this morning, destroyed from the waist up. The statue was a depiction of the long-ago sorceress Jhanifer, believed by many to have been a lover or close friend of the mage Ahghairon. The standing remnants of the statue were revealed to have had a hollow cavity concealed in the middle torso, just large enough for a scepter or large scroll tube to be placed within. Palace officials would not say if they had previous knowledge of the compartment's existence, or if anything was stolen from within, although they soon closed the gallery to all but several mages summoned by the Paladinson.

Marpenoth 27: A series of setbacks and disturbances has plagued the fledgling construction site of the temple of Umberlee, on a large outcropping outside of South Gate. While it is still many years before the projected completion of the cathedral, the Dread High Trident, Meritid Archneie, has confronted the Lords, accusing "enemies of the Dark Lady of the Waters," the churches of Tymora and Selune in particular, of being behind the recent misfortunes. While it is known that members of the two churches (especially Jorynn Halstaff, the "Lady's Luck" of Tymora, and the half-elven Kyriani of Selune) have been vocal in their opposition to an organized temple of Umberlee so close to Waterdeep, the Lords politely turned down Archneie's demands to censor the temples, citing a lack of evidence.

## Uktar Edition

1370 DR/Year of the Tankard

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Uktar 1: Lord's Court today was host to a most unusual scene. A number of known Harpers and Harper-friends appeared at midday, to demand that Khelben Arunsun appear before all to explain himself on charges unknown, but variously rumored to involve Harper betrayal or traffic with members of the nefarious Black Network. The petitioners were turned away with a unanimous refusal, with Lord Piergeiron stating, "While I question his actions, I trust the Blackstaff has our best interests at heart. I wish I could unequivocally say the same of Those Who Harp. As long as you disturb none, you are welcome here, but choose your battles and foes carefully."

The Harper delegation left immediately thereafter, looking none too happy. Indeed, Lord Piergeiron seemed upset as well, as the Court swirled with semi-hushed whispers and speculation over what misdeeds the Blackstaff stood accused of. The open session was soon ended, as the Lords withdrew into private chambers.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED: The events of the Blackstaff's dealings with Fzoul and the ensuing fallout have finally begun to reach the ears of people outside the ranks of the Harpers. While rumors, lies, and half-truths have always swirled about Khelben, such a public appearance by members of the secretive Harpers and the ensuing words from the Paladinson are sure to cause an immediate uproar in taverns and gossip circles across the city. In coming months, the Blackstaff will doubtless replace Zhents, Luskanites, dopplegangers, and Mad Halaster as the cause of any misfortune or whispered dealings in the city...

Uktar 1: Patrons in the taproom of the Gentle Rain Inn in Castle Ward are reporting that the ghost of the Baroness Chelthorea Crownsilver, long thought to have permanently vanished, re-appeared this afternoon on the one-year anniversary of her assassination. The spirit appeared on the stairs to the upper floors, beckoning to Zandoun Kormallis, her former lover, who had just finished paying his respects to her memory. The sudden reappearance of the ghost was nowhere near as shocking as her ensuing words, delivered loud enough for Zandoun and all those present to hear; the phantom accused Harkas Kormallis, brother of Zandoun, of being responsible for her death, killing her in a jealous rage over her affections for Zandoun. The Baroness's ghost wavered and vanished again after her proclamation, leaving behind a stunned Zandoun, who turned and fled upon his horse, into the Kormallis estate. Priests and watchmages sent to the Gentle Rain have found no lingering traces of the Baroness, and most believe that her ghost has gone to its final rest after divulging the identity of her killer. As for Zandoun, there has been no word on his disposition, and the Kormallis villa has been closed to all those outside of immediate family.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED: This is all a set up by the dopplegangers of the Unseen. While Zandoun was upstairs "paying his respects," the Unseen's ally, the illusionist Pharem Ellstric, was busy casting a number of complex visual and audio illusions. As the temple of Lathander had removed their priest from the Gentle Rain some months ago, there was no one present to verify whether or not the apparition was real. For his part, Zandoun-Ulandyr will remain in seclusion, playing the part of the confused, unsure mourner, until the final pieces of Harkas' framing are put into place. As for Harkas, the paladin has so far been oblivious to the rumors involving him. This new development will reach his ears thanks to messengers from the church of Tyr, but the paladin is too involved in the losing effort against the elves of the Misty Forest to immediately return to the city. Instead, he will rely on the members of the church and his family to defend his name until he can represent himself against the charges of murder.

Uktar 10: A morning raid on a Dock Ward warehouse by members of the Watch has resulted in the uncovering of a secret "torture dungeon," in the words of Terl Fadesmar, a watchmage who was instrumental in the raid. Allegedly operating on information from "reliable sources," the Watch has discovered documents and papers that supposedly implicate the noble Harkas Kormallis as well as the mage Vahje, an ex-member of the Watchful Order currently wanted by the Lords, in a number of abductions and foul sacrifices as well as membership in the Cult of the Dancing Bear, an ancient beast cult that was believed destroyed or driven underground a number of years ago. While it is not clear just exactly what the documents contained, members of both the church of Tyr and the Kormallis noble family were immediately summoned to a closed session of Lord's Court.

The Herald has learned that the priests of Tyr steadfastly denied the evidence against Harkas, alleging that the Champion of Tyr was cleared of any wrongdoing through communing with the God of Justice himself. The Kormallis family was apparently split, with Patriarch Helm Kormallis represented by the seneschal Julkoun Rhystahl, who pleaded for leniency and a fair trial for Harkas, and Eldyn Ornaer, aide to Zandoun Kormallis, expressing the younger Kormallis's sorrowful belief that Harkas was indeed responsible for both the death of the Baroness Crownsilver and the illegal cult activities, and should be banished or executed under the laws of the city. It is unknown at this time just what actions the Lords will take, but they have sent a unit of guardsmen and watchmages south this afternoon, to escort Harkas back to the city immediately.

Uktar 12: A squad of griffon-riders flew low over the city this morning, trumpeting the arrival of the first winterfrost and the holiday of Auril's Blesstide. Throughout the city's upper Wards, bardlings from New Olamn roamed the streets, ringing tiny handbells, caroling on streetcorners and front stoops, and cajoling homeowners for donations to "help preserve our fair city's arts and culture, lest it never again be said that Waterdeep is truly a City of Many Splendors."

In the Market, an ugly rumor began circling that the bardlings were also helping themselves to the contents of people's moneypouches and unguarded jewelry. The crowd of shoppers quickly turned into a frenzy, and three young troubadors were set upon and almost lynched before the Watch, led by Senior Civilar Olophin, broke up the mob. Afterward, it was speculated that a wizard or priest of some fell god was active in the vicinity, using magic to turn the crowd violent.

Uktar 14: The first nobles left the city today, travelling to their seasonal estates ahead of the imminent winter snows. While a number of families left for their lodgings in Tethyr, the chaos in Amn has caused many to cancel their southern vacations, lest they get caught up in the humanoid invasion of that land. Indeed, of those nobles who chose to travel south, many opted to make the journey by sea, skirting Amn and its' environs completely. The same could not be said for the city's mercinary population, whose southern exodus has turned from a trickle into a steady rush in the last few tendays. The lure of plentiful Amnian gold has drawn many of Waterdeep's hireswords south, leaving some citizens concerned should a goblinkin horde or monstrous invasion launch itself at the city this winter, after the trade roads leading back north have been snowed under.

Uktar 19: A sudden midnight explosion in sky over the Court of the White Bull today left late-night streetwalkers and several on-duty guardsmen ducking for cover. The disturbance, described by some as the result of a wizardly attack or duel, lit the entire Court in an eerie bluish-white light and was accompanied by a concussive force strong enough to shatter a number of windows around the perimiter of the square.

After the explosion, several slightly-charred items of clothing drifted down out of the sky overhead, including an opalescent sash, crimson traveller's cloak, and a heraldic badge of some sort, depicting a crossed thorn-rose and eagle-feather on a burgundy background. While it is believed by most at the scene that the articles of clothing are all that remain of the target of the mysterious blast, members of the Watch present have been quoted as saying that the items were too undamaged to have been at the center of such an explosion. The heraldic badge has not yet been positively identified, but is similar in appearance to those of several minor noble houses of the Moonshae Isles.

Uktar 23: The heavy winter skies that hung above the city for a number of weeks finally opened today, bringing several hours of snowfall to the rooftops and streets of Waterdeep. The snows, while not heavy enough to shut the city down, did cause a premature ending to a series of jousting contests at the Field of Triumph, including a much-anticipated match between the famed riders and bitter rivals Gildan of Turnmarch and Phaerald "Red-Hand." Not to be deterred by the closing of the official tournament, the two knights engaged in a series of loud challenges and slights, resulting in the formation of an impromptu unsanctioned joust right down the middle of Julthoon Street. Phaerald, the first to be unhorsed, immediately accused Gildan of foul play and of using hidden magics. Another verbal dispute began between the pair and their assembled entourages, but was ended soon after the baring of steel and clash of blades brought a number of guardsmen and magisters to the scene. Both parties have been brought to the Castle, where they await sentencing on charges of Unlawful Dueling, Disruption of City Traffic, Excessive Noise and Disturbance, and Posession of an Outlawed Substance (as one of Gildan's retainers was found to be in posession of a long-barrelled "Gond-gunne," and a quantity of illegal smokepowder).

Uktar 25: A number of soldiers and mercinaries entered to the city early today, the first returning members of the defeated Misty Forest campaign. Among their numbers was Harkas Kormallis, the erstwhile Champion of Tyr, surrounded by the guardsmen sent by the Lords a number of days ago to escort the noble back to the Castle. A commotion broke out south of their destination, along the Way of the Dragon, when the group was stopped by a number of armed men led by Harkas's brother, Zandoun. Zandoun, appearing greatly agitated, publicly proclaimed Harkas guilty of killing the Baroness Crownsilver, as well as being a member of an evil cult. The guard escort moved to intercept Zandoun and his band, and were roundly booed and tauted by the gathered citizenry, who began hurling rocks and insults at the protesting Harkas.

The scene swiftly turned deadly when a spellcaster in the crowd began hurling bolts of flame and lightning about randomly, apparently seeking to reach Harkas. The mage, who was later identified as the wanted criminal Vahje, was driven off by Zandoun's band and the watchmages present, but not before a number of guardsmen and innocent civilians were slain. It is believed that the mage was trying to escape with Harkas, as both of them were implicated in the "torture dungeon" uncovered a tenday ago. Additional watch and guardsmen swiftly arrived, fending off Zandoun and his men and speeding Harkas to the confines of the Castle.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED: By using one of his other identities, that of the wanted mage Vahje, Hlaavin has sealed Harkas's fate. Public opinion has turned so far against the paladin that there is no way, even if found innocent by the Lords and their magisters, for him to remain in the city. The church of Tyr will argue vigorously for his innocence, but they will be the only ones. Even Helm Kormallis, father of Harkas, has by this time reluctantly acknowledged that there is simply too much evidence against his son. He will, however, plead for banishment rather than a penalty of death.

Uktar 28: The disgraced paladin and alleged murderer Harkas Kormallis is believed to have left the city early this morning, escorted by a guard of Tyrists and Waterdhavian soldiers. It is rumored that the Lords spared his life after the High Priest of Tyr, Hykros Allumen, swore to send the noble to a monastary in southern Tethyr, to serve his penance. The former Knight Champion of Tyr has been under a dark cloud of suspicion recently, accused of the murder of a Cormyrean ambassador, partaking in foul cult activities, and other assorted charges. In addition, during the last few days soldiers returning from the Misty Forest have begun to tell rumors of Harkas mutilating captured enemies and killing unarmed opponents. While so far unsubstantiated, these new accusations have done nothing to improve the noble's image or chances of regaining his freedom.

WHAT THIS MEANS: Harkas was indeed sent south this morning by Allumen, who ordered the noble to stay away from Waterdeep and its' environs. The priest fully believes that Harkas is innocent of all charges, but realizes that this whole situation is only serving to damage the reputation of the church of Tyr and the office of Knight Champion. As for the new rumors involving Harkas, they were begun by the returning mercinaries mingling with the citizenry, and are wholly independant of any created by Hlaavin and the Unseen. Such is the strength of public sentiment against Harkas. As for the dopplegangers, they are currently busy portraying Zandoun as the betrayed brother and mourner of a lost love, bolstering his position with both the commoners and the other nobles.

Uktar 30: Raelar Hosthann, the Most Merciful Doomguide of Kelemvor and noted rabblerouser, appeared in Lord's Court today on the eve of the Feast of the Dead, to announce the beginning of a planned "holy crusade" against the city's numerous resident phantoms, ghosts, and restless poltergeists, which he deemed an "abomination against the natural order and an affront to the Lord of the Dead, the mighty and compassionate Kelemvor." He was accompanied by Antorin Broadmantle, an imposing, silent myrmidon rumored to have recently become a holy warrior of the Doomguide's faith, and the bespectacled Phyldos Ullthool, said to be the secondmost authority on supernatural affairs and ghostly legends in the city, behind the sage Amnglor Belthair. The Lords, who have often clashed with the ideological Hosthann in the past, warned the priest against inciting the city's populace, and against disturbing things better left alone, but offered no serious opposition to his plan.

It has been rumored in recent months that Raelar, an native of Tethyr, took up the faith of Kelemvor after having fallen from grace as a paladin of the god Anachtyr. Such whisperings are best discussed out of the hearing of the Doomguide though, as he is known to have flown into a rage and taken physical action on at least two separate occasions when questioned on the matter.

Calendar Day - The Feast of the Moon: Throughout the city today, in taverns, festhalls and private houses alike, the dead are remembered and tales are told of great heroes and valiant deeds far into the night. The most holy day of Kelemvor, the priests of the Holy Judge gathered in the City of the Dead this afternoon, to commune with their god and with the spirits of the deceased until the stroke of twelve bells that night.

As usual on this day, many of Waterdeep's undead denizens rested uneasily, and reports of spectral sightings came in from all Wards. Dock Ward, especially, was the scene of much spectral activity, as a number of previously unreported phantasms strode the docks, re-enacting their last moments of life during the battle against the denizens of the deeps some months ago. The Watch, wearing the traditional white armbands to ward off malevolent spirits, was present, but the ghostly phantasms offered up no real threat to the living. Afterwards, many members of the Watch gathered at the Sleeping Snake tavern, where they recounted tales of the dead lost that day and drank toasts, to both those present and to the memories of those long gone.

# 1371 DR YEAR OF THE UNSTRUNG HARP

## HAMMER 1371

Hammer 2: Reports are surfacing throughout the city today that the Ulmharp, the stolen magical heirloom of the Thongolier clan thought recovered from the cellars of the Blue Gables social club last month, is again missing and has been attempted to have been sold at least once already. The halfling importer Linsylin Timbertree claims that she was approached earlier yesterday by Ambara Iliphar, daughter of the renowned sage Zeltabbar, with a monentary offer to smuggle the magical instrument out of the city to an unknown recipient in the eastern city of Elversult. When Timbertree (rumored to have once been active in Elversian smuggling circles under the alias of "The Grab") refused, Ambara became "visibly upset" and rushed out of the halfling's offices. Watch officers sent to the domicile of the sage Zeltabbar have reportedly discovered that the young Ambara is missing, perhaps for as long as five days. Watch Grand Civilar Derek Windsfire made a brief comment on the matter, stating that one suspect in the theft was already in custody, and that the Ulmharp believed to have been discovered in the Blue Gables was apparently some sort of clever fake, combining excellent workmanship and a number of interwoven faux magical dweomers.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED: The Ulmharp seized in the raid on the Blue Gables last month was indeed the real article. However, four days ago it was stolen again from a Watchful Order holding room and replaced with the forgery by Ambara, who used her father's contacts within the Order to gain access to the chamber. Grand Civilar Windsfire knows the truth of the second theft and would love the opportunity to embarrass the mages of the Order, but has been ordered by Lord Piergeiron himself to mention nothing of the security lapse or the theft, "in the interests of good relations between civic-minded men of both sword and staff in Waterdeep."

As for Ambara, she panicked after Jhelan Sarsorel (her lover, and the mastermind behind the whole scheme) was arrested by Watch investigators. Taking the fake Ulmharp (which was originally intended to be placed in a warehouse belonging to the Wands family, with the intention of creating strife between the Wands and the Thongoliers), she made the switch with the real item, and then contacted Linsylin in the hopes of getting the Ulmharp out of the city as fast as possible, for without the real heirloom the charges against Jhelan would be dropped. However, the halfling proved uncooperative, and Ambara fled in a panic. She is still in the city, and is desperately looking for a way out. Unfortunately, maritime traffic has come to a halt, and the number of people leaving the snowbound city on foot has slowed to a crawl as well, severely limiting her chances of escaping undetected.

Hammer 6: There was a curious scene in Southcourt today as a female figure, shrouded in robes of verdant green and brown, planted the butt of her walking staff into the dirt of the Court and spoke words of power, causing the staff to swiftly bud and blossom into a many-branched citrus tree, limbs heavy with fruit. While wary at first of the sorcerous display, the ring of onlookers soon turned into a mad rush to gather as much of the ripening fruit as possible. Members of the Watch soon arrived to restore order to the scene, but proved unnecessary, for as soon as the last fruit was picked from the branches the strange tree shimmered and shrank, becoming an ordinary walking-staff once more. Of the strangely-robed woman there was no sign, though most believe her to be a druid or priestess of one of the gods of nature.

Hammer 10: Waentryn's Wolves, a fighting band led by the warrior Waentryn, have returned to the city this evening from the Open Marches, telling of a new evil lairing in the fire-blackened ruins of Dragonspear Castle. Waentryn, who reported having lost four armsmen in a nighttime attack upon their encampment near the edge of the moors, claims the attackers moved silently and efficiently, as if guided by a great, fell intelligence. He also produced a single pitted, yellowed tusk the length of a man's hand, which he claimed caught and broke off on the rim of his greatshield as he rallied his men into a fighting retreat. Waentryn is believed to be seeking the sages Nulaasyr of Memnon and Mirrormul Tszul, to see if they can ascertain what type of creature the tusk belongs to, and has also put out a call for experienced sellswords looking for employment.

Hammer 17: The Slut Street facade of the Old Xoblob curio shop was burst asunder in spectacular display early this morning, disgorging a monstrous bulette engaged in furious combat with Guarim, the resident golem doorward of the shop. The bulette was dispatched soon after being thrown through the upper chambers of the row house across the street by the "Gentle Persuader," but the inside of the Xoblob was left a wrecked mess. While the proprietor, Dandalus Ruell, has been taken to the Tower of Luck to have various injuries treated, his wife Arathka has reported that several ancient historical weapons and minor magical items, most notably the Snoring Shield of Antalassiter, Marchandyr's Mace, and the Red Blade of Harkstag, are believed missing, possibly stolen by the number of small kobolds that scampered out of the shop in the wake of the bulette, disappearing into the city sewers. Arathka went on to issue a reward for the retrieval of any missing items. The Watch seems to be mystified as to the origin of the rampaging creatures, although early talk in taverns across the city has pinned responsibility on either Mad Halaster or the machinations of the Lord Blackstaff.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED: One of the problems with having an opening into Undermountain in your basement is that things sometimes come out of it. While senior members of the Watch, including Ward Civilar Tychander, are fully aware of the Xoblob's access point, they will not divulge such information to the citizens of the city, lest there be a general panic or individuals looking to benefit from such information. As for the missing items, they were indeed stolen by a band of kobolds that followed the bulette up into the city, and are presumably still in their posession.

Hammer 20: The 23rd annual Estelmer Banquet (also known as the "Cacaphonous Conclave of Sagacious Sages and Learned Loremasters") took place today, in the Great Hall of the Cynosure. While not as large as similar gatherings held in the cities of Silverymoon and Berdusk, the Banquet usually attracts a large number of Waterdeep's more sedentary intellegentsia and pundits, as the packed rows of tables tonight atested to. The most notable occasion on the night (indeed, perhaps the most noteworthy occasion ever in the history of the otherwise staid event) was the rather surprise appearance by the eccentric scholar Zeboaster, who appeared in front of the assembly under magical disguise, having been banned from the Banquet a number of winters ago for "unspecified offenses." Using the alias "Gib Rekab," Zeboaster launched into a rather lengthy tirade on the usage of certain pluralized names in Faerunian languages, demanding that there be a set of guidelines that sages and other literary folk adhere to. He also advocated changing the spelling of any pluralized words that were "too confusing" or "bugged people," such as replacing "geese" with "geeses," "octopi" with "octopuses," and "phaerimm" with "phaerimms." Zeboasters' eventual denouement came in the midst of a rambling dissertation on the superiority of the descriptive term "Waterdeepian" to the archaic "Waterdhavian," when he was abruptly de-masked by the noble Maskar Wands, in attendance at the time. With his disguise gone, Zeboaster was exposed to the gathered academecians, and was soon dragged from the hall, shouting "Such non-standard pluralizations must be expunged from the Common Tongue of Faerun, before it is further debased!! We must act now or risk mass confusion amongst future generations!" Lord Wands, who had apparently arrived to the Banquet from his southern holdings by magical means, was heard to dismiss Zeboaster's comments as "utter rubbish."

Hammer 23: It appears that the outcry over the new cathedral of Umberlee rising just south of the city walls will not abate any time soon. The latest volley of criticisim came today from the mermaid shaman Thur Aquarvol, making a rare appearance before the Lord's Court. Bedecked in all her priestly finery and ensconced in a perfectly spherical, levitating volume of seawater, borne somehow by four armed and armored mermen, the priestess harangued the Lords for a goodly length of time, reminding them that she alone was granted authority over spiritual matters involving the Bitch Goddess and the other Gods of the Sea, and that her underwater Cache must remain the main focus of such worship and devotion.

The masked Lords listened to the tirade without comment, with only Lord Piergeiron speaking up, promising to discuss Aquarvol's issues "at great length, in closed session." The mermaid priestess was clearly unsatisfied with the response, but she allowed herself to be carried out of the Court without further comment. It is believed that the priestess, once one of the most powerful figures in the city, has lost much of her clout in recent years, what with her increasingly erratic behavior and demands for ever greater tribute during Fleetswake, and her former involvement with the short-lived Cult of Ao.

Calendar Day - Midwinter: In taverns and festhalls across the city, the ale flows freely and roaring hearths blaze brightly as citizens gather to make agreements for the upcoming trade season, spin tales of heroes long gone and battles hard fought, dwell on the latest gossip (the plottings of Khelben Blackstaff, and the continuing Kelemvorite quest to rid the city of its' many phantoms seem to occupy the majority of such taverntattle), and make predictions for the newly-born Year of the Unstrung Harp. A few notable highlights on the day;

A small circle of Auril-worshippers gathered on the slopes of Mount Waterdeep at daybreak, clothed only in short shifts and appearing deep in prayer. As the first rays of the sun crested the Mount, soft nimbuses of bluish light enveloped the gathered faithful and, moments later, a light snowfall began. Shortly thereafter, the Frost Maiden's supplicants ended their prayer and disbanded. The snowfall continued for some hours afterwards, but never gathered in any appreciable amounts in the streets of the city.

In a solemn cerimony, the druids of the Quiet Place (the chapel of Silvanus) cut specially-blessed mistletoe from their indoor gardens. Along with Lord Piergeiron and Guardcaptain Rulathon (both bedecked in white-tabardded chainmail), and an honor escort of city guardsmen, the druids made a circle of the city, stopping at each massive city gate to ritually hang sprigs of the mistletoe (a tradition dating back to the days of the Fallen Kingdom, designed to bring peace to all within the city walls for the next year).

In what is fast becoming an annual tradition, the bard's school of New Olamn held its Silvertide Festival. Soon after nightfall, Olamn Square was set alight with colored lanterns and softly-glowing driftglobes. The centerpiece of the Square, the eerily-lifelike Three Giants statue, was lit in vibrant, multi-hued faerie fire, which crawled up and down the length of the statuary until daybreak. Costumed partygoers, wild dancers, Olamnite students and others took part in the wild festivities amid raucous music, pinwheeling Shou fireworks, and a seemingly endless supply of ale and zzar.

## Alturiak

Alturiak 4: A number of waterspouts have been spotted in the winter waters off Waterdeep recently. Some inhabitants of Dock Ward swear to have seen mermaids frolicking in the disturbances, others claim to have spotted ghostly bobbing lights or nimbuses atop the waves during recent sundowns. Some even claim that a gigantic dragon of crystalline appearance has taken up residence in the sea nearby, and is engaging in undersea battles with the aquatic inhabitants of the region to prove its' dominance.

Alturiak 10: There has been growing unrest in the snowbound city this past tenday, as rumors of rampaging humanoid hordes and summoned demons surging north from the ruins of Amn seem to grow tenfold with each passing day. The only real confirmation of any trouble has come from swift-riders out of Baldur's Gate, reporting that a late-season caravan, bound for the Southlands and containing armaments and supplies for the Amnian defenders, was attacked outside of the ruins of Dragonspear Castle. The messengers went on to report that, although the caravans' large contigent of drovers and armed outriders were slain to a man, the contents of the wagons, valuable steel swords, arrowheads, and halberd blades newly forged in Mirabar, were left largely untouched. Many now fear that fell Dragonspear has become a northern encampment for the advancing forces now ravaging Amn. With so many mercinaries and sellswords gone south for the winter, Waterdeep would be hard pressed to raise an army should it need to defend itself from a great horde from the south.

WHAT THIS MEANS: Rumors and paranoia breed like flies in the snowbound walls of the city, especially this late in the winter season when even the most stoic of city residents tend to get a bit stir crazy. While there is no real threat from without the city walls, the Watch and Guard remain vigilant on the streets within, lest idle rumors of doom-and-gloom turn into a frenzied panic or general riot.

The arms caravan, a total of twelve wagons and some seventy men, did indeed meet its' end near Dragonspear, but the humanoids beseiging Amn were not the true culprits. The attack was carried out by a clone of the wizard Manshoon that has taken up residence in the depths of the Trollbark Forest (the same one that attacked the caravans of House Brossfeather last year, sparking the brief conflict with the elves of the Misty Forest). In testing several new magical items and spells recently gained, the Manshoon clone slaughtered those in the caravan, and was also behind the attack on the encampment of Waentryn's Wolves, last month.

Alturiak 18: Imzeel Coopercan, proprietor of the Mighty Manticore tavern in Castle Ward, was attacked late last night by knife-wielding thugs. The attack occurred in the alley behind his establishment, and his attackers were only beaten off with the timely arrival and aid of the young noble Fenn Estelmer and his companion, the half-elven Tiirlon Windstar. The attackers, three of whom were slain in the melee, bore no insignia and their affiliation remains a mystery. Common consensus in the taverns today is that Imzeel overheard or was privy to something important enough to get him killed for.

WHAT THIS MEANS: Red Wizards, of course. A Thayan mage and his apprentices are in the city, on a mission to scout out the local political scene and look over promising locations for one of their planned enclaves. Two of the lesser apprentices were in the Manticore discussing their plans and came to conclusion that Imzeel was spying upon them. They then thought it prudent to hire a number of local street toughs and silence the bartender before he could tell anyone of what he "overheard." When their master Thaumryn, an underling of Zulkir Lauzoril, discovered their deeds, he was incensed and immediately had them punished (teleported back to Amruthar for shovel duty in the devil-swine pens under the city), but by then it was too late to stop the assassination attempt.

The ironic part is that Imzeel heard nothing of the Thayan plans to petition the Lords for an enclave, or to open a trade in magical items. What piqued the proprietor's interest in the duo was their secondary conversation about the recent magical chaos and monstrous invasion of the Old Xoblob shop, run by his good friend Dandalus Ruell. Thus, even though the assassins were foiled, Imzeel has no idea who sent them, a fact that will soon be ascertained by Thaumryn and his magical divinations. The wizardly troupe will return to Thay ahead of schedule, however, lest one of the Watchful Order or a hirespell bought by Imzeel uncover their role in the attack.

Alturiak 20: Today marks the festival of the Great Weave, one of the dozen High Festivals celebrated by the faithful of the trade goddess, Waukeen. While traditionally the least-observed of the Golden Lady's holy days (largely due to the bulk of her worshipers being absent from the city at this time of year), today saw a flurry of activity from the handful of priests in residence. Laskar Ilithair, the presumed High Priest who proclaimed the return of his goddess to Faerun at the Winterride Ball in Nightal, appeared before Lord's Court to present two dozen finely-woven wall tapestries and long-banners to the city. The works, depicting scenes of mercantile trade on both land and sea, are scheduled to be placed in the halls of the Cynosure. The public meeting-place, originally built by the Cult of Ao, has been heavily rumored lately to be the future home of Waukeenar activity in Waterdeep. After Lord's Court, Ilithair and his entourage visited each of the major temples in the city, discussing matters of faith and re-forging old alliances. Included in these visits was the clergy of Umberlee, who have converted a wing of the Ulbrinter villa into a shrine sacred to the Bitch Queen, until their cathedral outside the south wall is completed.

Alturiak 22: Calnus Tolaedryn, a visiting adventurer-mage from Leilon, caused quite a commotion in Trades Ward today as the dweomered staff he bore triggered the spontaneous opening of a portal or magical-type gate on Slipstone Street just off the High Road. The rogue portal caused a great deal of havoc, striking up intense, scouring winds and a suction powerful enough to draw in a number of nearby crates, barrels, and random refuse. No one nearby was lost through the opening, though a number of minor injuries were reported, mainly due to flying debris. The area around the portal was soon cordoned off by the Watch, who stood guard at the scene until nearly midnight, when it vanished just as suddenly as it had appeared. Both Tolaedryn and his staff were brought to the Tower of the Watchful Order for examination and questioning, with the mages of the Order apparently seeking to discern the method of triggering and controlling this heretofore-unknown portal.

Alturiak 27: Swift-riders out of Red Larch have brought news of an unknown force menacing the town, believed to be drow raiders from the depths. Folk caught out of doors after sunset have begun to turn up dead or missing, with only their single sets of tracks visible in the snow and slush. A number of the victims have been guardsmen on patrol, and the local warcaptain is believed to have sent the Lords a missive requesting additional assistance to deal with the problem. At least two of the remaining mercinary bands in the city, the Bold Blades of the Griffon and the Fanged Hands, are rumored to be readying their equipment and planning a trek to Red Larch, in hopes of claiming a reward for disposing of whatever is menacing the village.

WHAT THIS MEANS: An unusually cooperative group of four peryton have made Red Larch their winter feeding grounds over the last few months. Striking in darkness and from the air, the monsters have successfully kept their nature hidden from the townsfolk. However, their hunting may soon become a bit more difficult, as the people of Red Larch have taken to barricading themselves within their homes at night, and only travelling around by day in sizeable groups. Currently, the perytons lair in the ruins of a half-collapsed grain silo on one of the farms to the north of town, but they will try to lure would-be monster hunters to the ruins of one of several abandoned keeps in the hills to the west, where the unstable, burnt-out second-story timbers would provide them with an advantage over their ground-based foes.

Alturiak 30: The Third Annual Snowbound Festival was held tonight at Mother Tathlorn's House of Healing and Pleasure, drawing many of the upper class residents still in the city. Touted as "one last festival" before the bulk of Waterdeep's richer inhabitants return from their southern winter hideaways, the event was deemed a success, surpassing last year's festivities. As before, the highlight of the evening was the contest to pick a "Lady Frost" and "Lord Icicle" (something akin to "King-and-Queen-for-a-Day") from among the contestants.

A surprise appearance to the Festival was put in by the noble lady Aalnethe Margaster, who had not been seen in the city since she eloped with Bragaster Raventree and a number of Margaster family heirlooms some months ago. The young noblewoman's dogged persistance in the contest finally paid off, as she managed to win the title of "Lady Frost" for the first time in many tries, causing her to "shriek like a banshee and hop about like a one-legged bullywug with his hand in a hornet's nest," according to Bamaal Dunster, an acolyte of Lathander Morning-Lord in attendance at the time. Her celebration proved to be short-lived though, as several members of the Margaster clan in the audience swiftly moved to seize her and drag her out of the tavern, presumably taking her to the Margaster villa.

It is currently unknown when Aalnethe returned to the city, or the whereabouts of the still-missing Bragaster, although rumor has it that the younger Lord Raventree left Aalnethe penniless and alone in Scornubel, in favor of the attentions of a two-copper Calishite streetwalker. The location of the stolen Margaster heirlooms is also unknown at this time, and it is their safe return that the end of the feud between the two noble houses is believed to depend on.

## Ches

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Ches 8: The first tenday of Ches has seen a lessening of the constant winter storms, opening the way for many of Waterdeep's citizens who spent the winter vacationing in the Southlands to return home. With them comes an end to the rumors of advancing hordes of demons and goblinkin that have plagued the city for the last month, as the returning nobles and master merchants have made it known that the rapacious forces have advanced no further yet than the borders of Amn, although raiding parties assumed to belong to the main group have been spotted throughout the region.

Many of the mercinaries and hireswords that made the trip southward at the onset of winter have so far failed to return to the city, either having been killed in battle or having chose to remain in the field. Many of their number who chose to begin the trip back north were waylaid in the lands of the Pact, the allied farmsteads of the southern Sword Coast, where they were offered coinage to lend their swordarms towards the defense of that region, should it become necessary.

Ches 11: Traffic along the northern portion of the High Road came to a near-halt today, with the arrival of the Lady Cassala Thrundwick, the "Silver Dowager" of Silverymoon. The Lady Thrundwick's entourage, which included her four longhaired winter tressym (gifts from the wizardly Kolat brothers), and her purple-garbed all-Hin retinue (the only ones the diminutive Dowager towers over) turned heads as they made their way to the villa of the Maernos family. Lady Thrundwick, a well-known collector of antiquities and sponsor of various adventuring groups, is rumored to be overseeing the construction of Lord Ultas Maernos' controversial villa remodeling plans, and to be making a rather sizeable donation of elven and dwarven artwork to aid in the eventual transformation of the Maernos villa into a place of safehaven and general worship for the nonhuman peoples of Waterdeep.

An issue of contention in Waterdhavian high society, Lord Maernos' plans are opposed by many of the city's nobles, who dislike the idea of non-humans having anything to do with the nobility of the city (and not a few, it is whispered, who have their own designs on the property the villa rests on). However, the Silver Dowager is a celebrity of the first rank, and her arrival in the city is sure to set the social circles of the city abuzz, with each noble clan or wealthy merchant house seeking to have her attend their Fleetswake ball or gala.

Ches 20-30: Fleetswake celebrations: The entire city has been gearing up for this last tenday in Ches, which is traditionally kicked off by the Annual Shipwright's Ball and then followed by countless nobles balls, guild galas, and neighborhood celebrations. The nobles and festhalls across Waterdeep are said to be spending an unheard-of amount of money on the proceedings, which promise to be the best in recent memory.

Ches 20: The Annual Shipwright's Ball at the Shipwright's House was held tonight, and drew many of Waterdeep's rich and famous. The decor this year was a return to the traditional maritime motifs, with blue and green sea-tones predominating, and signalled that most of the assembled were looking to put the sea troubles of the past few years behind them. Enormous ice-sculptures, carved out of the frozen flanks of the Spine of the World and kept magically cold, were brought in through the North Gate by teams of drovers and arrayed about the grand Hall of Sails, their innards eerily aglow with colored magelights (and, in one case, what appeared to be the body of a yeti or other snow-beast, its' shaggy white pelt entombed by the hoarfrost and perfectly preserved).

Indeed, the grandeur of the glacial sculptures and the school of illusory dolphins that swam and frolicked near the vaulted ceiling of the great hall were only outdone by the massively ornate regalia of the city's two resurgent priesthoods, those of the Bitch-Queen Umberlee and the Lady of All Trade, Waukeen. High Priest Laskar Ilithair of Waukeen, attired in open robes seemingly made of spun gold and platinum undergarments, with enormous slashed and fluted sleeves that reflected the colors of the many flashing gemstones that orbited about his head, spent the night revelling in his status as one of the city's newest celebrities, chatting up the city's trade barons and making arrangements for the Highcoin gathering at the end of the month.

Mirroring the opulence of the Waukeenar delegation, Dread High Trident Meiritid Archneie arrived in sweeping aquamarine vestments complete with high fanlike collar, blazing abalone breastpiece, and an animated train that faded into roiling sea foam at the tail end. Flanked by members of the Ulbrinter clan (who have hinged much of their reputation and wealth on establishing the Umberlant faith in the city, in the hopes of currying favor with the Sea Queen and gaining an edge on their maritime rivals), the Dread High Trident was often the center around which the rest of the ball ebbed and flowed.

Ches 21: Faithful of the god Lathander partook in the Song of Dawn today, a holy festival celebrating the arrival of the vernal equinox. The Spires of the Morning seemed to come alight in the morning rays, resounding with the voices of those assembled, a blending of vocal harmonies and counterharmonies of beautiful complexity that was audible for an astonishingly far distance.

The choir was overseen by High Radiance Ghentilara, who also presided over several knighting ceremonies on the day. Olbert and Thaeryn Roaringhorn, two young scions of House Roaringhorn, were among those so honored, and were also inducted into the Order of the Astor, the most prestigious of the Morninglord's knightly orders (a choice made only in order to give them some prestige and get them out of Waterdeep and the crowded Roaringhorn line of succession, some whisper).

Ches 21: Tespergates Ball: Kicking off the widely-anticipated round of Fleetswake noble parties, the Tesper villa was host to a rousing soiree that lasted until well after the first rays of the morning sun reached over the villa walls. The entertainment featured a beast-tamer and his trained monsters, as well as several "small-spells" magelings which kept the revelers amused amid their carousing and hobnobbing. The festivities reached such a pitch that even a break-in into the Tesper's private chambers and a nearly-foiled burglary attempt went unnoticed by the majority of those present until mid-morning, when the unfortunate episode was confirmed by Lord Tesper.

The thief was discovered and driven off by two guests in attendance, the archmage Rhalaglingalade of Neverwinter and Enobur Erthidrannus, the Sage Royal of Ruathym, but not before he absconded with several choice pieces of jewelry and magical heirlooms (rumored to include the Burnished Warhorn of Barunrae and the Scepter of Eyes). He is said to be a man of medium height and build, and to have worn an ornate party-mask of mithril and red gold, shaped into the visage of a snarling red wyrm with jewelled flames shooting forth from its gaping maw. It is not known if the defenses in place around the valuables were magically dispelled or manually bypassed somehow, but Lord Armult has declined the assistance of the Watch in resolving the theft, citing the family's personal investigation into the matter.

Ches 27: The annual Naval Ship Races were held today, and saw the inclusion of no less than seventeen newly-built naval rakers. Accompanied by the Raerimyn and the Seastallion, the twin flagships of the Waterdhavian fleet, the new ships arrived amidst much fanfare from their winter drydocks on the isle of Orlumbor. The rakers were ordered built last year by the Lords, to replace ships lost in the Battle of Waterdeep Harbor two years ago, and to counter the increased lawlessness in the shipping lanes of the Trackless Sea since.

By decree of the Lords, nine of the ships were paid for by the temples of the city (one from each of the eight major houses of worship, and a ninth from the collected "lesser" churches), with the other eight being funded directly from the coffers of the city. It is also heavily rumored that the Lords demanded (and recieved) large "donations" of gold and trade bars from the northern members of the Lord's Alliance, due to Waterdeep shouldering the majority of naval duties in the region.

This last bit cannot be confirmed as anything more than rumor, although at the Winterride Ball last Nightal, Lord Glordyn Arnslance, the Baldurian ambassador to the Alliance, was overheard to remark to Lord Piergeiron that "perhaps then, the City of the Gate should send missives demanding equal access to the pouchstrings of our northern brethren, in repair for their rather inadequate response to the plague of sea devils that equally ravaged our proud soil. We would be put to the blush indeed, to discover that the vigilant and stalwart southern bastion of the Lord's Alliance has been gulled of the goodwill and largess shared by her fellow brothers-in-arms."

Ches 29-30: Fair Seas Festival: Fleetswake ended amid much pomp and pageantry, leaving the streets empty of all except the members of the Dungsweepers Guild, who were faced with the daunting prospect of cleaning the streets of a tenday's worth of debris.

The politically and religiously sensitive issue of just who would preside over the annual donations to Umberlee's Cache was sidestepped by having the Dread Trident Meritid Archneie and his human followers collect the tithes from those gathered at the site, then hand them over to the shaman Thur Aquarvol and her merman acolytes, to be delivered down into the depths of the Harbor. It is rumored that neither faction was entirely happy with the compromise, but all involved put on a good face for the length of the cerimony. As for the donations themselves, they totalled nearly 300,000 pieces of gold, another indication that the city's maritime merchants are expecting a robust trading season this year.

Ches 30: A grand gala was held in the Cynosure today, celebrating Highcoin, one of the Twelve High Festivals of the Waukeenar faith. Spoken accolades, accompanied by trumpet fanfares, hailed the faithful for amassing such wealth, both that displayed in the Fleetswake festivities and the coinage and sparkling gemstones that overflowed the donation urns placed throughout the cavernous hall.

## Tarsakh

Tarsakh 3-13: Waukeentide: The arrival of the first regular merchant caravans of the year signals the onset of the Waukeentide holidays. The tenday-long festival is said to be highly anticipated this year, given signs of renewed mercantile business and the resurgance of the priesthood of the Goddess of Trade Gold.

Tarsakh 3: Caravance: Taverns and taprooms alike reported doing brisk business today, as newly-arrived caravanfolk and locals alike gather at such establishments to party the night away. In homes throughout the city many parents hide small gifts, supposedly left for their children by the mythical peddler "Old Carvas" (always in multiples of three, a tradition dating back to the days of the Three Kings of the Fallen Kingdom).

Tarsakh 5: The Moonshaen diplomatic caravel Dauntless entered the harbor today, bearing the Baron Gaeban Redharphin and his entourage. The Moonshaen mission was met at the docks by Cirian Cellantyr, the Lord's Envoy, and was whisked by guarded carriage to the Castle, where Gaeban and the Lords are scheduled to discuss a number of matters, including dark tidings out of isolated Mintarn and increasing troubles from the raiding rakers of Ruathym. The Baron is also expected to attend many of the remaining Waukeentide functions, and his arrival has been highly anticipated by the mercantile figures of the city, many of whom wish to discuss closer ties between the City of Splendors and the Island Kingdom, given the potentially rival inland traderoutes and power bases developing around the Moonlands of Luruar.

The half-elven Redharphin is well-known by many in the city for his previous adventuring career with the Knights Errant, one of the city's more long-lived "blade-fellowships." Although diplomatic lodgings are available to him in the Castle, it is widely assumed that the Baron will choose to stay with either Belshareen Azurean, the "Lady Mage of Lion Street," or the "Favored of Tymora" Jorynn Halstaff, both companions from his adventuring days.

Tarsakh 11: Guildmeet: The multi-guild festival marking the Guildmeet holiday took place today, covering the entirety of the Market, the Cynosure, the Field of Triumph, and most areas in between. New Olamn gave its' students the day off, and many joined in the festivities as well. The continuing animosity between members of the Bardschool and the journeymen of the Watchful Order surfaced relatively early, but the broad shoulders of the Dockworkers guildsmen and the everpresent scowls of Guardscaptain Rulathon and his men kept any unpleasantness from marring the night.

Tarsakh 13: Leiruin: As this holiday commemorates the occasion of the goddess Waukeen catching the Lady of Illusions attempting to cheat her in a deal, the sermons and Plinth-side devotions of the priests of the Goddess of Trade were especially fervent today. Also marking the Leiruin holiday, all guildmembers in the city paid their guild dues today, as their elected heads met with the Lords to renew the guild charters.

Tarsakh 16: Aunrimn Boldavar, a noted purveyor of magical feast-masks and similar trinkets to the noblility and wealthy of the city, was uncovered today as an agent of the outlawed Shadow Thieves organization. Aunrimn's denouement came at the hands of a band of adventurers, the Bold Bellows of Beregost, who uncovered his involvement in the so-called "Kolovhryn Killing," in which the Lady Kolovhryn was overcome by magically-induced madness and slaughtered her husband and several other partiers at the merchant house of Kolovhryn earlier this month. Both Aunrimn and the Bold Bellows were escorted to the Castle by Ward Civilar Helm Maddryn and a mixed number of guardsmen and watchmages, and have not been seen since.

It is rumored that the Lady Kolovhryn's madness was caused by the magical face mask she wore at the party, an item provided by Aunrimn, and that he (and through him, the dread Shadow Thieves) hoped to sow discord and chaos through the ranks of the city's well-to-do population. Popular at the fetes and balls of the upper class, such face masks mold to the wearer's face and (for the next 10-12 hours, the length of a typical Waterdhavian ball) magically laugh, frown, and contort as if real flesh and blood. Further, those of a beastial appearance allow their wearer to snarl, roar, trill, hiss, or blow plumes of colored smoke, as would the actual beast the mask represents.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED: Such masks are indeed common at noble parties, but the ones enchanted by Aunrimn held a far more sinister purpose - those sold to designated individuals were further enspelled to burn into their wearers' flesh when donned, turning the unfortunate into a mindless thrall of Aurnrimn's (equivalent to a ju-ju zombie) and subject to his telepathic command.

It should also be noted that, while Aunrimn's deeds were of a sufficiently heinous nature to have him taken into immediate custody, the high-ranking nature of his watch captors (watchmages led by Ward Civilar Maddryn himself!) is more a function of the offender's true allegiance - Boldavar is actually a Tethyrian agent sent by high-ranking concerns to spy on the inner circles of the city's nobles and merchants, and to "dispose" of troublesome or unduly influential Waterdhavian citizens. Given the newly-established relations with the southern kingdom and the amount of political goodwill extended by the Lords in the past, it would be an extreme embarassment to the Lords if such connections were uncovered. Hence the faux "Shadow Thieves" connection, concocted by the Lords Mirt and Sammereza, and spread throughout the city by their agents.

Tarsakh 21: The elderly loremaster Phyldos Ulthool was killed in unfortunate accident with runaway horsecart in Castle Ward this evening. Ulthool, widely regarded as one of the foremost Waterdhavian experts on spirits and spectres, was leaving the environs of the Gentle Rain Inn when the cart struck him down. The loremaster had been frequenting the inn for a number of days, apparently seeking to contact the phantom of the Baroness Chelthorea Crownsilver which once haunted the upper floors, in the continuing Kelemvorite effort to rid the city of Waterdeep of its' numerous spectral inhabitants. The faithful of Kelemvor, led by the high priest Raelar Hosthann, held services for the deceased Ulthool this evening, committing his soul to the care of the Judge of the Dead and Damned.

WHAT THIS MEANS: The dopplegangers of the Unseen are active again. After discerning that Raelar was contacted by the priesthood of Tyr at the Winterride Ball, in an apparent attempt to enlist his aid in clearing the name of Harkas Kormallis, and the aborted "retrieval attempt" by the bountyhunter Sayvels Aka'Philip, Hlaavin has decided to take matters into his own hands. The wily doppleganger soon learns through his other sources that the Kelemvorites are searching the city for all hauntings and spirits on some sort of "holy quest." This includes the Gentle Rain, former site of the phantom of Baroness Crownsilver. In fact, the noted ghost-hunter and historian Phyldos Ulthool has been spending much time there as of late, apparently digging for clues as to the phantom's disposition.

Although he realizes that further open action could draw too much attention to the whole situation, Hlaavin authorizes Kerrigan Ellstric, the Unseen's master assassin, to dispose of Phyldos (as quietly as possible!). Kerrigan carries out his job, making it look like the elderly loremaster was run down in a tragic, though ordinary, street accident. Unfortunately for the dopplegangers, "there is another." Raelar is talked into letting the Lady Jillian Doncastle continue Ulthool's investigations by Allumen of Tyr, Gorman Doncastle, and Antorin Broadmantle. Events may yet blow up in the mirrorkin's collective faces...

Tarsakh 27: The candlelit facade of the Chandlers and Lamplighters guildhall has been thrown into chaos this evening, leaving guildmembers and watchmages alike scratching their heads in confusion. The Scroll Street exterior has been randomly - and quite mysteriously - changing colors and patterns since the advent of sunset. The patterns seem to be spelling out runes or messages of some sort, although no one seems to know what they mean or how the changes are being affected. An early attempt to extinguish the bedeviled wicks failed, resulting in severe burns to the candlesnuff-wielding guildmembers, and additional attempts have not been forthcoming. Similarly, attempts to magically dispel the lights have also failed, although without resulting in harm to the gathered watchmages.

CALENDAR DAY - Greengrass: Today marks the Greengrass festival, heralding the official beginning of spring. Flowers that had been grown in the inner rooms of villas and temples were cast out onto the streets to bring rich growth in the season ahead, and the Annual Flower Fair was held in the Market. Many of the city's nobles used this day as an excuse to throw a party (not that many of the nobility need a reason), and the streets of North and Sea Wards were brightly lit by the colorful lanterns and glowing globes of noble villas.

As they have since their founding, the priests of the nearby Goldenfields held a festival in the Field of Triumph. Entering the city at sunset through the Northgate amidst much fanfare and blowing of horns, the procession travelled down the High Road and Julthoon Street, gaining a steady flow of local dancers, costumed partygoers, and minstrels sporting panpipes and hand-drums before entering the Field. Once inside a great bonfire was lit, and casks of minty icewine were offered to all. As the night wore on the festivities gradually became wilder and more decadent, encouraged by the faithful of Chauntea who view the Greengrass holiday as a fertility festival in all aspects.

## Mirtul

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Mirtul 1: In response to increasing troubles and lawlessness in the growing ramshackle slums outside the southern walls of the city, the Lords have finally authorized the establishment of a Watch precinct on the main road a stones throw outside of the Southgate, the first such edifice erected outside Waterdeep proper since the finalizing of the city walls in 1276DR. Captained by Caedan Lythlyn, a Senior Civilar under the command of South Ward Civilar Talaver "Azure-Hand," the new precinct is charged with keeping the immediate area about the walls free from obstruction, and quelling the rising tide of violence, unrest, and lawlessness in the slums, now commonly known as the "Southersprawls," or more simply, "the Sprawls." The Sprawls have grown at an alarming rate in the last few years, due mainly to a lack of space inside the city itself, and a large number of immigrants, mainly from the troubled Moonshaes and civil-war Tethyr. An edict passed by the Lords last Nightal, forbidding any new buildings within a distance of three miles of Waterdeep save by official decree, has so far done little to discourage the growth, and there are even rumors that members of the Carpenters and the Stonecutters Guilds, in public vehemently opposed to the unsanctioned construction in the Sprawls, have begun to profit off of illegal, "off-the-books" transactions.

Mirtul 3: A statue turned up missing from the Tchazzam family villa this morning, its' customary wall-niche empty. The stature, a rather overdone representation of Aurados Tchazzam, stood gesturing grandly along the Seawatch Street side of the villa, its gaudy gold-leafed gaze looking out towards the seawall. It was a tribute to one of the family's greatest patriarchs, who lived during the last century, but was roundly criticised by neighbors and art lovers alike. While Watch investigators are still looking for a reason behind the theft, according to goodman Vurhn, a sellor of scallion pies who was in the vincinity late last night, the statue actually got up, looked about, and walked off, all on its own accord. Watch investigators scoff at the notion, but there are a single set of gold-flecked footprints in the road, until they turn onto the hard courdoroy of Diamond Street and disappear. Further, there are at least two reports out of Sea Ward last night, of a gold-colored giant walking the streets, singing old sea chanties and gesturing all about him....

Mirtul 5: In taverns and tankard houses across the city, bards and taproom-singers have begun singing of "Harkas the Horrible," a shining paragon of virtue who leads a double-life of debauchery and deceit, until he meets his end at the hands of his long-suffering brother. The tale is widely recognized as a thinly-veiled reference to the deeds of the former Knight Champion of Tyr, Harkas Kormallis, now exiled from the city on pain of death due to his involvement in evil cult activities and the death of the Baroness Chelthorea Crownsilver of Cormyr. It is not known where the vicious satire originated from, but it has spread across the city in the space of a few tendays, and is especially popular in the lower Wards. It has also led to at least one altercation, when it was played within the hearing of three acolytes of the Halls of Justice, Tyr's temple in the city.

WHAT THIS MEANS: Suspicious of what appears to be an alliance between the priesthoods of Tyr and Kelemvor, Hlaavin has set his Unseen underlings across the city in the guise of bards and tavern tale-tellers. He seeks to reinforce the image of the former Knight-Champion as an evil demon-consorting cultist and to undermine any Tyrran attempts at clearing his name. Due to the political clout of the church of Tyr and House Kormallis, the telling of "Harkas the Horrible" will soon be squelched, but the damage will have been done, at least in the minds and opinions of common Waterdhavians. The wily mirrorkin also continues his efforts to place one of his dopplegangers among the ranks of the Kelemvorites, to ascertain the extent of their dealings with the Tyrrans, but the priests of the dead have proven difficult to infiltrate thus far.

Mirtul 9: An Ice Hunter mission entered the city today, seeking aid and swordarms against the monsters troubling their northern villages. The "Ancient Men of the North," little seen this far south, and especially rare in urban centers, are said to have brought valuable pelts and ivories to barter for mercinary services with. As is the custom among their people, they declined to give their real names, instead giving the nicknames of Big Fish in Cold Water and Bleak Sky At Morning as contacts. Interested parties are directed to the Dripping Dagger Inn in Trades Ward, where the Ice Hunters have encamped.

Mirtul 11: Lathanderites across the city today celebrated Rhyestertide, the holiday commemorating the life of Rhyester, the first prophet of the Morninglord. Before dawn, the Spires of the Morning were set alight with vibrant red and yellow faerie fire magics, and the dawnpriests fanned out across the city to help the needy or infirm.

Mirtul 16: A wagonload of iron-banded barrels containing alegar from the Vintners, Distillers, and Brewers Guildhall was overturned at the intersection of Keltarn and Swords Streets this afternoon, apparently part of an attempt on the life of the Lady Cassala Thrundwick, the "Silver Dowager" of Silverymoon. The acrid fumes given off by the liquid contents, used as both a fiery salad dressing and as a cheap preserving agent, stung the eyes and burned the throats of all passerby in the vincinity, and effectively served to obscure the identities of the would-be assassins, at least three of whom assaulted the carriage the Silver Dowager was riding in. Thankfully, the attackers were driven off, in part due to a spray of blinding sparks from one of the Dowager's many rings and the heroic efforts of her Hin retainers, two of whom fell to the envenomed blades the assassins bore. It is not yet known who hired the killers, or what their motive was, but it is suspected to involve the Lady Thrundwicks' association with Lord Maernos' planned demi-human temple-sanctuary, an idea many of the city's nobles are vehemently opposed to.

Mirtul 17: The fey creatures known as will-o-wisps have been congregating in increasing numbers amid the myriad lamps, lanterns, and bobbing torches of Trades Ward in recent days, and at least four people have been killed by the creatures, including a member of the Watch and two youths of the Chandlers Guild. It is not known what has caused the creatures to gather in the area, although a ready food supply would seem to be one indication. Whatever the reason, the Watch has increased both the size and frequency of patrols in the Ward, and has advised against travelling back-alleys after dark.

Mirtul 20: The Castle is abuzz this morning over news that Aluar Zendos, the Sword of the Frozenfar and commander of the city's northern military forces, has resigned his posting to travel to the far forests of Cormanthor, where drow are rumored to be massing in the depths. Although the old ranger is famed for his hatred of the dark elves, the notion of travelling halfway across Faerun to shoot arrows at forest phantoms has left many shaking their heads in disbelievement. The Lords were apparently notified in advance of Zendos' resignation, as they announced the selection of Sheiraya Blaskarn to replace him shortly thereafter. Blaskarn, a devotee of the Red Knight and graduate of the prestigious Red War College of Tethyr, is well-known to the Lords, and helped to plan the war against the Ice Bear in 1369DR. She is also considered to be a better diplomat and politician than Aluar, whose blunt, forthright manner was ill-suited to Lords Alliance dealings, although her lack of actual battlefield leadership is troubling to some.

WHAT THIS MEANS: Click HERE for more information on Aluar Zendos, and HERE for a write-up of Shieraya Blaskarn.

Mirtul 22: The Varayance, a Waterdhavian convict ship destined for the exile colony of Farr Windward, has been reported sunk by Ruathym raiders. In recent months, the increased presence of raiders in the Trackless Sea has been counterbalanced by coordinated efforts from the Waterdhavian and Moonshaen navies, but there has still been an increase in assaults and sinkings along the shipping lanes. The Varayance, carrying the crazed and convicted miscreants of the Lords Alliance cities, was escorted by two lightly-armed escorts, which may have caused the raiders to mistake it for a rich merchant trader or diplomatic vessel. The report of the attack was brought in by one of the escort ships, the only vessel to win free of the conflict. The crew of the escort confirmed that the raiders were flying the flags of at least two Ruathym warbarons, and that they were united under the common sail-insignia of a many-tentacled mauve squid-like symbol on a black background.

Mirtul 27: A caravan out of the Border Kingdoms was assaulted while passing through the Southersprawls this morning, and many of its contents were stolen, including ripe sourpears, tiny sweet oranges, and rare golden melons. The drovers and outriders of the caravan reported being suddenly swarmed from evey direction by men armed with clubs, daggers, shortswords, and slingstones. The bandits were ill-trained and unorganized, enabling the defenders to kill a number of them, but sheer numbers allowed the wagons to be ransacked. The owner of the caravan, Maerlandan "The Golden Prince" of Orparl, is currently seeking recompense from the Lords for his losses. The Watch responded to the bold daylight robbery, the most serious of its kind yet, with a crackdown and foray to roust the inhabitiants, and overzealous officers even began to put those dwellings closest to the city walls to the torch. Such activities were hampered by the newly-founded mission of the Crying God Ilmater, whose monks formed human shields around threatened dwellings and interfered with the rounding up of many of the Sprawl's inhabitants. "Mother" Irimae, leader of the mission, was taken into custody by the Watch for suspicion of inciting a riot, and is scheduled to be brought before the Lords later this evening.

WHAT THIS MEANS: The caravan was assaulted and plundered by the street thugs and roustabouts under the lead of Sendrin, a common thief and gang leader. Sendrin in turn reports to Naelzaur, a lieutenant of the Xanathar, who is attempting to consolidate his hold on the Sprawls. The Xanathar sees the Sprawls as a potential anchor for his activities, a base to expand into the city itself, especially South and Trades Wards. The beholder crimelord also sees the inhabitants of the region as a prime source of cheap muscle and potential future Guild members, and is greatly pleased with Naelzaur's actions thus far.

## Kythorn

Kythorn 2: The children of the city celebrated the Trolltide holiday today by running through the streets, growling and snarling like trolls. In recognition of the holiday, many of the city’s “body-artists” (artists, tattooists, and minor magelings who specialize in altering a customers various body parts) painted the children’s hands and faces with green pigments for free.

Kythorn 7: Chaos in South Ward today, as a number of the odd, many-tentacled creatures known to sages and collectors of esoterica as “flumphs” descended out of an open balcony high in the tower of the wizardly Kolat Brothers and scattered throughout the surrounding side streets, apparently seeking refuge in nearby sewer openings. They were quickly followed by a number of hired armsmen and cudgel-wielding drovers, who emerged from the ground-floor gates and attempted to chase the creatures through the bustling crowds. Injuries resulting from the scene were light, with most reported cases resulting from people sprayed by the creatures’ nauseating liquid defense mechanism, and damages were mostly confined to a few overturned merchant carts and swift-stalls.

The Kolats have so far remained silent on the matter, although the merchant Panthras, of Panthras Procuring, has lodged a formal complaint in Lords Court against the Kolat brothers for what he calls “non-payment for delivery of several specimens of levitating invertebrates, as agreed to in contract on the eleventh day of this past Mirtul.” Most of those following the days’ events believe that the flumphs were destined for usage in the Kolats’ wizardly experimentations, although it may be that the brothers were planning to sell the creatures to the Order of Master Taylors, Glovers, and Mercers for a less exotic purpose - dyed and tooled flumph-skin parasols have reportedly become all the rage amongst the younger female nobility of the courts of Silverymoon and Westgate this past summer. Indeed, Alurra Tarbrossen, Master of the Order, has recently adopted just such a fashion in her evening excursions outside of the guild headquarters.

Kythorn 11: All of Waterdhavian upper society has been thrown into confusion today, as claims of shapeshifters and deific intervention in the halls of House Kormallis are run rampant. The rumors began swirling early this morning, when a sizeable party of clergymen from the churches of Helm and Kelemvor entered the Gentle Rain Inn in Castle Ward, clearing the establishment of all but a few onlookers. The priests, said to include the Most High Doomguide Raelar and the holy myrmidon Antorin Broadmantle, as well as the high priest of Tyr Allumen and the paladin Dannil Balambar, later emerged with tales of murder and false conviction, as well as a plot to usurp the heads of all nobles families in the city. Their claims were apparently taken seriously enough by the Lords and the Watch, as a contingent of guardsmen, magisters, and watch-mages were almost immediately dispatched to the gates of the Kormallis villa, where they forced open the front gates. There were some sounds of struggle and spell-play from within, although it is believed at this hour that whoever the guards were searching for managed to escaped their grasp. The Lords and city officials have remained silent on the matter thus far, although whisperings out of both the Kelemvorites and Tyrists seem to indicate that the exiled Knight-Champion of Tyr, Harkas Kormallis, has been proven innocent of the charges of murder and cult worship laid against him, and that it was in fact his brother, Zandoun, who was responsible.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED: After the rather suspicious death of the Phyldos Ulthool last month, Raelar was talked into letting the Lady Jillian Doncastle continue Ulthool's investigations by Allumen of Tyr, Gorman, and Antorin Broadmantle. Building upon the deceased Loremaster’s findings Jillian reveals the truth behind the Baronesses Chelthorea Crownsilver’s death, and puts the blame upon Zandoun Kormallis, not his brother Harkas.

Unfortunately, the spirit-sucking dagger used by the assassin Kerrigan still disrupts mortal attempts to contact the Baroness’ soul. After a brief period of prayer and communing with his deity, Raelar manages to summon up the spirit of Chelthorea (briefly, and with Kelemvor's agreement, the Judge of the Dead’s divine power overriding the draining magics of Kerrigan's enspelled dagger). The ghost, in front of a hastily-summoned magister and other witnesses, clears Harkas and reveals Zandoun to be not only the murderer, but some sort of shapeshifter. Further evidence damning Zandoun is gained through speaking with the Baronesses' two pet tressym, who witnessed the murder and still lair in the Gentle Rain.

Kythorn 12: The bizarre events and rampant rumors of yesterday continue, as the dead body of the nobleman and accused shapeshifter Zandoun Kormallis has been discovered, in the cellar of a Dock Ward apothecary. Both the Watch and officials in the Lords Court have confirmed the earlier rumors that Zandoun was killed and replaced by a doppleganger or other shapeshifter, and that the evil creature was responsible for the murder of the Baroness Crownsilver. They will not, however, comment on the circumstances surrounding the false Zandoun’s death. Noble families across the city, shocked by the news that a shapeshifter walked among them for more than a year, are said to have begun magically screening the members of their families, and taking precautions to prevent any further such deceptions.

The church of Tyr hailed the news with a joyous gathering of the faithful at their temple, with trumpets blaring and countless colored pennants flapping in the breeze. It is currently believed that the Lords will quickly offer a pardon to the falsely-accused and exiled Harkas Kormallis, and allow him to return to both the city and his duties as Knight-Champion of Tyr.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED: Zandoun, when cornered by the Watch, attacked with hired allies (no one who can be traced back to Hlaavin or the other Unseen, of course). Forced to flee the Kormallis villa, he made his way to a Dock Ward safehouse, where Hlaavin was supposed to provide succor. Instead, the master of the Unseen dispatched his assassin Kerrigan, to make sure that the Zandoun doppleganger was not captured by the humans of the city. But before the Unseen assassin could strike, Zandoun was cornered by the priests Raelar of Kelemvor and Allumen of Tyr, as well as Antorin Broadmantle and Dannil Balambar and the siblings Jillian and Gorman Doncastle. In the melee, Antorin revealed himself as an archon, a celestial servant of Tyr, and struck down the doppleganger, thus completing his master’s Justice. Kerrigan slipped away, to report Zandoun’s death, while Raelar became (and remains) furious that a celestial servant of his former god was masquerading as a faithful of the Judge of the Dead. Both Allumen’s and Antorin’s assurances that Kelemvor approved of Tyr’s actions do little to calm the Doomguide, who storms off.

Kythorn 19: The Festival of the Dancing Goat brought trade and traffic to a halt along sections of the High Road and Waterdeep Way today, as partygoers dressed in leering goats-head masks and others costumed in fat, slovenly mockeries of the Hidden Lords danced wildly to the raucous music of hand-drums and ninepipes. In addition to the usual chaos of the festival there were reports of a number of robberies, assaults, and mob activity in the Lower Wards before nightfall. The majority of participants ended up gathered in front of the Castle, where several demagogues railed at the “injustices” of the Lords, and a virtual caravan-load of rotten vegetables and eggs were hurled against the Grand Gates and the unfortunate guards stationed in front.

The festival is widely believed to be organized by one or more unsavory groups who use it to further their own ends, but it has become very popular with many of the Waterdeep’s lower classes and poorer citizens, perhaps more for the copious wine and wild abandonment than anything else. The Lords have allowed it as a “controlled release” of sorts for the citizenry, although in recent years the rising violence and murders during the affair have led to calls for an increased Watch presence and even a ban on holding future festivals.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED: The Festival of the Dancing Goat was started years ago by Durnan (in his guise as “The One”) and the vigilante Red Sashes, to allow the citizens of Waterdeep a relatively harmless outlet for their frustrations and complaints against the Hidden Lords, by dressing up in mocking costumes and holding torchlight “mutter-moots” where grievances could be aired and discussed (and Red Sash operatives could gain useful information).

As time passed however, the Festival was seized upon by troublemakers and true enemies of the Lords, such as the High Captains of Luskan and the faithful of Cyric, who began to incite riots and use the chaos to undermine the Lord’s Rule. This year there were at least two separate organizations using the festival for their own ends, as the street thugs of the Xanathar looted and attacked a number of businesses and shops in South and Trades Wards, and the agents of the outlawed Shadow Thieves worked to extend their influence amongst common citizenry who distrust the Lords and their edicts.

Kythorn 23: Scandalous talk amongst the gaming rooms and private clubs of the upper Wards has concentrated recently on the continuing feud between the rival up-and-coming merchant houses of Brinmaerth and Illenstars, most notably the rather vicious (and unusually public) war of words between the ambitious matriarchs of the two families, Daeluna Brinmaerth and Jounreene Illenstars.

According to the latest gossip, during an exchange between the two at a dinner party held at the villa of the Brokengulf family, the elderly Lady Brinmaerth sought to punctuate their rather vicious verbal fencing by dumping her bowl of mushroom-and-herb soup over the head of the Lady Jounreene. The upended soup failed to hit its’ target though, as the matriarch of House Illenstars was discovered to be protected by an invisible dome of some kind, which the soup splashed off harmlessly. Lady Illenstars then turned the tables on her rival by causing the many amber-and-pearl beads strung about Lady Brinmarth’s neck to transform into stinging insects, which left quite a number of ugly red welts about her upper shoulders and head before being dispersed by nearby serving attendants.

The Lady Illenstars is not known to possess any real talent with the Art, and most of those who have heard the tale speculate that her magical display was powered by the new rings she has taken to wearing, an overly large and rather gaudy gold band, one on each hand. It is also rumored that she gained the devices from the several shaven-headed, dusky-skinned foreigners seen entering the Illenstars House on a number of recent occasions.

WHAT THIS MEANS: Typical sparring between rival trade houses in the city, although conducted with less subtlety than usual. The fortunes of both houses have risen rather rapidly in recent months, due to the huge upswing in trade with unified Tethyr, and members of both houses have become flush with money and power as a result. It is this newfound hubris and a desire to “one-up” their trade rivals that has led to this feud.

Both offenders will most likely receive a visit from the matrons of several noble houses in short order, recommending that they tone their sparring down (and keep it away from the eyes of the common citizenry) if they ever hope to advance in the upper circles of Waterdhavian society.

## Flamerule

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Flamerule 1:Today marks Founder’s Day, the holiday that commemorates the Free City of Waterdeep’s founding. The Field of Triumph is host to a number of performances retelling the history of the city as well as various martial exhibitions, and many festhalls are sponsoring costume contests.

Flamerule 5: A party of Kormallis nobles and clergymen of the church of Tyr left the city early this morning, centered around a city dignitary bearing a flag emblazoned with the crest of the city of Waterdeep. The mixed party is believed to be heading south to Tethyr, with an official pardon and repeal-of-exile for Harkas Kormallis, cleared last month in the murder of the Baroness Chelthorea Crownsilver.

Although few believe once falsely-disgraced heir of House Kormallis redeemed enough in the eyes of the citizenry to take his ailing father’s place as patriarch, the church of the Lord of Justice is widely rumored to be accompanying the southward-bound delegation to reinstate the paladin as Knight-Champion of Tyr. The mission is travelling with some urgency, as Lord Helm Kormallis is said to be gravely ill and wishes to be reunited with his son before travelling on to Kelemvor’s Realm.

Flamerule 11: Trade caravans, many of them Mirbaran in origin, have been encountering difficulty in reaching villages and trading posts along the River Mirar and the road to Luskan. Orcish war bands have been raiding the northern trade routes with increasing regularity, stealing goods and supplies before slipping back to thier strongholds in the mountainous northern Ice Lakes region. Although these raiding parties have proved exceedingly clever in avoiding Mirabaran patrols and heavily-armed “false caravans,” there was a pitched battle outside of the Mirarside village of Haen’s Roost in the last tenday, in which at least two dozen Mirabaran armsmen and four battlemages were killed or wounded in a well-placed orcish ambush. The foul creatures were said to be aided by ogres and at least one spellcaster. It is beleived that these incursions are being directed from the lair of the Ice Bear, the fell creature that has controlled much of the nearby territory since the war with Luskan two years ago. Mirabaran authorities are said to be increasing the size and frequency of their patrols, as well as putting out bounties on orc heads. Anyone interested in such employment is directed to the offices of the new Mirabaran ambassador Shalaea Zendross, on the Street of Silks in Castle Ward (third green door south of Sevenlamps Cut, emblazoned with the Arms of Mirabar and flanked by two mailed doorwards).

Flamerule 13: A somber Umberlant ceremony turned to chaos and armed battle today in Dock Ward, scattering onlookers and requiring the presence of the Watch to quell the fighting. During the ceremony of the First Tide, in which a caged animal is brought to the ocean’s edge to await the Bitch Queen’s whim, the procession was set upon by a number of enraged Uthgardt clansmen, who had apparently spent the day drinking away the profits of a round of successful fur trading. After being subdued by the Watch the Uthgardt, members of the Griffon tribe, told authorities that they were approached by a “silver-haired, half-elven woman” who told them of the priests’ imprisonment and intended sacrifice of a griffon, their sacred totem beast. While the animal in the cage was quite clearly seen to be an ordinary mountain cat, several onlookers told the investigators that they too saw a griffon in the cage in the moments leading up to the attack. The leader of the Umberlants, the Most Dread High Trident Meiritid Archneie, accused “enemies of the Glorious Queen of All Waters” as being behind the attack, especially the Temple of Tymora, whose followers have engaged in a series of verbal disputes and scuffles with the Bitch Queen’s faithful in the months since the inception of a new Umberlant temple. Watch authorities were not so convinced of the Dread Trident’s claims, which only served to further infuriate the priest.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED: The whole incident was indeed planned by faithful of Tymora, in this case the “Lady’s Luck” Jorynn Halstaff and his compatriot Corinna Dezlentyr. After riling up the drunken barbarians, a simple illusion cloaking the mountain cat was all that was required to set them upon the Umberlants. The action was not sanctioned by the Tymorite heirarchy, who, although they oppose the Umberlant temple on moral grounds, have previously warned Jorynn about publicly embarrassing and assaulting Archneie and his followers. The Dread High Trident is not known for his patience, and it may not be long before he issues a reprisal against the church of the Lady.

Flamerule 22: Orlar Thammas, former Speaker (public contact) for the Watchful Order, has recently reappeared in the city after vanishing quite suddenly last Ches. Appearing at the Castle during Founder’s Day festivities, he told a gathered crowd of onlookers of “divinely-granted inspiration” and a quest for magical learning and enlightenment in the mysterious lands of the Unapproachable East. While his disappearance from the city provided no end of gossip among the high society of Waterdeep, so, too, has his return, which is believed to be linked to the construction of a rather large walled compound at the eastern edge of the fast-growing Southersprawls, on a plot of land formerly belonging to the Lady Hlanta Melshimber. Occupied by a number of dusky-skinned foreigners -- believed to be natives of the eastern Sea of Fallen Stars, or perhaps even from far-off Thay itself -- this new edifice has recieved quite a bit of attention from certain groups in the city, including several guilds and temples, and even the Lords themselves, who are known to have sent a delegation to the gates of the enclave. The desires and intentions of those within have not been made known to the general public, at least thus far, but most rumors lean towards the rising of a new temple or merchant consortium, or perhaps even a school of magical or philosophical learning.

WHAT THIS MEANS: As with many other cities across the Heartlands of Faerun, Waterdeep has been chosen by the Zulkirs to host a Thayan enclave. Once completed, the Thayans will offer a wide array of magical trinkets and goods rarely found this far from the lands around the Alambar Sea. Although they have been operating in the city for a number of tendays now (the magical powers displayed in dramatic fashion by the Lady Jounreene Illenstars last month were the result of purchases made from the crimson robed merchants), their requests for an enclave within the city itself was firmly denied by the assembled Lords, with strong backing from the guild mages of the Watchful Order. Thus, the idea of building a base outside of, but not too far from, Waterdeep was born.

Entering into an agreement with the Lady Hlanta Melshimber (who sought a new ally strong in magical power now that her tenuous alliance with the mage Maaril seems to be faltering), land was purchased and construction began. Although the Watchful Order continues to loudly protest the Thayans presence, the Lords seem content to take a “wait-and-see” type of approach.

And as for Thammas, he had always been enamored of the exotic Thayan magic and society. Seduced by the charms of a Thayan operative, he travelled to the Priador where he was magically interrogated and probed by the Zulkirs for information about the Order and the city’s mages. Returned with the magic merchants, he will likely serve in much the same capacity as his former position, as the front man and negoitator for those wishing to do business with the enclave but not with untrustworthy foreigners or suspiciously-robed mages.

Flamerule 25: The Boundless Winds, a Waterdhavian caravel bound for the southern port of Baldur’s Gate, was reported sunk this morning by a north-sailing merchantman out of Amn. The captain of the Amnian ship, Mehmen “Blackteeth,” reported that the Winds was swamped by a freak wave, which arose suddenly out of relatively calm seas. “The Displeasure of the Bitch Queen,” Mehmen called it, noting that that he immediately made a sacrifice of gold and good wine to the goddess of the seas after the ship went under, and planned to do the same before leaving the harbor again.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED: Umberlee’s vengeance is swift and unforgiving. Among the passengers aboard the Boundless Winds were a number of Tymorite priests bound for the Gate, including the “Favored Hand of the Lady” Faerlthann, a senior priest and mentor to one Jorynn Halstaff. Although he was aware of possible retribution following the disruption of the First Tide ceremony, the aged priest chose to put his fate in the hands of the goddess of Luck and Chance. Unfortunately for him, Umberlee had other ideas.

Calendar Day - Midsummer: Tonight marks Midsummer’s Night, and nobles villas and festhalls across the city are set to throw huge parties in honor of the holiday. The various priesthoods are said to have couples lining up to have marriage cerimonies performed, and the usual sundown restrictions on the City of the Dead are being relaxed to allow couples access to the grounds.

The Melshimber Ball is without a doubt the most extravagant of the various noble parties, as it is held in conjunction with the Bard’s College of New Olamn. The centerpiece of the gala is a dazzling exhibit of dwarven “speaking stones,” recovered recently by a band of hired adventurers from the ruined halls of Ghaundantaun, an outlying settlement of Lost Delzoun. Rock crystals and overlarge geodes inscribed with vibrant Dethek runes, these stones were enchanted long ago to capture sound and spoken words, for later release with the simple touch of a living being. The collection is a veritable trove, not just of dwarven music and prayer hymns, but of long-dead rulers, religious scholars, bards, and sages speaking on everything from the whereabouts of buried treasure to philosophical musings on the purposes of life and family and wars. Security around the exhibit, from discreetly placed armsmen to costumed (and wand-wielding) magelings, is said to be extensive, as is the list of nobles, merchant barons, loremasters and celebrities waiting to be granted entrance.

Also on this night, the temple of Milil is holding a Grand Revel to celebrate the Lord of All Songs. The faithful are invited to gather for a night of feasting, dancing, and singing, and many minstrels and harpists from New Olamn are said to be performing.

## Eleasias

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Eleasias 1:The rumors of sickness and death swirling around the Harbor in recent days were confirmed yesterday, when the mermaid shaman Thur Aquarvol made an unprecedented visit to the quarters of Dread High Trident Meiritid Archneie, seeking succor from a mysterious wasting disease. However, the Watch and city officials were quick to calm the fears of Dock Ward residents, stating that there is no discernable plague outbreak among the human residents of the city and that the symptoms of nausea, dizziness, and internal bleeding is thus far limited to the surviving merfolk and sea elf population of the Harbor floor. Although they would not offer explanation for the disease or promise that it would not spread to the humans of the city, with most simply shrugging and calling it “the will and whim of Talona.” Whatever the origin of the sickness, most assume it to be severe indeed, to send the High Shaman and Guardian of Umberlee’s Cache begging to her inter-faith rival, the Dread High Trident.

WHAT THIS MEANS: This initial wave of sickness and ill health among the harbor folk is only the beginning, as the mermen have made some powerful enemies in their increased patrolling of the harbor waters. Due to the events of the Threat From the Sea and the recent rise in raiding Northman blacksails, shipping along the Sword Coast is in disarray, with many ships of Waterdhavian and Baldurian origin sunk or heavily damaged. Also, many Amnian merchantmen have been commandeered and pressed into service in the war against the armies of the Horned Banner or set upon by emboldoned Nelanther pirates. Into this void has stepped the southern mercantile cabal known as the Rundeen, who are currently attempting to expand their reach into the lucrative City of Splendors.

However, the cover of darkness and human law enforcement paid to “look the other way” has proven little help against the merfolk of the harbor. The vigilant and alert denizens of the harbor bottom have already foiled several Rundeen transactions, alerting the Lords and Dock Ward Civilar Tychander to clandestine moonlight transactions of slaves, stolen goods, and other illegal contraband. Thus, the Rundeen have determined to do away with the “prying eyes below,” by infusing the waters of the Harbor with a nigh-undetectable mix of magical and mundane poisons designed to cripple and ultimately kill the merfolk.

To this end, the Rundeen are aided by the deific efforts of Meiritid Archneie and the resident Church of Umberlee. Approached by the Rundeen’s contact in the city, Alreena Grey-Eyed, the Dread High Trident readily pledged his aid. Not only is Archneie guaranteed a new circle of powerful southern allies, but this course of action also acts to rid him of his closest rival, the mer shaman Thur Aquarvol. The patriarchs of the Ulbrinter clan, the main backer and source of Archneie’s political support, have also signed off on this course of action, lured in by promises of expanded southern business and openings into Rundeen-controlled trade markets.

Eleasias 5:According to several well-informed “up-Ward” sources, the newest fashion symbol among the nobles and wealthy merchants of the city are spell-carved chunks of “demonstone” from fallen Hellgate Keep. Alternately pock-scarred and burned glassy-smooth by incredible temperatures, these hunks of stone allegedly claimed from the tumbled walls of the legendary bastion of evil have been popping up in noble gardens and merchant antechambers in recent months, with the most notable coup going to the Ilzimmer family, whose seaward Eagret Tower now boasts three new stone gargoyles carved from a massive block of “demonstone” by the noted mage-sculptor Eanthalas of Memnon. Waterdhavians wishing to posess such an item for themselves are directed to the following sources; the Bold Blades of the Griffon band, the merchant-adventurer Elaith Craulnober, and the mages Randulaith of Mirabar and Torst Halthast, all of whom have demonstrated enough ability or contacts to deliver such goods.

But potential buyers are warned to beware; not only are “demonstones” expensive, there is no real proof to their authenticity. The noble Maskar Wands, a mage of no small water himself, has already been heard to dismiss the purchase of such a hunk of rock by a young member of his own clan as “a waste of perfectly good money; for half the price I could deliver several score such stones from the depths of the quarries of Daggerford, an ye’d be none the wiser.”

Eleasias 10:The temple of Mystra is abuzz over news that the necromancer (and reputed Cyricist) Stavros of the Skulls has returned in wounded triumph from the depths of the legendary Dungeon of the Crypt. During his treatment for various wounds — including rumors of mummy rot infliction — Stavros described encountering a multitude of undead creatures, including their master, a “bloated, cruel-eyed monstrosity possessed of wicked iron fingernails and rotted skin.” According to Stavros the creature claimed to be none other than the dead god Myrkul, the Lord of Bones. While obviously deranged, the creature was indeed powerful, and forced the necromancer to flee without the treasure he came seeking: the Siblant Spellwheel of Arrakhos, a Netherese arcanist rumored to be buried in the Crypt. However, Stavros claimed to have recovered a number of other minor magical items and rare tomes, and is said to be preparing for another delve into the Crypt in the near future.

Eleasias 17:Today marks Huldark, one of the dozen High Festivals of the Waukeenar faith. A grand celebration was held in the hall of the Cynosure, decorated for the occasion like some Elysian paradise, with fruit-bearing trees sparkling with glim-magics and swaying gently to the musical accompaniment, and magically-enlarged grapes and other vines growing up the sides of the Great Hall. Presided over by the High Priest of Waukeen, Laskar Ilithair, the banquet was attended by a number of the city’s merchant barons and wealthy traders, especially those whose wealth was gained in the trade of foodstuffs and farm goods.

Eleasias 19:The temple of Tyr is reporting today that Helm Kormallis, patriarch of the troubled Kormallis noble clan, has passed away. Lord Kormallis was known to be struggling with illness for a long time now, made worse by a recent shapeshifter plot against his family. Harkas Kormallis, Helm’s eldest living son and Knight-Champion of Tyr, was returned from his Tethyrian exile in time to meet with his father before the elder Kormallis passed on to Kelemvor’s Judgement. The Lords have been notified of the death, and have already ratified Lord Helm’s wishes in passing control of the family fortunes to his niece, the lady Delune Lauthryn.

It is commonly held that Delune, the daughter of Helm’s sister Metheldra, was named over Harkas due to the fact that the Knight-Champion is still stained from the false accusations and the now-repealed exile charges brought against him by the doppleganger masquerading as his brother, Zandoun. Most observers also believe that matron Metheldra will quickly move to bring her husband’s household from Elturel in time for the official Lord’s Court ceremonies honoring her daughter.

Eleasias 22:A quintet of turbaned, dusky-skinned men have visited taverns and sage domiciles across the city in recent days. Rumored to hail from southern Calimshan or the lands of the Tashalar, the men are said to be seeking the whereabouts of a magical tome of some sort, or a hook-handed man known to possess or looking to sell such an item. The southerners are known to be lodging at the Gray Serpent in Trades Ward, and are believed to be offering a reward for anyone with the information they seek.

WHAT THIS MEANS: The five men are indeed natives of Calimshan — Calimport, in fact. Four of them are members of the amlakkar (the city watch), and their leader is Anzhir el Zhakam, a high-ranking clerist of Denier. They are in the city searching for an item known as the Tenfold Tome of Jhathaedra, a church relic recently stolen from the Gallery Majesta in Calimport. While merely a perfect forgery of the true item (a variant book of infinite spells, still safely ensconced in the vaults of the Denierrath temple), the five have been tasked with bringing those who dared to steal it to justice. To this end, they used the tracking magics inherent in the forgery to trace one of the thieves, the mage Liljestryn of Scornubel, but his compatriot, the hook-handed thief known only as el Hydar Nero (“The Black Lion”), escaped and fled north. The Black Lion’s path was traced as far as Waterdeep but, once in the City of Splendors, further magical tracking became mysteriously unreliable.

The Calimshanni will welcome any information on the whereabouts of the Tome or the Black Lion, but will balk at revealing too much about the specifics of their mission. Anyone in the company of the thief or in possession of the Tome will be assumed to be an accomplice to the theft, and will be treated accordingly.

Eleasias 23:Two bodies found in a small court off of Buckle Alley early this morning have been identified as acolytes of the Tower of Luck, the temple of Tymora Luckbringer. Thier deaths are rumored to involve Murgos Zel, Vengeful Hand of Umberlee and bodyguard of one Meiritid Archneie, the resident high priest of the Bitch Queen. The two acolytes, Delphar Lackhand and Khel Roaringhorn, were seen last evening in the nearby Tapping Tappan tavern challenging Zel to an unsanctioned duel, presumably over the death at sea of senior Tymorite Faerlthann last month. Indeed, the Lords earlier turned down a request for a magister-sanctioned duel between Zel and the “Lady’s Luck” Jorynn Halstaff, over similar grievances. Though the Lords are said to be doing everything in their power to calm the volatile feud developing between the two priesthoods, it shows no sign of ending soon.

Eleasias 25:Zzundar Thul, Master of the Guild of Watermen, made an appearance at Lord’s Court today after returning from a rather lengthy visit to the northern city of Luskan. The guildmaster shocked many of those in attendance by claiming to have been introduced to and invited to dine with none other than the Thelark, the notorious pirate captain and onetime scourge of the Sword Coast. The Thelark was captured by Waterdhavian marines in Ches of last year and then spirited from the city by the former Luskanite ambassador Neruudan, a move that severely set back relations between the two cities. According to Master Thul, the Thelark has gained the ear of at least two of the High Captains of Luskan, and is now acting to rebuild the City of Sails as a naval power after the majority of her warships were treacherously seized by the northmen of Ruathym, where they were sent for safekeeping during the war against the forces of the Ice Bear.

Thul also furthered rumors of a new alliance developing between Luskan and Mirabar, the City of Gems. While on icy terms for much of their history, the two cities are now said to be looking to ensure the dominance of their respective domains as they face the waxing economic and political might of the nation of Luruar to the east. One Luskan delegation to the City of Gems is rumored to have all but guaranteed an end to the skirmishing and regular raids made against Mirabar by the nearby humanoids of the Ice Bear’s realm in return for a pact of alliance (interestingly, Guildmaster Thul reported seeing a number of hobgoblins and mountain orogs in the streets of Luskan, forces normally associated with the Ice Bear and his domain in the Ice Lakes to the north). What impact such an alliance would have on the already fractitious and divided Lords Alliance is unknown, but not held to be positive.

WHAT THIS MEANS: As with many of the rumors and tavern tales floating through the City of Splendors, there is some truth to these Luskan whispers — but not too much. It is true that members of the Ice Bear’s humanoid legions walk the streets of the City of Sails, armed and armored, as they have done since the negotiations that ended the siege of the city in Eleasias of 1369DR. It is also true that the High Captains (acting under orders from their masters, the Ice Bear and the Archmage Arcane Queltar Thaeloon — who some speculate may be one and the same) have sent overtures to the ruler of Mirabar, but their goal of conquering the City of Gems militarily still stands. Indeed, common belief in the streets of Mirabar is that the Thelark may try to “jump-start” his rebuilding of Luskan’s navy by seizing the Mirabaran fleet anchored on the north side of Luskan’s harbor. Although a common enough Luskanite threat, designed to extract periodic additional harbor fees from the City of Gems, the commander of the Mirabaran enclave in Luskan seems to be taking it very seriously, as the number of armed soldiers visible atop the enclave walls and on the bridges of the docked ships has increased in recent weeks.

Eleasias 28:Ceremonies were held in Dock Ward today, to celebrate the opening of the newly-completed Shrine of the Sea and the Stars, a joint temple dedicated to the gods Selune and Valkur the Mighty. Already commonly referred to as the “Mariner’s Temple,” the dockside edifice marks the first readily-accessible place of worship in the city for the sea-god Valkur, and also brings the Word of the Moonmaiden closer to the docks and their large transient population. The groundwork for the temple was laid in Flamerule of 1369DR, when the city was graced with a visit from the Schooner of the Seas, the foremost of Valkur’s holy temples.

The opening blessings and pronouncements were attended by a number of influential Waterdhavian citizens, including High Priestess of Selune Naneatha Suaril (who bore the Wand of the Four Moons, a holy relic of the temple) and the Open Lord Piergeiron, who made offerings to both faiths and pledged them to continue to work for the good of the city. Noticeably absent from the proceedings was the Dread High Trident Meiritid Archneie, whose faith is not particularly well-disposed towards the “upstart” god Valkur.

Suaril then turned her duties over to the two high priests of the temple, Blessed Moonlight Shanae Indaglol and High Captain Ammarkhan, who completed the ceremony by unsealing the front gates of the shrine, opening it to any who wish to avail themselves of the gods’ attentions.

GAME NOTES: The Shrine of the Sea and the Stars is located just east of the Sailor’s Own tavern in Dock Ward, atop the site of two former warehouses that burnt down during the Battle of Waterdeep Harbor. The building is fronted by a sweeping, open colonnade of bronze-banded ironwood columns, each festooned with vibrantly-colored pennants, facing out across Dock Street towards Hammerstars Wharf. The main building itself consists of a domed sanctum of Selune and an attached, open courtyard-like rectangle which holds an altar dedicated to Valkur — an enormous, everbright-treated shield levitating above a circular reflecting pool of seawater. The walls of the court are lined with numerous niches, into which faithful of the Captain of the Waves often leave small donations or offerings. The entire edifice is softly lit by glowing globes and moonglow spells (especially the Dome of the Moonlady, the interior of which is alight with a magical replica of the nighttime sky).

The temple is staffed by two clergy of Selune (Anathaer and Ilisarn, both 2nd level Adepts) and two clergy of Valkur (Madusk and Thentar, both 2nd level Adepts), as well as Blessed Moonlight Shanae Indaglol (CG,HF,P5) and High Captain Ammarkhan (CG,HM,P7). In addition, six doorwards (2nd level Warriors) and ten “helpers of the faith” (1st level Commoners) call the temple home, and live in chambers under the temple proper.

## Eleint

Eleint 3: Fire in Dock Ward! Dry-docks belonging to the Order of Master Shipwrights were heavily damaged today as three ships under construction went up in flames. The fire was kept from spreading due to the Art of the sorceress Mhair Szeltune, summoned by the horns of nearby watch officers. The Lady Mage summoned up a huge funnel of water from the Harbor and channeled it towards land, dousing what has already been labeled as a fire of “suspicious origins.” The Watch and the Shipwrights Guild are investigating the matter, as is the Lord Arlos Dezlentyr, who had the ships comissioned as part of an expansion of his merchant fleet.

Eleint 7: Spryndalstar. Today is the Spryndalstar, one of the Twelve High Festivals of the Waukeenar faith. As Spryndalstar serves to recognize how magic and the ideas of those who work with it have enriched all Faerun, the Great Hall of the Cynosure is host to a Waukeenar-sponsored contest-of-Art, with a number of young magelings and aspiring freestaves demonstrating their talents. The mage Tessalar Hulicorm and his evergalloping zufferooma are widely proclaimed winner of the contest, while the surprise appearance of the mage Kappiyan Flurmaster, not seen within the city walls since early 1366DR, causes quite a stir among the assembled crowd. Flurmaster and Overgold Laskar Ilithair retire to secluded quarters soon thereafter, while Hulicorm publicly displays his prize of a number of scrolls and magely paraphernalia donated by the priesthood of the goddess of All Trade.

Eleint 13: The Halls of Luck, the Waterdhavian temple of the goddess Tymora, announced today that a delegation of temple faithful would be setting out for the southern lands of Amn on the first day of Marpenoth. According to Tlabbras Crael, the Voice of the Halls, the purpose of the mission is to re-found and re-build holy sites damaged by the depredations of the humanoids of the Empire of the Horned Banner. The effort is being led by the Lady’s Luck Jorynn Halstaff and the Wandering Fortune Elegul Another. Many in the city are already whispering that Jorynn’s appointment to the mission is just a ruse to get him out of the city in an attempt to defuse the simmering feud between the churches of Tymora and Umberlee. The Tymorites are rumored to be under great pressure from the Lords to bring Jorynn and his hotheaded compatriots to heel and curb the inter-faith violence, which is already believed to have claimed at least five lives in the last few months, including the senior Tymorite priest Faerlthann and the acolyte Khel Roaringhorn, of the Roaringhorn noble family.

Eleint 16: Chaos erupted in crowded Virgin’s Court today, as a spellbattle between two robed mages caused a panic among those citizens nearby and resulted in fire damages to four buildings around the Court. The corpse of the loser of the duel was later positively identified as a rogue clone of the wizard Manshoon, the Mad Mage of the Black Network. The indentity of the second duelist is still unknown, although rumors flying about the city point variously to the Lord Blackstaff, the Dragonmage Maaril, the reclusive Mage of Stars, another Manshoon clone, or even an avatar of the god Azuth.

Although sightings of the mages’ clones have died down in recent months, with most believed to have been slain in battle with each other or rival mages, one mageling claiming to be Mad Manshoon himself showed up in the taproom of the Yawning Portal recently, threatening customers - to which the innkeeper Durnan (rather dryly) replied, “Aye, an’ I’m the Grand Punjabati of the Great-n-Mighty Golden Empire of the South! Off with ye!,” Before picking the boastful boor up bodily and heaving him down the shaft into the depths of the Undermountain.

Eleint 17: There is a growing rumor in Dock Ward of some hideous, ooze-like creature that takes human form and waylays unsuspecting passerby to perform ritual killings, before escaping back into the city sewers.

WHAT THIS MEANS: The rumors are true. A rogue ghaunadaun (a type of shapeshifter holding fealty to the dark god Ghaunadaur) is stalking the back alleys of Dock Ward. Crazed and mad with blood-lust, this creature will continue to seek out and slay any citizens it encounters, fulfilling its own warped devotions to the Elder Eye. The Watch and any adventurers seeking to put an end to the shapeshifter’s rampage will find they have unlikely (and largely unseen) allies in the Cult of Ghaunadaur. The other ghaunadauns are only too willing to dispose of this rogue member who threatens to expose their covert spying and infiltration activities in Waterdeep.

Eleint 23: Word out of the Castle is that a conclave of some of the city’s most powerful mages — including Mage Civilar Thyriellentha Snome, the Lady Laeral Arunsun, Belshareen Azurean, and Randulaith of Mirabar — acting in concert with the Lords have discovered some type of poisoning agent active in the waters of the Harbor, targeting the merfolk of the city. The origin of this mysterious poison is not known, although it is believed powerful indeed, to resist the dispelling magicks that have been brought against it thus far. The Lords are known to be asking the resident priesthoods of Lathander, Tymora, Selune, and Umberlee for deific help in succoring the undersea folk of the Harbor.

WHAT THIS MEANS: The activities of the Rundeen and the church of Umberlee have been uncovered. The Dread High Trident Meiritid Archneie will most likely back out of his end of the deal and readily pledge the aid of the Bitch Queen’s clergy towards "ridding the Lady’s Waters of such foul and unseemly poisons." Umberlee’s divine power has done its work well and the mermaid shaman Thur Aquarvol — now "convalescing" in Archneie’s quarters at the Ulbrinter villa — has been so weakened that, even if she were to survive, she would no longer pose a threat to the Dread High Trident’s position as head of the Waterdhavian church of the Queen of the Seas.

The other person to come out of this whole situation ahead is the mage Randulaith of Mirabar. Randulaith, an operative of the Xanathar thieves guild, has long been enamored of the merfolk of the Harbor, especially his "Ladies of the Deep," and when word of the Harbor sickness made its way through the city last month he readily pledged his aid. The contacts made, and the goodwill of the Lords towards the mage, will serve the Xanathar well in his quest towards placing Randulaith among the Masked Lords of the city.

Eleint 25: The dead bodies of three Lower Ward shopkeeps and Ulyn Thomd, a minor scion of the Stormweather clan, were found early this morning, each murdered under similarly grisly circumstances. The three merchants — who are not believed to have known each other or have been affiliated in any way — were all discovered lying face down on the floor of their shops, a single dagger in their back and a piece of parchment pinned to their clothes with a harp-and-moon clasp, an insignia similar to that used by the secretive organization known as the Harpers. The body of the noble Thomd was discovered in a corner of Talnu Ropeworks, where he had gone the day before to buy supplies. The method of his slaying — a blast of some sort of magical energy, from a wand or spell — has lead the watch to believe that he walked in on one of the murders as it was happening, and was dispatched by the surprised killer. The parchment pieces pinned to each of the three shopkeeps are identical, bearing only the words "Seek me where the night’s stars meet the Place where the Grey Ghost Sleeps." The watch is currently investigating.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED: Rundeen activities in the City of Splendors may have been disrupted, but their thirst for vengeance against Those Who Harp remains unquenched. Before leaving to pursue a new conspiracy — allying with Lord Bly Ruldegost and the Knights of the Shield in a bid to organize proxies and mount a swift naval invasion of the unsteady island realm of Mintarn, making it a fortified northernmost port-of-call for both organizations — the Rundeen’s operative, Bilraern "Madwands," slew the three merchants and the unfortunate Thomd, believing them to be either Harpers or Harper-friends. The note pinned to the bodies is a final doom arranged by Madwands — easily recognized by any Harper operative, it is designed to lead them to Heroes’ Garden and the grave of Storntar Rhen, a long-ago ranger of the North and Harper ally. Madwands has enspelled Rhen’s weathered headstone to explode in a hail of deadly granite shrapnel and magical energy when anyone bearing a Harper pin steps near.

Eleint 28: A body found in an alley of the sprawling slums south of the city has been positively identified as a member of the reclusive walled compound recently risen outside of the city walls. Rumored to be from the far lands of Wizardly Thay, the inhabitants of the enclave are rarely seen in the city and are commonly believed to travel about through magical means. The corpse, marked with enough wounds to suggest foul play to even the most casual observer, was quickly claimed by a number of robed, shaven-headed men, and carried through the gates of the imposing, red-walled compound, leaving the Watch with little to work with in regards to an investigation of the matter.

WHAT THIS MEANS: The corpse, one Thazram of Tyraturos, an apprentice of Draughaldryn "Old Blast-and-Bluff" Thalt, was set upon as he left the walls of the enclave on a mission for his master. The assailant may have been sent from any number of Waterdhavian power factions unhappy with the Thayan presence in the City of Splendors, from rogue elements of the Watchful Order, to the thieves of the Xanathar’s Guild, to independant operators like Elaith Craulnober or the Dragonmage Maaril. While it is unlikely to have any real effect on the enclave’s long-term goals, the assassination does serve to punctuate the belief, widely held among Waterdhavians aware of such matters, that the easterners and their meddling ways are not welcome in the city of Waterdeep.

Calendar Day - Highharvestide: Highharvestide festivities were subdued again this year, with the memory of the chaos of Halaster’s Harvestide two years ago still fresh in most citizens’ minds. Nonetheless, many citizens of Tethyrian origin gathered in the Great Hall of the Cynosure to celebrate the second anniversary of the Storm Seige of Myratma and the end of the long Tethyrian civil war, and the annual Lords Court/Harvestide Ball was held at the Castle.

Highharvestide: Silver Lea, the barbarian adventuress (and rumored Ruathym princess), caused quite a commotion upon her arrival at the Revel Arcane being held in the Tower of the Watchful Order. Flanked by two hulking half-ogre hire-hands, Lea — famed in the wilderlands of the North but little seen in its’ crowded urban centers — unveiled a carry-chest filled with a dozen globes of clear crystal as large across as a man’s chest. Bidding on the orbs began immediately among the mages present, and quickly devolved into furious shouting and shoving as the last of the crystal globes were snapped up. When asked where she had gained the unusual treasures, the silver-haired swordswoman cryptically replied “far to the north, in a place where wizards such as yourself would do well not to tread.” Lea departed the Revel shortly thereafter, her bondservants and an exquisite winter wolf cloak bearing minor enchantments — traded to her on the spot by the elven mage Yululee Lantannar for one of the globes — in tow.

Highharvestide: Hykros Allumen, the High Priest of Tyr, appeared before Lords Court to publically reaffirm and re-appoint the noble Harkas Kormallis to the office of Knight-Champion of Tyr. While widely expected following the dismissal of charges and repeal-of-exile against the paladin, Allumen’s move is not without controversy. Indeed, it is rumored that there is deep division in the Tyrran church itself, with some feeling that Harkas is too stained by the false charges brought against him to effectively carry out his duties.

Those who have been vocal in their opposition to Harkas include the paladin Theavos Aumbaeren. Aumbaeren, a native of Silverymoon and "rising light" in the church heirarchy, is the leader of a temple sect known as the Belarrans, an order of clerics who venerate Belaros, the Mortal Hammer of Tyr, a supposed “holy smith” who dwelt around the Lake of Steam some four centuries ago. The Belarrans, accomplished swordsmiths whose creed is that justice can only be found at the end of a blade, are a little-known sect of the Lawgiver, and their somewhat fanatical ethos is often at odds with the main body of the Tyrran church.

Highharvestide: The Bard’s College of New Olamn held its’ first-ever quarterstaffing contests, which were judged a success by everyone who attended. Divided into balkstaff, shortstaff, and tipstaff categories, the event drew over fourty participants, including such famed martialists as Blynn o' the Burgundy and Caeledryn of Alaron. The festivities also featured jugglers, acrobats, and musicians of all sorts, as well as performances by the Bold Bellowing Blades, an Olamnite fellowship of knife-throwers, sword-swallowers, and experts in performance sword-play.

## Marpenoth Edition

1371DR, Year of the Unstrung Harp

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| MARPENOTH 1 |

The first day of Marpenoth marks Marthoon, one of the Twelve High Festivals of the church of Waukeen. As Marthoon recognizes the vigilance and work of soldiers and guards in defending the wealth and the security of those who generate it, such folks are feasted and given gifts of coinage and comestibles by the faithful of the Goddess of Gold. Waukeenar adepts made visits to the guardhouses and watchposts around the city, as well as to the private domiciles of a number of retired doorwards and noble retainers, dispensing their gifts with abandon. Members of the noble clans whose livelihoods derive from the men and women of "the Watching Blade" (the Hawkwinters, Tespers, Jardeths, and Silmerhelves, among others), were feted at a grand revel sponsored by the Waukeenar, held at the Great Hall of the Cynosure.

It was noted by many that Anathaen "Greatshield," ranking priest of Helm, and his followers were the guests of honor at the Cynosure feast, and that the servant of the Great Guardian was personally gifted with a large donation by Overgold Ilithair himself. That the normally spartan and devout Helmite would accept such a rich offer has set tongues to wagging across the city about the seriousness of his piety, and of the alleged excesses of Helmite clergy in the New Lands of Maztica. Such rumors may well prove to be detrimental to Anathaen's quest to establish a place of worship for the Vigilant One in the city, as an offshoot of the temple-complex located in the nearby settlement of Goldenfields.

| MARPENOTH 4 |

The Swords of the Lucky Lady, a company of adventurers sponsored by Lord Eremos Hawkwinter, returned to the city in triumph today, leading a dozen pack animals carrying numerous antiquities believed to date back to the legendary sorcerers' realm of Netheril. After being examined by several of the city's foremost sages, the items, recovered from orc-infested ruins in the Fallen Lands, were declared to be of exquisite craftsmanship and quasi-magical in nature, chief among them a glimmering chunk of some amber-like mineral, roughly the size of a man's head and carved into the shape of a roaring flame. The patriarch of House Hawkwinter has announced a grand gala tomorrow eve in honor of the successful delve, one that many of the city's nobles are believed to be planning to attend.

WHAT THIS MEANS: While many of the valuables are indeed of Netherese make, a few boast other origins. The amber "flame," in particular, is actually a necromantic item of great age and power - while it does have a number of healing side effects (when held and the command word uttered, a great circle of flame blazes forth, engulfing the holder and curing them of any minor injuries, muscle fatigues, or minor diseases suffered), its' main purpose is actually to aid in the creation of the rare undead commonly known as "blazing bones."

That much will soon become evident to one Meleghost Starseer, the High Mystery of Mystra, when he attends the Hawkwinter feast tomorrow night. An accomplished master of the Dark Art and sage of necromantic lore, he will recognize the item for what it really is, and will immediately begin plotting a way to make it his own, before its' true nature and powers are discerned.

| MARPENOTH 9 |

News from the Spires of the Morning today reports that Lord Eremos Hawkwinter has donated a number of his newly-acquired Netherese treasures to the temple of Lathander, including the flame-shaped amber stone that many have begun calling the "Healing Flame of Wonders," after its' recently discovered restorative powers. The Hawkwinters have long been patrons of the church of the Morninglord, and their largesse towards the temple is well known. The items, which also include a number of heavily-engraved roundshields and a hooded robe-type garment composed entirely of fine motes of shimmering energy, will be displayed in the temple's Hall of Reflections before being moved to the vaults for safekeeping.

WHAT THIS MEANS: Meleghost approached Lord Eremos at the Hawkwinter ball four nights ago, but his offer to buy the mysterious amber flame were rebuffed. The High Mystery had plans to simply infiltrate the Hawkwinter villa and take the item with the aid of his magicks but, now that the "Healing Flame" rests in the temple of Lathander, he has been forced to rethink his plans - after all, it would not do for the high priest of Mystra in Waterdeep to be caught thieving from a fellow temple!

To this end, the priest has contacted an old acquaintance of his, the reclusive mage Maaril. In exchange for the theft and delivery of the magical artifact, the High Mystery offered the Dragonmage a magical grimoire in his possession - the Workbook of Sabbar. Sabbar, an infamous archmage of the city, had learned the means to travel the Planes when he disappeared a number of winter ago. His sanity was not what most would have called stable, but his knowledge and power were undeniable.

For his part, the Dragonmage readily agreed to the theft, due to his desire to possess the Workbook - Sabbar was in fact Maaril's master, the one who taught him spellcraft (and gave him the webwork of scars that still crisscross his back), and Maaril believes that the tome hides much of Sabbar's untaught secrets, as well as the location of his hidden magic. Meleghost has no idea why the grimoire is important to the Dragonmage, or what it contains - aside from minor incantations and garbled, illegible handwriting - but recognizes that it is of great value to his new hireling.

| MARPENOTH 13 |

There are growing concerns and whispers in North Ward over strange doings in the villa of House Nethelra, an up-and-coming clan of moneylenders and landowners. Neighbors report a feeling of great unease when passing within the shadow of the villa walls, which in recent days have become curiously mottled and pock-scarred in appearance. Family members have been close mouthed when questioned, and the clan patriarch, Thelduun Nethelra, has been absent from his offices at the Zoarstar (guildhall of the Scriveners,' Scribes,' and Clerks' union) for more than a tenday. Further adding to that are the rumors that Iridmae Nethelra, Thelduun's youngest daughter, was found wandering the Heroes Garden some nights ago, gibbering mad and pierced through with over two dozen (apparently self-inflicted) slim, needle-like tines. The truth of these matters is still unknown, although charges of foul sorcery and devil-dealings are beginning to make the rounds in Up-Ward tankard houses and festhalls.

WHAT THIS MEANS: Thelduun Nethelra was one of many who purchased so-called "demonstones" in recent months, following a fashion fad among the noble and wealthy members of the city. Hunks of warped and scarred stone alleged to have come from the ruins of fell Hellgate Keep, most such stones were mere imitations, bought from nearby quarries and subjected to magical energies to achieve their ruined look. However, the stone House Nethelra recieved was indeed brought from the tumbled Keep, brought out by the ill-fated Burnished Banner fellowship (all of whom have succumbed to mysterious illness or ill-fated accidents in the past fortnight).

Hellgate Keep was long (and rightly) regarded as one of the most foul places of evil and fiendish activity in the northern Realms, and such evil did not simply dissipate with the destruction of its' exterior fortifications. A malign intelligence and power permeates the ruins still, including the stone brought to the garden of the Nethelra villa. A twisted and scarred plinth of rock, resembling nothing so much as a single crooked talon, the Demonstone of House Nethelra now extends its evil to the rest of the villa, exerting its will on the family inside. If left unchecked, it will attempt to transform the domicile into a miniature copy of the fallen Keep, including gradually driving those inside mad and inducing them to summon devils and other planar horrors into the city.....

| MARPENOTH 15 |

Today marks God's Day, the anniversary of the end of the Time of Troubles and the ascension of the mortals Midnight and Cyric to godhood. All through the city, shops and businesses close in rembrance of those who died fighting the minions of the god Myrkul, and a military parade of Guard and Watch units wind through the city, southward along the length of the High Road, ending at the gates to the City of the Dead.

The Church of Mysteries celebrated the holiday today as the rebirth of their goddess in the form of the mortal, Midnight. The religious observances of the Mystrans were subdued as usual, although hazy, ethereal mists and sparkling motes ebbed around the House of Wonder after dark, and many passerby later recounted seeing familiar faces or eerie landscapes in the strange vapors.

| MARPENOTH 16 |

Burglary in the Spires of the Morning! Acolytes and trumpeters from the temple of Lathander spread across the city early this morning, seeking information and posting rewards for the return of several stolen items, including the "Healing Flame of Wonders," recently donated to the temple by the Hawkwinter clan. Initial investigations of the theft have turned up nothing, and magical divinations have likewise proved useless thus far. Anyone with information about the night's events are directed to seek out either one of the temple heralds, or Athosar the Old, the Prior of the Inner Chapel.

WHAT THIS MEANS: As might be expected, the theft of the Flame was arranged by Maaril, although, much like High Mystery Meleghost, the Dragonmage hired others to perform the actual theft for him. Three others, in this case - the hire-spell Azibar of the Seven Skulls, the thief known as Winestab, and Foril, an acolyte at the Spires bribed with a hefty pouch of gold coinage. While the trio were successful in removing the Flame from the temple grounds, their plans soon fell apart - and attracted the notice of others in the city - when Azibar disappeared and Winestab turned on Foril, slaying him and absconding with the Flame.

In reality, the erstwhile "fallen faithful" Foril was actually a member of the vigilante Red Sashes organization. The Sashes had been keeping close watch on the Dragonmage since he uncovered and slew several of their number in Mirtul and Kythorn of last year, and Foril agreed to play the part of a co-conspirator in order to expose Maaril and flush out his other allies. Unfortunately, the thief Winestab had his own agenda as well and, after Azibar vanished, he turned on the priest, slaying him and taking the Flame for his own. The body of the Lathanderite was discovered soon after the theft, in a Castle Ward midden, by agents of the Beggar Queen Shabra. Shabra reported the gruesome discovery to the Sashes, who will now devote their energies to tracking down Winestab and his ill-gotten treasure.

As for the missing mage Azibar, he was summoned suddenly, through magical means, by his true employer - the Lady Hlanta of House Melshimber. The onetime alliance between the Dragonmage and the noble matron dissolved some months ago after Hlanta vomited forth a number of snakes and other ophidians in the midst of a crowded Lords Ball (something she still does on occasion), a condition she blames on the untrustworthy mage (in reality, her embarrassment and subsequent wrath was arranged by the Red Sashes, who paid a visiting shaman of the Griffon Uthgardt clan to place a magical curse upon her). Hlanta only wants to possess the Flame to deny it to Maaril, and mistakenly believed Azibar to be carrying it when she had him teleported to the Melshimber villa. Upon discovering her error she will order the hirespell to track down and kill Winestab, and to retrieve the amber gem before anyone else can.

When Maaril learns of the incompetance of his underlings, he will fly into a furious rage, as without the Flame there is no deal for the Workbook of Sabbar. However, the Dragonmage will soon regain his composure, and begin plotting to take the tome from Meleghost by other means.

Finally, when the High Mystery discovers that his "lackey" Maaril had entrusted the theft of the Flame to three hired hands, he will not be pleased. The necromancer will most likely set about divining the current whereabouts of the stolen artifact, while at the same time arranging rather unpleasant dooms for everyone else involved in the botched theft. He can ill afford to leave loose ends lying about, as the Lords would surely take a dim view of his recent activities....

| MARPENOTH 19 |

Cleaning crews and members of the Carpenter's, Roofer's, and Plasterer's Guild have been busy today at the Yawning Portal Inn, cleaning up fire-and-brawl damage after a private celebration gone awry. Although the details are still sketchy, rumors of magical explosions, swordplay, golems, mind flayers, and even a spellduel between the Blackstaff and Mad Halaster are rampant across Dock Ward. Whatever the truth, the night's events caused enough chaos to temporarily shut down the Portal, and to postpone the inaugural dungeon delve of the Glittering Gauntlet of Glory, a newly-formed all-female fellowship of adventurers.

WHAT THIS MEANS: Ladies' Night at the Yawning Portal, of course. Click here for more information: [ http://www.wizards.com/default.asp?x=books/fr/ladiesnight ]. Please note that I took some liberty in placing the events of the tale in this month, as it is noted as having actually occurred in the month of Flamerule.

| MARPENOTH 22 |

Today marks the most holy day of Tymora, the festival of the Starfall. At the Tower of Luck, the worshippers of the Smiling Lady gathered to celebrate the date of their goddesses' birth and to ceremonially reward several outstanding members of the clergy. This year's celebrations were unusually ostentatious, most likely designed to offset several recent public setbacks suffered by the Tymorites, including the death-at-sea of the senior priest Faerlthann and the absence from the city of both the Wandering Fortune Jorynn Halstaff and the Elder Fortune Elegul Another, all of which occured due to the still-simmering feud with the clergy of the Bitch Queen Umberlee.

| MARPENOTH 24 |

Three bodies found partially hidden under a layer of refuse in the alleyway behind the Inn of the Dripping Dagger have been identified as acolytes of the Tower of Luck. The condition of the bodies suggests a targeted assassination, but the identity of the killer or killers remains a mystery. Tlabbras Crael, the Voice of the Halls, has announced a reward for any who bring information of the killings to the temple of Tymora.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED: After spending the last few days and nights narrowly escaping from watchful agents of the Spires of the Morning, the darkenbeast assassins of High Mystery Meleghost, and the spell-spitting skulls of the mage Azibar, Winestab came to the conclusion that the only way to escape from this situation with his life would be to give the Flame over to someone else. To this end, he contacted some middling level acolytes of the luck goddess Tymora and, over a few decanters of wine in a back booth of the Dripping Dagger, convinced them that the object of the Lathanderites search was in fact none other than the Flame of the Spirit, one of the most holy relics of the Tymoran church (in truth, the Tymorites needed little convincing, for rumors to that effect had been steadily gaining ground among the ranks of the Luckmaiden's clergy since the "Healing Flame" was unveiled at the Hawkwinter ball). In return for a rather hefty satchel of platinum coin, the thief turned over the amber object and quickly left the tavern (headed for somewhere south of Baldur's Gate, most likely, until matters settle down). The priests left the tavern soon thereafter as well, although they were set upon before they travelled too far....

When the Tymorites met with Winestab in the Dripping Dagger, it drew the attention of the resident priesthood of Umberlee. Currently mired in a feud with the faithful of the Luckmaiden, the Umberlants, led by the Vengeful Hand Murghos Zel, ambushed the viverant Luckbringers, killing them and absconding with the magical artifact - after all, possession of what may be one of the most holy of Tymoran relics would be quite a bargaining chip and feather in the cap of the Dread High Trident. Sacrificing it to the depths of Umberlee's Cache would perhaps be even more satisfying.....

| MARPENOTH 29 |

Amid the continuing unrest between the various faiths of the city comes news that Meleghost, the High Mystery of the temple of Mystra, was attacked as his carriage rode through Sea Ward on its' way to the villa of the Cassalantar family. There is no word as to the condition of the priest or the identity of his assailant, as the House of Wonder has been shuttered and warded since early morning. If true, this incident would be a serious crime indeed, as the High Mystery holds a position of no little power in the city. True or not, it is currently believed that the Lords have already sent their agents forth, to seek out the worst of the recent rabblerousers and roustabouts, and send them swiftly to the depths of the Undermountain, lest the city spiral further out of control.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED: A bit of unfinished business between the High Mystery and his erstwhile partner-in-crime, Maaril. The carriage the priest was riding in was pierced through with a dozen blacklance spells, courtesy of the Dragonmage. While Meleghost managed to survive the assassination attempt, he was sorely wounded, and forced to retreat to the inner sanctum of the House of Wonder in order to rest and recuperate. It is there he will wait - in a bath of troll ichor and healing pastes, ringed by silent helmed horrors, the Workbook of Sabbar by his side - for events in the city to calm, and for Maaril to lower his defenses. Then the High Mystery will gain his revenge.....

## Uktar Edition

1371DR, Year of the Unstrung Harp

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| UKTAR 4 |

A squad of griffon-riders flew low over the city this morning, trumpeting the arrival of the first winterfrost and the holiday of Auril's Blesstide. Throughout the city's upper Wards, bardlings from New Olamn roamed the streets, ringing tiny handbells, caroling on streetcorners and front stoops, and cajoling shopkeeps and passerby for donations to "help preserve our fair city's arts and culture, lest it never again be said that Waterdeep is truly a City of Many Splendors."

| UKTAR 7 |

The normally staid and stuffy atmosphere of Nybor's Gentlerium was the site of much chaos today. Sometime after sunset the main lounge and hall of the well-known Sea Ward patriarch's club in were filled with malodorous mists of unknown origin. The hueless cloud of vapors caused irritation to the eyes and lungs of those present, and precipitated a swift evacuation of the premises (something much remarked upon by those observing the proceedings, who noted that the patrons of the establishment are rarely known to do anything in the way of haste). The cause of the vapors is currently unknown, although some members in attendance at the time claim that they emanated from the long-stemmed pipe of a dark-skinned, robed man reading in a corner chair. The veracity of those claims cannot be verified at this time, however, as neither the man nor his allegedly offensive pipe have been seen since.

| UKTAR 9 |

For the last fortnight citizens of the Blue Corners, a neighborhood of northern Sea Ward, have spread rumors of an eerie, plaintive singing echoing in back alleys of the Ward at night. Taverntalk across the ward in recent days has placed the source of the singing alternately as coming from a lovelorn banshee (as if there could be such a thing!), the ghost of a waylaid mermaid, or the nighttime carousings of a deceased bardling, reincarnated into the shape of a common alleycat (one would take care not to place too much credence in such ale-soaked mutterings, however). Ammathan Var, the noted "Bard of Blue Corners" and member of the Council of New Olamn, has claimed to have heard the mysterious melody twice already, and has publicly stated that it resembles the ancient elven mourning dirges of Illefarn in style and tone.

Whatever the source, the haunting sounds are agreed by all to contain no words, or at least nothing that can be identified as such, and its source seems to always be aware of those in the vincinity, moving away or fading into the night air at the approach of a living being.

| UKTAR 10 |

Tonight marked the grand celebration of Tehennteahan, the "Night of Hammers and Nails," one of the Twelve High Festivals of the Waukeenar faith. Carriages began arriving at sunsdown at the Grand Hall of the Cynosure, rented out and dressed up for the occasion by priests of the Merchant's Friend. Many high-ranking faithful of Gond were also in attendance, as Tehennteahan celebrates the inventions and efforts of smiths, forgemen, crafters, and those who work with their hands and not magic, the same folk the make up much of the Wonderbringer's church.

Unfortunately, the festival was soon thrown into chaos when the numerous golden hammers, tongs, and bladed smiths implements adorning the walls took life and flew about the room, striking at random. Many of those in attendance suffered a variety of cuts, bruises, and lacerations before the divine magicks of the assembled priests and the ready blades of the doorwards positioned about the hall fended off the malevolent tools. It is unknown who engineered the enchantments, or their purpose, but many in attendance have stated their belief that the high priest of Waukeen, Laskar Ilithair, was the sole target of the chaos. In recent days, the High Overgold has come to be known as the "Golden Autarch" by his detractors, which include many wealthy nobles and merchants unhappy with Ilithair's increasing meddling in the affairs of the merchants and moneylenders of the city, as well as his extravagant spendings and giftings which have made him very popular with the common folk of the City of Splendors.

| UKTAR 11 |

Lord Lylar the Second of House Emveolstone announced today his intentions to hold a grand High Dragon tournament in the city early next year, after the winter snows melt and the transient populations return to the city. High Dragon, for the uninitiated, is a three-player card game, long popular in the gaming halls and tankard houses of Cormyr and Sembia, and is currently rising in popularity in the Western Heartlands as well.

The last organized High Dragon tournament, held in the Carvan City of Scornubel, saw over 400 entrants. It caused quite a stir when the winner, the legendary halfling gambler "Lucky" Lhyrnstar, won the princely sum of 18,000 gold coins, only to be later killed and revealed as an agent of the dread Shadow Thieves by the Waterdhavian bravos Danilo Thann, Zanthus Greencloak, and the late Venzan Margaster. While the Emveolstone contest may not draw quite that many participants, the Lord of the House has guaranteed an almost identical purse to the winner.

House Emveolstone, which owns a number of gambling parlours and meeting-clubs across the city, is believed to be the setting for the tournament, although Lord Lylar is also rumored to be considering the Cynosure or the Smiling Siren Festhall in Dock Ward as alternative venues.

Game Notes: See "Elminster's Guide to the Realms: The High Flagon" in Dragon #302 for more information on High Dragon and other Faerunian card games.

| UKTAR 12 |

Excitement in Dock Ward today as the Thirsty Sailor tavern was invaded by a number of watch officers in pursuit of the infamous rogue known as the Scarlet Knave. The canny thief stirred up much trouble in the taproom before making his escape by trapping the officers beneath Wensten's Shield, the centerpiece of the Sailor's taproom decor. The Knave cut the ropes which hold the "Shield" — a generous slab of dining trestle once used by the warrior Wensten to defend the patrons of the tavern against sahuagin invaders — causing it to fall onto the hapless guardsmen below, pinning them to the ground and effecting his escape.

Onlookers report that the frenzied chase began on Thevryn's Wharf, where the newly-arrived Lord Avaeralos of Tethyr and his entourage were relieved of a rather large strongbox of gemstones and jewelry by the daring Knave, right out from under the noses of an honor escort of city guardsmen. Many of those present in the taproom of the Sailor during the scuffle noted that the Knave was not in possession of a strongbox or chest of any kind, and rumors quickly grew that the Knave used one of a number of Dock Ward rainbarrels, middens, or other "hiding-holes" to quickly stash his ill-gotten goods until he could return to retrieve them.

At least one ne'er-do-well in attendance, the halfling Ilvryn Lackpurse, took the rumors of the Knave's hasty stash seriously, exiting the Sailor and proceeding to hoist himself into every barrel, window nook, and corner-cask in sight (finding nothing, but quickly earning himself the appellations of "Bustle-Boots" and "The Barrel Blackguard" by bemused onlookers).

| UKTAR 13 |

Meiritid Archneie, the reigning high priest of Umberlee in the city, has been noted as being busy in recent days, making a number of political moves designed to increase his stature among the power structure of Waterdeep. In addition to his normal duties of overseeing the continuing construction of the new Umberlant cathedral on Raerloon's Rock and recieving petitioners at his temporary court in the confines of the Ulbrinter villa, the Dread High Trident has announced an alliance with his nominal rival, the High Trident Thaeryld Nornagul of the Stormhaven House on Orlumbor (to counter-act the growing power of the Wavemistress Royal Qalbess Frostyl and the Mad Tyrant of Mintarn, most whisper), and, in a great ceremony two days ago, caused a number of important items and relics thought lost beneath the waves of the sea to be disgorged, returning them to their owners.

The items thus retrieved include the Brightblade of Analaena, a Selunite item of the faith thought lost along with the knight Delvyn Banbosk during the invasion of sahuagin and sea-creatures two years ago. It is widely believed that in returning the item, the Umberlant Most Dread is seeking to court the powerful Waterdhavian church of the Moonmaiden, in order to drive a wedge between the Selunites and their allied church of the goddess Tymora (with whom the Umberlants are currently feuding).

| UKTAR 17-20 |

A blinding blizzard hit Waterdeep today, as the heavy winter skies that hung above the city for a number of weeks finally opened, bringing hours of intermittant snowfall to the rooftops and streets of the city.

| UKTAR 23 |

The indoor "hot-houses" of the Spires of the Morning and the bowers of the Quiet Place have been hit by some sort of unholy blight or evil magic during the past day. Many of the exotic plants and flowers kept within the greenhouses of the churches of Lathander and Eldath were killed or severely damaged with the failing of the special spells that kept them warm and damp in Waterdeep's harsh northern climate. Thizraen "Shamble-Staff," the Sacrosant Seed of the Goddess, and creator of the renowed blue rose, described the blight as "definitely magical" in nature, noting that the damage to the greenery was done before the normally vigilant acolytes and herbalists of the temples could respond. The cleric also reported that the Spires' fragile crop of white moon lilies, whose useage is favored in the upcoming Feast of the Moon holy day, was completely ruined, leaving the traditional feast-day blessing of the City of the Dead tombs in doubt.

| UKTAR 26 |

Several minor riots and civil disturbances were contained and quelled by the Watch and Guard late today, a number of hours after they first began. The epicenter of the disturbances focused on the marble-clad hall of the Cynosure, where the play "Ten Black Days" by the noted playwright Ovir Jaal debuted to a mostly Tethyrian audience. Covering the events leading up to the bloody Tethyrian civil war, a touchy subject at best, the play ignited rock throwing and fisticuffs between those in the audience, many of whom had fought against each other or backed various losing candidates to the throne during those dark years. The violence swiftly spread to the neighborhoods of Tethalan and Zundswalk, and to the outside slums of the Southersprawls, all of which are home to sizeable Tethyrian immigrant populations, where fires were lit and a number of assaults and injuries were reported.

The Watch and Guard managed to dispel the crowds and put out the street fires by nightfall, but sizeable contingents of armed officers remain in the affected areas, guarding against another outbreak of violence. Performances of "Ten Black Days" have been cancelled by order of the Lords, but the attention drawn to the play by the chaos has drawn the interest of many noble and wealthy patrons, who have begun sending missives to the lodgings of Ovir Jaal, inviting the bard to arrange private performances at their villas and clubs.

Game Notes: See [ http://12.232.108.96/game/campaign/information/culture/plays.html ] for more information on plays and playwrights of the Realms.

| CALENDAR DAY - The Feast of the Moon |

Throughout the city today, in taverns, festhalls and private houses alike, the dead are remembered and tales are told of great heroes and valiant deeds far into the night. As usual on this day, many of Waterdeep's undead denizens rested uneasily, and reports of spectral sightings came in from all Wards. The city watch, wearing the traditional white armbands to ward off malevolent spirits, was present, but no reports of any such activity was reported.

As the Feast is the most holy day of Kelemvor, the Judge of the Dead, priests of the Holy Judge and those mourning the recently lost gathered in the City of the Dead this afternoon, to commune with their god and with the spirits of the deceased until the stroke of twelve bells that night.

The Most High Doomguide, Raelar Hosthann, was not present at the proceedings, and has been little seen in the city since the events leading up to the uncovering and slaying of the doppleganger masquerading as Zandoun, heir to House Kormallis. A high priest refusing to preside over a holy day of such magnitude is currently the source of much tavern talk across the city, where it is rumored that the Kelemvorite has fallen out of favor with his god and the elders of his church. His place in the ceremony was taken by Mhaerten Vorl, a Doomguide recently arrived in the city from the main church in Ormath (and who is also widely rumored to be annointed as the fallen Hosthann's replacement).

# 1372 DR YEAR OF WILD MAGIC

## HAMMER

| HAMMER 2 |

For several days now, the lower Wards of Trades, South, and Castle have been struggling with an infestation of flying, swarming, and stinging creatures known as "stingflies." Those citizens travelling outdoors must not only brave the harsh winter elements, but the merciless clouds of biting pests as well. Sages versed in such matters have advised the Lords that the creatures are common in the Vilhon and surrounding lands. Although the cold weather is killing the airborne bloodsuckers in relatively short order, it seems that their high reproductive rate has kept them around thus far.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED: A mismanaged portal opened within the confines of the wizardly Kolat Towers brought forth the swarms of irritants. Due to the unfamiliar terrain and harsh winter weather the tiny beasts will soon die out, but not before more than a few citizens and beasts of burden are made to suffer.

As for the entomology of the stingfly (courtesy of Ed Greenwood): "...resembles a thumb-sized housefly with a scorpion-tail, barbed stinger and all. It likes the ears, underchin, and neck of humans, striking to draw blood with its tail and then sucking at the gore with large, spongy mouthpiece -- just for an instant, before springing away. The bites DON'T itch, and stingflies don't strike at eyeballs or fly into mouths or nostrils, but they DO strike at genitalia and breasts, and the feel of a stingfly bite is like being firmly jabbed with a pin. Sleeping through stingfly bites is impossible for many folk, who when they must slumber in the open often roll in mud to stop stingflies from trying to bite. If one had to travel or labour all day amid clouds of stingflies, the blood loss would probably equal 1- 2 hp damage, plus a chance of bloodborne disease...."

| HAMMER 10 |

Swarms of stingflies still haunt sheltered back alleys and protected courts of Trades and South Wards, although their numbers are quickly diminishing. In Lord's Court yestereve the mage Alcedor Kolat offered the services of what he called "a highly trained flight of stirge-bats" in attacking the airborne pests, but was firmly denied by the assembled Lords. Given recent rumors that the irritants originated from the shuttered abode of the wizardly Kolat Brothers, such a denial may only be expected.

| HAMMER 11 |

The reputed smuggler and notorious Dock Ward ne'er-do-well Buldath of the Coppers disappeared from his cell in the Castle this morning, literally right out from under the noses of his gaolers. The Watch and Castle guardsmen remain silent on the matter, and it is thus far unclear whether the prisoner was rescued by compatriots, abducted by ransomers, or quietly disposed of by an enemy (or the Lords themselves). As his nickname suggests, Buldath was the leader of the Cod Lane Coppers, a Dock Ward fellowship of cutpurses and street toughs. He was apprehended in the last tenday by a large force of Watch and Guard officers who stormed the wharfside lair of the gang.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED: The feared Xanathar has collected that which belonged to him. Buldath was a minor operative in the crime syndicate, in charge of running the beholder's southern Dock Ward interests. Using his Hand operatives as well as several allies within the Castle, the eye tyrant liberated the smuggler from his cell. Unfortunately for Buldath, the Xanathar does not reward failure or capture well. The erstwhile escapee is now imprisoned in a Xanathar safehouse, until his fate is decided.

| HAMMER 14 |

Passerby in Virgin's Court today were witness to an astonishing display of martial combat. Armed with only a stout length of ironwood, Padriembor the Pale, a recent arrival to the city, took on and soundly defeated four fully armed and armored swordsmen. After the bout, the victorious Padriembor announced today his intention to take students in the art of unarmed fighting. Some of the onlookers to the duel, such as the renowned arms-tutor Myrmith Splendon, were openly skeptical of the easterner's fighting prowess, and charges that the contest was rigged with hireswords bought by Padriembor soon began to circulate through the crowd. It is being whispered that the incensed foreigner later challenged Splendon to an honor duel, but that the black-robes of the city have declined to sanction such a contest.

| HAMMER 16 |

Buldath of the Coppers, the smuggler and Dock Ward gang leader who disappeared from his cell in the Castle some days ago, was discovered and killed in a hidden Trades Ward lair today. He was discovered not by the Watch or the Guard, who have mounted a citywide search and rousted the lairs of his "Coppers" street gang, but by the mage Randulaith of Mirabar, one of a number of bountyhunters and headsmen who took the Lords up on their offer of a reward for the capture of the escapee. In what is being described as quite a titanic struggle, the escaped felon was incinerated by a fire spell cast by the valiant mage. The charred remains were positively identified by some personal effects, including several pieces of gold jewelry, and by a recognizable tattoo on the left arm of the victim that escaped the burning.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED: As noted earlier, the Xanathar was none too happy with the captured Buldath. The publicity and contacts made today (in addition to those garnered in the Eleasias efforts to succor the ailing merfolk of the Harbor) will serve Randulaith -- and thus, the Xanathar -- well in his desire to become one of the Hidden Lords of the city.

| HAMMER 23 |

A number of officers and mages of the Watch raided a Trades Ward warehouse today, carting off several wagons full of merchandise and issuing an arrest order for Flalghest of Elversult, the merchant who leased the hall. The watchmen were observed removing a number of "topkegs" (barrels built with a separate, smaller "top" compartment, usually used to store quantities of ale and rum), leading to rumors of illegal contraband -- everything from stolen gemstones to Gondish smokepowder to the blood of elves or unicorns -- hidden in the smaller compartments.

| HAMMER 25 |

The notorious freebooter (and alleged black-sail) Jardhan Ilvhmost was slain in a brawl with the Swords of the Lucky Lady adventuring fellowship last night, in the Bloody Fist tavern in Dock Ward. During the chaos, which started when a member of the freebooter party charged the Swords with cheating on a game of dice, Jardhan was laid low by the sorceress Raesalra "Hurlstars." The surviving members of Jardhan's party (including his lieutenant, the half-orc Grundhas One-Eye) retreated to their ship, the Black Maiden, where they are said to be arming themselves and preparing to revenge the death of their captain.

| HAMMER 27 |

The Valiant Wind, a merchantman out of Myratma, exploded in a deadly blast this evening, sending the Harbor into chaos and confusion. Passerby report the ship, sitting at anchorage with a full cargo of passengers, household goods, and horses and wagons, erupted without warning. The blast destroyed the ship and killed at least eight crewmembers. Large pieces of the ship's upper deck flew as far as 300 feet into the harbor, while other pieces damaged the warehouses and merchant offices fronting the wharf. A large timber was thrown right through the facade of the nearby Haelembryn's Fine Footwear, striking and killing the owner. At least 13 other crew members and passengers were injured, although a full accounting has not yet been made by the Watch.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED: The cause of the explosion can be blamed on one of the passengers, a Calishite mage named Alhagamn "of the Flaming Fingers." Alhagamn booked passenge on the ship intent on returning to his native land after a lucrative trip to the City of Splendors, to sell several bound fire elementals. The sale of such creatures is forbidden by the Watchful Order, and for good reason; elementals are dangerous to trap and contain, and such practices are fraught with danger. One of the last elementals Alhagamn had in his possession weakened the bonds of its prison just enough, causing a magical backlash that blew the upper deck (where the mage's private quarters were located) to smithereens. The other three fire-creatures, still entrapped within their wards, were flung far from the ship, and now presumably lie on the harbor bottom, or on some Dock Ward rooftop.

| CALENDAR DAY - MIDWINTER |

In taverns and festhalls across the city the Midwinter holiday starts off as normal, with the ale flowing freely and citizens gathering to make agreements for the upcoming trade season, spin tales of heroes long gone and battles hard fought, dwell on the latest gossip (the political intrigue surrounding the vacant office of Knight-Champion of Lathander and the always-popular "who's-a-Hidden-Lord" guessing game seem to occupy the majority of such taverntattle), and make predictions for the newly-born Year of Wild Magic.

A small circle of Auril-worshippers gather on the slopes of Mount Waterdeep at daybreak, clothed only in short shifts and huddled deep in prayer. As the first rays of the sun crest the Mount, soft nimbuses of bluish light envelope the gathered faithful and, moments later, a light snowfall begins. Shortly thereafter, the Frost Maiden's supplicants end their prayer and disband. The snowfall continues for some hours afterwards, but never gathers in any appreciable amounts in the streets of the city.

Later in the morn, in a solemn ceremony, the druids of the Quiet Place (the chapel of Silvanus) cut specially-blessed mistletoe from their indoor gardens. Along with Lord Piergeiron and Guardcaptain Rulathon (both bedecked in white-tabardded chainmail), and an honor escort of city guardsmen, the druids make a circle of the city, stopping at each massive city gate to ritually hang sprigs of the mistletoe (a tradition dating back to the days of the Fallen Kingdom, designed to bring peace to all within the city walls for the next year).

However, the gathering twilight brings a sudden and dramatic change to the day's events, and a heavy pall descends over the normally festive night. Across the darkened city, many citizens report feelings of great unease and unexplained fear, and soothsayers and prophets across the city claim to have visions of tyranny and flame and, more specifically, of eyes of red blazing flame, surrounded by utter darkness. Many of Waterdeep's spirit denizens rest uneasy this night also, and there are sightings in all Wards of a marching column of hooded, cloaked, spectral beings, whose heavy boots and inhuman chantings strike fear into the hearts of even the bravest nocturnal inhabitants.

These unnatural events fade with the coming dawn, but in their place is left a new mystery; the mark of a mailed black fist is found incised into the doors and entry portals of many buildings across the city -- apparently by magical means, as there is no charring or flame-marks on the edges of any of the brands. Places so marked include the private abodes of the necromancer (and reputed Cyricist) Stavros of the Skulls, the courtier Colstann Rhuul and the mage Nain Keenwhistler, and city landmarks such as the Plinth and the House of Wonder.

WHAT THIS MEANS: Bane, the Black Hand, the Tyrant Lord, has returned to Faerūn. Throughout the Realms, the Midwinter festivities are subdued and fraught with visions of fear and ruin. The mark of the mailed fist is meant as a warning to those who oppose the Lord of Acheron, such as faithful of Cyric, meddling adventurers, and followers of the "lesser gods."

# WATERDEEP NEWS

## Attackers Plague Goldenfields

Waterdeep -- There are unconfirmed reports that priests from Goldenfields (source of much of Waterdeep's staple food) visited the Palace yesterday to request the aid of city authorities and agents in identifying and stopping mysterious assailants. The miscreants use magic to suddenly appear in fields deep within the walls of the sprawling temple-farm, where they attempt to stab clergy of Chauntea, and just as abruptly vanish again.

Palace officials refused to confirm that these rumors are true, or -- if so -- what leads the priests of Goldenfields to suspect that their attackers originate from Waterdeep.

## Backlash Spell Scrolls in City Again

Waterdeep -- Watchful Order speakers are issuing a warning. Spell scrolls have recently been sold in the city that have unforeseen 'backlash' effects. They stress such dangers aren't a result of sloppy spell-scrivening or creation but must be deliberately crafted as an attack on users of the particular scrolls. Unfortunately, some backlash traps can't be detected by wizards below the skill of an archmage. Most backlashes involve the summoning of monsters -- or, more rarely, the wizard who crafted the scroll -- to attack the person reading the scroll.

Some years ago, scrolls were sold in Waterdeep that summoned beholders into the presence of anyone casting the spells written on them. Thrice in the last score of days, backlash scrolls have unleashed harmful spell effects on users -- once a feeblemind, once a nightmare, and the third instance involved an unknown magic that caused the wizard to suffer painful, bleeding sores whenever casting spells for seven days (commencing with the spell the scroll had borne).

Popular rumor associates these scrolls with various Red Wizards of Thay, but Thayan trade agents in the city have issued a furious denial of any connection to curses and magical trickery. When asked directly about the backlash scrolls, a known Thayan mage snapped, "Can any thinking person truly believe we of Thay would be involved in such things? If so, I ask them this -- why would we want to harm our livelihoods and reputations? Why? Find who started the rumors blaming us, and I'll wager you'll also have found the miscreant responsible for these treacheries. When you do so, bring him to us. We have some treacheries of our own we desire to share with him, her, or it."

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## Body Found in Chimney

Waterdeep -- The mummified body of a man was discovered yestermorn in the kitchen chimney of Noathaven, the empty Sea Ward mansion built by Turnvar 'Turnstone' Noathe, wealthy importer and vendor of weigh-scales and measuring-ribbons.

Watch officers identified the body as that of Arl Thambandar, long-missing heir to a fortune in ivory-sales money. The remains were found standing upright on the 'smoke shelf' in the chimney with no signs of wounds or being bound. They say Thambandar has no known connection to Noathe (who died of shaking-fever on a visit to Memnon in Calimshan a season ago), and it's not known how he got into the chimney or how long his corpse has been there.

Thambandar was discovered by visitors to the city who were inspecting Noathaven with an eye to purchasing it. They all declined to give their names, but two of them claimed the body was holding or wearing something the Watch hastily concealed from them and now won't talk about. Noathaven stands on the north front of Chasso's Trot, between Sul and Shield Streets. Watch investigations continue.

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Waterdeep News

## Brawl Erupts after Guild Hikes Dues

Brawl Erupts after Guild Hikes Dues

Waterdeep -- The Old Guildhall on Gaustus Street, Trades Ward, was the scene of a wild fight this morning, when Master Turnstone of the Cellarers' and Plumbers' Guild announced a stiff hike in guild dues.

Guildmembers formerly paid dues of 7 sp/month, but dues will now be levied at 4 gp/month for the remainder of the year, and 5 gp/month thereafter.

If, that is, Master Turnstone and his officers survive that long. An uproar occurred among guildmembers when rumors of the planned increase leaked out -- and members came to the Guildhall armed with pipes, picks, and hammers, obviously expecting trouble.

Trouble met their expectations, as defiant guildmembers rushed the front tables where the officers were gathered, loyalists hastened to defend them, and pitched battle broke out. Four Watch patrols answered alarm calls, cordoned off the hall, and summoned the Guard -- who were forced to use vials of sleepsmoke gas to quell hostilities.

Unconfirmed reports say dozens of guildmembers are dead, senseless and near death, or wounded. In fact, almost everyone who attended the meeting has at least one broken limb or extremity, and the interior of the Old Guildhall is a "shattered shambles."

## Clergy Recruiting Soldiers

Clergy Recruiting Soldiers

Waterdeep -- Priests of Lathander have come to Waterdeep to recruit adventurers and warriors for "lasting hire" of two seasons or more. The task -- to guard workers as a planned temple and farming community, New Dawn, is built in the wild countryside northwest of Secomber. The chosen site is in what local shepherds and drovers call the Hindhorn Hills, a rolling area of scrub woodlands, small cliffs, and deep ravines shown on few maps -¬an area rich in deer, hares, and hawks but plagued by roaming packs of wolves and armed bands of gnolls and orcs.

This scheme is no doubt inspired by the success of Goldenfields, but Voice of the New Dawn Harammas Malark describes its advent as "visions streaming into our minds straight from the Divine Morninglord himself." These visions revealed to priest after priest the locale and structure of the temple-farm as if it were a real place. "It took me, at least, some time," the spokespriest admitted, "to realize that our task was to make it real. For some months, we all thought we were being shown a farm that already existed as we were seeing it and that our duty was to find it.

"That ended when we all had new and very similar dreams, in which we saw a warrior-priest preaching to a throng of enthusiastic faithful. His words ended with the promise -- 'Our Lord leads us all through smoke and fire, to bright victory!'

"As the last clouds of night rolled away like dark smoke, he waved a sword above his head, flashing back the light of dawn like red fire, and brought it thrusting down into the ground -- and behold! It struck there as a shovel, a war-blade no longer, and turned the earth aside, and the tillage was begun."

Malark and his fellow priests of the New Dawn promise pay of no less than two dragons per day to every skilled warrior or battle-mage who "agrees to submit themselves utterly to our direction." Such remuneration will begin as soon as the first priest-led expedition sets forth from Waterdeep's gates toward the chosen site and continue throughout every day that includes shifts of duty.

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## Confession in Flavauro Slaying

Confession in Flavauro Slaying

Waterdeep -- A Beacon Street grocer has admitted to stabbing the popular actor, dancer, and former adventurer Mistram Flavauro last month. The handsome, debonair Flavauro was notorious for his popularity with Waterdhavian ladies from all wards and walks of life, and many suspected his slaying was the work of an enraged husband, father, or brother of one of his sometimes thrice-daily conquests. If Armest Harrigo's confession is true, these suspicions were correct.

Harrigo, of Harrigo's Good Table (east-front Beacon, three doors south of its moot with Shoor Street), is a short, stout, bustling man of mild and breathless manner. Even Watch officers say he seems an unlikely physical specimen to catch and best the acrobatic, weapons-wise Flavauro in combat. Harrigo claims a customer told him Flavauro was hosting both of Harrigo's sisters (the unmarried Harrigo siblings dwell together above the grocery) in his luxurious tallhouse on Ivory Street, Sea Ward. Harrigo furiously hastened there, found this truth, and attacked Flavauro.

He says his sisters angrily bade him begone, and the naked Flavauro mocked his cleaver and turnip knife, laughing so wildly that Harrigo easily slashed the man's fingers with the one, and buried the other hilt-deep in Flavauro's belly. He says Flavauro backed away screaming and fell through a window to land impaled on the stony spears of heroic statues in his own garden below. Harrigo plundered the murdered man's wine cellar to calm his hysterical sisters, and led them home, reeling and giggling, in the dark hours -- much to the amusement of no less than six Watch patrols on the way.

Harrigo claims he'd defend his kin the same way again, and he confessed recently only because of visions sent him by holy Chauntea. Watch officers have recorded his words, but not yet said if Harrigo will stand trial. Over forty persons have confessed to Flavauro's slaying, but an anonymous Watch officer said details of Harrigo's confession make it the first to match "certain evidence" in the matter. A Watch guard remains on duty in Flavauro's many-times-plundered home.

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## Controversial Book

Waterdeep -- Since its release three days ago, a slender chapbook, What I Saw and Felt, is being enthusiastically sold and resold in the streets of Waterdeep, much to the fury of many in the nobility. Written by Ophyl Ramstel, the work is a "tell-all" tome of what the author observed and participated in at nobles' revels over the last four seasons in Waterdeep.

Some Palace officials have unofficially commented that dozens of sealed, stiffly-worded notes from noble families have been delivered to Piergeiron during the last two days to protest the inaccuracy (or disapproval) of the contents of Ramstel's book and demanding all copies be seized and the author exiled, flogged, or worse.

Ophyl Ramstel was a beautiful courtesan, formerly from Tethyr, who became known in certain exclusive circles in this city for her amorous (and acrobatic) skills, and was invited to many feasts, revels, and amusements hosted by various Waterdhavian nobility. After she refused to wed both Phorol Massalan, heir to the Massalan family fortune, and the wealthy 'wonder powders' merchant Vulphor Stralmaer, Ramstel was disfigured by a series of mysterious spells, potions that made her skin rot, and attacks with thrown vials of acid and whip¬daggers.

Massalan flatly denies the widely-known connection between Ramstel and himself, while Stralmaer departed Waterdeep a season ago -- his present whereabouts are unknown.

Ramstel herself is believed to still dwell in the city. She uses a new name, and magical disguises have given her a new appearance. Some anonymous street sources say she now poses as a man, and all such 'nameless speakers' agree she has hired several adventuring bands to "do dirty work" for her, using information gained about shady activities of the nobility during her associations with them.

## Double Wedding on Spindle Street

Waterdeep -- Unmarried sisters who own adjoining houses on west-front Spindle Street in Trades Ward have just married each other's street-level tenants. Sharlma and Ierithue Steelhawk, some forty-odd summers old, inherited the buildings from their father, the famous archer and adventurer Duroamyn "Deathstrike" Steelhawk.

As in many Waterdhavian tallhouses, they dwell on the topmost floors, letting out the floors immediately beneath to tenants, who also rent the street level below as a shop. Sharlma has the more northerly house. The buildings share a common wall, and the sisters' apartments connect.

It was commonly known that Sharlma and her tenant, the wizard Starago Nye of Starnight Spells and Magelore (minor castings, identifications, advice), were longtime lovers. Ierithue and her tenant, Bhelgrair Yathro of Yathro's Adventurers' Outfitting (ropes, maps, weapons, tents), were thought to enjoy similar relations. Rumors abound about what led the four to switch partners and engage in formal union. The couples kept celebrations private, and they have announced no plans for changes in the business of the shops.

## Fugitive Hunted in Snail Street

Fugitive from Amn Hunted in Snail Street

Waterdeep -- A notorious murderer from Amn was cornered in Snail Street (Dock Ward) yestereve and hacked to death by men who'd hunted him from Athkatla, the city where he slew at least sixty merchants.

Induth Haelor, called "Haelor of the Heads" because he decapitated his victims, was described by a witness to the slaying as a "young, nervous-looking, spider-thin" man with long, tangled dark hair, many daggers about his person, and "great, staring dark eyes."

Said outlander merchant Imryn Thalgallop of Iriaebor, a dealer in curios and sundries from Inner Sea lands: "A dozen men or more came down on him, from north and south, then out from side-alleys and shops, whistling to each other. They drew in around him in a ring, quite menacing -- and he knew they'd got him! He rushed one of them, downed the man with three or four hurled knives, and crossed blades with the next -- but by then they were all around him. They cut him up, they did, right into pieces there in the street!"

Watch patrols were on the scene almost before the slayers were done, and the hunters from Amn did not resist arrest. They told the Watch calmly they bore commissions from "the rulers of Amn" authorizing them to put Haelor to death, and that to punish them would be to "incur the displeasure of a trading land that could crush this city." At the time of this writing, it's not known if magisters or Lords of the city were impressed by such arguments.

Haelor is said to have become deranged when the loss of all his invested funds in crooked dealings cost him the favor of his father and then his betrothed; his victims are all thought to have been men he thought swindled him. His habit of seizing a particular amount of coin from each victim supports this tale and suggests that he was replacing their portion of his losses, "to the last copper."

Several witnesses, including Thalgallop, say Haelor continuously hissed, "Slurdren! Slurdren!" (Amnian slang meaning "a ruthless, ruinous-to-society turncoin;" turncoin means "swindler") as he fought and died. Folk of Snail Street swear they heard the same word hissed last night, in the empty darkness of the street, at the murder scene.

## Ghost Sightings

Ghost Sightings in Trades Ward

Waterdeep -- Over the last tenday, Trades Ward has been the scene of many hauntings -- a running woman pursued by sword-waving ogres in Irimar's Walk; a floating head whose face peered in at windows by day and pursued folk up and down streets by night (an apparition that continues to be seen in and around Spindle Street and the Coffinmarch); a spectral fray of sword- and axe-wielding elves and dwarves who race and clash from Slipstone Street east to (but never into) the Court of the White Bull (a battle that city sages never happened in that vicinity, so far as they know); and ghostly riders -- armored figures on armored warhorses that gallop facelessly and silently abreast down many streets in the ward, cloaks billowing out darkness in their wake).

Ward residents, city sages, and Watch speakers are all frankly puzzled as to what is causing these apparitions, both singly and in such a flood. There have been speculations that some sorcerer or wizard is experimenting with illusions or casting such spells for some sinister purpose (to spread fear and drive down local property values or harm local businesses, perhaps), but those putting forward these theories admit readily that their words are no more than unsupported speculations.

Other Waterdhavians are less unsure. Sheireera of the Prophecies claims, "These hauntings are the cries of the dead against the increasingly wanton and lawless lives we lead and our rulers steer us to here in Waterdeep!" The priest Thalomaun of Lathander, in a speech in Virgin's Square, insisted the apparitions are "a sign from the dead to the living -- 'tis time for change, and new ways, and new ventures, among those neighborhoods! The old businesses should be shed to make room for new, as-yet-unthought-of, enterprises! The way has been clearly shown to us; we have only to heed!" Sambral the Soothsayer warned, "The dead rise, restless, warning of battles to come. They bid us be armed and vigilant, and they come from below -- so the attack they herald will come against us from below!"

More conflicting but loudly-stated local opinions are almost certain to be forthcoming.

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Waterdeep News

## Lords Order Statue's Removal

Lords Order Statue's Removal

Waterdeep -- By proclamation of the Lords of Waterdeep, read out by Piergeiron at the Palace yestereve, a statue unlawfully erected in Court of the White Bull in Trades Ward has been pulled down and destroyed.

The statue, sculpted "skillfully" by unknown hands from imported marble, was of a lone, standing man in laborer's garb, facing north-of-west (directly at the spires of the distant Palace). He held a hammer in one hand, and his other arm was outstretched in the act of making a certain gesture.

The statue has now been reduced to rubble and dust. Before the Lords reached their decision, the Watch was ordered to examine it out of fears it was a mimic setting up shop, as has happened before in Virgin's Square.

No trace of monstrous nature was found, but Watch officers did discover that the statue sported several hidden 'drop-scrip' cavities (message caches). One contained a message that was seized by the Watch. Its contents have not been made public.

The statue was making a rude gesture known locally as 'hooking', in which a first finger is extended alone and curled into a hook, in the manner used by fishmongers to draw edible innards out of shellfish. This has long been a Dock Ward insult implying expulsion of bodily wastes toward the person to whom the gesture is directed.

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Waterdeep News

## Merchant Slays Rival in Bizarre Attack

Merchant Slays Rival in Bizarre Attack

Waterdeep -- A long-standing feud between trade rivals ended in tragedy early this morn when Vlaeren Tonstal, proprietor of Tonstal's Beast Remedies (of north-front Sulmor Street, North Ward), was murdered by another natural medicines merchant, Delgor Emmerthyl of Emmerthyl's Wildwonders (north-front Tarnath Street, North Ward). Witnesses say Emmerthyl clubbed Tonstal to the ground with a stuffed dire rat, shattering his skull, and then thrust the rat into Tonstal's mouth, returning to his own shop to letter a placard, which he returned and placed in the obviously dead Tonstal's hands.

The placard read: "Here lies one of the most evil men in Waterdeep, lawbreaking and greedy to the last, who finally choked on one of his kin."

North Ward neighbors of the two (who both rented out the floors above their shops to tenants, and lived a few doors apart on luxurious Saerdoun Street) say Tonstal and Emmerthyl had waged a war of increasingly nasty pranks, hoaxes and dark rumors, and heated words for years. The beginnings of this feud are forgotten, perhaps even by Emmerthyl (who's now in Watch custody, awaiting trial).

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Wizards is headquartered in Renton, Washington, PO Box 707, Renton, WA 98057.

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Waterdeep News

## Merchants Demand Representation

Waterdeep -- Mirror-maker Amblar Tharstar delivered a proclamation to the Palace this morn. Signed by more than a hundred independent (non-guild) merchants and casual-hire laborers of the city, it names Tharstar as their speaker and demands that a representative (of their choosing and answerable only to them) be installed at the Palace to advise the Lords and to speak out openly to "sway public opinion" on matters of trade and law.

In the words of the proclamation -- "We need a voice to speak the truths that must be told and take unpopular stands, in the face of the honeyed words said, year in and year out, by orators hired by the nobles and the guilds. We must be heard!"

Signatories to the proclamation are said to include several wizards of the city, the infamous courtesan Lissra of Loviatar, Mhandar the Toymaker, and the moneylender Bherekh 'Black Hand' Suldolphyn.

Amblar Tharstar is locally famous for his ornate, etched, and shaped mirrors and for his forceful and eloquent manner.

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Waterdeep News Minstrel's Songs a Hit

## Minstrel's Songs a Hit

Waterdeep -- The Three Towers performances club in Dock Ward has been jammed for the last three nights with enthusiastic crowds roaring applause for traveling minstrel Nymbrar "Nighteye" Shatterslee. His 'Crying To My Harp' show brought so many folk to the club that windows were propped open to allow those standing shoulder-to-shoulder in the alleys outside ri hear (and prevent a probable riot).

'Crying To My Harp' is a sequence of satirical ballads that begins by poking fun at stock characteristics of street folk everywhere, but swiftly turns to viciously criticizing some known antics of certain Waterdhavian nobles. It was reportedly greeted with "roars of approval" from patrons, who threw so many coins that Towers staff ran about collecting them in baskets normally used for serving hot garlic-buttered 'long loaves' to club tables.

Nighteye is believed to have now left the city after bands of 'strolling thugs' crisscrossed Dock Ward asking after his whereabouts. These 'fists for hire' are widely thought to have been retained for this service by noble patrons, but they customarily refuse to divulge the identities of their patrons, and have thus far refused to do so. Some nobles are known to have complained to the Lords about Nighteye, requesting he be hunted down, arrested, and punished. Mirt the Moneylender stopped such proceedings cold at a revel thrown last night by the Amcathra noble family (and attended by senior members of almost all Waterdhavian noble families) by loudly commenting that such complaints are clear, 'that boot fits me' admissions of guilt on the part of the complainants -- and marks them as fools, if not worse.

The Three Towers club hosts many visiting minstrels, singers, and storytellers, notably Rymrick the Bawd, Dulchaesen, and the Bell-Dwarves Three. It stands on a corner in Dock Ward -- south-front Watchrun Alley, east¬front Drawn Sword Alley, and north-front Leera's Alley. On nights when no performer is hosted, the staff (led by "Waterfall" Baerle Waszunn, so-called for the tears her sad songs can evoke) present a Rounde of Ballades.

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Waterdeep News

## Monster-Man Found Murdered

Monster-Man Found Murdered in Trollskull Alley!

Waterdeep -- Andruthra Thorn of the Watch will confirm only that they recovered "the corpse of an unknown man" from the notorious dead-end alley this morn, but several local residents and tradesfolk (notably Haunzro Thlam, of Thlam's Fresh Loaves of Immar Street, who was making early deliveries of his famous morningfeast buns) confirm that the "stabbed and cut open" man -- naked but for a pair of boots -- had one unusual feature: his body sported a ratlike, hairless tail more than a foot long!

The Watch took the remains to Farwatch Tower for examination, displaying only the face to interested persons, but the murdered man is as yet unidentified. Watchful Order mages were seen at work in the alley.

Located north of Delzorin Street in North Ward, Trollskull Alley was for years a favorite spot for duels and trysts, and local Watch patrols scour it regularly.

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Waterdeep News

## Mouther Slaughters Six at Revel

Mouther Slaughters Six at Revel

Waterdeep -- Tragedy befell six wealthy merchants and would-be consorts to the wealthy at a revel hosted by Urtos Phylund last night. Apparently the conversation and views of some of his guests so angered the patriarch of the Phylund noble family that he released a captive monster to pounce on guests and devour them. Although Phylund servants swear the monster's unleashing was accidental, over a dozen surviving guests (some of them of noble birth) say otherwise. They all say Lord Phylund bellowed, "So unguarded and careless your mouthings -- well, guard yourselves against a real mouther!"

The monster was a strange beast known as a "tall mouther," described by one guest as six whirling limbs attached to a hairy ball that was all leering eyes and a great gaping mouth. It slew six guests by biting and breaking their limbs, and injured another eight as guests scrambled to draw largely ornamental weapons and fight it off. Unconfirmed reports say the creature was slain by magic cast by a beautiful courtesan hitherto unknown as a sorcerer -- and that three of the wounded guests took their injuries while trying to get to, and slay, Urtos Phylund. The patriarch was protected by his servants and remains unharmed -- though it's rumored the heads of no less than four other noble families have delivered stiff notes to him warning that if ever he and they meet in the streets, he will take "fatal harm."

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Waterdeep News

## New Scent Makes Faces Glow

New Scent Makes Faces Glow

Waterdeep -- Yestereve, several Waterdhavian matrons were deeply frightened hours after applying a new scent to their faces. The fragrance, "Waterfall Kiss," is made and marketed by the half-elf Jhamanthra Tsathree, of Tsathree's Comforts shop on Golden Serpent Street in North Ward. Jhamanthra confirms her first sales were made early yesterday, but insists she was "entirely unaware" that Waterfall Kiss can make faces glow. The fragrance is a secret brew of herbs in water, which creates a clear, strong-smelling, slightly oily liquid used as a facial wash. It removes dirt and "tired skin" and leaves its scent behind.

The glow -- a vivid lime green that comes on suddenly, and lasts for hours -- occurs only when certain rouges and powders are applied to Kiss-treated skin. Most of the startled users were furious (one has reportedly hired a mage to "Do to that trickster what she did to me!"), but several enjoyed the attention.

Young wealthy Waterdhavians are flocking to Tsathree's Comforts to procure their own supplies. Kiss sells for 3 gp/handbottle -- but may soon be more: street resale prices of 6 to 9 gp have been reported. A new fad may be in the making, as revelers experiment with making other skin areas glow.

## Nobles Demand Halt to Sale of Paintings

Waterdeep -- Agents and members of the Phull noble family burst into a public sale of paintings this morn and angrily demanded the sale be stopped. They attempted to seize certain items and were accused of attempted theft. Swords were drawn, brief strife followed with no one suffering serious injuries (witnesses say the vendors defended themselves by using the disputed items as shields, causing the Phulls to put up their blades), and the Watch summoned.

Watch officer Estrar Thongolyr says no charges have yet been laid and no persons were detained, but the Watch has taken possession of the disputed items pending magisterial decision. As with most matters involving nobility, proceedings are almost certain to be referred to the Lords of the city.

The sale, by merchants of the newly established Flying Falcons Coster, was held at the Frowning Face\* rental hall, which is west-front of the High Road and facing down River Street.

The family Phull claim the disputed items, which were painted panels depicting portraits of distinguished-looking, richly garbed men and women, were stolen from their city villa in North Ward late last year, and these portraits depict dead, much-loved forebearers. One would-be buyer said that if this is true, the artists "flattered the Phulls incredibly" (not an uncommon practice, when portraits of the wealthy and powerful are limned) or "perhaps the family is much fallen into coarseness of features since the time of the people depicted."

\*The hall is so-named for the appearance of its street-facing wall, which is of fieldstone sculpted into the likeness of a severe human face, with windows for the eyes and the entry doors located in the mouth.

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## Palace Fined over Outlander Injury

Palace Fined over Outlander Injury

Waterdeep -- Magister Kaulyn Maurestyn today awarded the spice merchant Haumian Draethe of Tharsult 700 dragons from city coffers. In his judgment, Maurestyn decreed city "neglect in dealing with afore-reported perils" of crumbling stonework at the River Gate was the direct cause of the partial arch collapse a tenday ago that broke Draethe's arm, leg, and cart.

Though Watchful Order wizards took charge of the merchant's cart and runaway team almost immediately, and city-hired priests from the Plinth healed him of his injuries, Draethe suffered four days of lost sales and some spoilage of wares.

The judgment is expected to unleash a torrent of claims from citizens and visitors claiming past and present losses from similar perceived Palace maintenance failures, but Lord Piergeiron moved swiftly to stem such a flood by declaring, "The judgment of one magister in one case may differ from the judgments of others, in others."

## Poisonings Rumored -- Zzar Scarce

Waterdeep -- A zzar shortage prevails in Waterdeep today after citizens began stockpiling zzar, ale, and other drinkables in "frantic buying" that emptied the keg-rooms of many shops.

The rush of purchases was spurred by swift-spreading rumors that some wine sold in the city has been poisoned. Such beliefs seem to have arisen hot on the heels of the deaths of three outlander wine-merchants, each of whom collapsed into wild convulsions in the Market yestermorn.

Independent Waterdhavian merchant Azbold "the Bold" Bahammurhor had handbills printed and run throughout all the city wards warning folk to "shun all but freshly-pressed local vintages, upon pain of dreadful death!" Handbills from vintners in Rassalantar, Amphail, and Goldenfields have now appeared in the streets announcing "firelight revels" for the next three nights, which Waterdhavians may attend to watch casks being tapped and sampled. Citizens can then buy wine on the spot that they're "sure of."

## Serious Carriage Crash on Sul Street

Serious Carriage Crash on Sul Street

Waterdeep -- Three draft horses were injured early today, a delivery cart destroyed, and the display window of Aumra's Fine Potteryworks (on west-side Sul north of Zarimtar) demolished by a flying cart-wheel, when an illegal race ended in disaster.

Two men are in Watch custody, but no names have been released pending further investigation. There's talk that the guilty fled, and those arrested were drunks betting on the race, not participants.

The long, straight north-south streets in Sea and North Wards have for years hosted various pell-mell races and chases. Sul Street in particular seems a favored site for so-called "chariot challenges." These are cart or carriage races wherein citizens -- usually young apprentices finished with their deliveries but still in possession of small open carts belonging to their masters -- dash in pairs, almost always from north to south, to an agreed- upon endpoint. Local residents often complain about noisy cartwheels, hooves, and shouts or oaths, but some say the loudest complainers are those who bet on losing racers. Impromptu betting is the norm at such races.

## Shapechanger on the Loose!

Shapechanger on the Loose!

Waterdeep -- Shoppers on the Street of the Tusks in Trades Ward were startled yesterday by a lone being that ran south down the street, changing its shape repeatedly as it made various screams, wails, and grunts. No one noticed where it came from, and after stumbling hurriedly down the busy street, it turned east into even busier Vellaar's Lane -- where no one seems to have noticed it (suggesting either a magical disappearance or an immediate cessation of beast-shapes).

Along its brief run, the being passed two startled members of the City Watch, who were off duty and buying pastries and beer for a walk and talk\*; a clerk from the Palace on official duty; and several well-respected senior officials of various guilds. All agree that they saw such things as tentacles, elephant heads, stag antlers, "dozens of flowing, opening eyes and mouths," wings, and a shark tail. It's not known if they witnessed an illusion; the results of a magical prank, curse, or punishment; an experimental spell gone wrong; or something more sinister. Persons with any information about the shapechanging display are asked to report what they know to the Watch; testimony will be kept in strict confidence.

\*A meal taken while walking and talking in the streets, in this case as they strolled home from work.

## Sharp Rise in Silversheen

Waterdeep -- Last tenday's announcement that the sculptor Marleon Krendlemar (of Swords Street, Castle Ward) intends to cast his next gigantic statue in silversheen has led to steep increases in the overcounter price of the shiny make-metal. Sometimes called "alloys," make-metals are mixtures of smelted metals such as iron and zinc, often with small amounts of more valuable metals, and strange "secret ingredients." The alchemists who produce make-metals always keep amounts, processes, and precise ingredients secret, citing the perilous nature of the work (which all too often ends in poisonings, acid fleshmelt, or deadly explosions).

Silversheen, the glossy, mirror-bright silver "metal" seen in many local decorative castings, is smooth, heavy, and too brittle to see service in armor, fastenings, struts, or cookware. Devised decades ago by Eremaun Uthchantaer of Amphail, silversheen saw the secrets of its creation "get out" when the alchemist died and his dozen-some workers scattered, each taking its secrets. Waterdeep is currently home to at least seven silversheen makers; their wares are sold as finished castings or in "melt-bars" the size of a human forearm (formerly about 1 gp each; now 5 gp or more).

## Ship Sinks at Docks

The caravel Laughing Lady, sailing out of Myratma in Tethyr and owned by Phandro Emburrgel of that city (a wealthy shipper and investments-procurer who owns five other trading vessels), sank overnight at the Southlook wharf, at the foot of Net Street.

The Lady arrived in Waterdeep yestermorn, and her cargo of milled barley had been safely offloaded into leased warehouses off Asteril's Way. Emburrgel's agents in Waterdeep were said to be assembling a cargo of mixed trade goods for the voyage back to Myratma, but their identities and whereabouts remain unknown as of this writing.

The Guard and the Watch are both investigating the causes of the sinking, even as wizards of the Watchful Order and Raulinvur's Ropehaul barges are raising the ship. According to Raulinvur, the Lady will first be taken onto the beach nigh the East Torchtower known to folk of Dock Ward as "the Stinking Sands." This will be done to dry the vessel out and to see if her timbers retain enough strength to be worth a rebuild. If not, the ship will be broken up for salvage wood. If so, the work will be done in the keel-dock of Arnagus the Shipwright "in the Elbow" (the angle enclosed to the north and east by Dock Street).

## Snake Sickness Claims Two

Snake Sickness Claims Two in Dock Ward

Waterdeep -- The bodies of two sailors recovered by the Watch from alleyways in Dock Ward were burned on a seaward pyre on Mount Waterdeep today after examination by Palace officials. The nameless sailors (southerners, by appearance) are thought to have come to the city aboard one of three vessels that brought cargoes of mritha-fruit and tlarm-melons from Lundeth, then took aboard armor and shields bound for Almraiven and departed Waterdeep seven days ago.

Watch speakers are of the opinion that when the sailors fell ill, their own crews drugged them and deliberately left them behind to die. The sailors perished of a little-known condition (thought to be very contagious but only through intimate contact) that's been called "the snake sickness." This mysterious affliction is thought to have originated in the Mhair Jungles.

It causes the surface of the skin to crack in small roundlets resembling scales. Some who are stricken recover completely, some regain full health but retain this 'scaly' appearance, but most perish. When nearing death, victims lose balance and fall to ground. Once there, they writhe with arms pressed to sides, akin to the slithering of a snake. The disease has no known cure sickness.

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Waterdeep News

## Strange Fire on Cage Street

Strange Fire on Cage Street

Waterdeep -- A high-coin gown, cloak, and fineries shop on the "northwest block" of Cage Street in Castle Ward erupted in flames yesterday -- bright, vivid blue flames that lacked heat and smoke, consumed nothing, and soon vanished. Staff of Mhalavo's Brightstar could give no reason for the mysterious conflagration, and they insisted it was no "bid for fame" on their part.

Lady Shopmatron Daztriiya Ghallowglond opined that the blaze was "obviously magic . . . and so many who use such forces are malicious and untrustworthy, even deranged." Ghallowglond believes mischief was a more likely reason than madness, and "if it was an attempt to distract staff so as to steal our superb wares, it failed utterly -- as such attempts always will."

Ghallowglond warned would-be thieves that the Brightstar is guarded by "unseen and very attentive eyes." She felt the Watch "responded too slowly, given our importance and proximity to Ahghairon's Tower and the Palace," and expects them to prevent "further problems," while the Brightstar will remain "the first choice of discerning courtiers, as well as of visitors to our city having important civic or social engagements, who desire to be clad appropriately.".

## Tharantra Husband-Hunting Again

Waterdeep -- Notorious local "lady of pleasure" Nauloene Tharantra (of Sevenlamps Cut, Castle Ward), who for years ran the Heartflame festhall on Snail Street in Dock Ward until the Night of Pirates, is seeking a husband once more.

Tharantra has been wed nine times. Five husbands died (at least two, rumors whisper, with Tharantra's direct help); two fled Waterdeep loudly denouncing the Flouncing Flame's freespending, loving-all ways; one was revealed as a doppelganger and slain in the streets; and Tharantra threw out her last (the Innarlithan merchant Mharelk Thorlkan), paying to have their union broken. Announcing herself "sufficiently recovered from Thorlkan's cruelties," Tharantra took the stage at the Splendid Falcon theater and dancehall (Street of Bells, Castle Ward, east-front four doors north of the Pampered Traveler inn) in a striking gown made of crisscrossing chains and teardrop blue diamond "dangles," to tell the city she's seeking a mate once more.

The Night of Pirates befell late in the Uktar of the Year of the Shield. The pirate-lord Elro Starankh of the Nelanther, and three of his crews (ninety-six seadogs strong), visited the Heartflame and offered to wed every working-lass there. The bride-price was twenty dragons per head to Tharantra and ten thousand dragons each to the brides. All but two accepted, and Starankh set fire to the Heartflame in a wild, dancing celebration. The ornate Arrowsar Apartments now stand on the festhall site.

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## Thongolir Heir Seeks Wife

Waterdeep -- Dolerphus Thongolir IV has put out a public call for a "kind, gentle woman who loves to cook, knows how to ride, won't disapprove of frivolity, hard drinking, or long hours of neglect while I attend to work, and is willing to share my bed." Thongolir promises to make his bride more wealthy than most women ever dream of becoming (his generally well-thought-of family is rich indeed), and the "work" he refers to is the family business concerns of calligraphy, limning, and printing.

Questioned bluntly as to the reason for his unusual request, the tall, slender, and handsome Thongolir heir replied that he now believes he can find a suitable life-mate only by casting his net wider afield. He has become disgusted by the predatory courtesans, daughters of ambitious wealthy merchants, and jaded, dishonest noblewomen who keep trying to snare him.

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## Treasure Found in Sea Ward Well

Waterdeep -- City wells are covered to prevent casual contaminations (by the tossing into them of refuse, nightsoil buckets, pet bodies, and the bodies of murder victims or those folk hope to soon become murder victims), and both dredged and inspected regularly. Palace speakers say occasional stolen items and incriminating weapons are found therein, plus dropped water "dippers" and occasionally rings or other small personal items, but it's unlikely any substantial treasure could be successfully hidden in a well without immediate discovery.

However, the Courtyard of the Well north of Whim Street has apparently hosted a magically concealed treasure for some years. Watchful Order member Dormallen Rathanagor (of Rathangor's Mysteries, The Street of Silks, Castle Ward) was demonstrating an arcane eye spell to an apprentice yestermorn, demonstrating how it could see down the well if a light source was lowered in the water-bucket, when his inadvertent use of some arcane words triggered a magic left in place by someone else -- and a block of stone in the wall of the well flew out of its socket and up into his hands, yielding up its small but valuable cache of gemstones.

Rathangor steadfastly refuses to reveal what gems he gained or the words he uttered. The Palace has issued a public warning that the penalty for anyone caught "disturbing" city wells will be the same as for well poisonings: instant, on-the-spot execution.

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## Woman Sought in Stabbing

Tentacle-Faced Woman Sought in Book Street Stabbing

Waterdeep -- A tall, curvaceous, dusky-skinned human woman wearing a decorative veil (as many wealthy Waterdhavian women do when facing the stinks of the docks, slaughterhouses, and livestock pens of the southern city) is sought by the Watch today after she murdered someone on an open street at dawn in Dock Ward.

Witnesses say the unfamiliar-to-all woman, probably an outlander, encountered a fishmonger in Book Street before the doors of the Sunset Satyr tavern (east-front Book Street, north-fronting Candle Lane). She spoke with him briefly, and then drew a "needle-thin rapier of great length" and thrust it through him. All agree the conversation was neither friendly nor heated, no oaths nor emphatic words were exchanged, and the attack was a complete surprise. Pierced through the heart, the victim (later identified as Aldo Nurlamyn of the Dancing Marlin Market, Net Street, Dock Ward) fell dead, and the woman strode away.

One Itham Flarmar (of Stathor's Boots and Weathercloaks in Book Street) accosted her, but she whirled and slashed at him with her still-drawn rapier until he fled -- whereupon she walked "purposefully but unhurrying" into Drakiir Street, where she disappeared.

Flarmar tore off her veil, and says he found himself facing "an angry but beautiful face, with very large, dark brown eyes, a pert nose -- but from her upper lip and cheekbones down, all was a writhing tangle of fanged snake-heads, framing a sucking mouth!" Other witnesses saw no snake-heads in their brief glimpses, but described the woman's lower face as "a mass of coiling, slithering tentacles" or "reaching eels."

The Watch has retained Nurlamyn's body and the mysterious woman's veil for examination, and they ask anyone seeing "a tall, dusky-skinned woman with a covering or anything unusual about her face" to contact them immediately.

# WATERDEEP POST

### Bubbled Beverage Battle Barrels On

LaCrosse Potions has seen a drop in sales of their popular bubbled water as more patrons turn to rising competitor Bublé. LaCrosse Potions broke into the business with their bubbled water almost thirty years ago, but Bublé has been selling potions across Faerûn for over eighty years. LaCrosse saw a surge in popularity five years ago as high society wanted a beverage option less filling than wine. Bublé followed suit with a bubbled water of their own, producing it at a lower cost due to their considerable resources. It remains to be seen if LaCrosse can continue to appeal to consumers.

### “Book Of Faces” Confiscated Amidst Privacy Concerns

Clark Zulderbug, a Goldenfields native, has been placed on probation in Waterdeep. He had been assembling something he called the “Book of Faces,” which was a large tome filled with the personal information of many Waterdeep citizens. Everything from names and addresses to personal likes and dislikes accompanied a sketch of each person’s portrait. According to interviews with the people found in the book, they willingly gave up their personal information in exchange for a small stone imbued with the Message cantrip. More than one person had later found their information unexpectedly disseminated to a stranger. It is not known what Zulderbug was ultimately planning on doing with the tome.

### Ferry Company Under Fire After Forcibly Removing Passenger

United Ferryways has lost the faith of the public after forcibly removing a passenger with a valid ticket. The ferry company needed a passenger to disembark because the trip had been overbooked. When no one volunteered to take a later ferry in exchange for a ticket voucher, the company was in what they called an “involuntary disembarking situation.” They chose someone to remove. When the passenger, who has not yet been identified, refused to give up the seat he’d already paid for, two guards boarded the ferry to forcibly remove him. The passenger was dragged off the ferry with an injury to his face, though it is unclear if the injury was an accident.

### Precious Painting Propelled To Pricelessness

A Shanksy painting was recently put up for auction (a rare occurrence indeed) at Northelby’s in Waterdeep. It sold for ninety-five thousand gold to Alith Belabranta. The moment the gavel struck the podium, a hidden glyph was triggered on the panting, and it launched into the air and tore itself into exactly ninety-five pieces. Mending spells were ineffective in restoring the painting to its original state. It is now assumed to be worth far more than what was paid for it at auction.

# LIST OF WATERDEEP BROADSHEETS

### Burnstel's Oracular

### Calagar's Caravans

### Daily Luck

### Daily Trumpet



1 Daily Trumpet

''The Daily Trumpet'' is the name of both the most widely read broadsheet in the city of Waterdeep, as well as the building in which it is produced. The Daily Trumpet building is located in the Adventurer's Quarter, South Ward, Waterdeep. | Local news and gossip of questionable authenticity

This old stone two-story building, home to one of Waterdeep's more infa¬mous broadsheets, is constantly in need of cleaning due to "dissenting opinions armed, alas, with rotten eggs and veg¬etables," according to the Trumpet's editor. The broad¬sheets are printed and distributed each afternoon, posted on the various kiosks throughout the city and available for 1 cp each. Each tenday, the Trumpet reprints each of its previous broadsheets and adds two pages of editorials and editorial cartoons by an anonymous artist, creating a small 12-page folio that is sold by street criers for 1 sp. Despite its somewhat sketchy facts in reporting the social goings-on inside the parties of North and Sea Wards (Hlanta Melshimber still resents the insinuations that she had spoiled, inferior wines at her last party, while Ultas Maer- nos is still demanding reparations for a report that he was affiliated with a rumored evil cult), the Trumpet has many eyes and ears and much of what is reported tends to be found true. While the editor, one Carson Innes, is given to "provocative and enticing" headlines and reporting, he does tend to steer clear of outright libel and definitely takes care not to openly insult or question the Lords and their rulings; this is all that keeps him and his staff of 12 from being exiled outside the city walls.

### Dock Ward Dispatch

### Horkle's Gossip Cauldron

### Merchants' True Friend

### Mouth of True Waterdeep

say very rude and inflammatory things about Lords, Palace officials, nobles, and other socially prominent citizens

### Lady Amaranth's Falcon

(for the young, fashionable gently born lady)

### Hulbrant’s Record

"Noble Fashions • Monthly

Once a month, all of Waterdhavian society seeks out the Record. Its pages contain illustration-heavy articles discussing who is wearing what, how it was made and by whom, and most importantly, what the editor Hulbrant thought of it. Waterdhavians delight in recognizing their neighbors and friends in the Record. They tend to be a bit more ambivalent about their own names appearing in it, of course: most of the time, it comes with opprobrium about choices in garment and presentation. But the times that it features high praise for stunning style? Why that is nearly enough to make it all worth it, and is certainly an easy way to gain quick renown and invitations to a positive avalanche of dinners and parties.

A bland, exhaustive catalog of who was seen where—and what they were wearing at the time | Once a month, all of Waterdhavian society seeks out the Record. Its pages contain illustration-heavy articles discussing who is wearing what, how it was made and by whom, and most importantly, what the editor Hulbrant thought of it. Waterdhavians delight in recognizing their neighbors and friends in the Record. They tend to be a bit more ambivalent about their own names appearing in it, of course: most of the time, it comes with opprobrium about choices in garment and presentation. But the times that it features high praise for stunning style? Why that is nearly enough to make it all worth it, and is certainly an easy way to gain quick renown and invitations to a positive avalanche of dinners and parties.

a bland but exhaustive catalog of who was seen where and wearing what, or will be seen where and with whom)."

### New Waterdeep Truth

### North Wind

"light, sunny, and sardonic, a recent broadsheet specializing in lots of illustrations of fashionable garments and easy-on-the-eyes folk wearing them, ""lucky winner"" contests with prizes as large as 66 gp (but usually averaging around 25 dragons), and arch commentary on the airs of the wealthy and ""crusty old nobles.""features illustrations of fashionable garments and easy-on-the-eyes models and gossip about the higher circles DS39

a recent broadsheet specializing in lots of illustrations of fashionable garments and easy-on-the-eyes folk wearing them, ""lucky winner"" contests with prizes as large as 66 gp (but usually averaging around 25 dragons), and arch commentary on the airs of the wealthy and ""crusty old nobles."""

### Pleased Toes

### Sharkroarer

Satirical broadsheet featuring wax­cut illustrations lampooning popular people and current events

Horth Sharlark's Broadsheets: Printer (Broadsheets)

""True secrets"" books have yielded most of Waterdeep's bestsellers thus far, in a busy, bustling mercantile city. Most long-term citizens read voraciously for pleasure and ""don't want to miss"" anything important that could be an opportunity to make money (and so try to keep abreast of any topic that strikes the popular fancy). Like the broadsheets, almost all Waterdhavian chapbooks are printed in Common, and so travel well, and are often found in unexpectedly distant places in Faerûn.

### Thaeler's Coinwatch

### The Eternal Dawn

Many nondevout Waterdhavians occasionally pick up a copy of The Eternal Dawn, the Lathanderite broadsheet, because it concerns itself with new ventures, new organizations, near-future plans, and probable politics just ahead. Like the "gilded broadsheets" of the rich and noble, the devout broadsheets tend to cost three nibs to a shard per issue.

it concerns itself with new ventures, new organizations, near-future plans, and probable politics just ahead. Like the "gilded broadsheets" of the rich and noble, the devout broadsheets tend to cost three nibs to a shard per issue.

### The Mocking Minstrel

Censurous Public Opinion & Gossip | Daily

One of the many "secret broadsheets," no one claims to really know where their copies of the Mocking Minstrel came from: "Surely someone just left it behind," they all claim. The reason for this is fairly understandable, for the Minstrel has been publicly censured by the magistrates and even the Lords on more than one occasion, so vitriol-filled and satirical are its mockeries of public and famous figures of Waterdeep. No one is spared its barbed quill: Open Lords, high priests, archmages, guildmasters, noble xatriarchs, one and all have felt the lash of the Minstrel. To some degree, everyone knows that while not strictly fiction, the reporting in the rag does veer strongly into inflammatory versions of the truth. Unfortunately, most readers are content to read (and repeat) the worst about most folks who make an appearance in the Minstrel, up until it is their names on the page.

### The New Waterdhavian

### The Sword in the Sun

### The Vigilant Citizen

"Solemn “nothing but the facts” broadsheet covering local news | the most reputable broadsheet, : the solemn, ""nothing but the facts"", trusted by the majority of Waterdhavians but taken by very few as their only reading thanks to its dry style | Solemn “nothing but the facts” broadsheet covering local news

trusted by the majority of Waterdhavians but taken by very few as their only reading thanks to its dry style, and the light, sunny, and sardonic "

### Waterdeep Herald

Halivar's Lords and Ladies

reports all the news and nasty gossip about the "Old Nobility" in a cynical manner, but fawns upon the "New Nobility" of the wealthy but not yet ennobled.

### Merchants' True Friend

### Waterdeep News

Waterdeep News was a newspaper based in Waterdeep on the Sword Coast North, published daily in the early 1370s DR. It reported on a variety of current political matters, crimes, social events, gossip and unusual happenings in the city. It was one of the largest daily newspapers in Faerûn.

### The Anklet

### Waterdeep Post

### Waterdeep Times



### Waterdeep Today

### Waterdeep Wartrumpet

### Waterdeep Warhorn

### Waterdeep Wazoo

Gossip & Japery | Tendaily



Catty gossip, mocking recounting of important public and private events, and stright-up bawdy jokes are the order of the day when it comes to the Wazoo, and even those who purport to hate broadsheets often chuckle at the Wazoo's content. One of the recurring columns in the Wazoo mocks the nobility quite openly using the old joking "Glunder & Bladderblat" names. Specifically, a column by that name takes something ridiculous done by a real member of the nobility and reports on it, changing the name of the ones involved to either Glunder (if the noble was being stodgy, highnosed, and tightvested) or Bladderblat (if the noble was ridiculous, extravagant, or just plain without dignity).

### Mouth of True Waterdeep

say very rude and inflammatory things about Lords, Palace officials, nobles, and oVther socially prominent citizens

## Straight Talk from the Docks

Dock & Newcomer/Visitor Stories • Daily

A broadsheet by this name has come and gone over the years in Waterdeep. The most-recent version of it has been around for about twenty years or so, something of a record for the name. Like previous versions, the Straight Talk focuses on the sights around the docks, of strange cargos and fascinating visitors. The gossip of sailors often makes its way into the rag, discussing the sinking of ships, attack by monsters, and the predations of pirates. It also advertises hiring of sailors and reviews of craftsmen and businesses that cater to the needs of ships.

# LINKS AND SOURCES

Campaign Guide (CoS), p.32-35

Running the Realms (2nd Edition box set), p.20 and 24

<http://archive.wizards.com/default.asp?x=dnd/archfr/wdn>

[Ed Greenwood](https://forgottenrealms.fandom.com/wiki/Ed_Greenwood) (2005-08-24 – 2007-03-01). [Waterdeep News archive](http://web.archive.org/web/20090602131726/http:/www.wizards.com/default.asp?x=dnd/archfr/wdn). Waterdeep News. [Wizards of the Coast](https://forgottenrealms.fandom.com/wiki/Wizards_of_the_Coast). Archived from [the original](http://archive.wizards.com/default.asp?x=dnd/archfr/wdn) on 2009-06-02. Retrieved on 2016-08-15.

<http://www.oakthorne.net/wiki/index.php?title=Broadcryers_of_Waterdeep>

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