

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 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 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).

The Waterdeep Herald

Tarsakh Edition

1370DR, Year of the Tankard

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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

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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

1370 DR/Year of the Tankard

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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.