Hammer Edition

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Tarsakh Edition

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mirtul Edition

1371 DR/Year of the Unstrung Harp

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Kythorn Edition

1371DR, Year of the Unstrung Harp

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Flamerule Edition

1371 DR/Year of the Unstrung Harp

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Eleasias Edition

1371 DR/Year of the Unstrung Harp

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Eleint Edition

1371DR, Year of the Unstrung Harp

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Marpenoth Edition

1371DR, Year of the Unstrung Harp

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| MARPENOTH 1 |

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

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

| MARPENOTH 4 |

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

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

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

| MARPENOTH 9 |

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

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

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

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

| MARPENOTH 13 |

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

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

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

| MARPENOTH 15 |

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

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

| MARPENOTH 16 |

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

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

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

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

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

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

| MARPENOTH 19 |

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

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

| MARPENOTH 22 |

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

| MARPENOTH 24 |

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

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

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

| MARPENOTH 29 |

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

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

Uktar Edition

1371DR, Year of the Unstrung Harp

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| UKTAR 4 |

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

| UKTAR 7 |

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

| UKTAR 9 |

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

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

| UKTAR 10 |

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

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

| UKTAR 11 |

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

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

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

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

| UKTAR 12 |

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

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

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

| UKTAR 13 |

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

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

| UKTAR 17-20 |

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

| UKTAR 23 |

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

| UKTAR 26 |

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

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

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

| CALENDAR DAY - The Feast of the Moon |

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

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

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