

AGE 12+



## MURDER IN BALDUR'S GATE™

ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTERS OF 1ST – 3RD LEVEL

FORGOTTEN REALMS®



# A TALE OF THREE CITIES

Baldur's Gate is a city on the verge of war—a simmering stewpot of social tensions where even the smallest drop of unrest might cause it to boil over and turn the city against itself. Walls cut Baldur's Gate into three cities. The rich live atop bluffs protected from the bourgeoisie. Their homes cling to the slopes that literally prevent member of the middle class from rising above their stations. Beyond the protection of the walls, the city's many outcasts live with no law aside from that enforced by the daggers of thieves.

In this powder keg, an old threat flickers to new life. The plot of a murdered deity finally comes to fruition, resurrecting the god of assassins. Bhaal will live again. And in the city that once thwarted his rebirth, three prominent figures unwittingly compete to herald his return.

As the bodies clog the streets, can the heroes keep the city from tearing itself apart? Can they prevent Bhaal from claiming the mind and soul of one of the city's most powerful citizens? Or, as they battle their way to the top of the heap, will Bhaal's favor fall upon one of them?

Only one thing is certain: There will be blood.

## FOR THE DM

*Murder in Baldur's Gate*™ is an adventure designed for five 1st-level characters. It doesn't work like a typical adventure in which the heroes stop the villains and save the day. Instead, the adventure is about the experience the players create as the drama of events unfolds. As the adventure plays out, it pushes those events out of the PCs' control. However, not being in control doesn't mean not having something to do. The players should increasingly feel pulled in different directions, with too many fires to put out and too little time. If you or they get stuck for what to do, consider using a neutral party such as Coran (Campaign Guide, page 38) to give the players a hint or an idea of what to do next.

You will need to improvise details as you run various events and encounters. You might need to produce tactical maps on the spur of the moment, create minor nonplayer characters on the fly, or decide what happens when the characters try something unexpected.

*Murder in Baldur's Gate* turns the heroes loose in one of Faerûn's great cities and puts few limitations on what the characters can do—so be ready for anything. When players try outrageous actions, don't stifle their attempts because they complicate your plans. Instead, use the opportunity to complicate their plans right back.

## Game Rules and Statistics

You can use the rules for 3rd Edition (v.3.5), 4th Edition, or D&D Next when playing this adventure. Few game rules and no monster statistics are included in this book. You can find that material online at [DungeonsandDragons.com/Sundering](http://DungeonsandDragons.com/Sundering). You can print out the statistics or copy them into a file for your personal use. Throughout the adventure, a monster name in bold indicates a monster that is available in the statistics packet.

In addition, the adventure usually does not specify the number of adversaries the heroes might face. This absence is intended to give you the flexibility to adjust encounters based on what edition you're running, and what is a suitable challenge based on the circumstances and the condition of the party.

This adventure calls for ability checks rather than skill checks. Depending on which edition's rules you're using, replace the ability checks with skill checks that are appropriate for the task being attempted.

## THE SUNDERING

*Murder in Baldur's Gate* is set during the time of the Sundering, a period of years after 1479 when many of the gods designate mortals to be their Chosen. These individuals are granted fragments of their deities' power in order to achieve certain aims before the overgod, Ao, recreates the Tablets of Fate. During the Sundering, gods that were thought lost or dead return, and age-old alliances and hierarchies of the deities are thrown into upheaval. *Murder in Baldur's Gate* tells just one of these stories. Others play out in the *Legacy of the Crystal Shard*™ adventure and the Sundering novel series, starting with R. A. Salvatore's *The Companions*.

## BACKGROUND

During the Time of Troubles, the gods walked the world after being forced from the heavens by Ao, the overgod, in punishment for their arrogance. Bhaal, the Lord of Murder and god of assassins, was himself murdered during this time. Yet he had foreseen his demise. In preparation, Bhaal took mortal form and coupled with many mortal creatures, spreading his divine essence ever thinner as each child was born. After his death, the children of Bhaal—the so-called Bhaalspawn—grew up haunted by dreams of death and found themselves imbued with strange powers. Age had little effect upon them once they had grown to maturity, but as each Bhaalspawn was killed—often by a sibling—the divinity of Bhaal became more and more concentrated in his still-living sons and daughters.

One Bhaalspawn named Abdel Adrian resisted the murderous nature imparted to him by his father. When

he grew to adulthood, he set out to right the wrongs committed by his siblings and those who sought to control the rebirth of Bhaal or tap that power. Many of his battles took place in or near Baldur's Gate, and so the city became Adrian's home of sorts, and its citizens looked to him as their hero. Adrian eventually settled down in the city, was inducted as a leader among its mercenary military, the Flaming Fist, and was elected a duke for life. Thanks to his divine heritage, Adrian has lived a long time, but so has his one remaining half-sibling, Viekang. He and Adrian met briefly many years ago when Viekang was a fretful ne'er-do-well. Decades of dodging assassinations and battling enterprising Bhaalspawn honed Viekang's murderous impulses to a razor's edge. Now he has come to Baldur's Gate to end it all, one way or another.

Abdel believes that since he is the last Bhaalspawn alive (to the best of his knowledge) and Bhaal has not arisen, the god of murder is well and truly dead. He's about to find out just how wrong he is.

## STRUCTURE

This adventure starts when Viekang and Adrian face off. Afterward, three prominent locals (one of whom might become the Chosen of Bhaal) separately approach the characters. Each seeks the heroes' aid to further his or her personal objectives. Sadly, there is no good guy among them. Whichever faction the characters associate with is just as violent and corrupt as any other one, as the players will learn in time.

The party's initial decision to ally with one or more of these factions kicks off a series of stages wherein one or more of the events instigated by each of the principal agents takes place.

As the Dungeon Master, you determine how the events of a stage play out and whether it makes sense for the heroes to get involved. To keep the tension high, you might have the characters hear about two events of a stage in quick succession, so they have to run from one location to another without rest. Alternatively, you might have two or more of a stage's events happen simultaneously, so the players have to choose which problem to solve or whether to split the party to tackle more than one issue. If the story arcs become unwieldy, you could space out events over the course of a day or more, or have the heroes hear about certain events after they have occurred, preventing the characters from getting involved. In addition, you could reorder or skip events to account for players' choices.

The players likely will realize before the final stage that all three agents are pushing Baldur's Gate toward ruin. At that point, the characters might attempt to kill one or more of the agents to solve the problem. But that choice puts them in line for Bhaal's favor—they've chosen murder as the solution to their problems, after all. If the characters kill all three antagonists, one of them becomes the Chosen of Bhaal.

## GETTING AROUND

The Gate is a crowded, bustling city, so moving within it is time-consuming. Walking is the only practical option for getting around, since riding animals and draft animals aren't allowed in the Lower and Upper cities.

The inset map on the DM screen identifies the city's districts and neighborhoods. Walking across a district to the next takes 15 minutes under normal circumstances or 10 minutes if characters push. Thus, if the characters need to carry a message from the Harbormaster's Office in Eastway to the High Hall in Temples, the walk through Heapside and the Steeps to Temples would take 30 to 45 minutes.

This is a slow pace, about one mile per hour. But Baldur's Gate packs a lot of people into a small space. On any given day, thick crowds are full of street performers, sticky-fingered urchins, Flaming Fist and Watch patrols, sailors, and travelers and traders. Stacks of cargo clog up intersections, traffic jams halt passage, and steep and drizzle-slick roads put unlucky passersby on their backsides. At night, when the Upper City's streets are clear and the Lower City's crowds have thinned somewhat, the heroes could move faster. But darkness, fog, and patrols might still slow them.

Because of the crowds, the peddlers, the bureaucrats, the toll collectors, and the air of tension over the city, every action and transaction takes longer than it would in a less congested and perilous place. If the characters are at Wyrm's Crossing when the High Hall goes up in a fiery blast, they are at least an hour away from the action. Capitalize on your opportunities to describe the tightly packed stalls of the Wide; the steep, narrow streets of Bloomridge; the teeming alleys of Blackgate; and the maze-like, walled environs of Little Calimshan.

## "OFFSTAGE" EVENTS

As you run the adventure, many of the events described in this book will happen without the characters' involvement. Don't think of this as the heroes missing out on something. The elements that characters do not take part in are as important to the story as the intrigues in which they become entangled.

The adventurers should hear news about all events that happen in the city, even those in which they do not take an active hand. Attacks from razor-wielding maniacs and other unexpected sources make for exciting, unsettling news, regardless of their targets.

Also keep in mind that word of mouth is rarely wholly accurate. Have some fun with the news as it circles the city. Just ensure that players understand that whatever is happening is occurring citywide and that their characters aren't the center of it. The upheaval in Baldur's Gate isn't about the adventurers, and it won't wait for them. But if they act, they might prevent a catastrophe and save lives.

# BHAAL'S FAVOR TRACK

The climactic scene of *Murder in Baldur's Gate* will unfold in a certain way, depending on which of the three central characters succeeds in gaining Bhaal's favor. To represent Bhaal's Favor Track, jot down the names of the three antagonists—Rilsa Rael, a kingpin in the Guild; Ulde Ravengard, the marshal of the Flaming Fist; and Torlin Silvershield, a duke on the Council of Four—on a piece of note paper. Each event in the adventure is connected to at least one of these individuals; a small portrait in the text of an event indicates which one is directly associated with that event. If an event occurs more or less as described because the adventurers failed to prevent it or helped it happen, the figure associated with that event rises one rank on Bhaal's Favor Track.

Keep track of the characters' ranks behind your screen, but do not reveal them to the players. The finale of the adventure is tied to whoever has the highest rank.

## IT BEGINS WITH BLOOD

On the day the characters arrive in Baldur's Gate, the city's favorite citizen, Duke Abdel Adrian, is leading the public celebration of Returning Day, the anniversary of Balduran's historic return to Gray Harbor. In moments, Viekang will attempt to murder Adrian to release the spark of Bhaal's essence that is contained within Adrian. This initial event takes place in the Wide.

### When the players are ready, read:

*The light drizzle isn't dampening the festive mood emanating from the gawkers and the hawkers of wares in the Wide, a marketplace packed with people from all strata of society and stalls selling exotic Faerûn goods. Cheerful citizens tightly wreath a platform erected along the Wide's eastern edge. Someone wearing an official-looking sash is speaking, but the crowd's noise drowns his words.*

*Moments later, the throng erupts in wild cheers as an older, surprisingly muscular man takes center stage. The ovation continues for minutes unabated. A nearby wizened female eyes you with amusement before hollering, "This here's Duke Abdel Adrian," as if that explains everything.*

*The duke, smiling broadly, bows to the crowd and then gestures for quiet. The crowd obeys, except for one person, who shouts, "We love you, Abdel!"*

*The duke responds, "I love you, too, Baldur's Gate," and the assemblage explodes in deafening hurrahs.*

*Another wave of the speaker's hand silences the crowd. For several minutes, the duke heaps civic praise on Balduran, the founder of Baldur's Gate; expounds on the virtues of shared opportunity; and waxes poetic about the future.*

*As he talks, you notice a disturbance to your right. Someone is pushing roughly toward the platform. A cloaked and*

*hooded figure emerges from the crowd, scrambles onto the podium, and strides toward Adrian, short sword in hand.*

The other officials scatter, leaving Adrian alone on the podium with Viekang, the only other living Bhaal-spawn. Watch guards move toward the stage, but the panicking crowd impedes their progress and prevents them from using their crossbows effectively. The heroes are closer to the stage, and it's up to them to intervene.

As mentioned earlier, the statistics for nonplayer characters and monsters in this adventure can be found online at [DungeonsandDragons.com/Sundering](http://DungeonsandDragons.com/Sundering). But you need not use the rules to play out Adrian and Viekang's fight if you would prefer to describe it to the players. You can have some of Viekang's thugs confront the characters if they try to intervene.

Adrian and his assailant are almost perfectly matched in skill, but Viekang's weapon gives him the advantage. To resolve matters quickly, roll a d6 for Adrian and a d10 for Viekang each round. When one of them rolls 2 or more higher than his opponent, the winner has struck a killing blow. If the characters intervene, assume Viekang and **Abdel Adrian** have half their hit points remaining.

When either Viekang or Adrian dies, the survivor makes an involuntary, bone-crackling, flesh-tearing transformation as Bhaal's essence concentrates into one being. The victor morphs into the hulking, blood-soaked, corpse-like form of the **Bhaalspawn Slayer**.

The silent onlookers stand transfixed as the Bhaal-spawn momentarily exults over its foe's corpse before leaping into the crowd and rending skulls from torsos. Pandemonium and panic reign in the Wide as the adventurers fight the Bhaalspawn Slayer. The Bhaal-spawn Slayer fights to the death. After the fiend has fallen, the Watch swiftly sets out to restore order.

The heroes can't know it at this point, but the Bhaalspawn Slayer's death resurrects Bhaal. The god's long slumber and the many years Adrian's good soul encased him has left the Lord of Murder weak. Thus, he cannot yet do more than subtly influence people who harbor murderous intentions. Bhaal swiftly fixates on the three antagonists and begins calculating ways to use them to whip the tendrils of fear drifting through the Gate into a tempest. Already, some Baldurians who remember Adrian's origin are whispering the Lord of Murder's name.

If the adventurers ask about the transformation, most folk are ignorant. But the three antagonists, any sages of city lore, the heroes might meet and long-lived individuals such as Coran (*Murder in Baldur's Gate Campaign Guide*, page 38) can outline the history of the Bhaalspawn. None of them suspect that Bhaal has returned. They assume that a ritual or something grander than the fight in the Wide would be necessary. If he is asked, Duke Silvershield does link the assassin

to the mysterious cults he is concerned about and suggests that the attacker might have been a deranged follower of the dead god Bhaal.

## INTRODUCTORY STAGE

Immediately following the Bhaalspawn Slayer's death, the antagonists separately approach the heroes to ask for aid. They see the adventurers as ambitious go-getters who could be useful to their plans for Baldur's Gate. All three set out to recruit the characters.

The first to reach out is Duke Torlin Silvershield.

### Silvershield's Invitation

A few hearty folk step from the stunned crowd to congratulate and thank the characters for their quick action. Among them is a young man, darkly handsome and graceful, who is dressed in a sumptuous robe. Imbralym Skoond, Silvershield's trusted wizard, smoothly clasps one of the character's hands, leans in to whisper a message, inclines his head, and slips back into the crowd.

**When Skoond whispers to the character, read:**

*"My name is Imbralym Skoond. My master bids me to discover who took Abdel Adrian's life. If you wish to save Baldur's Gate from the rot festering inside it, meet me at the Three Old Kegs. I will be there until four bells."*

### Ravengard's Invitation

After a few more Watch members and citizens speak with the characters, a powerfully built man strides toward them. The crowd parts as he approaches. Emblazoned on his tabard is a clenched gauntlet wreathed in fire—the symbol of the Flaming Fist.

**When he speaks to the heroes, read:**

*"Greetings. I am Ulder Ravengard, commander of Wyrm's Rock and—as of right now—marshal of the Flaming Fist mercenary company. Duke Adrian had been our marshal. The Watch was responsible for his safety here and should have protected him. We are indebted to you."*

*Please meet me at Wyrm's Rock, where we can have a proper introduction. You could be of great service to our city. I hope you do not disprove my good appraisal of you. You'll find I can be a valuable friend."*

*As Ravengard walks away, a dozen hard-bitten, plain-clothes figures melt away from their positions, shadowing the marshal, their eyes prowling the crowd, stalls, and eaves.*

### Rael's Invitation

As the heroes exit the Wide, a bearded young man wearing a deep hood catches one character's eye and beckons him or her to step near. Select a character who is a thief or a rogue, if possible, and mention that

the other person is using hand signals common among underworld types. The figure is helping to straighten a toppled fruit stall.

**When the adventurer draws near, read:**

*The cloaked figure mutters breathily, "You are newcomers here, so you don't know the situation. Don't trust either of those men who spoke to you. If you want to know what is really happening in Baldur's Gate, meet me at the gateway to Little Calimshan at dusk."*

*The figure steps into the crowd and is swiftly out of sight.*

### Decision Time

The requests from the antagonists overlap in time due to the principals' distance from one another, so the characters can't accept all three invitations unless they split up. The whole party could meet two of the individuals, but they would have to cut one meeting short or keep one of their hosts waiting for an hour or more.

Future opportunities to sit down with the agents can occur as the story unfolds. Characters might try to arrange a meeting on their own initiative, or you might decide the timing is right for an antagonist to extend another invitation. Those invitations won't trigger automatically, though, as these ones did. You or the players must set them in motion.

No matter whom the characters meet, they'll need to learn the basic facts about the political structure of Baldur's Gate.

The characters already know that Duke Adrian was a wildly popular figure. As a duke on the Council of Four, he drew a lot of water in the Upper City. He occupied the Flaming Fist's traditional council seat, which made him the middle-class representative of the people. And his lowly beginnings and many charitable works earned him devotion among Outer City dwellers and won him Guild support. Few recall that Adrian was a Bhaalspawn, and most who remember that fact wrongly believed that Adrian was the last of his kind.

The next day, Duke Adrian will receive a somber state funeral. The funeral itself will be cause for some dissension, because the Flaming Fist and the people of the Lower City and the Outer City claim Abdel as their own. They want his burial and monument to be in the Outer City, where all can attend and thereafter visit. But because he was a duke, he is entitled to be placed in the mausoleum of the High Hall. Folk from the Lower City and officers of the Flaming Fist grumble, but in the end, Abdel will repose in the High Hall.

## MEETING SILVERSHIELD

If the heroes meet Imbralym Skoond at the Three Old Kegs, the wizard buys them several rounds of drinks and a delicious meal. Over dinner, he explains the politics of Baldur's Gate, including the dukes, the

Parliament of Peers, and the Watch and the Flaming Fist. He also discusses the criminals of the Guild. Skoond offers a glowing assessment of Duke Torlin Silvershield's vision and leadership in both the council and the temple of Gond. Skoond answers questions fully. In his answers, he always commends Silvershield and the patriars, vilifies the Guild, and guards his own secrets. Finally, he announces, "My lord waits. Please follow me."

Skoond leads the heroes a short distance through the Upper City's well-lit streets to the marble-and-glass structure of the High Hall. Significantly, he nods to the guards as he walks past them unchallenged.

Silvershield awaits the heroes in a meeting chamber.

**When the characters arrive, read:**

A human noble wearing a wooden cog, the holy symbol of Gond, stands in greeting. His black hair has grayed at the temples, and he keeps a well-trimmed salt-and-pepper beard.

"Welcome!" he says. "I am sure Imbralym showed you a pleasant time thus far. Would you care for a beverage?"

**After the characters are made comfortable, read:**

"I will be forward with you," Silvershield continues. "Our city rots at its core. Who would dare to strike at such a venerated hero as Abdel Adrian but those who swear fealty to dark, evil forces? Many have come to our city seeking refuge, and we have graciously opened our doors. But they brought with them a rotten seed—unholy beliefs and foul gods. I intend to sweep their filth from our city and restore Baldur's Gate to its proper place of esteem."

"The people of whom I speak are in league with a cabal of thieves and ruffians known as the Guild, as if they deserve such a name. Their cancerous fingers reach from the gutters all the way to our most vaunted institutions. They manipulate our markets and shipping, worship unsavory deities, and have powerful cronies in the courts and even the Flaming Fist."

"To root them out, I must know who they are. I need someone who can trace the Guild's network and identify its leaders. Will you aid me?"

If the characters decline to help, Silvershield thanks them for coming, and Skoond shows them out. If the heroes agree to help, the "Search and Seizure" event in stage 1 should be their next step.

**If the heroes sign on with Silvershield, read:**

The duke offers you a winning smile and says, "My sources have identified three probable agents—a wool trader named Norold Dlusker; the sorceress Yssra Brackrel; and the Low Lantern's proprietress, Lraelra Thundreth. To move against them, I need proof. I can provide you a writ of search and seizure as High Hall agents."

"I am a generous patron. I can reward you well with gold, if you desire, or positions of prominence within the city."

## Working for Silvershield

Characters who align with Silvershield gain prestige in the Upper City. In return, Silvershield expects complete loyalty. His concern is the betterment of Baldur's Gate, which equates to serving the patriars' best interests and rooting out the disease that is the Guild. Any missions Silvershield assigns the characters are likely to be directed against the Guild.

If the characters are in his service, Silvershield offers to pay their room and board at an inn of their choosing. He recommends the Helm and Cloak. He also offers them 10 gp apiece as a daily stipend. What he pays per job depends on the characters' results.

Silvershield has many closely guarded secrets. If the characters learn sensitive information about his plans and then stop working for him, Silvershield wants to know why, at the least. If he hears that the characters have agreed to work for Ulder Ravengard or Rilsa Rael, Silvershield tries to buy them back into his fold. If that doesn't work, he suggests strongly that they leave the city and pursue their careers elsewhere.



## MEETING RILSA RAEL

Before the characters can meet Rilsa Rael, they encounter Nant Thangol, a toll collector.

Thangol is a male dwarf. His face is uncommonly gaunt for one of his race, giving him an unsettling, deathlike visage. Thangol operates the tax concession at the eastern gate between the Lower City and the Outer City, commonly called the Basilisk Gate because of the preponderance of statues erected around it. A tremendous amount of goods passes through this gate every day, making it one of the most lucrative posts in Baldur's Gate.

When the characters leave the city for their rendezvous with Rael, they must pass through the Basilisk Gate. It's the end of the working day, and hundreds of laborers are trudging uphill from the harbor toward their Outer City homes. All that foot traffic is jamming in a knot at the gate. Characters can hear a general hubbub of raised voices there.

Mareak, a blond-bearded dwarf waiting to exit through the gate, recognizes the characters from the encounter in the Wide and grips an adventurer's arm. He explains that "a city shield or something" has disappeared from the Harbormaster's Office. Now, the Basilisk is overseeing an impromptu search for it. Mareak isn't happy about the delay, but he explains, "Them as has nothin' to hide has nothin' to fear, I suppose. But maybe a word from the likes of you could speed things along and hasten these tired, poor folk home to their dinners."

To reach the gate, the heroes must elbow through the crowd. There, they see six Flaming Fist soldiers searching pedestrians. Some pawed-over people are sent on their way, but anyone carrying a bag or a marginally interesting item is led to a table beneath a striped canopy. More Flaming Fist mercenaries (a lieutenant and several privates) stand guard around the table, and Nant Thangol sits behind it. He examines the meager goods the guards place on the table when people are brought forward, scribbles notes in his ledger book, and declares fees ranging from a few copper pieces to a few silver pieces.

The dwarf is arrogant and contemptuous toward the crowd. He's also flagrantly exceeding his authority as a toll collector. Several grumblers defame him, pointing out that he isn't a customs agent. And a few of the Flaming Fist soldiers appear uncomfortable about this detail.

Use this scene to introduce the characters to class injustice in Baldur's Gate. The heroes don't have a good reason to start a brawl with the Flaming Fist, but that doesn't mean they won't.

Thangol is happy to wave "the heroes of the Wide" through the gate without searching them once he knows who they are. But he throws in plenty of comments about "the scum behind you" in the process. The characters can persuade Thangol to lift the roadblock peacefully if they appeal to his arrogance or offer to pay everyone's tolls (at least 25 gp). If they antagonize the dwarf, he might call for the guards to search the characters and levy a fine against them for "going about excessively armed" or some similar trumped-up excuse.

## In Little Calimshan

If the characters reach Little Calimshan's main gate near dusk, the hooded agent they met earlier is loitering outside the wall. The guide uses furtive signals to instruct the heroes to follow, but not too closely. A rogue understands immediately. Any other adventurer must make a DC 10 Wisdom check to sense his intent.

The hooded figure leads them through the gate and up a set of stairs to the walkway built atop the walls that enclose Little Calimshan and divide it into smaller compounds. After slinking through the wall-top passage's twisting obstacle course, the guide drops into a darkened, enclosed yard. The agent produces a key, opens a door that spills warm light into the cool night, and motions the characters to enter first.

### When the heroes enter, read:

*Three flickering oil lamps hang on copper chains. A central fire pit embraces a heap of coals. Multicolored rugs and cushions blanket the floor, surrounding the fire in the Calishite style. Heavy drapes obscure the walls and the ceiling, creating the impression of being inside a tent.*

*A seamed face peers at you from beneath a turban. The man, wrapped in an ornate, brocaded robe, sits beside a low*

*table alongside the fire pit. He motions for you to sit and begins pouring tea.*

*When the door clicks shut, your guide steps forward, pulls away a false beard, and throws back a deep hood, revealing a woman's face.*

*"Thank you for coming," she says as she sits cross-legged on a pillow next to the old man. "I wasn't sure you would, but we had great hope."*

The woman introduces herself as Rilsa Rael. She operates Calim Jewel Emporium, a pawnshop, in the front room of the building they now occupy, she explains. In truth, the shop is a front for Guild business. She introduces the man as "Musayed." He says little but watches, scowls, or nods sagely when appropriate and refills tea cups as needed. He is, in fact, Rael's employee, but she won't talk about him during this meeting.

Convey the following facts in your own words during the meeting, answering the characters' questions as they arise:

- ◆ Rael works with the Guild. The Guild has been declared a criminal organization because it takes money from the wealthy to help and protect the poor. For example, the Calim Jewel Emporium redistributes wealth to the needy by overpaying for the trinkets and trash the poor bring in to sell, nearly going broke several times as a result.
- ◆ The Guild is the people's only protector in the Outer City. The Flaming Fist and the city do nothing for them but take their money in taxes and tolls. The Outer City citizens are even locked out of the city in times of danger and must fend for themselves.
- ◆ Baldur's Gate is a merchants' town, and gold greases its wheels. You have to pay to get in, and you often have to pay to get out. In addition, toll and tax agents frequently demand bribes or confiscate alleged contraband, targeting folk from the Outer City because they know no one listens to their complaints. The poor of the Outer City are being kept poor.
- ◆ The whole system is unjust, but one toll collector in particular has grown rich from stealing from Outer City citizens: Nant Thangol. Being stationed at the highly trafficked Basilisk Gate and having a menacing stare earned him the nickname "the Basilisk."

Rael wants the characters to rob Thangol, so she can use her shop to redistribute the dwarf's gold to the Outer City's poorest residents. She won't directly ask the adventurers to commit robbery, though. She dances around the subject, stressing the people's suffering and assessing the characters' reactions to her tales of injustice. She references Abdel Adrian's charitable work, which earned him the adoration of the Outer City. The Guild kingpin of Little Calimshan discusses how the late duke and the Guild cooperated, despite the wishes of the Council of Four, to ease peasants' lives. She hopes to carry on his work.

If a character mentions the party's recent encounter with Thangol, Rael treats them to far worse stories about the Basilisk. She implies that no action will be taken against the dwarf unless they do something. (This is untrue, though.)

If a hero asks Rael about her connection to the Guild, she replies, "The patriars and the Fist blame the Guild for everything that goes wrong, and yet they sit on their hands in chairs of gold. You've seen the Outer City. No law's out here but for the Guild. I help the Guild give people hope." If the heroes press her on exactly what the Guild does, she admits that the group takes money from the wealthy through various schemes, such as blackmailing patriars with dirty secrets and conning merchants who mistreat their workers.

If the heroes decline Rael's proposal, she thanks them for coming and offers her assistance in the Outer City if they ever need it.

If the characters agree to participate, the "Tax Rebates" event in stage 1 should be their next step.

## Working for Rilsa Rael

Characters who sign on with Rael, the kingpin of Little Calimshan and the lieutenant of the Guild's leader, Nine-Fingers, should not immediately realize how highly placed she is within the Guild. Rael has contacts throughout Baldur's Gate, not just in the Outer City. People show her a level of deference that far exceeds her station as a shop owner.



The block of buildings housing the Calim Jewel Emporium includes a two-room suite, accessible through Rael's back room and a secret door in an adjoining alley. The rooms are clean, and the characters can use them for as long as they work for Rael.

If any characters observe the kingpin's shop, they see Rael and an endless string of visitors sharing tea and talking within a screened-in booth while Musayed watches the counter. They notice that the Calim Jewel Emporium does little pawnshop business. In truth, Rael is conducting Guild business, including meeting with people who seek the Guild's help, doling out favors, and ensuring that no one forgets to whom they're indebted.

As the Guild becomes more violent, characters who have cooperated with Rael might decide they would rather work for someone else or might balk at being involved in the unsavory activities the organization sponsors. If Rael believes she can reel the characters back in, she asserts that the ends justify the means, stressing that she doesn't like the situation either. The Guild kingpin argues that measured, judicious violence now could avert an open revolt by Outer City residents.

If the characters don't buy her line of reasoning, Rael has a problem. By now the heroes either know too much about her operation and the Guild, or Rael

suspects they do. Either way, she can't risk the adventurers reporting her to the Flaming Fist. Rael does her best to part on good terms. She wishes the characters happy, prosperous lives wherever their roads take them. As soon as the adventurers are out of earshot, she orders their assassination through whatever means you devise.

## MEETING RAVENGARD

If the characters have not gone to meet Rael, use the Nant Thangol encounter (see the previous page) as a precursor to their meeting with Ravengard, since they would have to leave the city through the same gate.

After the long trek through the noisy and colorful Outer City slums—passing reeking slaughterhouses, tanneries, and overcrowded pack-animal corrals—the characters reach Wyrm's Crossing. Tall buildings shade the crossing's narrow street, which leads to a wooden drawbridge. Once there, white-clad mercenaries hail the adventurers and lead them through a granite tunnel into the fortress, where they see Wyrm's Rock and its great, skyscraping slabs of granite up close. Their Flaming Fist escorts lead them to Wyrm's Mouth, the highest chamber in the tower.

### When the characters arrive, read:

*The marshal who approached you in the Wide stands at a window, looking out toward the harbor of Baldur's Gate. He motions you over.*

"Look at Baldur's Gate," he says. "See how it grows unchecked beyond the walls? Those slums and ghettos are breeding grounds for a criminal cabal called the Guild. The Flaming Fist is charged with defending the Gate. Right now, the Guild, not some foreign enemy, is the city's greatest threat. It owns the Outer City."

"The Guild has us encircled like a besieging army. Its agents and rot are worming into every nook of Baldur's Gate. These monsters find victims wherever the Fist is not. They grow bolder daily. They infest our politics and businesses."

"Abdel Adrian was the Gate's greatest citizen since Bal-duran. Yet a Guild assassin attacked him in broad daylight. I will crush them for it."

"I need people such as you to help me. I can offer gold, of course, but I also offer positions of rank in the Flaming Fist and the honor the company's tabard affords. What say you?"

If the characters accept this offer, proceed to the "Closing the Vice Dens" event in stage 1. If they decline, Ravengard offers them quarters in the barracks for the night. In fact, he hopes to keep them in Wyrm's Rock until morning to keep any hint of his plan (detailed in "Closing the Vice Dens") from leaking out. He won't prevent the heroes from leaving if they want to, but Flaming Fist agents secretly follow them. If their next stop is Little Calimshan, Ravengard assumes they have

betrayed his confidence and won't trust them again unless they prove themselves through deeds.

If the meeting ends on friendly terms, regardless of the heroes' decision, Ravengard gives each of them a silver brooch resembling a flaming fist. If the characters want to speak with Ravengard, they need only show the brooch to a gate guard at the Seatower of Baldurian or Wyrm's Rock to gain admittance.

## Working for Ravengard

Ravengard is not a zealot or a fascist—not yet, anyway. But the daily seepage of Guild-wrought corruption and human damage creeping from the Outer City into the Lower and Upper cities festers in Ravengard's heart. The Flaming Fist marshal views the Guild as the Gate's most pressing problem and the patriarchs' corruption and decadence as a close second, especially given the latter's absolute control over the Watch.

Initially, each task that Ravengard or his lieutenants asks of the characters feeds the Fist's goal of restoring



law and order. The adventurers should know that they are extending the law's protection to people who need it and handing punishment on those who deserve it. Their actions make them heroes to the members of the Lower City's bourgeoisie, most of whom share Ravengard's concerns about what they see as a horde of immigrants and indigents accumulating outside the city's walls. As the heroes' reputation grows, strangers along the Lower City's wharfs and steep streets heartily greet the characters; revelers and patrons treat them to dinners, drinks, and tiresome explanations of what's wrong in Baldur's Gate and how to repair it; and proprietors offer discounts whenever they try to spend their own money.

Ravengard resents the characters only if they leave his service on poor terms or have access to very sensitive information. He releases them from their Flaming Fist duties, provided they plan to leave town. But if the heroes have secret knowledge, the marshal jails them in the Seatower's dungeons. If the characters fight or kill Flaming Fist members, they lose the people's good will and are hunted through the streets.

## UPSETTING THE APPLE CART

The beauty of scenarios such as the one in *Murder in Baldur's Gate* is that players can push events in any direction. The difficulty for the DM is that players can push events in any direction. As the situation in Baldur's Gate worsens, some players might look for ways to shut down all three antagonists and their intrigues.

In such a case, the most likely courses of action are described below, along with advice on how to handle them.

**Set Antagonists Against One Another:** Once the adventurers are privy to one agent's plans, they might pass that information to a rival, either for a sack of gold or as an expedient way to thwart one or both antagonists' plans. The first time the heroes try this, it might work. The second or third time, though, the characters should learn that each of the three agents has informants in the others' camps. These snitches might not be in an enemy's inner circle, but their positions do allow them to report on who visits headquarters and who has private conferences with the enemy commander. And any of the three antagonists would jump to the obvious conclusion if new allies were seen consorting with the enemy.

**Kill One of Them:** Once the characters identify an agent as a villain, the urge to kill that antagonist could be strong. But Baldur's Gate is not some wild frontier town. Despite the rampant corruption in the city, the Flaming Fist and the Watch are effective police forces when they choose to be. Both have extensive networks of spies.

The characters might become convinced that Torlin Silvershield and Ulder Ravengard are involved in dirty deal-

ings. But they are two of the most powerful people in the city, and killing either of them would unleash a firestorm of outrage among the thousands of their supporters among the Watch, the patriarchs, worshipers of Gond, the Flaming Fist, and the professional guilds, as well as the regular citizenry. Escaping from the city after committing such an act would be nearly impossible—if the killing could be carried out at all. Silvershield and Ravengard don't encase themselves in armed guards, but devoted bodyguards are seldom more than one door away. The characters should realize that fact when they privately meet with either leader.

Similarly, Rilsa Rael is a beloved figure in the Outer City, and thousands would mourn her passing. Given her occupation, though, most would assume that Guild rivals had killed her. But Nine-Fingers, the Guild's leader, would know that was not the case, and she would go to extremes to track down her favorite lieutenant's killers. In this regard, Nine-Fingers's power surpasses that of even the Watch and the Flaming Fist.

**Kill Them All:** If the heroes assassinate one or two of the antagonists, they push the survivor or survivors closer to Bhaal. If the adventurers assassinate all three, they demonstrate great skill at murder—the exact qualification for becoming the Chosen of Bhaal. In that event, whichever character was the most prolific or effective killer becomes the Chosen of Bhaal. The transformation doesn't need to happen all at once but should be complete in time for the adventure's finale.

# STAGE 1

In each stage, the antagonist associated with an event is indicated by the portrait under the event's title. All events play out regardless of the characters' involvement, except in the final stage. If the adventurers are not the actors in an event's plot, the sponsoring antagonist has others do the dirty work.

## Search and Seizure

Duke Silvershield's investigations into dark cults and secret societies in the city target three Baldurians.

**Target 1** is the female half-elf **Yssra Brackrel**, who lives above Danthelon's Dancing Axe. Wyrm's Crossing folk report, "That's a queer one," and "She's skinny as a starvin' eel and has hair as wild as river grass in an eddy." She is known to mutter endlessly to herself, and late-night strollers often see lights on in her attic. Her landlord, Entharl Danthelon, assures neighbors Brackrel is a harmless alchemist, and he sticks to that story if the characters ask.

The young, dark-haired wizard has been known to speak out against the patriars from time to time. Characters interviewing Brackrel notice pigment stains on her hands and face and that she smells of charcoal and essential salts, all signs pointing to alchemy. If the characters demand to search her room, Brackrel refuses to let them in without a writ. Nothing in her apartment links her to the Guild or anything evil. That said, strange alchemy items do fill her shelves.

If the characters take Brackrel into custody, she is released again in a few days. Regardless of whether she's arrested, this incident cements her opposition to the patriars and the adventurers.

The characters might meet the half-elf wizard again when she is performing alchemy for Ravengard (see "Ravengard for Duke" in stage 4) or the Guild (see "Prison Break" in stage 10).

**Target 2** is a middle-aged half-elf named **Laraelra Thundreth**. She operates the Low Lantern, a listing, leaking three-master permanently moored along the quay on the harbor's eastern side. The mothballed ship is a festhall, tavern, and gambling house, but its chief service is providing a covert meeting spot for those who have illicit plans to discuss. Thundreth, who keeps her black hair in an intricate braid, is careful to observe the letter of the law, and she freely passes money under the table to ensure a smooth operation.

If the characters flash their writ and demand to search the Low Lantern, the ship's "crew" intervenes, saying, "Pawin' about in a lady's rooms ain't polite." Thundreth's ex-pirate staffers won't tolerate disrespect toward the "Lady Captain," and they resent any suggestion that Thundreth works for the Guild, even though



most of them suspect it's true. Thundreth allows a search if a character presents the writ and makes a DC 10 Charisma check to persuade or intimidate him—a search that produces nothing incriminating.

The Low Lantern's rough-and-tumble patrons (**half-ling rogues and thugs**) are armed, and they back the **crew members** if any trouble develops. They all know the rules, too; no one pulls a weapon unless a character draws first.

While the characters are either negotiating with Thundreth or brawling with patrons, several Flaming Fist mercenaries (**privates**) burst down the ladder and start turning the deck upside down. They pour out pitchers of ale, knock over games of chance, and try to herd patrons toward the exit, all while declaring the Low Lantern is being closed by order of the Flaming Fist and its proprietor, Thundreth, is under arrest. If the situation was not already an all-out, chair-throwing brawl, it becomes one now.

Thundreth uses the chaos to flee. If characters move immediately, they can follow the proprietress to her cabin and see her lowering a rope ladder out the casement to a dinghy. They can attempt to catch her or escape with her.

If confronted with Silvershield's accusations, the Lady Captain declares she has no idea what the characters are talking about. She continues, "The only 'evil gods' in the Gate are the swine who run it—the Fist, patriars, and Guild. They're all dirty. At least the Guild is truthful about how it operates."

If the characters insist on arresting her, Thundreth offers them a jeweled necklace worth 250 gp to let her go. If they persist, she jumps out the window to the dinghy and tries to escape.

**Target 3** is the patriarch Norold Dlusker (Campaign Guide, page 39). He has a stall in the Wide near the Beloved Ranger, a place his status secures for him despite his downturn in fortune. If the characters question him, he sweats rivers of fear. But a search of his stall, his Lower City textile mill, and his Upper City home turns up nothing except a meager supply of bulk cloth. If a character thinks to ask Bailiff of the Wide Jedren Hiller for information, Hiller suggests they check the registry, a ledger he is responsible for that details all official transactions in the Wide. He offers to let the characters peruse it for a monitoring fee of 10 gp. He waives the fee if characters flash their search-and-seizure writ. The paper doesn't impress the bailiff, but Silvershield's signature on it does.

Characters who investigate the registry discover that someone named "Lady Keene" has paid Dlusker's stall fees for the past forty-three months. If the characters ask Dlusker about Keene, he says only that she is his accountant. (In truth, "Lady Keene" is none other than Nine-Fingers, leader of the Guild—a fact that Dlusker does not reveal.)

## Keeping the Writ

If the characters are actively participating in this event, they have the writ that Duke Silvershield gave them. It grants them permission to search for and seize evidence against only Yssra Brackrel, Laraelra Thundreth, or Norold Dlusker, but someone who doesn't read it carefully could easily miss that limitation.

The heroes can hold onto the writ after this event. Clever characters might wring a lot of use from the document, and some shadowy figures would pay handsomely for Silvershield's authentic signature on anything bearing the ducal seal. If the characters are caught abusing the document or can't produce it when asked, Silvershield is displeased.

### KEEPING TRACK

**Silvershield gains one rank on Bhaal's Favor Track if the characters investigate Yssra Brackrel, Laraelra Thundreth, and Norold Dlusker, or if they fail to prevent Silvershield's goons from snooping on those individuals.**

## Tax Rebates

Rael is targeting toll collectors. Baldur's Gate runs on its taxes and tolls, so disrupting that revenue flow most hurts the Flaming Fist and patriars. The Guild expects a 20 percent cut of the spoils, and Rael plans to take another 15 percent to cover her risk. The robbers' percentage is negotiable, and the remaining coins are to be redistributed to the poor through Rael's Little Calimshan pawnshop, the Calim Jewel Emporium.



The enterprising thief plans to hit Nant Thangol first, unless the characters choose a different target. Thangol habitually stays at his post until shortly before midnight. Then Flaming Fist soldiers and lamp lads escort him to his Lower City apartment next to the Blushing Mermaid. His route never varies. Rael knows it well, including the best place along it for an ambush.

**On Board:** If the "heroes of the Wide" accept the job, Rael insists they don dark cloaks to conceal their clothes and scarves or revelry masks to hide their faces. She cautions them not to kill anyone, explaining that many Lower City folk would delight in the Basilisk being robbed but would resort to mob justice if a Flaming Fist soldier were killed.

If the players propose a different way to carry out this mission, such as breaking into Thangol's home or snatching the cash box while it's still at the Basilisk Gate, Rael goes with it. So be ready to improvise.

Otherwise, the ambush occurs along a steep, narrow Lower City street. Rael recommends that the characters split into two groups: one to halt the procession, and one to cut off its retreat. The 10- to 15-foot-wide street can easily be choked off.

The caravan consists of Nant Thangol, two **human bystanders** carrying the locked cash box, two lamp lads (also **bystanders**), and several Flaming Fist soldiers (**privates** and **lieutenants**).

Once the ambush is apparent, the panicked lamp lads drop their lanterns and scramble to safety, leaving the area in darkness. Only the mercenaries fight. Thangol and the cash-box carriers cower. When only two Flaming Fist members remain on their feet, they lay down their weapons.

One minute (10 rounds) after the fight starts, the heroes hear a lamp lad and a patrol consisting of a **Flaming Fist lieutenant** and several **privates** charging up the hill toward the fracas. They arrive 2 rounds later, and a new fight breaks out if the characters are still around. If the adventurers swipe the cash box and dash away, they escape easily. If you want to play up the chase, use opposing ability checks. In the end, though, the soldiers have little chance of catching the characters in the dark, narrow, fog-shrouded streets.

Back in Little Calimshan, Rael takes charge of the cash box. She thanks the characters and assures them their action will relieve much suffering and send the Basilisk a message to rein in his greed. If the heroes seem up for it, the Guild kingpin asks them to rob other toll and tax collectors in scenarios you devise.

**Not on Board:** If the characters don't commit this robbery, Guild agents do. The next day, the city is abuzz about it. The bandits strike repeatedly in the following days and quickly gain reputations as heroes among the poor. Ravengard or Silvershield might ask the characters to catch the group of thieves (**human rogues** and **halfling rogues**). In such a scenario, once half the gang is bested, the other half tries to escape.

### KEEPING TRACK

**Rael gains one rank on Bhaal's Favor Track if the characters rob Nant Thangol, or if they fail to prevent Rael's goons from robbing him.**

## Closing the Vice Dens

Ravengard wants two gambling dens shut down, the Oasis and the Low Lantern. He requires the establishments be emptied and boarded up, writs of closure be posted outside their entrances, and their owners be brought to the Seatower of Balduran for questioning.

He offers a handful of mercenaries as backup.



**Vice Den 1:** The Oasis is a dingy bungalow in Little Calimshan. Its proprietor, Ibiz, slathers his blotchy face in heavy, pale makeup. The effect is disturbing rather than pleasing to the eye.

The heavy Calishite human greets characters from the establishment's veranda and grandly motions them inside, where he offers cushion seats and tea and

casually probes the newcomers' interest in gambling, poppy dreams, and tender liaisons. When Ibiz realizes that the characters aren't patrons, he smiles nervously, draws a bulging purse from his robe, and extends it, saying, "Ah, I forgot my tenday fees. If you would please deliver this to your superior, I would be most grateful." The purse contains mixed coins and gems worth 75 gp.

Typically, Guild guards protect the premises. At this time, however, because Ibiz recently insulted Nine-Fingers, the muscle and many regulars are staying away. Only a half-dozen old patrons puff listlessly at pipes as they sprawl on cushions beneath dingy curtains draped to hide the ceiling. When the characters reveal that they've come to close the Oasis, Ibiz asks for a moment to "collect my life before you throw me onto the street." The heroes can seal the premises without a fight.

**Vice Den 2:** The Low Lantern is another matter. If the heroes were the actors in "Search and Seizure," this event does not occur since the Flaming Fist has already shut the place down. If the heroes are working for both Silvershield and Ravengard, Silvershield sends Watch soldiers to assist them in the task—but the soldiers start a tavern brawl instead of waiting for the heroes.

The Watch soldiers, led by a Watch sergeant, battle Laraelra Thundreth's devoted crew members and some of the Low Lantern's rough-and-tumble patrons (**halfling rogues** and **thugs**) who throw in with the crew. Three intoxicated revelers swing at everything, and three others continue eating and gaming despite the pandemonium.

Thundreth's crew is pummeling Silvershield's agents when the adventurers arrive. The heroes should be tempted to intervene when they see common ruffians beating on Watch officers. At least one Watch soldier recognizes the characters from their heroics in the Wide and implores them for help. Each of the Watch soldiers has taken 5 damage.

Earlier in the day, Guild informants had described the adventurers and their actions in the Wide to Thundreth. They also had reported seeing the characters speak with Ravengard. That they and the Watch should show up on the same night tells the proprietress that this crackdown is more serious than usual and now would be a good time to disappear for a while. Thundreth slips away as soon as she sees the characters, leaving them to ineffectually jostle through the fray as she escapes down a rope ladder dangling from her cabin's open casement to a dinghy in the harbor below.

#### KEEPING TRACK

Ravengard gains one rank on Bhaal's Favor Track if the characters shut down the Oasis and the Low Lantern, or if they fail to stop Watch soldiers from doing so.

## STAGE 2

### Sumptuary Laws

Baldur's Gate is a prosperous city. Many merchants in the Lower City are as well off as the Upper City's aristocrats. But no amount of money can change one's station in Baldur's Gate, where nobility is a birthright.



Wearing one's wealth is a common way to show off in the Gate. On any given day in the Wide, a person can see rich merchants dressed in furs, colorful silks, and jewels that rival those of lesser kings. The displays of wealth fill Silvershield and other patriarchs with jealousy, so they resolve to bring the lesser classes to heel.

Public notices go up swiftly, informing Baldurians that the city's old sumptuary laws are again in effect.

#### The notices state:

*By decree of the Council and with concurrence of Parliament:*

*To preserve the decency of citizens and promote the general weal, all citizens of Baldur's Gate must attire themselves in a manner befitting their station. Furs, silks, damask, velvet, samite, and satin are forbidden to all but those numbered among the patriarchs, as is jewelry incorporating inlaid gems or magical properties. Those who violate these terms are subject to fines or imprisonment.*

### USING CORAN AS A RESOURCE

When the characters need to know about the city's history or current power structure, Coran (*Campaign Guide*, page 38) is an excellent advisor. If they are arrested and get word to him, he can probably arrange their release. He is as good as his word. He helps the characters in any way he can, as long as doing so doesn't endanger him beyond his comfort level. And the elf likes a little danger.

Coran might be most useful as a way to move the story forward if the players get stuck. He can appear out of the fog with a companion on his arm and a bottle of wine in hand, stand up suddenly from a cafe's street-side table, or beckon the adventurers from a curtained palanquin. Coran knows much of what happens in the city and wants to know what the heroes are doing so he can help.

Politically, he is most closely aligned with the patriarchs. As an old adventurer, he empathizes with and has many contacts among the Flaming Fist. He has almost no influence on or informers within the Guild. In his youth, Coran was a freelance thief in the city, and he has never wanted to alert the Guild to his activities.

As civil servants nail up and read aloud the notices, passersby heartily ridicule their message and the Council of Four's decision to act before a new duke has been elected. Defiant citizens tear down or deface the declarations within an hour of their posting. That same day, however, the characters see Watch patrols ripping jewels from dresses, cutting lace collars, and slashing fine clothing merchants are wearing. These incidents begin in the Wide and spread outward. For the time being, they are confined to the Upper City, where the Flaming Fist lacks authority.

It's likely that one or more of the adventurers is in violation of the decree. If so, a Watch sergeant and several Watch soldiers confront the heroes and demand proof that the characters' social status befits their attire. The guards order characters who can't provide proof to remove the forbidden items. If the adventurers comply quickly and politely, the soldiers move on. If the heroes resist, the soldiers march push for shove and blade for blade. If the adventurers kill a Watch member, they are labeled murderers and treated accordingly. If the soldiers win a fight, they confiscate any offending items, tie the characters' hands, and lock the group up for the night in the Watch Citadel.

A change is quickly apparent across the city. The normally vibrant attire of Baldurians turns as somber as the weather. Although the Watch strictly enforces the ordinance only in the Upper City, nearly everyone does business there in the course of a day. Upper City residents, in their rich, colorful clothing and glittering jewelry, stand out like never before. Outer City dwellers take on the color of mud and shiver without their heavy fur cloaks.

The heroes can't prevent this event from occurring. If they appeal to Duke Silvershield, he pretends to sympathize with their argument but claims the "will of Parliament" is tying his hands.

The sumptuary laws remain in effect until the end of the adventure. As the city nears its boiling point in future stages, Watch soldiers brutally tear from their owners and instantly destroy any illegal items they see.

#### KEEPING TRACK

**This event cannot be stopped, so Silvershield automatically gains one rank on Bhaal's Favor Track.**

## Vandalism

News about tax collectors being robbed stirs up the Outer City, and a rise in petty vandalism hints at the growing agitation of the poor. As the Guild further fans the commoners' discontent, vandalism becomes increasingly visible and destructive. At first, angry slogans—such as "Down with the Patriars," "Extinguish the Flaming Fist," and "Tear down this wall. Free Baldur's Gate!"—appear on fences, Outer City buildings,



and the walls enclosing the Upper and Lower cities. Gradually, the destructive activity spreads inside the walls and escalates as vandals smash windows, break streetlights, set trash afire, and perform similar acts.

This is largely a background event, but the characters could counter its impact by succeeding in apprehending a few groups of the vandals (**thugs** and **tough thugs**).

#### KEEPING TRACK

**Rael gains one rank on Bhaal's Favor Track if the characters do not curb the vandalism.**

## Flaming Fist Thuggery

Many of the city's shipping houses have warehouses near the Brampton and Eastway docks, and large numbers of harborhands who live in the Outer City are employed there. These rough, mostly foreign workers congregate at taverns and eateries after work. Ravengard, suspecting them of being behind the vandalism and robbery of toll collectors, sends extra Flaming Fist patrols into the districts to encourage workers to move along home. That encouragement comes chiefly from the business end of a club or the flat of a sword.



Characters who spend much time in Brampton or Eastway are bound to witness incidents of Flaming Fist mercenaries (**Flaming Fist privates**, **Flaming Fist sergeants**, **crew members**, **human bystanders**, **thugs**, or **tough thugs**) roughing up Outer City residents. Returning Day and the characters' heroics are still fresh in everyone's memories. So if the adventurers step in to break up a violent encounter, the Flaming Fist soldiers back down as a show of respect. If the characters instead join in the harassment, the mercenaries let them strike most of the blows.

**Summoned:** If the characters take action, their participation is reported to Ravengard, and he summons the heroes to an interview. They aren't compelled to go, but the soldier who delivers the summons—Nordir Samulkin, a human who commands three others—makes it clear they'd be fools not to. He admires their courage and tells the heroes they have nothing to lose and much to gain by impressing the Flaming Fist's new marshal.

The tone of the meeting depends on what the characters did. Ultimately, Ravengard wants the heroes on

## PULLING RANK

If the characters join the Flaming Fist, they can pull rank with subordinates to effectively quash many of Ravengard's plans. Such a situation can't last, though. If the adventurers command Ravengard's orders more than once, the marshal sends high-ranking members of the Flaming Fist (**lieutenants** or **sergeants**) to strip them of their rank and, if possible, arrest them.

his side. He offers them the rank of flame, or lieutenant, in the Flaming Fist. They would have all the authority of that rank but none of its usual administrative duties. Instead, the heroes would report directly to Ravengard and carry out missions he assigns.

If the meeting ends on friendly terms, regardless of the heroes' decision, and the characters did not receive Flaming Fist tokens in stage 1, Ravengard gives each of them a silver brooch resembling a flaming fist. If the characters want to speak with Ravengard, they need only show the brooch to a Seatower of Baldurian or Wyrm's Rock gate guard to gain admittance.

### KEEPING TRACK

**Ravengard gains one rank on Bhaal's Favor Track if the heroes do not intervene to help the workers.**

## STAGE 3

This stage features only one event, and which of the antagonists rises in Bhaal's favor depends on what the characters do.

### Hands Off

During a single night, five statues' hands are stolen. The sculptures include Seaserpent Tamed by Umberlee, near the Water Queen's House; Fury of the Fist, outside the Seatower; Baldurian Looks Out to Sea, overlooking the river from east of the city; Six Wise Machinists, near the High House of Wonders; and Faithful Shopkeeper Meets the Honest Trader, at the foot of the Counting House pier. Merchants and civic leaders are furious, Upper City and Lower City residents are angry, and Outer City dwellers are largely amused.

The following day, Flaming Fist patrols search gang hideouts and businesses known to be purchasers of stolen goods, including Rael's shop. None of the missing hands are found. That night, the Beloved Ranger in the Wide is hit—it loses Minsc's hands as well as Boo the hamster, whose sculpture is cupped in Minsc's palms. All Baldurians cherish Minsc and Boo, and the defacement of this statue upsets the whole city.

The vandals who struck the Beloved Ranger are not the ones who damaged the other statues. Experienced Guild thieves acting on Rael's orders lifted the hands on the first night, while a half-dozen bored, rebellious patriarch youths damaged the Beloved Ranger.

When the young miscreants realize the outrage they have caused, they panic. They take Minsc's hands (and Boo) to the shop of Horgold Hadru, a potter who works near the southern end of Wyrm's Crossing, where they seek refuge. Hadru takes in the adolescents to repay a favor to one of their families, hiding them in the hanging cellar beneath his shop. Hadru, who knows the youths must be guilty of something and suspects the truth, is growing increasingly panicked.

**Involving the Heroes:** For the characters to intervene, at least one of four persons would need to approach them, including Silvershield, Ravengard, Rael, and Esgurl Nurthammas, the master of cobbles.

The master of cobbles is responsible for roads, bridges, and other public stonework. Nurthammas is an up-and-coming scion of a patriarch family who is eager to demonstrate that he is ready for bigger duties. He offers 150 gp for the characters to track down and capture the vandals, telling the heroes to "make these devils pay with their souls and save the city the expense of a trial."

This is a reckless statement. Nurthammas doesn't have the legal authority to sanction lethal force or the political clout to back it up. The adventurers might find themselves in deep trouble if they take his words to heart. If the characters kill the noble vandals, both Ravengard and Silvershield are incensed.

Ravengard and Nurthammas want the same thing, but the marshal has the force of law behind his instructions. Ravengard wants the culprits brought in alive for a public trial and punishment. This outcome would anger Silvershield and wrongly implicate the nobles in the defacement of the other statues rather than finger an angry populace, which is what Rael wants.

Silvershield's interest is the opposite. When he heard about vandalism to the Beloved Ranger and about a missing group of youths from various patriarch families, he put two and two together. Silvershield wants the vandals quietly brought back to safety before an angry mob finds and lynches them. Because they are local heroes, Silvershield calculates, the characters can likely move around the city without interference from the Watch or the Flaming Fist, which are conducting their own widespread, impassioned searches and interrogations.

Rael, like Silvershield, knows the culprits' identities, having pieced together reports from her spies in patriarch households. She doesn't want the youths protected. She wants them exposed and their families humiliated.

**Finding the Culprits:** The characters can track the vandals of the Beloved Ranger, beginning at the Wide. A careful search of the area turns up a brooch and a broken dagger. The youths used the dagger as a hammer and a pry bar to break the statue. Marble flakes are stuck to its pommel, and its blade is severely gouged. The brooch fell from the cloak in which the culprits wrapped the hands. The brooch bears the Ravenshade family crest, and the dagger carries the mark of the Oberon family; both are well-placed patriarch households. If the heroes interview those families, they find that each one has young members who have gone missing and receive descriptions of the youths.

From there, the heroes can talk with people who might have noticed the suspects: Guards at Heap Gate recognized the juveniles as patriarchs and opened the gate to them in the early-morning hours. A lamp lad who waits around Heap Gate for customers took them to Brampton and received a hefty tip. A ferry operator

on the Brampton docks ferried the group to Twin Songs near dawn and thought the adolescents were heading for Wyrm's Crossing. A merchant on the bridge's southern side saw them enter Horgold Hadru's pottery shop. Hadru is nervous and evasive. He hands over the youths if the adventurers threaten him or bribe him with 10 gp or more. (The potter had agreed to hide the group because he owed the Durinbold family a favor.)

Once the guilty **patriar youths** are tracked to Hadru's shop, the characters must either deliver them to the Flaming Fist checkpoint at Wyrm's Rock or find a way to move the youths through it. Getting past the soldiers is easy if the characters escort the vandals out unobtrusively. The heroes raise suspicions if they are discovered smuggling the youths in barrels or crates or the like.

### THE GRUMPY HALFLING

After the heroes apprehend the guilty youths, they'll have at least a brief encounter with the Flaming Fist guards at the checkpoint. This is your chance to introduce Lotgeir Shortcloak, an unhappy (and very vocal about it) member of the Flaming Fist. While within earshot of the characters, he complains to his fellow guards about having to work so hard. Judging from the other guards' reactions, Shortcloak complains like this a lot, and they don't take him seriously.

Shortcloak might make another appearance in the "Prison Break" event during stage 10.

#### KEEPING TRACK

**One of the three antagonists will benefit from this event, depending on the characters' actions.**

If the heroes kill the vandals on the order of the master of cobblestones, Rael gains one rank on Bhaal's Favor Track because no official answer to a controversy that embarrasses both the patriars and the Flaming Fist is presented to the public.

If the characters turn the youths over to Rael, her favor in Bhaal's eyes rises one rank when she gives the vandals to a mob. The mob beats the adolescents, chops off their hands, and ties the other statues' hands, which Guild members covertly provide to onlookers, around the juveniles' necks before dragging them from Norchapel to the Wide, where they are dumped at the Beloved Ranger's feet.

If the adventurers bring the culprits to Ravengard, he rises one rank in Bhaal's favor as the swell of negative opinion, even among the patriars, prevents the youths' parents from intervening to save them from the marshal's sentence of ten years in the Seatower of Balduran.

If the heroes spirit the vandals back to Silvershield, the duke gains one rank in Bhaal's favor because he has evidence planted on some of his personal enemies instead.

If the heroes don't get involved, you decide who finds the culprits and thus determines the youths' fates.

## STAGE 4

### Sanitation Strike

The Guild orchestrates waste-hauling slowdowns in the Upper and Lower cities. Garbage piles up in the Upper City's avenues, and the Lower City's streets glisten beneath a film of sewage that's washing downhill into the harbor. The Outer City is less affected, because garbage and unpleasant smells from tanneries, butcheries, and stables are ubiquitous in that area. As long as the slowdown and the protests last, the Upper and Lower cities are incredibly unpleasant places, making their residents irritable.



The most effective way for the characters to oppose Rael's efforts is to bribe the nightsoil and goldflow carriers. One gp apiece would do it, but the city has about 150 such workers. A few might admit to already taking bribes to slow the work, although none gives a reliable description of who bribed them.

#### KEEPING TRACK

**Rael gains one rank on Bhaal's Favor Track if the characters do not find a way to negate a shutdown.**

### Ravengard for Duke

Abdel Adrian's death leaves a vacancy on the Council of Four. Traditionally, someone who has strong ties to the Lower City in general and the Flaming Fist in particular holds that seat. As Adrian's second in command, Ulder Ravengard has already assumed control of the Fist, and he is the obvious choice to take Adrian's place as duke.



But dukes are not appointed; the Parliament of Peers elects them. And, according to rumor, the peers want to stack the council with a fourth patriarch to keep the Fist out. Ravengard is both angry and concerned about this development. The only patriarch who has enough Lower City support to stand a chance against Ravengard is Wylyck Caldwell, an alchemist and lumber baron who is well into his seventies.

**Involving the Heroes:** Ravengard invites the characters to meet him at the Hissing Stones, a Seatower bathhouse. Ravengard visits the bathhouse to relax or engage in sensitive meetings, as did Adrian. Inside the Hissing Stones, patrons can literally hide nothing.

At the meeting, Ravengard launches directly into the matter at hand—Wylyck Caldwell. Ravengard likes Caldwell, especially because of the patriarch's strong anti-Guild views. He doesn't want to discredit the man, but he won't let those feelings get in the way of himself becoming a duke. The marshal instructs the

adventurers to pressure Caldwell to turn down Silvershield's nomination, but without tying Ravengard to the effort.

Ravengard knows an alchemist named Yssra Brackrel, who has no love for the patriars and a fresh grudge against Silvershield; the duke recently had her jailed for several days. Brackrel is willing to sign a statement swearing that Caldwell's alchemically treated lumber, the commodity responsible for his fortune, is dangerous. These accusations won't hold up to scrutiny, but airing the charges publicly would nonetheless damage Caldwell's reputation. Ravengard believes that leveling the threat privately would be enough to persuade the bookish Caldwell to stay out of politics.

To fulfill the task, the characters need to gain an audience with Caldwell, deliver the message "from a concerned citizen," keep Ravengard's involvement secret, and make it clear that Caldwell must decline Silvershield's nomination to ensure that the accusation never becomes public. Caldwell is furious and presses hard to know who is behind the blackmail. Regardless, he ultimately agrees to the proposition in order to avoid a scandal.

## PRELUDE TO DISASTER

During the course of any event, as the characters pass yet another stinking trash heap (preferably in Bloomridge), a hero knowledgeable about magic or alchemy spots a cracked ceramic bowl stained with residue that smells of sulfur and smoke. A wizard or someone skilled in alchemy realizes the substance is characteristic of a batch of smokepowder. The letters "F E L O G Y R / B G" are scratched into the bowl's underside. The bowl is an important clue leading to Silvershield's plot to blow up the High Hall and thus wipe out the Parliament of Peers. (One of Imbralym Skoond's apprentice alchemists tossed it in the trash.)

Smokepowder is well known but not widely manufactured. The only licensed smokepowder producer in Baldur's Gate is Afery Sonshal, who runs Felogyr's Fireworks on Bindle Street in the Steeps. If the characters talk to Sonshal about the bowl, see "Protectionism" in stage 5.

If the characters show the bowl to Sonshal, he scratches his head, scratches his nose, and then explains that it's identical to the mixing bowls he uses, right down to his ancestor's name being scratched into its base. The powder-maker tells the adventurers that a Rivington potter makes the bowls to Sonshal's exact specifications, and he gave the name of that potter, Tacy Sands, as well as two others, to a man who paid him for the information a month ago. (He can describe the individual, who was Imbralym Skoond, but Skoond was using a spell to disguise himself at the time.) Sonshal is quick to add that he doesn't throw his ruined crockery in Bloomridge trash heaps, and any apprentice who ruins a bowl in this way deserves to be beaten like a rented mule.

Performing this job would mar the characters' reputations in Silvershield's eyes, and the duke would need to be convinced of their trustworthiness before offering them work again.

Regardless of the outcome, Duke Silvershield is manipulating Grand Duke Portyr and the Parliament of Peers handily without any other duke getting in the way. So, for now, no new duke is elected.

## KEEPING TRACK

**Ravengard gains one rank on Bhaal's Favor Track if the characters blackmail Wyllyck Caldwell without revealing Ravengard's role, or if they fail to thwart Ravengard's hired blackmailers.**

## STAGE 5

### Upper City Lockout

The Upper City has always closed to nonresidents at dusk. In response to the growing disturbances, Silvershield convinces the other two dukes to order the Upper City's gates barred at 3 bells.



The chief effect of this restriction is economic. Lower City and Outer City merchants must close their stalls in the Wide hours earlier than Upper City sellers. The residents of Blackgate who work unloading ships in the harbor or in many Lower City shops must leave their jobs hours early to reach the Black Dragon Gate before it is sealed. The alternatives are a long, tiring walk outside the city walls or a long, miserable night in a cold Citadel cell after being caught in the Upper City later than 3 bells.

As a result, ships sit unloaded at the piers while outgoing cargo piles up quayside. And merchants and shippers lose money, a tragedy in Baldur's Gate.

**In the Duke's Employ:** If the characters are working for Silvershield, he tasks them with patrolling the Upper City's well-lit streets for people who don't belong there. Most are regular citizens who either don't know the new law or who were too slow getting out. Silvershield provides the characters with passports to ensure that the Watch doesn't arrest them. Such passports are extremely valuable; an ambitious merchant or Guild member would pay up to 200 gp for one (but an opening offer would be closer to 50 gp).

**Not Working for the Duke:** If the adventurers are not working for Silvershield, the Upper City closes to them, too. The Undercellar connects the Upper City and Lower City through secret, underground passages, making it a good, albeit illegal, route in or out—assuming the characters hear about it. Because they are local celebrities, Silvershield would give them Upper City

passports if they asked, as long as they haven't worked openly for his rivals.

If the characters are in the Upper City after the gates close and do not have passports, they have a couple of options. Hiding and outrunning Watch patrols as they go about their business might be the best choice. They could attempt to pass themselves off as legitimate Upper City residents, but they would have to back up their claim with appropriate dress and behavior. Few patriars walk the streets armed and armored or in spattered traveling clothes, and Watch members pride themselves on knowing all patriars by face and name.

If the heroes want to reverse the curfew decision, they can try appealing to Silvershield. But marshaling the will of the other dukes and the patriars is a better option. The policy is costing people at all levels of society. If the heroes somehow muster enough support for reversing the decision among the other dukes or the Parliament of Peers, Silvershield relents.

#### KEEPING TRACK

**Silvershield gains one rank on Bhaal's Favor Track if the characters fail to get the curfew overturned.**

#### JAILED!

If the Flaming Fist captures the heroes at some point in the adventure, you have options from which to choose.

- ◆ Allow events to proceed without the characters until "Prison Break" in stage 10.
- ◆ If the adventurers are on good terms with Rael or Coran, have one of those people pull strings to secure the characters' release.
- ◆ If the heroes are on good terms with Silvershield, have the duke arrange their trial and exoneration.
- ◆ If the heroes are working for Ravengard, he could arrange for their release in return for some additional service.
- ◆ Allow the characters to stage their own escape. Perhaps they trick the guards, find a loose floor stone with a crawl space beneath it, or offer incriminating evidence to Ravengard against Silvershield or Rael in exchange for their freedom. As always, reward players' creativity.

#### Protectionism

The sumptuary law (stage 2) is a slap in the face to wealthy Lower City citizens who aspire to noble station, and they are incensed about it. Though Ravengard couldn't care less, his officers are grumbling, and that's unacceptable. In response, he uses his friendship with Harbormaster Erl Namorran to raise tariffs on fine goods shipped into the city. The taxes apply to



luxury items popular with the patriars, such as incense, spices, wines, magic supplies, and art objects.

Typically, such taxation is the purview of the harbormaster in consultation with the duke associated with the Flaming Fist. Namorran cooperates even though Ravengard does not yet have the title of duke, because he fully expects Ravengard to gain that post in the near future. So the complaints of patriars aren't enough to move Namorran on this issue, particularly if the "Upper City Lockout" curfew is still in effect. For Harbormaster Namorran to change his stance, he would need to first hear from Ravengard that the marshal had reversed his position. Appointing a new harbormaster would be the only other way to halt the taxation, but a new harbormaster would immediately make many enemies in the Lower City and among the Flaming Fist. "Who would dare take the job?" Silvershield meaningfully asks the heroes if they consult him.

The day before the new luxury taxes go into effect, the characters receive a lamp lass-delivered invitation to "a private soiree" in Bloomridge. If they accept the invitation and show up at the manor, see "Interlude 1: Disaster in the Making."

#### KEEPING TRACK

**Ravengard gains one rank on Bhaal's Favor Track if the characters fail to halt the taxing of luxury goods.**

### Interlude 1: Disaster in the Making

The "private soiree" alluded to in the characters' invitation is a hedonistic revel hosted by the famed citizen-adventurer Coran (*Campaign Guide*, page 38). He invites his guests to take advantage of his manor's sumptuous delicacies "while they're still available."

In the course of the evening, Coran corners the characters for a conversation, during which he hints that they might want to look into who else is stocking up on goods and what they're stockpiling. If the adventurers ask for help or advice, Coran suggests they ask Harbormaster Namorran for permission to examine the Harbor Manifest. If the characters take him up on this suggestion, continue with "Interlude 2: Harbormaster."

Coran is pointing the heroes toward the "Smokepowder Plot" event in stage 10. He knows that someone is importing large amounts of smokepowder ingredients.

Before Coran moves on to mingle with other guests, he offers the adventurers one more message.

#### Read:

*"Baldr's Gate is a viper's nest of schemes and schemers. I wasn't born a rich idler; I started out as a poor adventurer, like you. Adjusting to my new life in this labyrinth of gossip and intrigue was no easy feat. If you find yourselves in trouble or needing help sorting the Gate's heroes from its villains, my door is always open to you. But do me a favor; use the back door."*

## Interlude 2: Harbormaster

In addition to looking after the harbor, the harbormaster is responsible for maintaining the **Harbor Manifest**, a record of everything shipped legally by river into or out of Baldur's Gate. Harbormaster Namorran is a martinet who refuses to let anyone who isn't a civic officer peek at the manifest.

As a result, the characters might decide to sneak into the harbormaster's office at night. The huge, ancient door lock on the place is more ceremonial than practical. It's easy to pick by anyone skilled in thievery.

The manifest is another matter—it is a potent magic item. When the harbormaster dictates to it, his words are magically recorded. Someone who wants to open the book successfully must trace a magic pattern embedded in its cover. The manifest has been opened so many times that the tracing marks are clearly visible, but the pattern is so complex that following it properly requires a DC 15 Intelligence check. If it is opened before the correct pattern is traced, the manifest screeches in a parrot voice, "Thief! Help! Thief! Help!" If triggered, the book's shouts soon attract the attention of nearby Flaming Fist soldiers (**privates** and **lieutenants**) who patrol the docks. The loud cry repeats endlessly until the symbol is traced correctly.

If the characters open the manifest correctly, they find a copy of every bill of lading for every cargo that has moved legally through the harbor since the manifest has been in use, which is a very long time. With a DC 15 Intelligence check every 30 minutes, a searching character finds something noteworthy. Only one character can read the manifest at a time. But with DC 20 Intelligence checks, another couple of heroes could conceivably discover interesting information while reading over the first one's shoulders.

The characters uncover a few irregularities, but only one jumps out at them. For many years, Felogyr's Fireworks has imported four identical shipments per year of dragon dung, salt of yolk, and charcoal. Anyone knowledgeable about magic or alchemy recognizes the items as key ingredients in the manufacture of smokepowder. A couple of tendays ago, less than a month after the arrival of the most recent regular shipment at Felogyr's Fireworks, another consignment for five times the usual amount was received. Two similar shipments preceded it. The larger shipments were labeled "Deliver to H. Kope, in care of Felogyr's."

Avery Sonshal can be found at Felogyr's Fireworks in the Steeps. He is happy to discuss his shipments, but swears he never made or took possession of the larger orders. Months ago, a man (Imbralym Skoond in disguise) came to the shop and placed a huge order for fireworks. He bought everything Sonshal had in stock, plus all the raw materials the shopkeeper had on hand. The purchaser even paid a finder's fee for the names of Sonshal's suppliers. Sonshal says the purchaser was

named "Horus Kope, or something like that. . . . Say, you don't suppose that was a joke?"

Further investigation among harborhands reveals that the large cargoes were sent to several different harbor-area warehouses. All have already been picked up. The warehouse managers were paid in cash and have no information about where the goods went when they left their care. What they don't know, but Imbralym Skoond does know, is that each of the shipments took a roundabout route to one of three secret entrances into Seskergates, Skoond's mansion in Bloomridge. The characters have no access to that information yet.

## STAGE 6

### Arson

The state of the city spirals further downward as the Guild launches a campaign of targeted destruction on behalf of the Outer City against important Lower City and Upper City locations. The targets are businesses that draw money away from the Outer City, guild halls that exclude Outer City residents from membership or compete with Outer City guilds, and the homes of individuals who are particularly disliked.



Because of the frequent rains, near-constant dampness, and prevalence of stone construction in the city, structure fires seldom rage out of control. If a blaze does take off, it can be difficult to fight from the Lower City's steep streets, and a large fire could readily spread uphill. When a cry of "Fire!" is raised, it's customary for citizens who hear it to drop whatever they're doing and race to the scene to help, because a fire that goes unchecked threatens everyone.

This event's fires burn out the interiors of the targeted buildings but don't threaten to consume more of the city unless you choose otherwise.

**In the Guild's Employ:** If the characters are working for Rael, she might ask them to start some of the fires. She would be more likely to ask the adventurers to scout potential locations, so she could call in professional arsonists when no one is home. At this stage, Rael

### SNEAKING SKOOND

When the characters are in the Upper City one evening, they might spot Imbralym Skoond, Silvershield's wizard, scuttling through the streets and nervously glancing over his shoulder. The duke's right-hand man is heading home after shifting casks of smokepowder from a wine shop's back room, through the sewers, and into the High Hall. His clothing is smeared with mud. For more information, see "Smokepowder Plot" in stage 10.

is interested in sending a message through property damage, not in burning people to death.

If the characters take on Rael's assignment, she introduces them to Othial Burlist, a member of the Flaming Fist who has approached Rael for a favor. In the company of this female half-elf, the characters can move around the streets of the Lower City easily and accomplish whatever they set out to do. The heroes might come across Burlist again during the "Prison Break" event in stage 10.

**Fighting a Fire:** Characters who respond to a fire alarm have three options. They can help fight the fire, passing buckets and pitchers of water for 30 to 60 minutes until the fire is extinguished. They can enter the building to rescue anyone trapped inside. Or they can try to spot and catch the arsonists, if the fire-setters are still in the area.

**Fighting the Fire-Setters:** If the heroes try to stop the arsonists, catching or killing the arsonists from two fire-setting teams is sufficient to do so. The Guild members work in five-person teams. Two arsonists (**tough thugs**) set a fire, while three urchins (**human bystanders**) watch for patrols or potential witnesses. If the characters scan the crowd, tell them, "A child is studying you from the street corner, failing to be subtle about it."

If the heroes approach the child, two more urchins materialize and beg for spare coins, or plead for help finding their lost little sister, in an attempt to divert the adventurers' attention from the fire and the escaping arsonists. The children will lead the characters away from the scene if they can.

The fire-setters fight only if they have the benefit of surprise or are cornered. Otherwise, they run in separate directions while the urchins do their best to cover the arsonists' escapes.

A captured arsonist won't crack under interrogation. Rael chose these individuals because they have been toughened against physical and psychological pressure. A bribe of 20 gp, however, loosens an arsonist's tongue. The fire-setter reveals that a shadowy figure known as Fruward the Nail hired the two-person team.

Fruward is not well known outside a small circle of criminals. He works directly for Nine-Fingers, arranging jobs and payments with which she does not want to be directly associated. The characters can ask around the Outer City or talk with a Flaming Fist mercenary to confirm Fruward's association with the Guild. Tracking down Fruward, however, is next to impossible. The Nail goes into deep hiding the moment he suspects the adventurers are after him.

#### KEEPING TRACK

Rael gains one rank on Bhaal's Favor Track if the characters participate in the arsons, or if they fail to capture or kill the arsonists responsible for at least two attacks.

## Old-School Dueling

In this stage, Silvershield manipulates the Council of Four into reinstating the dueling laws that date back to the city's rough-and-tumble days as Gray Harbor. According to the old law, any person can demand immediate redress in the form of a one-on-one duel for any perceived wrong another person commits against that individual.

The law was based on the notion that the gods would bless and preserve duelists who were in the right. In contrast to modern dueling rules (see "Patriars," page 39 in the *Campaign Guide*), the old decree does not limit the types of armor and weapons that can be used, because equipment was considered irrelevant when the gods intercede on behalf of justice. In actuality, the law heavily tilts the odds in a duel toward people who have military training or who own magic armor and weapons.

Traditionally, duels are fought to first blood, but the combatant who suffers the first wound can choose not to yield. Against a skilled duelist, first blood could mean a lethal wound. Additionally, a better fighter could allow himself or herself to be lightly wounded and then press the battle to the death.

It is against the law for anyone to intervene in someone else's duel. If a person intrudes on a duel, he or she can be arrested or the original duelists' friends can challenge the intruder.

**Strutting Duelists:** Shortly after the law goes into effect, a handful of patriars and Watch soldiers who believe the new rules give them an edge take to prowling the Lower and Outer cities looking for opportunities to duel with anyone they find a reason to dislike.

The characters can witness such an encounter at any time. In one case, a patriarch duelist wearing leather armor and wielding a fine rapier squares off against a lamp lad (**human bystander**) armed with a dagger. Spectators watch, their expressions revealing disgust or excitement. The noble accuses the lamp lad of disgracing his sister by leading her to vice dens against her will. The lad objects, saying he guided the girl only to places she told him to take her. Unless the heroes intervene, the youth is cut down in the first exchange of blows and dies in the street.

The city becomes an increasingly tense and bloody place. Gate residents, who carry knives for eating or the odd task, begin bearing daggers, meat cleavers, hatchets, billhooks, and clubs as everyone from Guild members to shopkeepers use the law to settle old scores. If the adventurers have made enemies or if they anger a stranger, they could be challenged to duels as well.

**Opposing the Law:** Convincing Parliament of Peers members and Grand Duke Dillard Portyr to oppose the law is the only way to end the slaughter. Impassioned



speeches could do it, but the adventurers might need to defeat more than a few **patriar** duelists to persuade the rest of them to back off.

#### KEEPING TRACK

Silvershield gains one rank on Bhaal's Favor Track if the characters fail to turn the Parliament of Peers against the reinstatement of the old dueling laws.

## Kangaroo Courts

The criminal justice system in Baldur's Gate calls on independent judges—dukes or their appointed patriar proxies—to hear cases and pass judgments based on law, tradition, and common sense. For all its quirks, the system functions reasonably well. At least, it did, until the Guild found enough patriars who were susceptible to bribery or blackmail to take control of the system, ensuring that anyone who has an important Guild connection isn't convicted of a crime.



The rarity of convictions for Guild members infuriates Ravengard. In response, he creates the Court of the Fist, an impromptu military tribunal that can convene anywhere, hear evidence, and pass judgment. The presiding officer must be of flame rank or higher.

These trials are illegal. Nothing in the city's laws or the Flaming Fist's charter gives Ravengard the authority to create such a court. Only the peers and the dukes are in a position to stop the marshal. But Silvershield won't object as long as the tribunals stay out of the Upper City, and the patriars are increasingly avoiding travel outside the Upper City or contact with anyone who isn't in their elite circles. The Guild, meanwhile, doesn't have the structure or the strength to challenge the Fist on its own terms.

These kangaroo courts begin operating immediately, with Flaming Fist members capturing suspected Guild members and sympathizers and hearing cases involving everything from theft and libel to confidence games and murder. Sometimes the verdicts are proper and practical, such as when petty thieves are forced to pay restitution or slanderers are forced to publicly recant their lies. Some rulings are barbarous, such as when breakers of verbal contracts have their tongues cut out. And some are fatal, such as when merchants who sell spoiled goods are hanged in their shops' doorways.

#### KEEPING TRACK

Ravengard gains one rank on Bhaal's Favor Track if the characters fail to unleash the Parliament of Peers on the illegal Court of the Fist.

## STAGE 7

### Closing Baldur's Mouth

Baldur's Mouth is a one-page broadsheet, printed irregularly three to eight times a tenday, based on when it fills up with articles and advertisements.



Ravengard suspects that the Guild is using Baldur's Mouth for citywide secret communications. If the characters are in his good graces, he tasks them with investigating his suspicion. If the marshal and the adventurers are not on friendly terms, Ravengard sends out Flaming Fist soldiers to rip papers out of folks' hands and tear them off walls.

Indeed, the Guild has been using the news outlet to coordinate actions between its many cells. Information about Guild meetings is coded into some of the broadsheets. When the sheet is folded in a particular way, a person can read the time and place of a gathering. Folded in a different way, it serves as a pass to gain admittance into the meeting.

Not all copies of an edition contain the code. Most of the papers reveal no secret information, even when folded correctly. A few trained mouthers (lamp lads and lamp lasses who distribute broadsheets during the day) hand out special copies to operatives they know and to people who look like Guild recruits—anyone accoutered like a rogue, thief, assassin, or bard. With a DC 10 Wisdom check, a character can spot a paper deliverer handling two separate stacks of papers.

Even with a coded version of the broadsheet in hand, a character still needs to figure out its puzzle. With a DC 15 Intelligence check, someone who is experimenting with ways to fold the broadsheet hits on the secret. Once a character knows the technique, folding the paper into the meeting-pass configuration is simple.

The broadsheet directs those who decode the message to "Gather at the last bell above the ankle of the Sow's Foot." The "last bell" means midnight, and Sow's Foot refers to that district. With a DC 10 Intelligence check, a character recalls hearing that Hamhocks Slaughterhouse is located in that Outer City district and knows that a hamhock is the cut of meat above a pig's ankle. Otherwise, the adventurers can wander around the streets and alleys of Sow's Foot for 30 to 60 minutes and stumble on the answer when they spot the slaughterhouse.

**Getting Inside:** At Hamhocks Slaughterhouse, a **tough thug** guards the door. He demands that the heroes' credentials, or the properly folded broadsheet, be slid through a slot. He gives everyone a thorough visual inspection and is suspicious of anyone who looks like a wizard or a soldier. At the first sign that spies or informants have compromised the meeting, the door

guard bars the entrance, and everyone inside dashes out a side exit and scatters.

If the heroes are admitted and don't arouse suspicion, they hear discussion of Rael's kidnapping plot (see the next event). The discussion relies heavily on slang terms that have meaning to rogues and similar individuals but sound like gibberish to most other people. For example, the plot to kidnap Omdarsh Nyach for ransom is described as "hooking a toddle for rounds."

Ravengard is determined to shut down Baldur's Mouth to prevent the Guild from using the paper for its own purposes—but he might well change his mind if the characters share their discoveries with him and persuade him to let the Guild keep its secret system. Now that Fist soldiers know what to watch for, they have a better chance of identifying Guild collaborators.

### KEEPING TRACK

**Ravengard gains one rank on Bhaal's Favor Track if the characters learn the Guild's scheme and pass the details on to Ravengard, or if they fail to prevent Fist soldiers from doing so.**

## Kidnappings

Kidnapping for ransom are uncommon but not unheard of in Baldur's Gate. The victims are not city leaders or other figures of importance. Abductors instead target the leaders' family members, snatching them as they venture through the city on routine activities. Typically, kidnappers demand relatively low ransoms, which are paid, and the victims are set free. No kidnapping victims in the Gate have been harmed, beyond the loss of a finger, for at least a generation.

Rael, however, is beginning to feel bloodthirsty. She unleashes kidnappers on a handful of targets, setting high ransoms and offering murky payment instructions that seriously limit the length of time families are given to pay. Rael hopes some families fail to meet her demands so she can order the hostages' deaths.

The adolescent son of Valaith Chadur, a well-known Lower City stonemason, is the first kidnapping victim to die. Simmur Chadur's strangled body is found near the harbormaster's office. The second slain hostage is Lara Alreven, the wife of Alraner Alreven, the owner of an artistic glassblowing shop. Her bludgeoned body is dumped near Elfsong Tavern. The third murdered victim is Harali Avir, the daughter of Aurayaun, owner of the Blade and Stars. Her body is found in an alley behind Sorcerous Sundries.

**Working for Ravengard:** When the son of Darsh Nyach, a prominent merchant of sailcloth, is snatched, Ravengard might summon the characters. He is certain to if they work for him at the time. He wants these murderers brought to justice—any justice.



Darsh Nyach is one of the few members of the Parliament of Peers who lives outside the Upper City. His son, Omdarsh, is 15 years old and often goes fishing along the docks in Brampton. The lad set out for the docks before dawn yesterday and hasn't been seen since. No one who lives along the most direct route between the Nyach home and the harbor admits to hearing an altercation that morning.

The characters' best chance for catching the kidnappers is to deliver the ransom. The kidnappers' note to Nyach, which was delivered to him while he was in a Parliament of Peers session, instructs him to bring 800 gp to Blind Darcaryn's corner in the Lower City just outside Baldur's Gate. The instructions say to then drop 2 pp into the beggar's coin cup.

**When the characters drop the platinum coins into the beggar's cup, read:**

*Hearing the clink of platinum among his copper pieces, the blind man nods in thanks and hands you a note. It reads, "You're the pigeons now. Let's see who's faster, the real pigeon or the volunteer pigeons. Bring the ransom to the roost. Don't be late."*

*As you read, Blind Darcaryn opens the basket next to him. A bird flies out and begins circling in the air.*

The pigeon needs a short time to get its bearings before it can head home. The characters lose sight of the bird as soon as it passes over the nearby rooftops. Within the next minute or two, one of them has to dash to the top of the wall and watch where the pigeon flies. Any delay means losing the bird.

Steep stairs ascend the tower of Baldur's Gate a mere dozen steps from where Blind Darcaryn sits. The Watch guards posted at Baldur's Gate might recognize the characters and let them pass if it's obvious they're in a hurry. But the vigilar on duty will want an explanation when they come back down. If the heroes and the Watch are at odds, the characters might need to force their way through the gate and up the tower.

The top of the wall affords a panoramic view of the Lower City. From there, an observer can easily watch the pigeon's flight. It wings its way to a building four blocks uphill from the harbormaster's office. By noting details about that structure and its surroundings, the heroes should be able to find it from the street.

Blind Darcaryn knows only that someone came to him earlier and gave him 1 gp, the note, the basket, and verbal instructions to hand over the note and open the basket if he heard 2 pp drop into his cup. He was promised he'd be allowed to keep the platinum.

Rael's orders to the kidnappers are to kill the hostage when the pigeon arrives and then clear out. But her flunkies are tired of killing hostages for wages. They want the ransom. The abductors wait 30 minutes after the bird returns. If the heroes haven't arrived by

then, fear of Rael overcomes their greed, and they kill Omdarsh and abandon the hideout.

**Run for It:** To reach the right structure within 30 minutes, the characters need to push hard through the crowded, rain-slick streets. Each adventurer must make a DC 10 Strength check or a DC 10 Dexterity check in each district along the route, including the Steeps, Heapside, and Eastway.

With a successful check in the Steeps, a character crosses the remaining portion of the district in 8 minutes. On a failure, the crowds, cargo handlers, a wedding procession, or Guild agents slow the character, and the trip takes 10 minutes.

With a successful check in Heapside, a character crosses the whole district in 10 minutes. On a failure, the trip takes 12 minutes.

With a successful check in Eastway, a character crosses about a quarter of the way into the district, reaching the correct neighborhood in 4 minutes. On a failure, the character gets lost and takes 8 minutes to reach the right area.

**Kidnappers' Hideout:** The kidnappers are in a dingy residence under a hat-maker's shop. The small home's entrance is located in a narrow, crate-strewn alley and down a short flight of stairs. To enter the structure, an adventurer could pick the door's lock with a DC 12 Dexterity check or smash open the door with a DC 15 Strength check. If a hero knocks on the door and the home is still occupied, one of the kidnappers calls for the visitor to enter.

If the characters enter before the kidnappers leave, they encounter the abductors (**halfling rogues** and **thugs**), as well as a **Flaming Fist corporal** (a friend of one of the thugs who heard about the ransom and switched allegiances). The abductors surround a youth who is lashed to a chair. The heroes can negotiate or fight their way through the situation. The abductors want money, and they want to leave.

If the adventurers ask the kidnappers who hired them, they say "he" didn't offer a name. But their description of their boss reminds the character who spoke with Rael in the Wide of the Guild kingpin's appearance that day. After hearing about the botched job, Rael goes into hiding long before anyone comes looking for her.

**Renegade's Fate:** If Ravengard hears about his soldier turning traitor, he wants to keep the information secret. In contrast, Rael or Silvershield would pay handsomely for that tidbit. The duke would use the information as leverage against Ravengard in the council, and Rael would plaster the news on handbills to turn the city against the Fist.

#### KEEPING TRACK

Rael gains one rank on Bhaal's Favor Track if the characters fail to save the kidnapped youth.

## Massacre

A small crowd of workers kept away from their jobs by the turmoil in the city gather in Norchapel. They intend to march to the High Hall and demand that the Outer City be recognized as part of Baldur's Gate proper. This is a peaceful assembly concerned about the escalation of violence against Outer City residents. If Guild agitators were to get involved, the group might become hostile.



Ravengard's officers tell the marshal that a group of rabble-rousers is moving through the city, gathering strength as it goes. Ravengard assembles as many mercenaries as he can from the Seatower of Baldur and the Lower City, sends runners to alert the garrison at Wyrm's Rock, and marches toward the Wide.

As the protesters head toward the High Hall, their numbers swell from about two hundred to two thousand. It takes them an hour to reach Baldur's Gate, the entrance that leads into the Wide, and they don't actually get into the High Hall.

When the protesters arrive at the gate, they find three hundred Flaming Fist soldiers blocking the street. In addition, about a hundred retainers from patriarchal families and several High House of Wonders priests line the Old Wall along both sides of the gate. Everyone on the wall is holding a crossbow. The streets are otherwise deserted, and all the surrounding buildings' windows are shuttered. The Watch, responsible for guarding the gate, is conspicuously absent. (Silvershield called the soldiers away to prevent any blame from falling on the Watch for what's about to happen.)

If the characters do not intervene to forestall or interrupt this event, it unfolds as follows.

1. **Ulder Ravengard** ascends a platform of barrels and commands the crowd of unarmed commoners to disperse and return home immediately.
  - ◆ With a DC 10 Wisdom check used to spot any weapons among the protesters, an adventurer can see they are unarmed, except for a handful of ruffians who look like typical Guild operatives and informants.
2. A male protester scrambles onto a low building and answers, "We will speak with the Council of Four! We demand recognition for Baldur's forgotten, the Outer City's hardworking people!"
3. Ravengard declares that no one will negotiate with a mob and repeats his demand that crowd members return home. He adds that anyone who does not leave voluntarily will be driven back by force.
  - ◆ With a DC 5 Wisdom check to sense motive, a hero realizes that Ravengard is unhappy about the presence of the retainers and acolytes of Gond. The marshal glances uneasily at the people on the wall

- several times and twice dispatches officers in their direction on unknown errands.
4. The crowd breaks out into shouting and chanting, making further communication impossible.
  5. Ravengard climbs down from the barrels, speaks a few words to his second-in-command, and then disappears into a press of junior officers.
    - ◆ With a DC 15 Wisdom check, a character spots Imbralym Skoond skulking among the patriars' retainers and speaking angrily to several of their leaders moments before the first bolt is launched.
  6. The patriar retainers and the acolytes of Gond launch a volley of crossbow bolts into the crowd, killing dozens and injuring many more. In moments, screaming protesters run in every direction.
    - ◆ With a DC 10 Intelligence check, an adventurer recalls that Ravengard and the flame he spoke to issued no command before the crossbows were fired. Armed retainers released the first bolts, and the acolytes of Gond followed suit.
  7. The Flaming Fist mercenaries (**privates, corporals, sergeants, or lieutenants**) and the armed retainers advance into the panicked mob, striking at unarmed people who are scrambling to get away.

The next five minutes are a wild, scrambling panic of people pressing into packed streets as they try to escape. When it ends, the streets are clear of protesters, except for 120 dead and hundreds of other victims who are too badly wounded to flee.

8. After the initial bloodbath, the Flaming Fist soldiers regroup into their formations, and some patriar retainers walk through the streets murdering wounded "rioters" who are too injured to fight back.

By the end of the day, the count rises to 183 bodies gathered from within a few blocks of Baldur's Gate and 36 more collected from the streets of Heapside and Eastway, where they were trampled during the retreat or collapsed from wounds. Many more victims succumb to injuries in the coming days. The number of wounded protesters is impossible to know, but is in the hundreds at least.

On the other side of the ledger, a crossbow bolt killed one retainer. Officially, an armed rioter was responsible, but it's more likely he was the victim of a fellow retainer's badly aimed shot. None of the Flaming Fist soldiers was injured.

- ◆ With a DC 15 Intelligence check, a character determines that in the streets where the Flaming Fist pushed back the crowd, many of the dead appear to have been knocked unconscious with a club or the flat of a blade, which Fist soldiers are trained to do against unarmed foes. Then the victims were fatally stabbed after the protesters who were still standing had fled.

**If the Heroes Take Action:** The characters can try to avert the disaster.

Talking to the mob won't work. The protesters comprise a leaderless mob whose members believe the Flaming Fist won't attack them, and no words can persuade them to disperse.

Ravengard is determined to break up the mob and send it packing. He didn't come here for a massacre, but he didn't come to negotiate either. To try to dissuade him from attacking, the characters must first reach him. They can do so, if they received silver brooches from Ravengard in a previous meeting and flash them now. Otherwise, they can't get past his guards.

The only argument that can persuade Ravengard to back away from this confrontation is the contention that the patriars' retainers are looking for a chance to trigger a bloodbath and, if that happens, the Flaming Fist will be blamed. Ravengard doesn't care that the protesters are unarmed and thus far peaceful. He wants to make a statement that the Guild and the Outer City won't soon forget. He is not, however, willing to lose control of the situation because of provocation from the patriars.

If the heroes convince Ravengard to stand down, he details a third of his force to screen off the retainers and the acolytes of Gond. He then orders the rest of his mercenaries to advance in lockstep down the streets, pushing the protesters ahead of them through the Steeps at sword point. Many people are clubbed and trampled, but no one is killed.

#### KEEPING TRACK

**Silvershield gains one rank on Bhaal's Favor Track if the characters fail to convince Ravengard to avert a bloodbath.**

## STAGE 8

This stage features only one event, and all three antagonists rise in Bhaal's favor if the characters do not quell a rioting mob.

### Riot

Tension in the city has been building up like water behind a dam, and it suddenly breaks loose in a riot. Some say a duel got out of hand. Others say an argument between harborhands and a merchant started the problem. Afterward, no one remembers how it began.

If the heroes are in the Upper City or the Lower City when the riot starts, they hear a low roar in the distance. If they are in the Outer City, they eventually see huge plumes of smoke rising from near the harbor.

A riot of enormous proportions has engulfed the port and its surrounding streets. Outer City and Lower City residents are tearing shutters and doors off buildings, smashing objects, and hurling dissenters into the bay.

**Keeping Their Distance:** If the characters stay out of the way, Rael's agents whip the crowd into a fury.

Not only are shops, ships, and warehouses looted, most are torched as well. The full force of the Flaming Fist explodes out of the Seatower of Balduran to quell the riot, using lethal force on resisters. Duke Silvershield sends the Watch down from the Upper City to aid the Flaming Fist. This troop movement traps rioters and those seeking to flee the violence on the western and northern sides of the harbor in a vise. Anyone who flees from the Flaming Fist ends up facing the Watch's swords and vice versa.

**Stepping In:** The characters might oppose the riot or try to calm the rioters. Their efforts could include, but aren't limited to, challenging the mob's leaders or trying to persuade them to go home, convincing Watch and Flaming Fist soldiers to lower their weapons so they don't appear to be thirsting for a fight, wheeling a keg of ale into the street and offering everyone drinks if they agree to sit down and talk, steering rioters down dead-end streets, and protecting shops and goods.

It's vital that players explain how their characters' actions can affect the rioters or the soldiers and that the heroes work together. The adventurers' actions must be coordinated and amplify one another to have an effect on the mob. If everyone tries a different approach—intimidating a few people here, convincing a handful over there—the party won't make a dent in the throng.

If the characters come up with an effective plan, and their players make a few successful checks, the crowd around them settles down, and the resulting calm spreads outward from there. A few ugly incidents might still develop in other areas, and a large number of people are incarcerated, but the day turns out far more peaceful than it would have without the characters' intervention.

#### KEEPING TRACK

If the characters fail to calm the rioters, Rael, Silvershield, and Ravengard all gain one rank on Bhaal's Favor Track.

## STAGE 9

### Weapon Smuggling

As Bhaal's influence on Rael grows, she begins covertly arming the Outer City's residents. Most Outer City dwellers carry only daggers, which even children have, and clubs. Rael is procuring and distributing swords, shields, and crossbows to anyone who promises to use them "when the time is right."

The weapons come from two sources. Trading vessels bring the bulk of the arms into the harbor inside mislabeled crates. From the harbor, the Candulhallows family (see "Death and Taxes," page 61 in the *Campaign Guide*) carts the munitions away alongside the dead. Guild agents steal the rest from the Flaming Fist armory at



Wyrm's Rock. Unlike the smuggling involved in the first source, which the Guild excels at, the latter method of procurement is daring and exceptionally risky.

The armory thefts require the reluctantly given aid of Favil Blanthe, Exchequer of the Flaming Fist. As a young man, Blanthe was a talented Guild rogue, but he fled following a near-fatal clash with a cohort in crime. He crafted a new identity for himself, joined the Flaming Fist, and gradually climbed in rank and his superiors' estimations. As exchequer, Blanthe controls the Fist's bookkeeping and, by extension, its armories.

Rael uncovered the truth of Blanthe's past and is using it to blackmail him. So far, she has demanded only an occasional crate of short swords or crossbows from the Fist's abundant stores. As long as the price and the risk remain low, Blanthe plays along to protect his position and reputation.

**In the Guild's Employ:** If the characters are working for the Guild, Rael asks them to accompany several Guild members to Wyrm's Rock to pick up more weapons. "Porters" drag a cart to the fort's gates, wave a work order (signed by Blanthe), pick up their consignment, and walk out again. Though this is usually a straightforward task, something about the characters might tip off the guards (**Flaming Fist privates** and a **sergeant**), particularly if the characters have already had difficulties with the group.

**Not Working for Rael:** If the characters are not in cahoots with the Guild, they can learn about the weapons smuggling in one of three ways.

- ◆ The two youngest Candulhallows, Resper and his sister Taleene, conclude that the family's longtime smuggling arrangement is leading the family toward disaster. They ask the characters to help them sever ties to the Guild, but they don't reveal the family's past decade of under-the-table dealings.
- ◆ Blanthe senses Rael's demands are increasing. He worries he won't be able to conceal the loss of much more inventory, so he approaches the characters and asks for help without exposing his crimes.
- ◆ The characters stumble on one or both smuggling plots when they hear weapons jangle in a passing deadcart or notice the glint of polished blades tucked beneath beggars' and laborers' tunics.

#### KEEPING TRACK

Rael gains one rank on Bhaal's Favor Track if the characters help the Guild steal weapons from the Flaming Fist, or if they fail to discover and reveal to Ravengard at least one of the two weapon-smuggling plots.

## Funeral Procession

As two laborers who work for the Candulhallow family wheel a smoke-powder-laden coffin on a two-wheeled pushcart through Bloomridge (see “Smokepowder Plot” in stage 10), one of them thoughtlessly knocks out the contents of his pipe onto the cart. A sprinkling of loose smokepowder blazes up, and the alarmed carters jump back, allowing the coffin to tumble to the cobblestones. It spills open, one of the three casks of smokepowder inside splits—and *kaboom!*



When the smoke clears, seven people are dead, including both carters, and all the surrounding buildings are damaged.

Any of Bhaal’s favored three can ask the characters to look into this incident. Everyone wants to know what happened, including Silvershield, who can make a pretty solid guess, of course. Ravengard and the rest of the city is sure the Guild is responsible. Rael and Nine-Fingers know the Guild had nothing to do with it, but they are itching to know who did.

Surviving witnesses are as puzzled as everyone else and quickly point fingers at the Guild. They describe a typical street scene, mentioning a few Flaming Fist soldiers standing on a corner, a couple of carters slogging alongside their cart, a couple of acolytes of Gond strolling past, a patriarch woman berating her servants, children playing, and a few adolescent boys insulting each other. Then suddenly everything was flame and thunder and whistling debris. Persistent questioning reveals that the carters were hauling a coffin, and pressing on that point stirs two people to recall that the last thing they saw was the coffin falling.

The Candulhallows vehemently deny that the explosion had anything to do with the casket, which they claim was empty. The undertakers report the coffin was being delivered to a Manorbore address. (If the characters ask where, they say, “The lives and affairs of patriars are not your business. Nor is our family’s business yours.”) The carters, or so they claim, were taking a detour to avoid a particularly crowded street along their path. The explosion site in Bloomridge near Seskergates does lie along a drastic, but not wholly unbelievable, detour from the most direct route.

### KEEPING TRACK

**Silvershield gains one rank on Bhaal’s Favor Track unless the characters somehow uncover stage 10’s “Smokepowder Plot” during this event.**

## Martial Law

By this point, Ravengard’s declaring martial law is more a formality than a change of affairs. The city has practically been under martial law for days, but the notices that criers shout and nail to walls make it official: Baldur’s Gate is now under the Flaming Fist’s military protection.



Under martial law, an order from any Fist mercenary carries total authority, and anyone who fails to comply can be arrested or executed on the spot. Only Flaming Fist soldiers are allowed to wear armor or carry weapons larger than a table knife. Gatherings with people outside one’s immediate family are forbidden. Everyone must be off the street before the sun falls behind the western wall. No ships are to enter or leave the harbor without clearance from the Seatower of Baldur.

An uneasy truce is drawn between the Upper and Lower cities. According to Ravengard’s declaration, the restrictions of martial law apply to the Upper City, too. But for the time being, he chooses not to challenge the Watch on its home turf. All five gates into the Upper City are closed, though, and no one can get through them without an awfully good story.

Once martial law is declared, it remains in effect until the end of the adventure.

**Armed and Scuttling:** From this point forward, unless the characters are Flaming Fist members or carry Ravengard’s silver tokens, they cannot easily move around the Lower City while wearing armor and carrying weapons.

To move from one district to another requires DC 10 Dexterity checks to sneak past Flaming Fist patrols. If half or more of the characters succeed on such a check, all of them proceed unnoticed. If the party fails by only one check (two successes and three failures, for example), it can retreat in the direction from which it came without being noticed. Otherwise, the patrol spots the adventurers and pursues to arrest them. (If the characters are apprehended, see “Jailed!” on page 17 for ideas on how they might get out.)

Anyone who wears a Watch uniform in the Lower City receives steely-eyed glares from Flaming Fist mercenaries but can travel the streets with minimal hassle.

The Guild relies on sewers, rooftops, and the Undercellar’s secret passages to move around. People who have excellent Guild contacts or 50 gp apiece can also travel through the Undercellar.

### KEEPING TRACK

**This event cannot be stopped, so Ravengard automatically gains one rank on Bhaal’s Favor Track.**

# STAGE 10

The events of this last stage before the finale depend on where the three antagonists are on Bhaal's Favor Track. Play out the events associated with the two highest-ranked agents on the track. If all three are of equal rank, play out all three events.

In addition, these events weigh heavily on whom Bhaal chooses, and they are very difficult to prevent. If the heroes significantly impede one of these events, it not only prevents the associated agent from rising on the track, it sets him or her back five ranks.

## Prison Break

With the Seatower of Baldurian filled to bursting following the riot, Rael plans to raid the military structure and release the prisoners locked in its dungeons. The Seatower is a formidable fortress, and attacking it is a thorny problem for any force.

The harassment of Yssra Brackrel in the event "Search and Seizure" (stage 1) pushed the alchemist into Rael's outstretched arms. In the days since, Brackrel has concocted a single smokepowder bomb. It could blast open the structure's front gate if the bomb were placed against it.

A large group of Flaming Fist soldiers (**corporals**, **lieutenants**, **privates**, or **sergeants**) guard each end of the Seatower's causeway. More crossbow-carrying mercenaries (**privates**) are posted atop the gate.

**In League with the Guild:** If the characters are working for Rilsa Rael at this stage, she probably trusts them as far as she trusts anyone. The Guild kingpin tasks them with planning the attack, so the decision for how to breach the Seatower falls to the players.

If the characters decide to run the attack, Rael provides them with a group of well-armed ruffians (**thugs**, **tough thugs**, **halfling rogues** and a **bomber**). She explains to them that if the bomber reaches the Seatower gate at the end of the causeway, the dwarf's smokepowder bomb is powerful enough to blow the gate open. The rogues, who know the Seatower's layout, then could use the commotion and confusion to slip inside, dash to the dungeons, and release the prisoners.

If the characters don't have their own plan for getting the strike team close to the gate, Rael offers them the assistance of someone within the Flaming Fist. She provides them with the names of three likely prospects.

◆ Nordir Samulkin, a human, has racked up large gambling debts that he is eager to keep hidden from his brothers, who are also in the Flaming Fist. (The characters might have met Samulkin during stage 2 in "Flaming Fist Thuggery.")



◆ Lotgeir Shortcloak joined the Flaming Fist on a lark and now proclaims for all to hear that he would buy out his contract if only he could afford it. (The heroes got a glimpse of Shortcloak at the end of stage 3.) It's all just talk, though. Despite his constant complaining, the halfling enjoys being a Flaming Fist. If someone approaches him with a scheme for betrayal, he reports the incident to his superiors.

◆ Othial Burlfist, a half-elf, fled an arranged marriage and joined the Flaming Fist for the anonymity it provided her—but another mercenary uncovered her past and is now blackmailing her. She approached Rael for the Guild's help, and in return for a promise of assistance Burlfist has agreed to aid the prison break. (The characters might have met Burlfist during the "Arson" event in stage 6.)

If the heroes are working with Samulkin or Burlfist, that person escorts the characters and their team across the causeway under the guise of a supply delivery. When they reach the gate, the bomb is detonated, and the traitor melts into the crowd and disappears.

If the characters approach the tower stealthily or in disguise without the help of a traitor, they must use Charisma checks against the guards' Wisdom to avoid detection. The odds are high that the mercenaries notice the heroes' subterfuge and either halt them or attack outright, depending on what they've spotted.

**Carnage:** Once the prisoners (**thugs**) are released, the escapees turn on the guards (**privates**), and the breakout becomes a bloodbath. The prisoners who survive make a dash along the causeway to the Seatower district, there to disappear into alleys and side streets.

Unless the "Weapon Smuggling" plot in stage 9 was revealed to Ravengard, the Flaming Fist is in worse shape than its members realize. When the mercenaries muster to fight the prisoners, they find weapons and ammunition missing from the armory. When they pursue the criminals into the streets, they find the missing weapons in the hands of Rael's allies and sympathizers (**tough thugs** and **thugs**), who step out from their hiding places to ambush the soldiers.

**Not Working for the Guild:** If the characters are not associated with the Guild, Rael uses other personnel to plan and execute the attack. If the characters are on hand when it happens, they can join either side of the battle, or not, as they see fit. If the adventurers tag along with Rael's strike team, they run into a group of guards (**Flaming Fist corporals**, **lieutenants**, **privates**, or **sergeants**) who heard the blast but have no idea what's happening and have received no orders.

## KEEPING TRACK

Rael gains one rank on Bhaal's Favor Track if the characters arrange a prison break, or if they fail to prevent the Guild from doing so.

## Smokepowder Plot

For months, Silvershield has been secretly stockpiling smokepowder in the Upper City. Its method of manufacture was once a secret of Gond's devotees, but religious doctrine has banned the substance since the secret escaped into the wider world.

As the high artificer of Gond, Duke Silvershield considers it his right to have the stuff made, and the duke has had Imbralym Skoond hard at work making batches of it for some time.

In the early phase of the plan, Silvershield's wizard bought up Avery Sonshal's smokepowder stores and lined up suppliers so he could arrange to produce more. Skoond imported loads of alchemical ingredients and stored them in Lower City warehouses before slowly sneaking them into his mansion, Seskergates, through its many entrances. He then enlisted a few apprentices and hid them away in the mansion's cellars to turn the ingredients into smokepowder.

At first, the duke didn't have any intentions aside from vague thoughts of breaking Sonshal's monopoly on fireworks production and putting on a great show. But as Bhaal's influence continued to twist his thoughts, Silvershield settled on a more insidious idea.

## Silvershield's Plan

It's common knowledge that many members of the Parliament of Peers are beholden to the Guild in one way or another. Debt, blackmail, favors, and questionable or illegal dealings have put them in Nine-Fingers's pocket. Since the peers' main responsibility is electing dukes



to the council, Silvershield believes it's only a matter of time before the whole city dances to the Guild's tune.

So Silvershield decides to cleanse the corruption from Parliament, but he has little control over who gets elected to that body. Since he can't cleanse it judicially, and with his mind turning toward thoughts of elaborate, magnificent murder, he alights on another plan—a shockingly drastic plan.

If Parliament can't be repaired, he reasons, then it must be swept clean. It must be done in a way that blames the Guild and rallies the people to support the dukes. Silvershield resolves to eliminate Parliament in one awe-inspiring crash—by blowing up his smokepowder stash beneath the High Hall while Parliament is in session. If the plot works, Silvershield concludes, the populace would revile the Guild and elect a new parliament. In addition, a new parliament would be much harder for the Guild to subvert, since all its members would believe the Guild had murdered their predecessors.

Silvershield and Skoond alone know all the details of the plan to blow up Parliament. The handful of people they've tapped for help along the way know only their own pieces of the puzzle. Aside from the heroes, no one is in a position to stop Silvershield.

Use the information in the following sections to guide the action, depending on how the characters decide to proceed.

## In the Cellars

If the characters gain access to the poorly ventilated cellars behind and beneath Seskergates, they come upon a few apprentice smokepowder makers in ill health mixing, cooking, and grinding components into

## CLUES TO CRACKING THE CASE

The characters can begin unraveling Silvershield's plot from many different angles. Each thread provides a clue, but every one that's followed individually leads to a dead end. Only by picking up on several of these threads do characters have a chance to forestall the explosion.

The adventure doesn't depend on the characters' preventing the blast. In fact, it might be more interesting if they know that something big is afoot but can't stop it.

The clues can be found in the following places.

- ◆ “Prelude to Disaster,” page 16: When one of Skoond's alchemists damages a mixing bowl in a smokepowder-manufacturing accident, she dumps it where the characters might find it. This discovery could focus the heroes' attention on Bloomridge.
- ◆ “Interlude 2: Harbormaster,” page 18: The Harbor Manifest indicates that someone has been importing large quantities of the basic ingredients for smokepowder and stashing them in Lower City warehouses. By the time the

adventurers get involved, those supplies are gone, and nothing links them to Skoond or Silvershield.

- ◆ “Sneaking Skoond,” page 18: If in the Upper City one evening, the characters might spot Imbralym Skoond skulking through the streets on his way home after hauling smokepowder from the wine shop's back room to the High Hall. He has Silvershield's clearance to go wherever he wants, but his behavior and his mud-spattered clothing might seem suspect.
- ◆ “Funeral Procession,” page 25: The explosion of a load of smokepowder in the Upper City raises questions about what happened, who was responsible, and the attack's purpose. This event could inspire the characters to track a coffin delivery.
- ◆ “X Marks the Spots,” page 28: Characters who prowl through Seskergates might find Skoond's blueprints for placing the smokepowder charges and take them to an expert who can interpret them correctly.

smokepowder. Fifty casks of smokepowder have been produced so far in the cellars. Each wooden cask is 16 inches tall and 12 inches in diameter.

The entire workshop is explosive. If a character brings in a torch or a flame, one alchemist screams at him or her to get out, a second uses a bucket of water to douse the flame, and the remaining ones bolt for the exits in a panic. The alchemists work by magic light.

Stuffed into the apprentices' straw mattresses and beneath a loose workshop floorboard are notes, receipts, and bills of lading that "prove" the apprentices were in league with the Guild. These documents are forgeries, but there's no way to tell that by looking at them. The apprentices know nothing about their existence. With a DC 10 Intelligence check to search the workshop, a character finds the documents. If the characters specifically search the mattresses or floorboards, they find the papers without a check.

Skoond keeps the doors between his home and the cellars locked. If someone discovers the workshop, he denies knowing of the cellars' existence, let alone that someone had set up a smokepowder factory in there. It's an odd claim on its face but not without credibility, considering the maze-like nature of Seskergates' cellars.

## Moving the Goods

The Candulhallow family has been responsible for reverently transporting the dead of Baldur's Gate to their final resting places outside the city for generations. For the past several weeks, however, deadcarts have been

### X MARKS THE SPOTS

If the characters find their way into Seskergates in Skoond's absence and do some exploring, they discover that Skoond's study contains a unique piece of furniture, a tall stool from the High House of Wonders. If the characters toured the High House of Wonders, they recognize where the oddly designed stool came from. Otherwise, it stands out as newer than the mansion's other pieces of furniture. One leg of the stool contains a hollow compartment featuring a clever lock. With a DC 15 Intelligence check, an adventurer who searches the stool notices the hollow leg. With a DC 15 Dexterity check, a character picks the lock. A tightly rolled map is hidden inside the stool's leg.

The map shows the High Hall with numerous red Xs inked onto it. The building is not identified, but characters who have seen the High Hall recognize it instantly.

Nothing immediately indicates what the Xs mean. But an architect or a mason who studies the placement of the Xs realizes they correspond with structural stress points, central columns, arches, beam supports, and load-bearing walls. Not coincidentally, the Xs also mark where smokepowder casks are being placed to destroy the wing of the High Hall that contains the Parliament of Peers' chambers. However, the heroes cannot deduce that fact from the map alone.

hauling more than the dearly departed. As part of a secret arrangement between the Candulhallow family and Skoond, smokepowder casks have been hidden inside supposedly empty coffins being brought into the Upper City for funerals. The Candulhallows have been plying their trade for so long that Watch soldiers never bother to inspect the coffins.

After it passes through Baldur's Gate, a coffin containing smokepowder is taken into a narrow alley near the Three Old Kegs. If anyone follows an "empty" coffin through the Upper City, this route should seem suspicious—there's no good reason why an empty casket on its way to the home of a bereaved family would make a detour up an alley. Skoond isn't concerned about this possibility, since he can't imagine why anyone would pay attention to a coffin delivery.

From the alley, the coffin is carried into a wine shop's back room, and the casks are quickly unloaded before the coffin carters proceed on their way.

The back room contains an accessway to a branch of the Upper City's subterranean aqueducts that connects to the cistern in the High Hall's cellar. Skoond stole the key to it from the office of the master of drains and underways. When several coffin-loads of smokepowder are waiting here, Skoond pops over and moves the smokepowder into position beneath the High Hall.

## Inside the High Hall

Skoond had workers erect new walls in the cellars of the High Hall, enclosing critical support beams directly beneath the parliament's chamber. With a DC 10 Intelligence check, a character who examines the walls can identify them as new construction. Dwarves note this fact automatically. The smokepowder is packed inside the walls, safe from casual observation. The placement of the walls is designed to help direct the force of the blast up into the hall above.

### Skoond Denies it All

The characters might corner and interrogate Skoond as this plot unravels. The wizard knows the price for treason, and he can guess the one for revealing Silvershield's involvement, so he tells the characters nothing.

If asked where the smokepowder is now, the wizard concludes that they are ignorant of the plot and it's best to keep them that way. If the characters reveal the High Hall diagram from his study, he explains that the map is a study of structural flaws in the High Hall that might need to be magically repaired. Then Skoond threatens to have the characters arrested for burglarizing his home.

Even if the characters drag him to the High Hall after the fuse has been lit and demand to know where the smokepowder is, Skoond refuses to answer. The wizard is doomed either way, and he would rather be blown to bits with his captors than be hanged alone.

## Blown Away!

When **Torlin Silvershield** decides it's time to take out the parliament, he contacts **Imbralym Skoond**. The wizard uses a scroll to summon a fire mephit to ignite the fuse, sending the reluctant creature through the aqueduct. Eight minutes later, the casks explode, demolishing the wing of the High Hall above them and killing everyone in the Parliament of Peers chamber.

Anyone inside the High Hall when the charge detonates takes 10d6 damage, more than enough to kill the peers and their guards. Anyone in the courtyard takes 5d6 damage. Anyone outside that area but within 100 yards of the High Hall takes 3d6 damage.

To observers, the explosion appears as a tidal wave of earth that erupts around the wing of the High Hall and swallows it whole. Burning fragments of the building rain down across the city, causing hundreds of injuries and starting dozens of small fires. Windows facing the High Hall are shattered for blocks around. The wrecked wing burns for hours and smolders for days. About half the structure remains standing.

### KEEPING TRACK

**Silvershield gains one rank on Bhaal's Favor Track if the characters fail to prevent the Parliament of Peers from being blown up.**

## Public Executions

As Ravengard sees it, Baldur's Gate now teeters on a knife's edge between the rule of law and the gulf of chaos. Guild supporters are dragging the city toward the gulf, and none of Ravengard's measures so far has made Baldurians understand the danger. But he can show them a vision of the danger to make them understand.



In the morning, news races through the city that executions are slated to begin at highsun beside the harbor, the Basilisk Gate, and Wyrm's Crossing. The names of the condemned are not released.

Between thirty and fifty criminals are lined up at each site. Their crimes range from rioting and murder to trespassing and flouting the sumptuary laws. A few were captured just this morning. In some cases, friends and families learn of a loved one's arrest only when the condemned is marched to the gallows or the executioner's block.

Within an hour, more than a hundred prisoners are beheaded or hanged. Heads are displayed on spikes lining the roadway, and bodies are left dangling from harbor cranes, the city wall at the Basilisk Gate, and beneath the Wyrm's Crossing bridge. Depending on how time is passing, these executions might continue daily at highsun through the adventure's end.

Whether the characters witness the executions firsthand or see the remains afterward, they recognize

at least one or two people, such as a lamp lass who had lit their path or brought them a message; Ibiz, the world-weary proprietor of a closed-down vice den in Little Calimshan; a half-elf they had saved from a Fist soldier's beating; the proprietor of a shop they had protected during the riot; or Musayed, the man who had run the Calim Jewel Emporium for Rael.

**In the Guild's Employ:** If the characters are working for Rael, she pleads with them to save Musayed, whom she has heard is among those slated to be executed at Wyrm's Crossing.

The prospect of a rescue by main force is slim. Many Flaming Fist soldiers (**corporals**, **privates**, or **sergeants**) line the bridge. A tremendous diversion might allow the characters to slip inside Wyrm's Rock to free all the prisoners and escape with Musayed into the throng of onlookers. The adventurers are more likely to succeed if they flash an official token—such as Ravengard's silver brooches or Silvershield's search-and-seizure writs—and couple the action with some outrageous bluffing or intimidation (DC 15 Charisma checks). With boldness and a bit of luck, they could escort someone from the jaws of death.

### KEEPING TRACK

**Ravengard gains one rank on Bhaal's Favor Track if the characters fail to rescue the majority of the prisoners at Wyrm's Rock.**

## IT ENDS WITH BLOOD

The penultimate events are meant to be shocking. "Prison Break," "Smokepowder Plot," and "Public Executions" should horrify everyone in the city except for their perpetrators. After two of those events, the whole of Baldur's Gate reels, inhales, and holds its breath.

Although Rael, Silvershield, and Ravengard are all on the path toward becoming the Chosen of Bhaal, it's likely that one of them has pulled way ahead. The other two are caught up in the power struggle but are more or less sound of mind. Despite the stirrings of Bhaal in their heads, they recognize the horror of what's happening, and they reach out to the Gate's bastions of power—surviving peers, dukes, Flaming Fist officers, and Guild leaders—in a last effort to restore some sanity.

That effort is doomed to fail. All it manages to do is gather a huge crowd for a magnificent murder spectacle.

Regardless of who becomes the Chosen of Bhaal, the lead-in to the climactic event is the same. The city's leaders unite to issue a proclamation. They declare that the situation in Baldur's Gate has gone too far, and the power groups now understand they must work out their differences politically and peacefully. The sumptuary law and the law banning Lower City and Outer City residents from the Upper City after 3 bells are relaxed, and rumor has it that the decrees might be repealed.

To help the city mend, the leaders pour resources into the upcoming Feast of the Moon, a three-day-long fete featuring costumed merriment, entertainment, somber remembrances, and feasting. (If another celebration better fits the timing in your campaign, use it. The Feast of the Moon is ideal, however, because it is in part a mourning and a celebration of the dead.)

The grand event starts the following night when the moon is high in the sky. The Wide, transformed into a festival ground, is laden with tables of food the patriars provide free of charge, and the site swirls with masks and costumes, minstrels and dancing, puppeteers and fireworks, and games of skill and chance. Opportunities abound for highborn and lowborn citizens to mingle as equals and for everyone to play the fool.

After all that's transpired, residents and the adventurers are likely to be wary, but the festival proceeds as it should until the second night. And then it doesn't.

## FINAL STAGE

In the final stage, only one event occurs. Play out the event for the agent who is highest on Bhaal's Favor Track. If two or more of the three antagonists are tied, make a judgment call on who was the more murderous.

Regardless of which finale unfolds, the Chosen of Bhaal is all about murder. He or she wants to slay as many people as possible in the splashiest and most terrifying ways possible. The Chosen of Bhaal doesn't spread terror for terror's sake. He or she intends to facilitate a historic day of murder for which Bhaal is credited.

The climactic encounter between the Chosen of Bhaal and the heroes is also your opportunity to clarify for players what has been happening in Baldur's Gate. During the battle, the Chosen accuses the adventurers of bringing this outcome upon the city, and he tells the heroes that they should know before they die that Bhaal lives. After what happened to Duke Adrian, the

players probably suspected Bhaal was afoot. If they are still confused, the Chosen's remarks can drop plenty of hints, such as "Another slaying for Bhaal!" and "Your skill at murder gratifies the lord."

### Murder Is a Riot

When the market area is crowded with festival-goers, Rilsa Rael organizes dozens of her assassins (**tough thugs**)

to quietly form a loose ring around the Wide marketplace area. When she gives the command, they draw daggers and begin assassinating their way through the crowd. They wear carnival masks to hide their faces and voluminous cloaks to hide their weapons. The more quietly they kill, the better.

Few revelers had thought to bring weapons to a festival of peace and mourning. So when people notice the attackers, the crowds push away toward the center of the Wide, where Rael transforms into the **Chosen of Bhaal**. She screams Bhaal's praises and laughs hysterically as she lashes out at anyone within reach. The panicked festival-goers trample one another in terror, unsure of where to run.

By the time the heroes reach the Chosen of Bhaal, several of Rael's assassins have joined her. One new assassin arrives at the start of every round as long as the Chosen of Bhaal is alive. All fight until they are slain.



### Feast of Death

During the evening meal, Silvershield rises from the head table to address the crowd. He speaks eloquently of lost loved ones and hope for a better future. As he talks, acolytes of Gond



## A CHARACTER IS CHOSEN

The adventure has one other possible ending. If the heroes eliminate Bhaal's favored three or if the characters' methods throughout the adventure were bloodthirsty, they become more attractive vessels to Bhaal, and the god of murder chooses one of them. (Pick the character whose behavior best exemplifies Bhaal's principles.)

In that case, the remaining dukes still arrange the citywide festival. During the fete, the characters are lauded as heroes. When all attention is focused on them, one transforms into the Chosen of Bhaal and begins trying to kill everyone within reach, especially former friends.

A character who becomes a Chosen retains all his or her normal statistics and also gains the benefits described under Chosen of Bhaal in the conversion guide.

You can play out this event in one of two ways.

Your first option is to instruct the Chosen character's player to mercilessly attack the remaining heroes until the character is killed. Perhaps if the character is later raised from the dead, Bhaal relinquishes his grip.

Your second option is to tell the Chosen character's player to attack the heroes—but at the end of each round in which no one is killed, give the Chosen character a saving throw to regain control. After regaining control, the hero is still the Chosen of Bhaal. Tell the player that with each creature the character kills, Bhaal grows stronger. Bhaal could then visit the hero in dreams to taunt him or her, reveal secrets, or give advice that seems good but leads to deadly encounters.

wheel in wine casks and set up tables atop which they place goblets and tankards.

In closing, Silvershield gestures to the hogsheads and encourages Baldurians to drink deeply of the best vintage of the High House of Wonders to honor the dead and herald a new beginning for Baldur's Gate. The temple's wines are justifiably famous, usually reserved solely for priests. The festival-goers quickly line up.

About thirty minutes after the wine is dispensed, a fight breaks out between two revelers. Watch soldiers quash it. Minutes later, another quarrel starts. And another. Earlier in the day, Silvershield spiked the wine with a poison that makes people irritable and combative. Soon, fights with fists, table knives, and improvised weapons erupt across the Wide.

As Baldurians turn on one another, **Torlin Silver-shield**, still seated at the table of honor and holding his wine goblet, transforms into the **Chosen of Bhaal**. Several acolytes of Gond who have fallen under Silver-shield's sway rush to his side. They attempt to protect the Chosen as he stands and wades into the panicking throng bent on murder. All the acolytes fight to the death.

## Death from Above

Despite everyone's misgivings, the festival reaches its second evening without a hitch.

Then a missile sails into the Wide and disintegrates in a shower of flaming shrapnel. Two more spheres burst within the shrieking crowd before anyone realizes that someone is launching clay shells filled with alchemist's fire from a trebuchet atop the Seatower of Balduran.

Fires spread rapidly, and panicked screams reach a crescendo when people discover that the gates leading into the Lower City have been barred from the outside. Meanwhile, arsonists have turned the Black Dragon Gate, the only other way out of the Upper City, into a roaring inferno. Each new missile lobbed into the crowd kills more innocents and adds its spattering flames to the growing conflagration.

The characters can do nothing from the Upper City. To escape the Upper City, they can use ropes to climb over the Old Wall, or they can access the Undercellar's underground passageways.

To get inside the Seatower of Balduran, the heroes must battle their way past guards (**Flaming Fist privates, corporals, sergeants, or lieutenants**) on the causeway. If they have Ravengard's silver tokens or are wearing Flaming Fist tabards, the guards let them pass unmolested.

On the roof of the Seatower, the heroes confront Ravengard. The marshal has already transformed into the **Chosen of Bhaal**, and a few **Flaming Fist privates** under his sway accompany him, four of whom



operate the trebuchet. Two additional soldiers come up the stairs and join the fight in every even-numbered round until the Chosen of Bhaal dies. All Fist mercenaries fight until slain.

## AFTERMATH

No matter how events transpire, Baldur's Gate emerges from these trying days as a changed city. The Chosen of Bhaal is dead (presumably), offering at least one cause for celebration amid the mourning and loss. Baldur's Gate now faces a crossroads, and the heroes' decisions will point the city in one of two directions.

Since the characters have won influence, they now have the opportunity to become storied heroes in Baldur's Gate. The people of Baldur's Gate aren't about to elect them dukes, but those in power—whoever remains of Silvershield, Ravengard, and Rael plus the surviving dukes, peers, patriarchs, high-ranking Watch and Fist officers, and other civic and religious leaders—pay great heed to anything the destroyers of Bhaal's Chosen say.

If the characters accept the hearty handshakes and tearful thanks and then depart, Baldur's Gate enters a period of renewed strife as factions seek to pin blame on one another and profit from hard feelings.

If the heroes actively step up and urge residents to shake hands and work together to rebuild their city, the citizenry complies. Destroyed buildings are replaced with sturdier, more modern structures. Chastened by the horrors of recent events, the Parliament of Peers elects a new duke from the citizenry of the Outer City. The new Council of Four begins discussions about how to more equitably govern Baldur's Gate.

## Tell Us What Happened

The history of Baldur's Gate is being written in the thousands of campaigns in which this adventure is playing out. When *Murder in Baldur's Gate* reaches its conclusion in your campaign, we want to know how it turned out. The ending that occurs most often will become part of the official history of the **FORGOTTEN REALMS®** setting. To report your results, visit [DungeonsandDragons.com/Sundering](http://DungeonsandDragons.com/Sundering).



620A4537000001 EN. Dungeons & Dragons, D&D, Forgotten Realms, their respective logos, and character names and distinctive likenesses are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast LLC in the U.S.A. and other countries. ©2013 Wizards of the Coast LLC.