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VENGEANCE IN FREEPORT

A D20 SYSTEM
ADVENTURE
FOR LEVELS 6 TO 7

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VENGEANCE IN FREEPORT

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VENGEANCE IN FREEPORT

~ INTRODUCTION ~

TIME PERIOD

Vengeance in Freeport takes place approximately one week after the events of *Madness in Freeport*.

BACKSTORY

As adventurers closed in on Milton Drac during the *Freeport Trilogy*, the Sea Lord briefly doubted the success of his plot. As a backup plan, Drac commissioned the creation of eight “fire bombs” – ceramic jars containing black powder with jeweled tops ensorcelled with *delayed blast fireballs*. The bombs would be activated by capping the jars and then detonate when the jeweled top was removed. After their creation, Drac entrusted the lot to a fiercely loyal underworld toady named Zelkema, who was also paid to murder the wizard that created them. Drac left Zelkema a written note (see p. 10) explaining what to do with the jars. With the death of Drac during the celebration, Zelkema’s directive could not be countermanded. The note bade him to have the jars delivered to specific locations at specific times over the next few days. Having already been paid, Zelkema has begun to make good on his former master’s last wishes. The fact that citizens will die is of little consequence as the city is currently paying little respect to the “great man” that was Milton Drac. However, Zelkema is not the only person who knows about the bombs; an orc captain named Klarr has somehow discovered their existence. The orc has sent members of his band, the Crimson Death, to find these jars. Once gathered, the orc plans to sell them to terrorist contacts on the continent for a tidy sum.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The PCs are about to arrive at a tavern to eat lunch when the building explodes. Many patrons lie dead but the PCs have a chance to save a few of the wounded before the Sea Lord’s Guard arrives. Sister Gwendolyn, member of the Captain’s Council, also arrives as the tavern is one of her favored eating establishments. One eyewitness points to the remnants of a ceramic jar and explains that a barmaid opened it right before the explosion. Gwendolyn recognizes the PCs (either from their work against

Drac in the *Freeport Trilogy* or simply from their good standing as mid-level adventurers) and pulls them aside where she asks for their aid in finding the culprit. Either through discussion with citizens (a DC 10 Gather Information check should prove sufficient) or a DC 15 Knowledge (local) check the PCs may determine that the jar is of a style unique to Freeport.

The PCs follow this lead to a potter named Xangy. Unfortunately, the potter was slain a month ago and his son Leukien now runs the store. Leukien has nothing to hide but he is not disposed to helping the PCs at the moment as he is cleaning up from a break-in that occurred last night. Helpful characters might gain access to the potter’s account ledger. There is a sale entry in the ledger for eight ceramic jars of the type used in the explosion but the buyer’s information has been crudely ripped from the page. The son has not had a chance to look at the accounts closely since his father’s death weeks prior and admits that it likely was ripped out by orcs who harassed him two days ago. However, the son does remember that buyer coming into the store—a wizard of tall stature and thick grey beard. Some more information gathering can lead the PCs to one of two places—the wizard’s home or the lair of the Crimson Death.

The PCs find Parnass, the wizard, lying dead in his bedroom upon investigation of his home. Members of the Crimson Death, after deciphering the potter’s shorthand, beat the PCs here and are ransacking the place to find the bombs. They did not kill the wizard though. Drac had Zelkema take care of that and the obvious time since the wizard’s death should clue the PCs in that someone else might be involved in all this. Zelkema, until a few hours ago, was working out of the wizard’s basement. He did not want the bombs in his possession (in case of an accident) but the imminent arrival of the Crimson Death forced him to move out. The clue here for the PCs to find is the letter from Drac to Zelkema which tells of his plan to blow up specific locales in Freeport. Zelkema dropped this letter in his haste (but retains another page with times and places). One of the Crimson Death is given the letter to take directly to Captain Klarr. The PCs will meet the courier either

~ INTRODUCTION ~

on his way out of the home or, if they investigate the Crimson Death's tavern hangout, as he arrives there.

The PCs use the letter to find Zekema's residence. If they first let Sister Gwendolyn in on this development, she tells them to keep this knowledge secret to stave off mass panic. After fighting past Zekema and his flesh golem workers, the PCs locate the stash of fire bombs; but not before the next two bombs are sent off to their destinations. The PCs need to find a way to get the five bombs captured here to a safe location and then track down the last two. They are aided by the time/location sheet found here (the two bombs in play are set to be delivered at the same time!). The couriers of the bombs are an unknowing young man and woman employed by Rentak's Runners, a local delivery service. Decisive thought and quick action will be needed to stop the deliveries.

Will the PCs be able to stop the bombs in time or will Milton Drac have his *Vengeance in Freeport*?

ADVENTURE LEVELS

Vengeance in Freeport is an adventure for four to six characters of levels 7-9. The encounters can be tweaked to allow for differing group levels and number of PCs. The below modifications are suggestions only and the GM should feel free to change (or ignore) them as needed. No two roleplaying groups are the same and the GM is always the best person to know how to scale an adventure for his group. You may also need to change an encounter on the fly before the PCs get to it. Unfortunate or lucky die rolls happen when you least expect them and can land PCs in dire straits or extreme good fortune. For the former, just remove opponents before the encounter

occurs. For the latter, it is entirely plausible to have reinforcements come around a corner or from an adjacent room to assist their comrades. Knowing an encounter is a death trap or a cake walk does no service to the GM or players if the adventure ends in total party kill or easy victory, respectively.

For fewer than four PCs or characters below 7th level, adjust as follows:

- Remove 3 levels from Captain Klarr (making him a Fighter 7), 2 levels from Prolk (making him a Cleric 6), and 3 rogue levels from Zekema (making him an Expert 2/Rogue 7).
- Part Two: Remove one orc soldier from the Hungry Vulture's tavern room and remove two orc soldiers from the group at Parnass' home (leaving only the errand soldier that carries Drac's missive).
- Part Three: Remove one of the flesh golems from the main level of Zstorage.

For more than four PCs or characters above 9th level, adjust as follows:

- Add one warrior level to all orc soldiers; add two rogue levels to Rask; add one rogue level to Zekema.
- Part Two: Add two more orc soldiers to the Vulture's Nest to protect Klarr.

No matter which direction the adventure is modified in difficulty, conduct the "Ambush!?" section (Part Three) with the appropriate modifications to retain a balanced encounter.

About the Author: Bret first cut his teeth in the d20 industry by winning a contest sponsored by Mystic Eye Games in 2001. He went on to contribute heavily to that company's Foul Locales line of books and to help pen

the first published adventure for the Dragonstar campaign setting (Raw Recruits). Since that time, he has freelanced for the likes of Bastion Press, Goodman Games, Green Ronin, and Sword & Sorcery among others.

Bret's most recent published work is the Complete Guide to Dragonkin for Goodman Games. "Vengeance in Freeport" marks his second visit to that famous pirate haven, having been a contributor to "Denizens of Freeport." When not freelancing or at his day job, Bret spends time hiking the Appalachian Trail near his home in Hamburg, PA. You can contact him with questions or comments about this adventure at: dmbretb@comcast.net

PART I:

~ DISASTER STRIKES ~

WHEREIN THE PLAYER CHARACTERS WITNESS A DEVASTATING ATTACK AND ARE CALLED UPON (PERHAPS AGAIN) TO AID A FREEPORT IN CRISIS.

The setup assumes the PCs have been in Freeport for at least a week. The mad plot of Milton Drac to use the lighthouse is well known and perhaps the PCs came to seek adventure in this destabilized port of call. It's also quite possible that the PCs have played through the *Freeport Trilogy* and are basking in the success and fame of their recent deeds. Having the PCs familiar with the city will aid in navigating the threat about to take form.

MISHAP AT MAURICE'S

It is late in the afternoon on this hazy Freeport day as you move through the Merchant District. Clean streets and happy faces greet you on your way to a late lunch at Maurice's, one of the most high-end eateries in the city. You pass under the shadow of the Freeport Opera House to walk down Wave Street. The splendor of the Merchant District pushes aside any concerns or fears one might have that this is one of the most dangerous cities one can find.

But this sense of peace is short-lived as a massive explosion rocks the very ground you walk on. Just ahead, the storefront that is Maurice's blows outward in a deadly shower of wood and stone. The shrapnel cuts down passersby as a larger chunk of debris lands at your feet – a blackened ship's wheel which, until seconds ago, hung proudly above the restaurant's entrance.

Outside: The fire bomb was detonated near the northwest corner of Maurice's and this part of the ceiling has collapsed in on itself. The northeast sec-

tion of the wall lies fractured in the street but the ceiling is holding for the moment. The gaping hole here is the only way into the structure. Many who were within – or passing directly in front of – Maurice's when the explosion pierced the area are dead (10 humans, 2 dwarves, and 1 half-orc). Those that are not dead but were within the blast area have taken damage and are lying in the street to either side of the restaurant (2d4 persons for each side). These latter folks require minimal medical attention but groans from inside the restaurant indicate others who are worse off. PCs succeeding at a DC 15 Spot check notice the instant response by the Sea Lord's Guard—over a dozen guardsmen [**male human War1**] and two sergeants [**male human Ftr 2**] are running out of the Old City as the Merchant Gate is being closed. Unless they start helping people, the PCs *will* be arrested and held for questioning.

Inside: Maurice's interior is a disaster area. The location where the bomb exploded is no more than a smoking black crater. In fact, heavy smoke hangs inside making vision difficult (normal and darkvision obscured beyond 10 feet) and breathing hazardous. [A character who breathes heavy smoke must make a Fortitude save each round (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or spend that round choking and coughing. A character who chokes for 2 consecutive rounds takes 1d6 points of nonlethal damage.] Wood debris which used to be tables and chairs now lies scattered along the east wall along with 3d6 corpses. The moans heard from outside belong to the three survivors—two in the kitchen and one across the room from the explosion. Unless tended to, this latter man will die in four rounds.

DEVELOPMENT

To avoid suspicion, the PCs should lend assistance where possible. By saving the man's life in the dining room, they are saving an eye witness to this horrific event. Within a few minute's time, the guardsmen evacuate all survivors and extinguish the few small fires still

~ PART I: DISASTER STRIKES ~

burning inside. The PCs are escorted outside (if they are not already) and asked to remain for questioning. If the PCs were assisting the wounded the guards will begin their questioning with a friendly attitude whereas if they were standing around and not assisting the guards will start the encounter with an unfriendly attitude toward the PCs. In either case, the characters note that the guardsmen are being directed by a green-haired woman of striking looks. She grasps the miniature trident hanging from a silver necklace as she applies healing magics to the wounded. The PCs must put up with the customary questions – “Where were you when the explosion occurred?”; “What exactly did you see?”; “What business do you have in this District?” and so on before the following takes place.

The female cleric in the aqua-colored breastplate approaches you after waving back your interrogators. “I am Sister Gwendolyn, a member of the Captains’ Council,” she says quietly, her green eyes seeming to peer into your minds. “I know your type, adventurers, and I would appreciate your thoughts on what just happened here.”

Gwendolyn was herself headed for Maurice’s, a favored eatery of the cleric’s, and saw the explosion from a block away. If the PCs participated in the *Freeport Trilogy*, she mentions this and responds to them in a more relaxed manner. If not, she is world-savvy enough to know adventurers when she sees them. The PCs are free to come up with whatever theories they like on the explosion. They may even want to conduct *detect magic* sweeps of the area, which Gwendolyn allows, until a few minutes pass. At this point, one of the sergeants gets Gwendolyn’s attention. The two move off to the side so the sergeant can whisper some words to the Councilor and hand her a blackened ivory-toned clay jar, obviously broken in the explosion.

Gwendolyn returns to the PCs and states that the jar was just discovered in the rubble. She shows the bottom of the vessel to the PCs and they can see some sort of

charred marking. Succeeding at a DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) check identifies the marking as an arcane glyph which deals with the school of evocation. If the eye witness survived (see above), she adds, “An eye witness to the explosion stated that a barmaid removed the top of this jar just before the explosion.”

The sea priestess immediately fears that this explosion might be the first of many attacks on the city. She asks the PCs to take up an investigation and offers them 1,000 gold pieces each to see the investigation to its conclusion (whether the incident was an isolated one or part of a larger conspiracy). PCs wanting more money must wait until Gwendolyn can confer with the Captains’ Council that evening. The priestess offers these parting words of caution once the PCs have agreed to help her.

Sister Gwendolyn leans close to you, hands over the jar fragment, and whispers, “Please look into this with discretion in mind. Freeport has been through a lot in the past few weeks and the last thing the citizens need is another conspiracy. You will also need to investigate without aid from the Guard. We’re still cleaning house from the old corrupt regime and I can’t guarantee the loyalty of guards you might flag down on the street. If you require a safe harbor to regroup in, come to the Temple of the God of the Sea. I’ll see to it that a room is available for the time being. You can send word of any important finds to me at the same location. Good luck.”

If, for any reason, the PCs need to take Sister Gwendolyn up on her offer to use the Sea God temple for succor, they are shown to a private room upon entering. Immediately after the cleric leaves the scene, she goes to the Temple and makes preparations for the PCs’ possible arrival. No more than two PCs can be healed in any single visit. And if they do require healing, they can purchase it for a small donation to the Temple (25 gp per spell no greater than 3rd level).

Vengeance in Freeport takes place at a very interesting point in recent Freeport history. The Sea Lord’s Guard functions somewhat inadequately due to the ousting of “Boss” Dutch Tillinghast a few days prior. The PCs can get help and tips from Gwendolyn directly but seeking help from official channels may not be the best move. More than a few guardsmen were firmly in line with Dutch’s crooked schemes and there may yet be Drac loyalists just waiting for an opportunity to bring down the late Sea Lord’s opponents. The truth is that the council is just not as sure of its infrastructure as it had been. “Who can be trusted?”—A common theme in any good Freeport adventure!

PART II:

~ THE MYSTERY DEEPENS ~

WHEREIN THE PLAYER CHARACTERS FOLLOW THEIR CLUE TO ITS SOURCE AND DISCOVER THAT SOMEONE MAY ALREADY BE ONE STEP AHEAD OF THEM.

The PCs now have the only clue they need. The trouble is how to go about using the ceramic fragment to get to the next step of the investigation. Fortunately, the PCs need only examine the bottom of the fragment. Close inspection (Search DC 16) reveals the presence of “X” markings inscribed at the four cardinal points. The “X” stands for Xangy, the local sculptor’s last name. If the PCs have been in Freeport for over a month and succeed at a DC 15 Knowledge (local) check, they recognize the symbol and who it represents. If not, Xangy and his work are known and respected by Freeport locals. Using the Gather Information skill, the table below summarizes what the PCs can find by asking about the “X” brand. However, not all rumors can be relied on, which is why the veracity of each is given in parentheses.

GATHER INFORMATION

Check DC Information (veracity)

- | | |
|----|--|
| 15 | The “X” is the brand of Rufus Xangy. His clay creations are a favorite for use in holding Merchant District potted flowers. (TRUE) |
| 18 | Rufus was slain by magic and his son took over the business located in the Eastern District. (TRUE) |
| 23 | Rufus was murdered because of gambling debts he could not pay. (FALSE) |
| 27 | The last creations fashioned by Rufus before his death were purchased for Sea Lord Drac. These were several ceramic jars with jeweled tops. (TRUE) |

LOCATION ONE: XANGY’S POTTERY SHOP

This shop is a small stone building located at the northern edge of the Eastern District where it meets Drac’s End. By the time the PCs reach the shop, it is evening, perhaps 7:00 or 8:00 p.m. Read the following as they approach the shop.

Light spills out of the one-story building’s windows from a lantern hanging inside. This may seem encouraging but once you reach the door, you can clearly see a “Closed” sign hanging from the open door’s frame. You hear a loud grunt just before a piece of pottery flies from the side and shatters inside the doorway, its fragments tumbling in all directions.

This is 25-year-old Leukien Xangy [**male human Exp3**], son of Rufus. The youth lives with his blind mother across the street above another business. He is sarcastic to a fault but has learned to not expect great things from life. Even as a child, Leukien was nicknamed “Unlucky Leuk” by friends who noticed trouble followed him everywhere. Tonight is no different. When the PCs reach the shop Leukien is in the process of cleaning up after a break-in that occurred last night. The youth waited until the evening to clean up so he could walk off his anger during the day. The plan was not totally unsuccessful as he has been cleaning for an hour and only hurled one cracked piece of pottery in anger. The PCs may think someone is in trouble and rush into the building. But even if they casually walk in to talk to the owner, the greeting they receive is the same.

- PART II: THE MYSTERY DEEPENS -

The shop's interior has obviously seen better days. Toppled pottery, some broken, some not, lies haphazardly on the shelves that stand against all four walls. A long table dominates the center of the room where lumps of clay, sculpting tools, and a basin of water reside. Beside the table are a stool and a stained pottery wheel. The person who threw the ceramic object is seated on the stool, his back to you, as he cleans out broken shards from beneath a shelf.

Before you can get his attention, the young man swivels to face you. He has short black hair and a faint goatee. With a sneer he says, "Since you obviously can't read, let me speak plainly—we're closed." The youth repeats the last two words in two other languages [Elven and Dwarven] for emphasis before dumping his collected fragments into a wooden trough.

Leukien is in a foul mood, more so than usual, and treats the PCs accordingly. His temperament cools if shown the jar fragment from the explosion at Maurice's. The young man's story can be learned from the answers he gives to PC questioning. Below are some probable queries the PCs might pose along with Leukien's answers.

Q: WHO ARE YOU? OR WHERE IS THE OWNER?

A: My name is Leukien Xangy. I took over the business here after my father died some weeks ago.

Q: WHAT HAPPENED HERE?

A: There was a break-in last night. Found the place in shambles this morning. Decided to walk off some of my anger before coming in to clean up tonight. Funny thing is, I can't find that anything's missing; just a lot of items shoved around. Didn't even check the back room yet. It was probably those thrice-damned orcs.

Q: WHAT ORCS?

A: Four of the stinky things were in here yesterday looking for my dad. When I told them he died, I thought they'd leave. Nope. They started to snoop around and even tried to go into the back room there. When I told them to take a walk, one of 'em drew some kinda fancy grooved dagger and pointed it at me. One of his buddies said I "wasn't worth it" and then they all left.

Q: HOW WAS YOUR FATHER KILLED?

A: Lightning blast. Took him full in the chest, though there wasn't a cloud in the sky. Never thought I'd be glad my mom's blind; the body wasn't pretty.

Q: CAN YOU IDENTIFY THE "X" MARKINGS ON THIS FRAGMENT?

A: Yeah, it's one of my dad's pieces. Just look at any of his work and somewhere on the bottom are those four X's. He said they represent the four generations of Xangy potters that came before him. Guess I'll be putting five of those on my stuff.

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHO YOUR FATHER MIGHT HAVE CRAFTED THIS JAR FOR?

A: Nope. He made several jars of that style—some with tops, some without.

[If the PCs have asked this question and either offered Leukien some gold pieces for his trouble or helped in cleaning up, he adds the following:]

But it is possible he recorded the sale and its buyer in the accounts ledger.

Q: CAN WE SEE THE LEDGER?

A: Sure. I haven't had much time to look at it since taking over the place. I knew there was coin to keep the business going and my dad's shorthand takes time to decipher—time I haven't had of late.

- PART II: THE MYSTERY DEEPENS -

DEVELOPMENT

If the PCs gain access to the ledger, Leukien takes them into the back room of the shop where a desk sits amidst bags of clay and other pottery supplies in a very small room. Oddly enough, the ledger is already open on the desk. A piece of one of the open pages has been crudely torn from the ledger. The date indicates the entry is from a few days before Rufus' death. The remaining part of the entry states, "Parnass: 8 ja—". This is the only part of the ledger that has been tampered with. If asked about that sale, Leukien thinks for a moment and then says, "Yeah, I was here for that. An order for eight jars with jeweled tops. I recall the buyer was a black-robed man with long silver beard braided into two lengths. He seemed pretty nervous, his eyes darting back and forth from my dad to the front door. I figured him for some eccentric coot who wanted jars to keep cremated relatives in."

Investigative Path A: PCs who do not get a look at the ledger have only the orc lead to follow. If the party succeeds at a DC 15 Gather Information check the grooved dagger clue can get them where they want to be. The grooved dagger with blood-red grip belongs to only one orc organization: the Crimson Death. They make frequent stops in Freeport and, when they do, the orcs invariably take over the upper floor of a Dockside dive called the Hungry Vulture (see Location Two below).

Investigative Path B: Kindly PCs who get to see the accounts ledger may bypass the orc angle and wish to go straight to the buyer of the jars. The black-robed, silver bearded man, an evoker named Parnass, is a well-known figure in Drac's End (see Location Three for more on Parnass and the Gather Information DCs needed to track him down).

LOCATION TWO: THE HUNGRY VULTURE

The Hungry Vulture is a squat, two-story wooden building in the southeast corner of the Docks at the border to Scurvytown. The first floor of the place is a

tavern while the second has a living chamber for the owner and a larger room that is rented for parties and the like. The owner is a half-orc named Grix Maltavich [**male half-orc Exp2/War6**], who took his share of pirating booty and started up the Vulture. Grix always wanted to pursue his love of cooking, a post he served admirably in during his freebooting days.

A. TAVERN ROOM

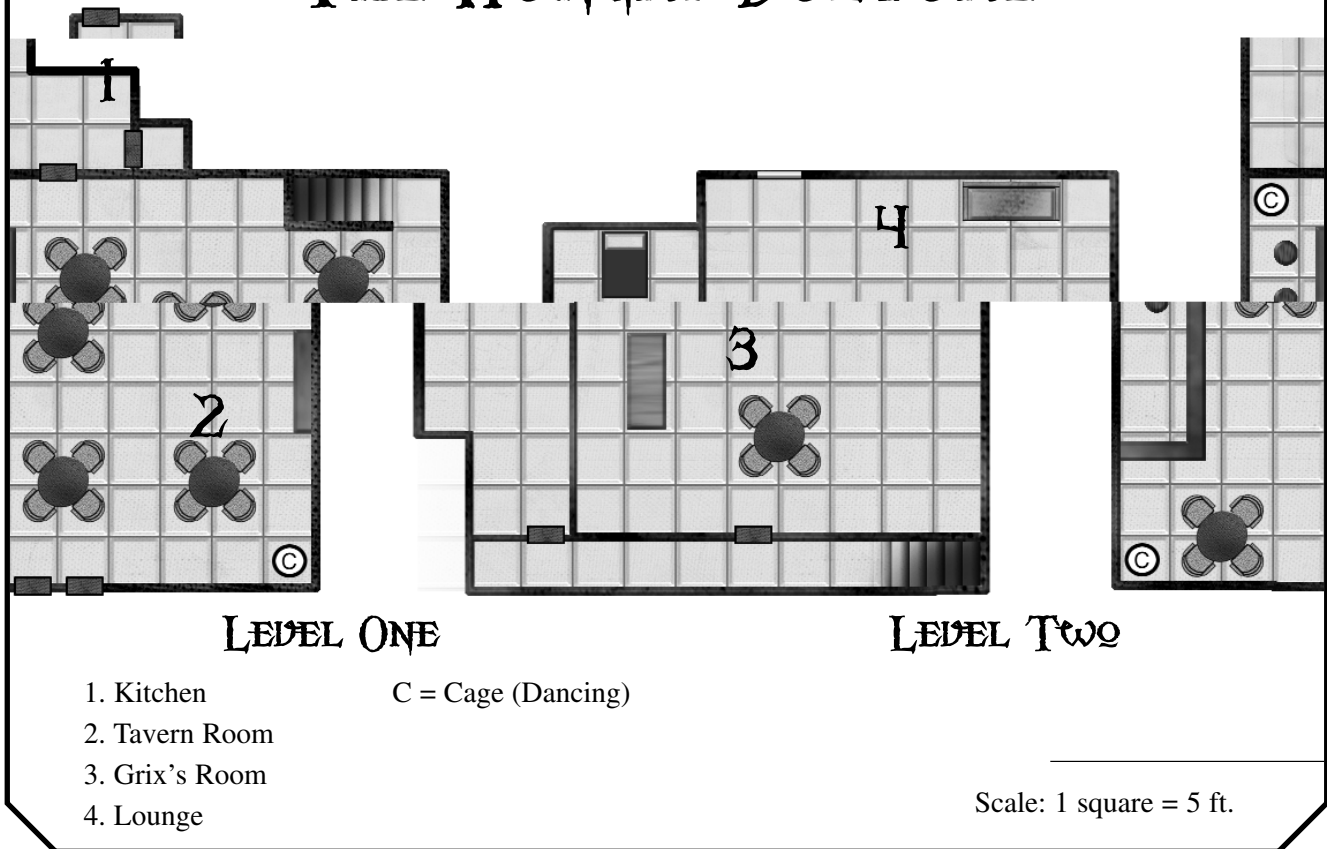
As one enters the Vulture's 50 ft. by 40 ft. main room, a bar with seven stools takes up the left wall. Round tables, each with four chairs, take up most of the floor space while a small fireplace dominates the right wall. The staircase leading upstairs is close to the far right corner. Near to the other corners are iron cages each large enough to comfortably hold a Medium size creature. Costumed orc females dance inside these cages for special occasions or on particularly busy evenings. They are accompanied by a drummer who pounds on hide-topped drums between the bar and the entrance to the Vulture's kitchen. On this night, one dancer is performing (inside the closest cage to the right) and she is clothed in conveniently placed feathers to resemble a vulture. This is standard entertainment for the currently small crowd of 14 (8 orcs, including the Crimson Death soldiers, 5 humans, and 1 halfling).

While the Hungry Vulture does not cater strictly to orcish patrons, there are few non-orcs who visit the place with any frequency. Grix's capability in the kitchen is well known but the number of fatalities associated with the Vulture are enough to keep those who are merely curious about the food's quality at bay. The PCs are allowed inside without quarrel but not without notice. The lone staircase has four Crimson Death orcs sitting at the table next to it. Captain Klarr has restricted these guards to light drinking in case of unexpected trouble. The fortune to be made by finding and selling the fire bombs is too great to let anyone interfere. The soldiers are under strict orders not to let anyone who isn't a member of their group to come upstairs.

Creatures (EL 7): From evening to morning, when the Hungry Vulture is at its busiest, there are always four soldiers on duty here. If confronted by a powerful force, one of the soldiers takes a war horn that is hanging on the wall at the stairs and blows it to alert Klarr or

~ PART II: THE MYSTERY DEEPENS ~

THE HUNGRY DULTURE



Prolk (whoever happens to be upstairs at the time; in this case it is Klarr).

Orc Soldiers (4): hp 19, 25, 28, 35.

Development: The PCs are likely old salts in all things concerning taverns by this time in their adventuring careers. They may wander idly through the room to see who's here, in which case a Spot check (DC 15) allows them to note a grooved dagger on the soldiers' table. Otherwise they might go straight to the bar and ask Grix if he knows anything about the Crimson Death. Unless offered a substantial amount of gold, perhaps 600 coins, he will not sell out one of his more regular and valued customers. Otherwise, Grix does not involve himself in events. He looks out only for himself and would believe that removing a known criminal element might increase his customer base (at least that's what he tells himself if the PCs cough up enough gold).

If a fight breaks out, the humans and halfling flee while Grix moves quickly into the kitchen to protect himself. The orcs, on the other hand, are always eager

to lend a hand in brawling matters. However, due to their already-inebriated state, they do not necessarily single out the PCs for attack. Treat these four orc patrons as 1st-level warriors (use *MM* statistics) and roll percentile dice to determine who they attack with their fists (50% to attack random PC; 50% chance to attack a random soldier).

B. "DULTURE'S NEST"

This is the tongue-in-cheek name for the lounge above the tavern room. The nest is slightly smaller in dimensions than the tavern room (40 ft. by 35 ft.) and is mostly carpeted with cheap wool. A round table with three chairs sits at the center closer to the door. Along the left wall is a makeshift bar, consisting of multi-sized glasses and choice bottles of liquor atop a tall wooden table. A shoddy couch rests along the far wall to the right. Entertainment comes in the form of playing cards on the table and a dart board on the right wall (a crude charcoal streak on the carpet 10 feet from the board indicating where dart throwers should stand).

- PART II: THE MYSTERY DEEPENS -

Klarr waits with two orc soldiers for a messenger to arrive. The ledger scrap that the Crimson Death stole last night from Xangy's states that a man named Parnass bought eight jars. The entry also gives the man's address in Drac's End (see Location Three below) so Klarr sent Prolk, Rask, and three soldiers to the house. He does not immediately attack the PCs since he believes that he has nothing to hide. Although the orcish captain has committed his share of illegal activities, who hasn't in this city? Klarr plays things coolly if questioned by the PCs. Below are some possible questions along with the captain's answers.

Creatures (EL 10): If taken by surprise, the soldiers are lounging in the center of the room while Klarr smokes a pipe near the far window. If alerted by the war horn, the soldiers are ready for combat when the PCs arrive at the nest as Klarr takes a position behind them.

Orc soldiers (2): hp 25, 27.

Captain Klarr (orc Ftr10): hp 75.

Tactics: At all times, the two soldiers maintain a position between their captain and the PCs. If a combat breaks out and is obviously against Klarr's favor, the captain leaps out of the window next to the couch. A mere 2 feet beneath the windowsill is the roof of the small kitchen. From here, Klarr falls the 10 feet to the ground and attempts to blend in with the night on his way to Parnass' house to reunite with the rest of the Crimson Death.

Q: YOUR ORCS THREATENED A YOUNG MAN; WHY?

A: What if some orcs did rough up a human pup? You gonna 'cuse every orc in Freeport? Yer kind's all the same.

Q: THE POTTER POSITIVELY IDENTIFIED A GROOVED DAGGER USED BY THE INTIMIDATING ORCS. HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THAT?

A: If some o' my men stepped out o' line, I'll handle it. Satisfied?

Q: WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE EXPLOSION AT MAURICE'S?

A: It was big.

After combat begins with Klarr's group, the soldier dispatched from Parnass' home arrives with a rolled sheet of parchment in his grasp. This is the letter that Drac wrote to Zelkema before his death describing the fire bombs and what to do with them. After Prolk read the letter, he sent it back with this soldier to ask Klarr for instructions. If captured, this orc does not really know what's going on besides the fact that Klarr is searching for explosive items that he can sell abroad. See the sidebar, below, for the letter's contents. The PCs can use it to take them to the next step of the investigation.

DRAC'S MISSIVE

Zelkema,

I have need of your services once again. I need you to go to the home of Parnass, a wizard who lives behind the Freeport Institute, and pick up some items for me. He is expecting you at midnight tomorrow, believing you are bringing him the remainder of the job's payment. You should make sure his "payment" is indeed final. When you are done, lock his house up and put word out on the street that he left town suddenly on a mysterious ship.

The items are jars with jeweled stopper tops. Whatever you do, do not remove the stoppers or you'll regret it. You are to keep the jars safe until you hear from me or until a week has passed since the dedication of the lighthouse, whichever comes first. In the latter case, you are to deliver the jars by a courier of your choosing to the exact places and at the exact times noted on the enclosed page. You must protect the jars at all costs, so be prepared to move them to your Warehouse District location if things get hot.

I have doubled your usual fee for this important job. Do not disappoint me.

- M.D.

- PART II: THE MYSTERY DEEPENS -

LOCATION THREE: HOME OF PARNASS THE EVOKER

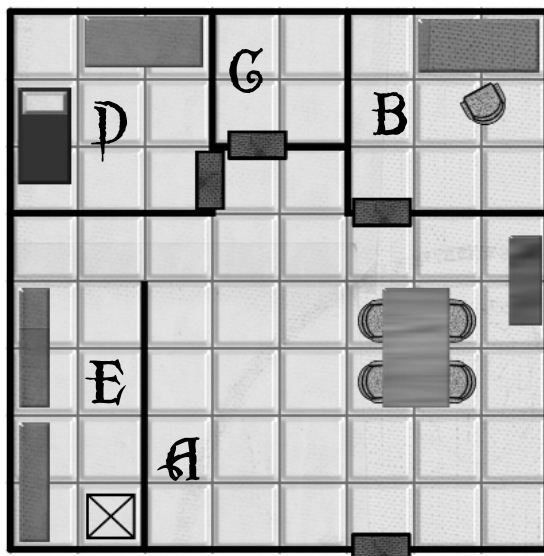
The home of Parnass is a one-story structure that sits just north of the Cluster in Drac's End (see map, below). Although the decorations inside the home seem scant compared to the wealth the evoker must have had, the accumulation of baubles was not something Parnass was concerned with. He funneled most of the gold he made back into arcane study and equipment for his basement laboratory.

If the PCs are taking Investigative Path B and skipping the Crimson Death in Location Two, they may need to snoop around for information on the name Parnass written in the ledger. The distinctive twin-braided beard aids immensely in singling him out in conversation with Freeport locals. Using the Gather Information skill nets information that can be found in the "Parnass' Story" sidebar (the first three

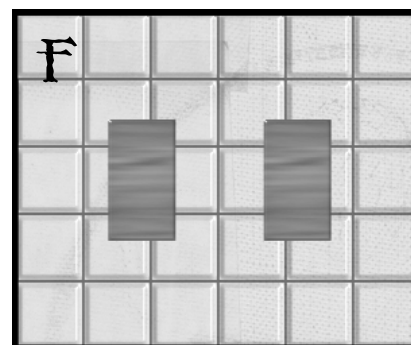
PARNASS' STORY

Parnass was a powerful evoker who decided to retire from adventuring and make his home in Freeport near the Cluster (DC 13). The wizard taught arcana and basic sciences at the Freeport Institute for many years (DC 16). But recently, Parnass wanted more out of life than a comfortable retirement—he wanted excitement again like in the old days (DC 22). To satisfy this craving, the evoker began contracting jobs with any interested parties. If they had the gold, he would cast the spells they desired. At first, the required spells were mundane in nature but the requests soon came in from criminal elements and the human did not think twice about aiding them for the sheer thrill of it. That is when Parnass came to the attention of Sea Lord Drac. Drac's experience with – and trust in – Parnass is what led him to contract the wizard when it came time to implement his fire bomb plan.

HOME OF PARNASS THE EVOKER



MAIN LEVEL



BASEMENT

Scale: 1 square = 5 ft.

- PART II: THE MYSTERY DEEPENS -

sentences are marked with the appropriate DCs for this check). The information gained from this questioning should point the PCs in the right direction.

Assuming Location Two has been skipped, the PCs arrive at the home as one of the soldiers is leaving it (this is the soldier holding the letter to Zelkema from Drac as described above). This should occur just as the PCs approach the door to the house (20 feet away) so the orc sees them when exiting (unless the PCs are being careful to hide their approach). The soldier immediately turns and attempts to flee back into the house to warn his comrades.

A. LIVING ROOM

On the east wall is a fireplace that sports an array of figurines on its mantle. Each of the 2-inch tall objects is fashioned from ivory and represents an arcane glyph for a type of energy (acid, cold, electricity, fire, and sonic). A square wooden table with four chairs sits in front of the fireplace. At left center of the room lies an impressively-woven rug resembling an exploding red-orange fireball. The only other feature is a bowl of incredibly dried fruit on the table.

B. STUDY

This small room has a desk and single wooden chair beside a small bookcase. The books here are of mundane nature only—treatises on creatures, plant life, and psychology, as well as a few slim books of fiction and erotica both with heavily dog-eared pages. A single candlestick sits on the desk beside an ink vial and quill.

C. PRIVY

This private chamber includes a large tub for washing, a chamber pot, and related items of no interest.

D. BEDROOM

The north wall of the bedroom has a closet populated with black and gray robes. Sandals and boots, one pair each, rest on the floor of the closet beside empty pouches. The bed itself is curtained. When a PC moves to investigate it, read the following.

As you draw near the canopy bed with its drawn blue curtains, you can barely discern a figure lying beyond them along with a putrid odor. The humanoid shape does not move at your approach. Drawing back the curtain reveals a human in black robes with a long twin-braided silver beard. A dried stain creeps out from beneath the man's left breast to cascade down the side of the bed. You can't be sure which is worse—the smell or the decayed state of the body—but you can be sure that Parnass the evoker is quite dead.

Parnass was slain over a week ago by Zelkema. The advanced decay of the body should tell the PCs that the orcs they've been encountering are likely not the culprits here. The dried blood comes from the mortal wound suffered when a dagger was punched through the wizard's heart.

E. KITCHEN

One cabinet and one long bench take up the west wall. The former houses all manner of spices (some foreign and expensive—55 gp for the lot) while the latter supports a full set of glass and steel dinnerware (stacked bowls, cups, and utensils) of moderate quality fashioned by a local craftsman. A stained straw basket sits beneath the window. Normally holding food waste, it is currently empty. The single noteworthy item here is an open trap door at the south wall which leads to the basement.

F. BASEMENT

Parnass did a lot of experimenting in his career. The basement is a testament to this nature of “try and see” in its myriad of beakers, vials, weights, components, fluids, and instruments. The evoker also was a firm believer in not writing anything down; something he considered as “the sign of a weak mind.” Two long wooden tables (10 ft. by 5 ft.) divide the basement (30 ft. by 25 ft.) into three defined aisles. Although the fire bomb jars themselves are long gone, careful inspection of the tables (assuming a battle does not disrupt them overly much) reveals that they were there. Succeeding at a DC 25 Search check made at the table closest to

~ PART III: CONFRONTATION ~

the trap door reveals eight circular patterns in the dust that has formed since Parnass' murder. Each pattern perfectly fits the ceramic base of the fragment the PCs have.

Creatures (EL 10): The errand soldier left the other orcs as they searched the evoker's basement lab. The orcs have been searching here for the fire bomb jars without success. All have been hesitant to disturb the tables (not to mention what's on them), and have instead directed their search to the walls for possible hidden rooms.

Orc soldiers (3): hp 18, 27, 29.

Rask (orc Sor5): hp 12.

Prolk (orc Clr8): hp 43.

Treasure: After proper salvaging and inventory, the equipment in the basement is equal to an alchemist's lab (500 gp value). Other laboratory items can fetch upwards of 200 gp in the proper market (the Freeport Institute can always use items like these, especially from the home of a former professor).

Tactics: At the first sign of trouble, the orcs extinguish the torches they were using to search the lab and take up hidden positions, relying on their darkvision to gain an advantage. The soldiers stay close to the ladder while the spellcasters weave defensive magics (Rask casts *mage armor* and Prolk casts *magic vestment*). The cleric first mate whispers in Orc that only one intruder need be taken alive for questioning (whomever he casts *hold person* on) while all other foes should be slain quickly. If the battle goes badly for the orcs, Rask reads his *scroll of invisibility* and Prolk casts *summon monster IV* to help stall the PCs while attempting to escape.

Development: Klarr sent this group to find the fire bombs but instead they discovered a long-dead Parnass in his own bed as well as an empty box which was used to carry the jars from the potter's shop to here (the letter was found inside it). Zerkema kept an observer near Xangy's shop since Parnass slew him those few weeks ago. When that spy reported yesterday that both the Crimson Death and the PCs were investigating the jars, Zerkema realized that the time had come to move the jars to his Warehouse District lair. In his haste, he left the letter from Sea Lord Drac in the basement without realizing it.

PART III: ~ CONFRONTATION ~

WHEREIN THE PLAYER CHARACTERS CONFRONT ZELKEMA IN HIS LAIR AS WELL AS THE FINAL GAMBIT OF MILTON DRAC.

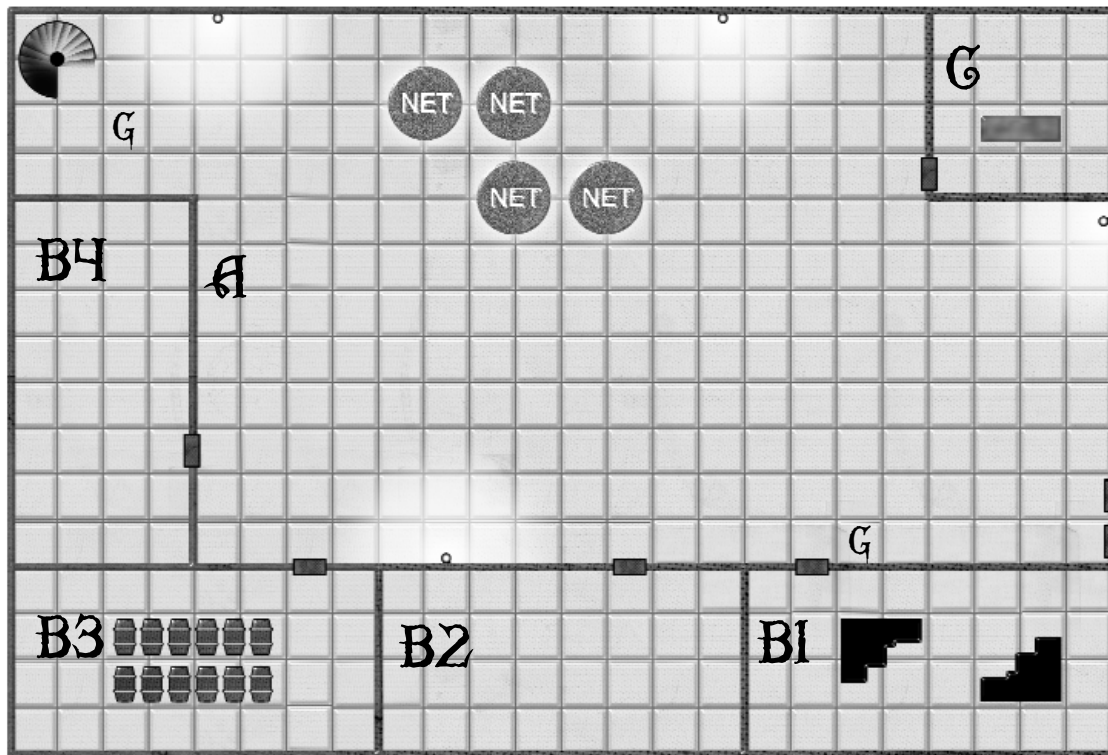
Figuring out the location of Zerkema's Warehouse District lair can be accomplished in one of two ways. The first is to ask around about the name Zerkema, although this undoubtedly attracts the attention of underworld associates of the rogue's. Succeeding at a DC 30 Gather Information check turns up the necessary location but likely costs upward of 3d10x10 gp in necessary bribes unless some Intimidation is used as well (even then the bribes might be necessary, albeit at one-third the cost). Without bribes, a suc-

cessful DC 20 Gather Information check tells the PCs that Zerkema is a known storage manager with his own warehouse and that he employs two golems. A successful DC 25 check grants the PCs the knowledge that these golems are flesh golems named Klick and Klack.

The second way to find the lair is to contact Sister Gwendolyn. As a member of the Captains' Council, she is privy to the discussions concerning Freeport's

~ PART III: CONFRONTATION ~

ZTORAGE

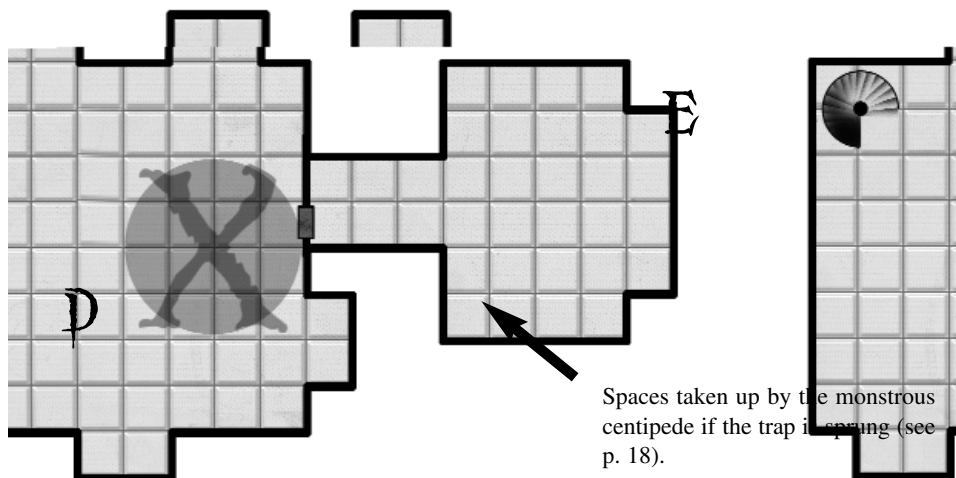


MAIN LEVEL

G = Golem (see p. 16)

Net – See p. 15.

Scale: 1 square = 5 ft.



Spaces taken up by the monstrous centipede if the trap is sprung (see p. 18).

LOWER LEVEL

~ PART III: CONFRONTATION ~

underworld activity. Gwendolyn knows that Zerkema's name may not be prominent but it has been associated with the second warehouse southeast from the Rhodes of Freeport. Zerkema's suspected activities include trafficking in stolen goods, theft, and murder. The warehouse was raided once but, unknown to Gwendolyn, a tip from Drac beforehand allowed Zerkema to move stolen goods elsewhere before the Sea Lord's Guard entered the building. Since then, the warehouse is kept under the same surveillance as all the others—minimal unless you have private guards. Gwendolyn and her allies on the Council have the ousting of Zerkema near the bottom on their long “to do” list now that Drac is gone.

LOCATION FOUR: ZORAGE

Part business, part hideout, Zorage is the name of Zerkema's warehouse operation. The business caters to any who have enough gold that want to store their goods inside the secure warehouse. Even if the rogue worked Zorage as a legitimate business alone, he would make enough coin to live in style. Merchants and pirates alike need a place to store their cargo temporarily and Zerkema vies for that business. The warehouse is prized by those in the know for moving larger, bulkier items because of the two golems that work tirelessly there. In lieu of gold, a cleric fashioned these flesh golems—“Klick” and “Klack”—as payment many years ago. Zerkema suggested this payment not just for their strength in lifting or guarding power, but for their easy maintenance and unfailing loyalty (you don't need to feed golems and your secrets are safe with them).

WAREHOUSE FEATURES

Iron Doors: The outer doors and lower level vault door are made of reinforced iron [2 in. thickness; hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 28]. The front doors are also protected by an amazing lock (DC 40) and a **poisoned dart trap:** CR 4; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Atk +15 ranged (1d4+4 plus poison, dart); multiple targets (1 dart per target in a 10 ft. by 10 ft. area); poison (Small monstrous centipede poison, Fortitude saving throw DC 10 resists, 1d2 Dex/1d2 Dex); Search DC 21; Disable Device DC 22.

Wooden Doors: The office door, vault doors, and lower level doors are all made of strong wood [2 in. thickness; hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 23].

Light: During the day, enough light comes in through the front doors to illuminate most of the warehouse floor. When these doors are closed or it is nighttime, everburning torches cast flickering green light inside at 20-ft. intervals along the walls. Within the vaults, Zerkema uses a sunrod to see the contents inside. The lower level is lit with everburning torches, one inside each room.

Rooftop: Zorage is 75 feet in height. Zerkema has a handful of discrete clients who drop (usually illegal) parcels by way of aerial creatures or magic. A hidden crank (Search DC 30) is accessed near the middle of the north side of the roof. This turns to retract a 25-ft. square of rooftop (Search DC 25). Below the opening are a series of finely-crafted nets which the parcels are dropped into. A winch on the floor of the warehouse lowers the cargo safely to the floor. There are four nets accessible from the roof, each a different size (capable of holding creatures/objects sized from Small to Huge).

AMBUSH!?

There is a high degree of probability that an ambush occurs around the Zorage warehouse. The number of opponents and time of the ambush are determined by where the PCs went and what they did after speaking to Leukien Xangy. If an ambush does occur, the Crimson Death attacks immediately, determined to not have their prize stolen out from under them by the PCs. Proceed according to the conditions below:

- **PCs went to Parnass' home first and left no orc survivors:** There is no ambush. Without the note from Drac to Zerkema, Captain Klarr has no way of knowing where to find the fire bombs and the Crimson Death fade out of this adventure.
- **PCs went to Parnass' home first and at least one orc escaped (EL 10+):** All orcs were privy to the letter's contents and know that Zerkema has the fire bombs. Once Klarr is reported to, it is a simple enough matter to find Zorage and

~ PART III: CONFRONTATION ~

take all available troops there. The PCs encounter Klarr, the six soldiers from the Hungry Vulture, and any surviving orcs from Parnass' home. This group arrives at Zstorage 1d4 rounds after the PCs do.

- **PCs went to the Hungry Vulture first and left no orc survivors (EL 9):** With Klarr's death, command of the Crimson Death falls to Prok. However, the cleric does not wish to proceed from Parnass' home without orders. Once he takes his squad back to the Vulture and learns what happened, he takes Rask and the three soldiers to Zstorage prepared for battle. This group arrives at Zstorage 1d4 minutes after the PCs do.
- **PCs went to the Hungry Vulture and Klarr survived (EL 11+):** Klarr rushes to Parnass' home and angrily relates the PCs actions. After being briefed by Prok, Klarr hastily leads the Crimson Death – himself, Prok, Rask, the three soldiers here and any orcs that survived from the Vulture – to Zstorage to find the fire bombs before the PCs do. This group arrives 1d4 rounds before the PCs do.

A. MAIN FLOOR

Zelkema keeps the stone floor here relatively clean. Klick and Klack are the only sizable items left on the floor when cargo is not being moved. As soon as a PC enters this area where one of the golems can see him, the closest moves in. Read the following text to begin the combat.

A giant robed figure lumbers stiffly from the shadows. The greenish haze from the nearest torch allows you a quick glimpse inside its hood. The ghastly visage that greets your hasty glance makes you wish you hadn't bothered, for inside the hood is half a human and half an orc face stitched together crosswise running from one ear across the top lip and ending at the jawbone. A guttural moan announces the creature's intention as it raises a meaty fist to strike!

Creatures (EL 12): As noted on the map, Klick and Klack are stationed on the main level of Zstorage. One is 30 feet from the front doors while the other guards the spiral staircase to the lower level. Zelkema ordered the golems to stand guard for the night. If anyone besides himself attempts to enter or move through the building, the golems are to attack and slay the intruders as quickly as possible.

Flesh golems (2): hp 70, 76.

Zelkema (human Exp2/Rog10): hp 52.

Tactics: As golems, Klick and Klack have no tactics. Each moves as fast as possible to the closest target and slams them into paste. When that opponent falls dead, the golem moves on to the next closest and so on until either all foes are dead or they are. As long as the golems are not silenced beforehand by magical or other means, the moans they emit alert Zelkema to danger.

Development: Assuming the golems are allowed to utter their moans, Zelkema hears them from his current position in the personal vault. The rogue immediately leaves the vault and seals it behind him before moving cautiously upstairs to see who is intruding. By the time he arrives, it is the fourth round of combat with the golems. Once one of the constructs has been defeated (or if one already has), Zelkema joins the fight. He uses his *bead of force* against an enemy spellcaster and then tries to flank a PC already fighting a golem (to make best use of his sneak attack). If Zelkema is badly hurt, he uses his *cape of the mountebank* to flee outside Zstorage.

If Zelkema does escape, a piece of paper slips out from beneath his bracelet and lands on the floor. Succeeding at a Spot check (DC 20 during combat and DC 15 after combat ends) allows a PC to see the paper. This small but important paper bears the numeric sequence necessary to enter Zelkema's personal vault downstairs (see room D for details). If Zelkema does not survive the combat here, the PCs find the paper half-tucked beneath the bracelet with a successful Search check (DC 15). The paper reads "3 – 5 – 7 – 2" from left to right.

- PART III: CONFRONTATION -

BI-4. THE VAULTS

Vaults B1 and B3 have contents while the other two are empty. B1 houses cratefuls of foreign spices waiting to be shipped to the mainland for a tidy resale value. The markings on the crates are in Elvish script. B3, on the other hand, houses barrels of ale with hidden doses of oil of taggit poison. While not one of the more potent poisons out there, oil of taggit is nevertheless illegal in Freeport and Zerkema took great care in storing it here. The twelve barrels are filled with cheap ale but a secret compartment on the bottom of each hides 5 doses of the poison inside (for a total of 5,400 gp worth of oil of taggit).

A message from a reliable source recently confirmed that application of oil of taggit to the smarm fruit causes anyone consuming the fruit to be afflicted with hallucinations and a feeling of euphoria. The smarm tree is native to the Windward jungles and Zerkema plans to mass produce this combination of poison and fruit for a hefty profit; for not only will the combination make an irresistible treat at noble parties, but the effect is terribly habit forming.

G. OFFICE

A broad wooden desk dominates the space at the center of this room. At its front left corner sits a glass orb permanently enchanted with a *light* spell. When not in use, Zerkema covers the orb with a small black velvet cloth. A closed leather bound book lies next to a stoppered ink vial atop the center of the desk. This is Zerkema's business ledger. It only has record of the rogue's legitimate business activities. If a PC casually flips through the book, have him make a Search check. If the roll beats DC 12, the PC notices that Zerkema almost singularly uses "Rantek's Runners" for intra-Freeport deliveries. This bit of information becomes of great importance once the PCs realize that two of the bombs are currently out for delivery! Zerkema planned to deliver all of the fire bombs himself but the duplicate delivery time of today's two bombs required he use a familiar delivery service (one that would not suspect his involvement despite the coincidence that will surface following the detonations).

POISONED SMARM EFFECTS

A smarm fruit is the size of an apple but with color of a dirty orange. The taste is quite sweet, even after oil of taggit is applied. Any creature that consumes a smarm coated with this poison must succeed both a Fortitude and a Will save (DC 18 for each). The Fortitude save determines whether or not the creature is addicted (meaning it must then eat a poisoned smarm once every 24 hours or become sickened). The Will save determines whether or not the creature experiences the hallucinations and other side effects (effectively making the creature confused for 1d3 hours). To cure an addiction, a creature must succeed three Fortitude saves in a row or be the recipient of a *neutralize poison* spell.

On the wall behind the cushioned desk chair hangs a fine wool tapestry. The city of Freeport is depicted in meticulous accuracy on the tapestry (200 gp value). The letters "KM" are woven into the lower right corner of the work, presumably the artist's initials. Zerkema bought the tapestry from a local artist after establishing Zstorage as a business. The rogue initially used the artwork to familiarize himself with the city's layout. He has since used it as a tactical aid in tracking significant changes in security that the rumor mill feeds him by scribbling codes on the map with white chalk. On this night, the chalk is marking three location with "X"s—Maurice's, the Temple of the God of Knowledge, and an estate just north of the Plaza of Gold (Lady Elise's home). Zerkema, out of habit, is marking off destinations of the fire bombs he has out for delivery. PCs looking at the tapestry know immediately the location of Maurice's "X" but the other two require a Knowledge (local) check (DC 15) to identify.

The desk has two drawers. The first contains a strongbox which holds Zstorage's spending coins (1d6 pp, 3d20+20 gp, 2d12 sp, 3d8 cp). The box is made of steel [**1/2 inch thickness, hardness 5, 15 hit points, Break DC 26**] and is locked (DC 30). The other drawer contains basic stationary supplies (paper, ink, etc.) and the **key** that opens all of the vaults on this floor.

- PART III: CONFRONTATION -

RANTEK'S RUNNERS

Rantek Lo'Quiss [**male half-elf Aristocrat 2/Expert 3, hp 27**] is the owner of Rantek's Runners, located next door to The Rusty Hook (in the Docks district). This small business specializes in the delivery of light parcels anywhere in Freeport. Rantek, an exiled noble from the continent, took the idea for a delivery service from the Blink Dog Rickshaw Company. After all, if a business could thrive by transporting people, why not in transporting goods from one spot in the city to another? Unlike the Rickshaw Company, however, Rantek did not need to borrow money to start his business. The half-elf fell victim to a coup to destroy his family but he escaped with a great deal of the family's wealth. He had enough gold to find his way to Freeport and start a new life here. Freeport isn't a small city, so Rantek's service is a godsend for those too busy, too lazy, or too ill to take something from point A to point B.

RANTEK'S FEES PER PARCEL

Delivery within the same district – 3 cp
Delivery one district over – 7 cp
Delivery two or more districts away – 1 sp
Passes through Scurvytown – extra 5 cp
Parcel weighs over 20 pounds – extra 1 sp

The only rule that customers need to be aware of is that Rantek does not suffer parcels of inherent danger. This means weapons, poisons, monsters, and other such packages are not allowed. The reason behind this, despite the business' "no questions asked" policy, is that a great many of Rantek's runners are teenagers. These young men and women know the city's streets and alleyways better than most adults and can navigate crowds with more expediency as well. When on delivery, a runner wears a blue armband displaying the business' logo—a red-tailed hawk carrying a scroll in its talons—a modification of Rantek's former noble standard.

D. STORAGE

All tools required for maintenance of Zstorage are stored here. Maintenance needs are not only for the building but for the golems as well. Building maintenance requires stone and woodworking tools and related components while golem upkeep requires restitching and cleaning of the bodies. Sewing supplies sit next to a bucket of dirty water with some rags inside the southwest alcove.

A sealed iron door can be seen at the chamber's far side. The stone blocks surrounding it are marked in Common with numbers: 1 to 4 on the left, 5 and 6 above, and 7 to 10 on the right. When one of these blocks is touched, a faint blue glow emanates from the number on that block. A sequence of four numbers is needed to open the door to Zerkema's personal vault. Touching the correct sequence causes the illuminated numbers to glow with a soft green hue before the door opens.

Development: With any luck, the PCs found the slip of paper showing the numeric sequence to open the rogue's personal vault. However, the combination written is to be used in reverse, right-to-left, instead of the common way to read of left-to-right. Touching the numbered stone blocks in the incorrect sequence triggers the *summon monster* trap. If this occurs, read the following. Otherwise, the door opens slowly and quietly toward the PCs.

The soft blue glow of the numbers suddenly turns violet after you touch the last stone. Then, a brilliant flash of light momentarily blinds you. As you blink away the flash, you find that another creature has joined you in the room. Now blocking the archway is a mammoth-sized centipede. The vermin's milky white skin emits a foul stench as it fixes your group with glowing red eyes.

Traps and Creatures (EL 7 or 8): The gargantuan monstrous centipede appears out of thin air in the spaces marked on the map. Any PCs standing within one of these squares is pushed to the closest empty square when the monster appears. Once

~ PART III: CONFRONTATION ~

destroyed, the centipede vanishes without a trace and the trap is inert.

Summon Monster VI Trap: CR 7; magic device; proximity trigger (alarm); no reset; spell effect (*summon monster VI*, 11th-level wizard), Search DC 31; Disable Device DC 31. Cost: 3,300 gp, 264 XP.

Gargantuan fiendish monstrous centipede: hp 66.

E. PERSONAL VAULT

This room holds the treasure that Zerkema accumulated over the last few years. Much of the wealth here comes from slain intruders to Zstorage and from the intelligent deals the rogue made in his career. The PCs should feel no guilt at grabbing up everything they can for they've likely earned every coin and item getting to this point. The full treasure list is below but most important are the jars lined up inside the entrance hall. Read the following aloud as the PCs enter the room.

On the far side of this chamber, perhaps 30 feet ahead, the green flames of an everburning torch highlight a small mountain of coins piled against the wall. Other items are scattered atop the coins as if tossed and left there, forgotten. But the real prizes are right in front of you—five ceramic jars with jeweled tops arranged in a line along the wall!

Zerkema's Treasure

+1 battleaxe

feather token of fog*

potion of cure serious wounds (x2)

potion of misdirection

privateer FP pistol (no bullets)*

ring of the owl*

scroll of disguise self (CL 2)

wand of detect secret doors (40 charges)

red garnet (80 gp)

sapphire pendant on a gold chain (1,300 gp)

9,050 sp

4,285 gp

*Denotes an item found in *Freeport: The City of Adventure*

As the PCs likely suspect, these are the fire bombs. If the PCs saw the tapestry map in the office and assumed that more bombs are loose in the city, then finding only five here confirms it. With one exploding at Maurice's, that leaves two unaccounted for. The detonation schedule (see sidebar) tucked neatly between two of the jars (Spot DC 10) helps answer the question of where the missing two have gone. When the rogue learned that Parnass' home had been entered, Zerkema decided it best to send out Day Two's bombs right away. Each is with a separate courier (see below).

DETONATION SCHEDULE

The locations and times for the fire bombs to be delivered are described in this second page of Milton Drac's missive to Zerkema. "Day One" refers to the first day following the first week after Drac's lighthouse is completed. The numbers in parentheses, if present, denote where the site is located on the map that accompanies the *Freeport: The City of Adventure* hardcover book.

*Day One – 5 p.m. – Maurice's (27)

*Day Two – 6 a.m. – Temple of the God of Knowledge (46)

*Day Two – 6 a.m. – Lady Elise's residence

Day Three – 9 a.m. – Halfling Benevolent Association (16)

Day Three – noon – The Courts (32A)

Day Four – 2 p.m. – Otto's Magic Sword Shop (40)

Day Five – 11 a.m. – Rhodes of Freeport (56)

Day Five – 9 p.m. – The Broken Mug (8)

* These three entries are the only ones of importance to this adventure. The others have been chosen at random. However, if the PCs manage to not prevent the bombings on Day Two and survive, then the GM should feel free to follow this schedule. Perhaps there's a reason for bombing these other locations, perhaps not. Milton Drac was not exactly known for his sanity.

PART IV:

~ DOUBLE TROUBLE ~

WHEREIN THE PLAYER CHARACTERS MUST RUSH TO
STOP TWO FIRE BOMBS AT THE SAME TIME.

Unless the players are strict in-game timekeepers, the GM has free reign to pick the current time. Did the events of the adventure take long for the PCs to follow? Were the combats prolonged? A good estimate is that once the PCs have slain Zekema (or at least fought past him) and found the detonation schedule (see sidebar), it is early morning on Day Two. Making the time 4 a.m. gives the PCs some breathing room, but not much. They have likely taken heavy damage from the last few combats but the pressure is still on. With two fire bombs missing and scheduled for simultaneous delivery, the PCs must act quickly if they have not searched the office upstairs. This gives them the most likely avenue for retrieving the bombs—a visit to Rentak's Runners.

VISITING RENTAK'S

If the PCs do decide to pursue Rentak's Runners angle, they find Rentak himself arriving this morning to begin the day shift. Although the delivery service is available throughout the night, even Rentak cannot be there at all hours. The half-elf relieves his assistant as the PCs arrive.

You shake away the mental fog inherent in prolonged wakefulness. The streets of early morning Freeport are as quiet as the city ever sees. The dangerous activities which occur at night make way for the no less dangerous activities of the daytime. The first shades of morning creep into the sky as you arrive at Rentak's Runners. A thin man in gray and brown attire waves goodbye to a woman before yawning and turning toward your group. Brushing away strands of copper hair from a slightly-pointed ear, he says, "Greetings. What can I do for you?"

If told about the imminent danger the city, and possibly his runners, are in (Rentak has heard about the "accident" at Maurice's), the half-elf cooperates in any way possible. He quickly checks the record of delivery requests and confirms that two items were indeed left a few hours ago that match the weight of the fire bombs. One light parcel is scheduled for delivery to the Temple of the God of Knowledge and one light parcel is scheduled for delivery to Lady Elise's; both for 6 a.m. Although there's some time before the delivery hour, runners typically leave early so they can take their time. This is especially true in the early morning hours when bleary eyed teens don't quite have their wits about them yet.

The names of the runners are recorded beside the delivery requests. Rentak describes them in as much detail as the PCs require. The young man going to the Temple of the God of Knowledge is a halfling with wide green eyes and a heavy set build. His name is Chentish and he almost always wears a blue cape his mother made for him. The delivery person for Lady Elise's parcel is a human named Alynda. Her womanly features are in full bloom now that she has turned 20 winters old. Blond hair cascades down past her shoulders. Alynda wears leather armor and carries a short sword to keep away the many unwanted "suitors" she tends to attract.

Forward thinking PCs might try to bring Rentak with them to stop the runners. If they can convince him that the matter is urgent enough with a Diplomacy check (DC 20), he locks the business' front door and goes with them.

XP Bonus: Any PCs key to successfully convincing Rentak to aid the PCs receive 200 bonus XP.

~ APPENDIX I: AFTERMATH ~

FIRE BOMBS

It is important to note that there is only one way for a fire bomb to be detonated—by removing the jeweled stopper from the jar's neck. If the jar is dropped or otherwise breaks and the stopper does not come free, then there is no explosion. However, should a detonation occur, the game mechanics are as follows—radius of blast: 100 ft.; 15d6x5 fire damage is inflicted on everything in the blast radius; Reflex save (DC 20) half.

Each of the 1-foot tall jars currently in the runners' hands are boxed like gifts complete with elaborate bows. Zerkema disguised the jars as gifts before giving them to another person to leave at Rentak's.

Some DMs may wish to present the fire bombs as traps. To do so, use the following (count each bomb separately):

Fire Bomb: CR 7; magical and mechanical; touch (attached) trigger; no reset; spell effects (*delayed blast fireball*, 15th level wizard, 15d6, DC 20 Reflex half damage); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 32; Cost: 26,250gp, 2,100 XP

delivery service in Zerkema's logbook) and instead split up to stake out the two locations. Or maybe they do get the descriptions of the delivery persons and attempt to track them down before they reach their destinations. Another possibility is that the PCs inform residents of the two destinations to refuse any parcels they receive around 6 a.m.

No matter what plan the PCs concoct, the GM must be ready to go along with anything. The primary goal is to gain possession of the fire bombs without either of them detonating. They could be hard pressed to stop either of the runners themselves without Rentak's help. The half-elf trained his employees to not give up a parcel to anyone but the intended customer or the Sea Lord's Guard (and only then with a good reason). For purposes of Diplomacy checks, Chentish and Alynda are considered Unfriendly.

DEVELOPMENT

If Zerkema escaped alive from Ztorage, he has quaffed his *potion of cure serious wounds* and taken up a position near Lady Elise's residence. The rogue is determined that at least this fire bomb will detonate and hopefully take the troublesome Councilor with it. Zerkema hides in the shadows one building away from her house. If some or all of the PCs show up, the rogue remains hidden until Alynda shows up in the Plaza of Gold. After the PCs move to intercept her, Zerkema moves in to slay them while they're distracted. If the PCs intercept Alynda before she reaches the Plaza, Zerkema slips away fifteen minutes after the scheduled delivery time and returns to see what the PCs have done to his personal vault back at Ztorage.

WINGING IT

Unlike many adventures, the climactic battle with the bad guys is not necessarily the ending here. The PCs have a few options they can take to prevent the bombs from reaching their targets and detonating. Maybe they decide not to go to Rentak's (or failed to notice the

APPENDIX I: ~ AFTERMATH ~

The PCs have hopefully prevented any further explosions in the city and seen the fire bombs delivered to a secure location (either relocking them in Zerkema's personal vault after finding them or delivering them to Sister Gwendolyn, who in turn hands them over to the Captains' Council later that day). While the Council can-

not publicly thank the PCs, they are more than welcome to the treasure found in Ztorage's secret vault in addition to the money agreed upon at the adventure's start (1,000 gp for each PC unless otherwise negotiated, up to 2,500 gp per PC).

~ APPENDIX II: ADVENTURE HOOKS ~

Because the Captain's Council did not want another citywide disaster on their hands like Milton's Folly, the explosion at Maurice's was covered up. Even *The Shipping News* was handed a false story (see sidebar) and all survivors of the explosion sworn to secrecy until the PCs' investigation ended.

Within half a day's time, the final plot of Milton Drac has been defeated. Your efforts have not gone unrewarded, as gold coins from the Captain's Council and treasure from Zelkema's vault now fill your personal reserves. The Council is officially, if not publicly, in your debt, since a public announcement about the plot might give enemies of Freeport ideas they don't need. But, in a city where theft and murder are almost daily events, having riches without the fame isn't all that bad.

THE SHIPPING NEWS

"Explosion at Maurice's Leaves 21 Dead!"

A fatal combination of the arcane art and liquor spell doom for nearly two dozen citizens when an inebriated sorcerer casts a spell to impress the patrons. A few misplaced gestures and words are assumed to have turned minor prestidigitation into cataclysmic inferno. Maurice, owner and proprietor of the restaurant, was out for supplies when the explosion occurred. 'It will be some weeks until the storefront is back to serviceable conditions,' he said. 'Until that time, I'll be drafting a new sign which tells spellcasters to leave their components at the door. This kind of horrific accident cannot be allowed to happen again.'"

APPENDIX II: ~ ADVENTURE HOOKS ~

There are a number of adventure possibilities presented in *Vengeance in Freeport* that can be explored once the adventure is completed.

- News of the defeat (and probably death) of Captain Klarr makes its way to the orcish hierarchy of the Crimson Death. The group cannot allow such an insult to pass by without response. Another group of the Crimson Death is assembled and sent to Freeport to track down the PCs. When that is accomplished, the orcs set a trap in the jungle north of the city. The Crimson Death steal something or someone of value to the PCs and leave an obvious trail to follow. Once inside the jungle canopy, the orcs make sure that the PCs know the Crimson Death are not a group to be taken lightly.
- If the PCs failed to find the hidden poison in Zstorage's vault, the Sea Lord's Guard discovers it when they seize and search the warehouse. The

Captain's Council suspects the plan to introduce the poison to the local smarm fruit. This suspicion is soon heightened when a known pirate captain lays claim to the "ale" barrels. In order to catch the pirate in the act, the Council hires the PCs to pose as mercenaries in need of work on the captain's ship. They are ordered to seize a poisoned smarm and return it to Freeport as evidence so the Council can act to arrest the pirate and impound his dangerous cargo on its return trip from Windward. However, the PCs find more than they bargained for when the captain's elaborate operation is encountered on the island. Hundreds of slaves harvest the fruit and even the trees themselves for transplantation to the mainland. The situation escalates when a slaver stationed on Windward recognizes the PCs as do-gooder adventurers and exposes them to the pirate captain!

~ APPENDIX III: STATISTICS ~

- Zelkema survived the events of this adventure and wants the PCs dead. The rogue does some research on the PCs and concocts an elaborate scheme that involves something deeply personal to one or all of the characters (possibly involving members of their families). Zelkema holds grudges a long time and it may be up to a year before his vengeance takes form.
- Rentak Lo'Quiss asks the PCs to look into the disappearance of one of his runners (perhaps even Chentish or Alynda). Someone or something kidnapped the teenager while they were out on a delivery. The unknown assailant took the runner but the expensive parcel which was being delivered was left unmolested. The trail leads to an old manor home, thought long-abandoned and rumored to be haunted.
- During the dispelling and disarming of Zelkema's fire bombs, one goes missing from under the Sea Lord's Guard's noses. This obvi-

ous inside job happens just before another previously unknown Drac relation vies for the title of Sea Lord. But this time, the Captains' Council publicly authenticates the man's lineage and prepares to install him. Sister Gwendolyn seeks out the PCs for help, claiming that this Drac is not related to that line but rather he is a Drac loyalist who remained hidden during the Council's cleaning up of the old corrupt Guard regime. She says the man stated he not only has possession of the bomb but has increased its explosive power by a factor of 100. The former guard is threatening to blow up the Old City in its entirety unless he is installed as Sea Lord by week's end. Gwendolyn begs the PCs to once again track down the fire bomb and put an end to the threat before this newest maniac can take the Sea Lord position.

APPENDIX III: ~ STATISTICS ~

CREATURES

Fiendish monstrous centipede, gargantuan: CR 8; Gargantuan magical beast; HD 12d8+12; hp 66; Init +2; Spd 40 ft. (8 squares), climb 40 ft. (8 squares); AC 19 (-4 size, +2 Dex, +11 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +9; Grp +27; Atk/Full Atk +12 melee (2d8+9 plus poison, bite); Space/Reach 20 ft./15 ft.; SA Poison, smite good (1/day, +12 damage); SQ DR 10/magic, resistance to cold 10, fire 10, SR 17, vermin traits, darkvision 60 ft.; AL NE; SV Fort +9, Ref +6, Will +4; Str 23, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 3, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Climb +14, Hide -2, Listen +2, Spot +6; Ability Focus (poison), Alertness, Improved Natural Armor, Snatch, Weapon Focus (bite).

Poison (Ex): A monstrous centipede has a poisonous bite, Fortitude save DC 19 to negate, inflicts 1d8

Dex initial and secondary damage. The save DC is Constitution based.

A gargantuan fiendish monstrous centipede's bite is treated as a magic weapon for the purposes of overcoming DR.

Golem, flesh: CR 7; Large Construct; HD 9d10+30; hp 79 (average); Init -1; Spd 30 ft. (6 squares); AC 18 (-1 size, -1 Dex, +10 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +6; Grp +15; Atk +10 melee (2d8+5, slam); Full Atk +10 melee (2d8+5, 2 slams); SA Berserk; SQ Construct traits, DR 5/adamantine, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to magic, low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 21, Dex 9, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: None.

Berserk (Ex): When a flesh golem enters combat, there is a cumulative 1% chance each round that its elemental spirit breaks free and the golem goes

~ APPENDIX III: STATISTICS ~

berserk. The uncontrolled golem goes on a rampage, attacking the nearest living creature or smashing some object smaller than itself if no creature is within reach, then moving on to spread more destruction. The golem's creator, if within 60 feet, can try to regain control by speaking firmly and persuasively to the golem, which requires a DC 19 Charisma check. It takes 1 minute of inactivity by the golem to reset the golem's berserk chance to 0%.

Immunity to Magic (Ex): A flesh golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against the creature, as noted below. A magical attack that deals cold or fire damage slows a flesh golem (as the *slow* spell) for 2d6 rounds, with no saving throw. A magical attack that deals electricity damage breaks any *slow* effect on the golem and heals 1 point of damage for every 3 points of damage the attack would otherwise deal. If the amount of healing would cause the golem to exceed its full normal hit points, it gains any excess as temporary hit points. For example, a flesh golem hit by a *lightning bolt* heals 3 points of damage if the attack would have dealt 11 points of damage. A flesh golem gets no saving throw against attacks that deal electricity damage.

Description: Like all flesh golems, Zerkema's pair are a ghoulish collection of stolen humanoid body parts, stitched together into single composite forms. No natural animal willingly tracks a flesh golem. They have no possessions and no weapons. Each stands 8 feet tall and weighs almost 500 pounds. They walk and move with a stiff-jointed gait, as if not in complete control of their bodies. Zerkema dresses them in long hooded robes to cover their grisly appearance and soothe legitimate customers' nerves.

Tactics: Golems are tenacious in combat and prodigiously strong as well. Being mindless, they do nothing without orders from Zerkema. They follow instructions explicitly and are incapable of any strategy or tactics. They are emotionless in combat and cannot be provoked.

Orc Soldier, male orc Warrior 4: CR 3; Medium Humanoid (orc); HD 4d10+4; hp 26 (average); Init +2; Spd 30 ft. (6 squares); AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; BAB +4; Grp +7; Atk +9 melee (1d8+3/19-20/x2, masterwork longsword) or +7 ranged (1d8/19-20/x2, mas-

terwork light crossbow); SQ Orc traits; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 17, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 8.

Skills & Feats: Climb +5*, Intimidate +4, Jump +5*, Listen +1, Spot +1, Swim +4*; Alertness, Weapon Focus (longsword). * Armor check penalty.

Possessions: Masterwork longsword, masterwork light crossbow, 10 bolts, masterwork grooved dagger, +1 chain shirt, cloak of resistance +1, potion of jump, 47 gp.

Description: A soldier of the Crimson Death commonly dons a chain shirt and longsword besides a ranged weapon of his choice and the customary grooved dagger. While there's always some variance in appearance orc to orc, soldiers tend to be gruff in attitude and worn physically—cracked and weathered skin and callused hands. A piercing and/or tattoo here and there on a soldier is also not uncommon.

Tactics: An orc soldier tends to take one of two basic approaches to combat. First, if a foe is too far away to charge, he fires his crossbow at it. Second, if a foe is within melee proximity, the orc uses his longsword. Tactics such as sundering and flanking are beyond these creatures in the heat of battle. Special combat maneuvers are generally limited to bull rushing and grappling; even these infrequently.

NAMED OPPONENTS

Captain Klarr, male orc Fighter 10: CR 10; Medium Humanoid (orc); HD 10d10+10; hp 75; Init +5; Spd 30 ft. (6 squares); AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; BAB +10; Grp +15; Atk +19 melee (2d6+11/19-20/x2, +2 greatsword) or +12 ranged (1d8+4/x3, masterwork composite longbow); Full Atk +19/+14 melee (2d6+11/19-20/x2, +2 greatsword) or +12/+7 ranged (1d8+4/x3, masterwork composite longbow); SQ Orc traits; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 20, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills & Feats: Climb +13, Intimidate +12, Listen +6, Spot +6, Swim +15; Alertness, Cleave^B, Great Cleave, Greater Weapon Focus^B, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder^B, Power Attack^B, Weapon Focus (greatsword)^B, Weapon Specialization (greatsword)^B.

~ APPENDIX III: STATISTICS ~

LEGEND OF THE CRIMSON DEATH

The founding orc of the Crimson Death mercenary company supposedly named the organization after a very special weapon he “confiscated” from an adventurer. The original *crimson death*, a longsword, had a deep groove running down the center of its blade. It is reputed that some of the blood of a creature slain by the blade could be absorbed into this groove. After a period of no less than 24 hours, the blood could then be released as a deadly vapor around the wielder on command. The “crimson death” cloud would then eat through armor and skin like acid and infect creatures with a terrible wasting disease. Although no one is certain where the *crimson death* now resides (much less if it even existed at all), the orcs of this group honor their founder by wielding grooved daggers with blood-red grips.

There are at least half a dozen Crimson Death groups in the world. Each operates independently but is accountable to a central hierarchy somewhere deep in the northern mountains of the mainland. The groups act like any other mercenary companies but every few months or so must report to the hierarchy. It is also not uncommon for two or three groups to come together for an important retrieval or assassination mission. The reasons behind these missions are not disclosed by the orc leadership. The separate Crimson Death groups know only that they are well paid to do what they’re told, barely caring for long what overarching goals their superiors have in mind.

Possessions: +2 *greatsword*, masterwork composite longbow (+4 Str), 20 arrows, masterwork dagger, +2 *studded leather armor*, *brooch of shielding* (81 hit points remaining), *potion of cure serious wounds*, *potion of shield of faith* +3, 8 pp, 42 gp.

Description: Like any other orcish fighter, Klarr has his share of scars on face and body. His shaved head, perpetual sneer, and bulging muscles tend to keep others at arm’s length if they don’t need to bother him. Klarr took the title “captain” not because he is an expert sailor or pirate, but because he enjoys the sea and has the muscle to control a crew to sail for him. The orc’s business in Freeport is simply for a layover for his ship, needing repairs from a previous engagement with an elven pirate hunter. But now that rumors of fire bombs have been confirmed, Klarr and the Crimson Death will have to stay in the city for a bit longer.

Tactics: Captain Klarr has a simple 3-step attack process. First, he slices it with his greatsword. Second, if the opponent does not die, then he sunders its weapon. Thirdly, he slashes at the foe again until it drops or flees. If there are more than four opponents, Klarr imbibes his *potion of shield of faith* before wading into their midst. When fighting alone, the orc attacks spellcasters first. When part of a group, Klarr prefers to attack the most powerful looking enemy warriors, leaving his companions to deal with irritating spell-wielders.

Prolk, male orc Cleric 8: CR 8; Medium Humanoid (orc); HD 8d8; hp 43; Init +0; Spd 20 ft. (4 squares); AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16; BAB +6; Grp +8; Atk +10 melee (1d6+2/18-20/x2, masterwork cutlass) or +7 (+9 vs. elves) ranged (1d10+1 plus 2d6+2 vs. elves/19-20/x2, +1 *bane heavy crossbow*); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (1d6+2/18-20/x2, masterwork cutlass) or +7 (+9 vs. elves) ranged (1d10+1 plus 2d6+2 vs. elves/19-20/x2, +1 *bane heavy crossbow*); SA Rebuke undead, spells; SQ Orc traits; AL CN; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +9; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 16, Cha 10.

Skills & Feats: Concentration +5, Heal +6, Knowledge (religion) +11, Spellcraft +3; Brew Potion, Lightning Reflexes, Martial Weapon Proficiency (cutlass)^B, Rapid Reload, Weapon Focus (cutlass)^B.

Spells Prepared (6/5+1/4+1/4+1/2+1; DC 13 + spell level): 0—*detect magic*, *guidance* (2), *resistance* (2); 1st—*bane*, *command*, *doom*, *entropic shield*, *magic weapon**, *obscuring mist*; 2nd—*darkness*, *hold person*, *silence*, *summon monster II*, *wind wall**; 3rd—*blindness/deafness*, *dispel magic* (2), *magic vestment**, *water walk*; 4th—*air walk**, *divine power*, *summon monster IV*.

*Domain spell; Domains: Air and War.

Possessions: Masterwork cutlass, +1 *bane* (humanoids, elf) *heavy crossbow*, 10 bolts, banded

~ APPENDIX III: STATISTICS ~

mail, *potion of cure light wounds* (2), *potion of invisibility*, *potion of protection from good*, 34 gp.

Description: Prolk's skin is always glistening, though with sea spray or oily skin no one can be sure. Big purple eyes and a gap-toothed grin drink in every detail of the cleric's surroundings. Prolk unnerves others by always appearing to know more than they do. Both cutlass and crossbow hang easily off the orc's lean form.

Tactics: Protection of self comes first in any combat; which means that spells such as *magic vestment* and *entropic shield* see first use. Prolk prefers to *silence* enemy spellcasters before using the likes of *hold person* or *doom* on enemy warriors. If a larger force threatens the cleric and his comrades, Prolk immediately *summons* as many monsters as he has at his disposal to assist before wielding his heavy crossbow to deadly effect.

Rask, male orc Sorcerer 5: CR 5; Medium Humanoid (orc); HD 5d4; hp 12; Init +2; Spd 30 ft. (6 squares); AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 11; BAB +2; Grp +3; Atk/Full Atk +4 melee (1d4+1/19-20/x2, masterwork dagger) or +5 ranged (1d8/19-20/x2, masterwork light crossbow); SA Spells; SQ Orc traits; AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 16.

Skills & Feats: Concentration +4, Knowledge (arcana) +4, Listen +2, Spellcraft +8, Spot +2; Alertness, Scribe Scroll.

Spells Known (6/5/4/4/2; DC 13 + spell level): 0—*acid splash*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *message*, *ray of frost*, *resistance*; 1st—*grease*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *obscuring mist*; 2nd—*darkness*, *scorching ray*.

Possessions: Masterwork grooved dagger, masterwork light crossbow, 10 bolts, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *ring of protection +1*, *scroll of blur*, *scroll of invisibility*, *scroll of protection from arrows*, *wand of web* (10 charges), 12 gp.

Description: Rask's most defining feature are a pair of extremely green eyes and pronounced ears. The orc has a crooked smile and a similar posture, tending to lean on objects when standing still. The sorcerer enjoys the dress of a commoner so he can surprise foes with a sudden display of magic. Dagger, scrolls, and potion are kept along his beltline while the crossbow and bolts are carried snugly on his back.

Tactics: The only rule Rask follows in combat is to stay as far from melee attacks as possible. Whenever possible, the orc casts *mage armor* first and follows that up with *darkness* cast on some opponents in a larger group. From here Rask casts every offensive spell in his arsenal unless he needs to retreat. Scrolls are used on an as needed basis, these being defensive in nature. When the orc does need to flee a scene, he uses his *wand of web* to slow pursuit.

Zelkema, male human Expert 2/Rogue 10: CR 11; Medium Humanoid (human); HD 12d6; hp 52; Init +12; Spd 30 ft. (6 squares); AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14; BAB +8; Grp +8; Atk +13 melee (1d6+1 plus 1d6 cold/18-20/x2, +1 *frost rapier*); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (1d6+1 plus 1d6 cold/18-20/x2, +1 *frost rapier*); SA Sneak attack +5d6; SQ Evasion, improved uncanny dodge, slippery mind, trapfinding, trap sense +3, uncanny dodge; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +13, Will +7; Str 10, Dex 18, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 11.

Skills & Feats: Appraise +16, Balance +8, Bluff +10, Craft (gemcutting) +16, Diplomacy +4, Disable Device +6, Escape Artist +6, Gather Information +17, Hide +7, Knowledge (local) +16, Listen +12, Move Silently +10, Open Lock +13, Search +13, Sense Motive +14, Spot +6; Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Greater Improved Initiative (see *Freeport: The City of Adventure* p. 125), Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Finesse.

Possessions: +1 *frost rapier*, +2 *leather armor*, *bead of force*, *cape of the mountebank*, *potion of cure serious wounds*, *smokestick* (2), finely wrought gold bracelet studded with 4 red garnets (580 gp value), 70 gp.

Description: The first feature one notes upon meeting Zelkema is his pair of constantly darting blue eyes. The human moves rather lethargically unless combat is imminent. A wiry body and jet-black hair belie Zelkema's 40-something age. His blue-hilted rapier rests hidden behind the folds of a midnight-hued cloak.

Tactics: The rogue attacks a flat-footed opponent first in combat when possible. If a melee foes against him (or there are more than 3 foes), Zelkema uses his *cape of the mountebank* to safely escape. If backed into a corner, Zelkema lights a *smokestick* and fights effectively within the cloud.

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