

FOOL'S ERRAND

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A Privateer Press D20 E-Venture™ for PCs of Levels 3–5

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Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Background for the DM	3
Act I	5
A Brief Undertaking	5
Making New Friends	7
Act II	10
Filcher's Crossing	10
The Abandoned Factory	11
Map: The Abandoned Factory	13
Malek's Ambush	16
Act III	18
The Undercity	18
Map: The Undercity	19
Epilogue: A Fistful of Vouchers	22
Appendix A: Creatures	24
Appendix B: Dramatis Personae	25
Legal Stuff	28
About Privateer Press	29



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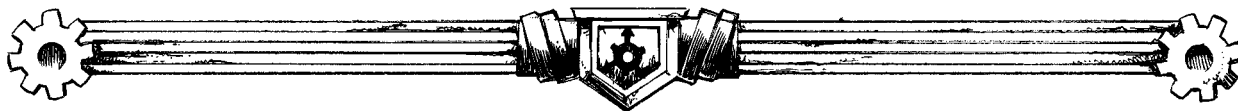
Iron Kingdoms Game World



A D20 Product



Introduction



This Privateer Press PDF E-Venture™ entitled “Fool’s Errand” is set in the Iron Kingdoms within the city of Corvis. This particular adventure introduces the characters into a dangerous situation within Corvis’ dicey underside as they unknowingly cross one of the city’s vicious underworld gangs. As the saying goes, “there’s plenty of adventure to be had in the Iron Kingdoms!”

Background for the DM

This background is for the benefit of the DM and it serves as the backdrop for the events that follow. Very little, if any at all, of this background should be exposed to the players...

In Corvis there is a powerful merchant by the name of Hamil Bodak (TLN 8–9) who is in need of some ambitious blades to remove a thorn in the side of his extensive criminal network. Bodak, once upon a time a mercenary himself, is a man with a stringent personal code, although he believes fully in the concept of profit and ambition. Let us go back a few years in order to understand this mysterious man who figures so prominently within the City of Ghosts.

This E-Venture™ is directed for parties of three to four characters of level 3–5, however it can be adjusted for lower or higher level PCs by decreasing or increasing the amount of antagonists in Act II and modifying their levels accordingly. This adventure works best if you have access to book one of Privateer’s “The Witchfire Trilogy” entitled *The Longest Night* (TLN), however it’s not necessary to have a copy in order to play this module. In fact, *Fool’s Errand* can be used in any fantasy game featuring a large city.

Twenty years ago, Bodak was a sword-for-hire in a mercenary group numbering 500 men called the “Talon Company.” This army was in the employ of the now-deposed King Vinter Raelthorne and took part in some particularly brutal campaigning along the Cygnar–Ord borders. At some point, the Talons perpetrated some exceedingly inhumane deeds on a village some leagues north of the Dragon’s Tongue, and when the particulars were later discovered by then-colonel Julian Helstrom, the rapine and murder committed by them turned the man’s stomach. It was by no means how the Colonel wanted to lead his armies. He publicly vilified the mercenaries and arranged for their employment to be terminated.

In the months that followed, the Talons could not be employed anywhere within the Iron Kingdoms. They eventually broke apart, either as individual mercenaries or small factions, and Hamil Bodak, cross at having his livelihood cut short, decided to strike out on his own. With scant food in his belly and even less coin in his purse, he eventually came to Corvis where he happened into a job as a watch guard. As he approached his mid-thirties, Bodak swiftly worked his way up to a captain’s position, establishing a moderate but solid power base for himself in the city. To his dismay, some years later, Julian Helstrom also joined the Corvis Watch in a position superior to his. The former colonel had no idea of how much this rankled Bodak, indeed he did not even know the man, but the one-time mercenary knew Helstrom and he took careful steps to distinguish how his loyalties developed and where they laid within the organization.

Hamil Bodak had learned to be a prudent man since his days with the Talon Company, but like

many men with mercenary blood in their veins, Bodak had succumbed to greed some months prior to Helstrom's coming to Corvis. He had plunged willingly into a network of dealings between seedy merchants and corrupt watchmen, accepting protection money and taking part in a "misappropriated" weapons coterie that sold and supplied weapons downriver to mercenary companies and others of that ilk. In time, the ever-vigilant Captain Helstrom unearthed this illegal ring and he shut it down, presenting many of Bodak's accomplices to magistrate-justice.

But the crafty Bodak was swift in covering up any proof of his involvement, and Helstrom could never pin anything on him personally. (This is actually the first time that Hamil Bodak was ever truly recognized by Helstrom, since his involvement with the former mercenary was not in such a position that Helstrom should know him personally. This gives Bodak more reason for increased animosity toward Helstrom.)

Regardless of that, Helstrom "urged" Bodak to retire from the Watch, or else he would demote him and make his life miserable. Doing his utmost to maintain composure after not once but twice having his life altered by Helstrom, Bodak did so,

but contended that he had nothing to do with the unlawful cartel. The fact that after his retirement he opened a fully stocked armory under Helstrom's nose was his way of maintaining his affluent lifestyle, but even more it was an act of disdaining the shadow cast by that aforementioned nose.

There is an uneasy truce for now between the two, but Bodak keeps his eyes on Helstrom and vice versa. The Watch captain's vigilance may be a bit less sharp than Bodak's since he has no idea how much he is truly despised by the former mercenary and Watch captain now-turned "legitimate" businessman.

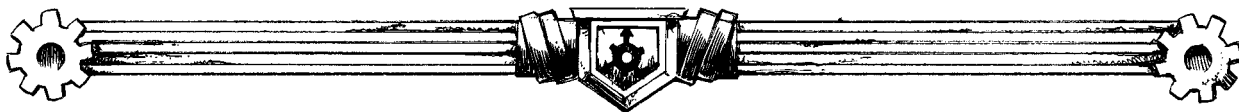
This is the tense situation that the PC's blindly stumble into in *Fool's Errand*. If the PCs have played TLN, Bodak is primarily curious as to who they are and how they are tied to Helstrom. He is so curious, in fact, that he devises this "test" of their abilities, all the while maintaining his anonymity by working through his trusted man, the wiry, dark-eyed rogue named Draegyn. If the PCs have not played TLN, Bodak simply wishes to strike at an obstacle in the path of his burgeoning mercantile network and, in Draegyn's opinion, the PCs appear to look brave (or foolish) enough for the job.





Act I

Wherein the adventurers are in the employ of the Church of Morrow when they realize they are being watched.



As stated previously, it is highly suggested that the party has played book one of "The Witchfire Trilogy," *The Longest Night*, before starting this adventure, although a resilient DM can easily adjust this into a stand-alone or even a forerunner to TLN. If the PCs have not played TLN, the DM should assume that the city treasury has raised a temporary work force to aid in repairing the damage of the city that was wrought during the Longest Night festival when undead walked the streets of the appropriately named City of Ghosts. The Church of Morrow was one of the hardest hit locales and the PCs, being goodly heroes (hopefully), have been asked to aid in the cleaning of the cathedral grounds and have gladly accepted. If they are not so "goodly," the DM may mention some meager compensation once the re-building has been accomplished.



A Brief Undertaking



Summary: A few days have passed since the attack on the city and the PCs have stayed on with the High Priest, Father Pandor Dumas, as he has given them lodging on the church grounds. Within a day or three, a mysterious man is seen shadowing

them. When confronted, he introduces himself as Draegyn and admits he has been watching them for some time shortly after the attack on the city (TLN), or he may simply be impressed with their appearance (assuming this party looks formidable, of course). He will not mention that he works for Hamil Bodak, instead referring to his employer as "a man who must remain nameless." Draegyn will compel the PCs to perform a task for his boss, giving them a cryptic note upon which is scrawled a time and location and nothing more.

To begin this adventure, the DM should start by reading the following text to the players:

A gray morning finds you in the courtyard of the Church of Morrow. Your benefactor, Father Dumas, is overseeing the continued cleanup efforts from the previous attack on his cathedral. The good father wears a long face, obviously stricken with despair after enduring the ghastly events of the Longest Night festival, and his dark vestments are stained with dust and mud from the debris of fallen stones and the decayed leavings of the undead army. He stands amidst a trampled garden that once housed flowering evergreen saplings and primroses in bloom, now a mess of muddy tracks from footsteps and wagon wheels as the priest directs his workers. Mostly patrons of the church, these men heft old bones and even older stones into wheelbarrows and horse carts hauling the remains away from the once beautiful courtyard.

Upon seeing you Father Dumas waves and approaches. "Morrow bless you, my friends," he says. "Another day of this and the courtyard should be prepared for laying the good souls who gave their lives defending this church to rest. I should like to ask a favor of you. Might you fetch some minor items for me from the Quad? Normally, I would send Brother Vetiver, but alas he is one of our fallen." Father Dumas pauses sadly and makes a religious gesture for Vetiver's soul, then he smiles, albeit sullenly, and procures some parchment from his vestments, and then continues, "Some minor items, these, but I would appreciate it much, my friends."

Assuming the PCs agree—there's no reason not to run a small errand to the market for him—he hands one of the PCs a parchment. At this point, each of them should make a Spot check against a DC 15. Whoever is successful sees a darkly-garbed man leaning against the wall, paring his fingernails with a dagger and watching the party with more than a passing interest. Why he stands out is simply because he is the only person in the courtyard who is not working. Before they can act on this, however, a wagon passes by and obscures their view of him. Once it is past, the man is gone.

Whether the PCs spotted the man or not, they will proceed to the Quad (TLN 7) to give the list of items that Father Dumas required to the appropriate merchants. The list is comprised of several mundane bits and pieces of no interest to the PCs, but the DM may wish to describe the buzz of this popular gathering place within the city by reading the following:

Finally the high sun peeks from the clouds above. Beneath it, the marketplace swells and clamors about you. Merchants, servants, entertainers, nomads, beggars, thieves, gamblers, artisans, courtesans, soldiers, and who knows what else mingle, prattle, argue, conspire, sing, play games, drink, eat, and who knows what else! Handcarts, horses, and wagons push through the crowds, provoking an epidemic of curses, and music chimes in your ears from all directions. Vendors proclaim the wonders of their wares while neighbors shout at one another and devotees of Morrow

chant from balconies above. Smells assault your senses, as well, thickening the air with roast meat, aromatic drinks, pungent herbs, smoke, sweat, flesh, wool, horse and leather. This is the Quad of Corvis, an untidy but vivid spectacle that always changes but seldom ends.

Throughout the Quad, river merchants have set up booths—some more permanent than others—and the sounds and smells of the bazaar are in full swing by midday. An opportunity for haggling with the merchants is presented. Some of the PCs may wish to sell or purchase items at this time.

At some point, another Spot check (DC 15) can be made. Any successes will once again reveal the mysterious man as he skirts through the thick crowd. This time, his angular features can be better discerned; he is clean-shaven, and stringy, black hair hangs down into his face. With shadowy green eyes, he looks directly at whoever notices him, and then passes into the flow of the crowd before the PCs can react. Chasing after him at this point reveals nothing.

Eventually, the PCs will return to the Church of Morrow with the desired items.

Father Dumas is easily found among the throng of workers, directing a group of them uprighting a statue near the cracked granite tomb of Lexaria Ciannor (TLN 18). He sees you and approaches.

Upon receiving the items, he hands you a folded parchment. It has a plain, heavy seal of red wax. "This was dropped off by an errand boy for you, my friends," Dumas explains. "I assured him you would receive it. Thank you for these items. Now, if you will excuse me, duty calls." So saying, the good father hurries off toward a group of workers and once more begins issuing orders.

At whatever point the PCs open the parchment, it reads:

Meet me at The Falling Star. Tonight. You know where it is.

If the PCs played TLN, they should recall that The Falling Star (TLN 50) is the seedy waterfront dive wherein they had met with Julian Helstrom beforehand, and the DM should allow them—even

urge them subtly—to presume that this parchment must be from the captain. If they have not played TLN, the PCs can make a Knowledge (local) check DC 12 or hail some streetwise visitors of Corvis. They will generally know the location of this infamous watering hole.



Making New Friends



The obscure note should suffice to get the PCs progressing toward The Falling Star a bit later in the day. There will be little else for them to do until then, unless they care to help Father Dumas with the last bits of cleaning the churchyard. Once they depart and approach the waterfront, the DM should read the following aloud:

Dusk in Corvis is seldom different than day except for the waterfront. Whereas in most sections of town business continues as usual, the

coming darkness here presages the turning over of the district. Once the work bells ring out, dockworkers and merchants give way to rogues, thugs, and other ne'er-do-wells. It is often said, "on the docks at night only a fool walks alone."

As your group makes its way toward the harbor, the graceful spires of New Corvis become less frequent, giving way to the unadorned and sometimes squalid structures and canal-spanning bridges of the old city. The usual mist from the Black River begins to rise as night falls, and the traffic thins as you proceed along the riverwalk. Nearby, the faint lighting from a warehouse illuminates the cobbles and from inside you hear the slight chug and hiss of steamjacks at work. Shouting and laughter spills from The Falling Star as you enter. The bar room is filled with the usual rowdy bunch, but you manage to spot an empty table in one of the far corners.

The Falling Star is a grimy place and its patrons even grimmer, if such a thing is possible. They drink watered ale from horns and flagons and engage in loud conversation that is a crude and ever-rising din. The walls are adorned with furs and hanging tapestries of every color, and a pair of shaggy dun and brindle dogs crack bones by the hearth. The proprietor and bartender are one and the same, a



Who Is That Guy?

If the PCs inquire about Draegyn to Dando or any other server or patron, they'll receive one of these replies:

"Who? That guy? That be Draegyn the Bastard. I'd bloody steer clear of him if'n I be you, friend. He's trouble."

"Er, that's the Black Bastard. E'd sooner slit your throat than look at ye. I'd advise ye ta steer clear."

"Him? Name's Draegyn... a blasted whore-son an'a haff, he is."

"Hmmm? Dat's me da... I t'ink... I dunno... I'm smashed, me mates..."

huge man named Dando Kildair, also called Dando "the Bull" for a number of reasons, the least of which is a bull-like neck actually thicker than his head. As per his stats (Appendix B), he is fully capable of taking care of himself, and if the PCs or anyone else attempts to accost him, he will not hesitate to go fisticuffs. His trusty bouncer Gajan (Appendix B) is also always nearby, usually sitting in a darkened corner nursing a mug of the Bull's Best.

After occupying the empty table or sidling up to the bar, the PCs will more than likely want to order drinks and scrutinize the room, perhaps making themselves available for whosoever—presumably Capt. Helstrom if they've played TLN—is wishing to meet with them. They will notice that there are no Corvis Watchmen to be seen, but after a few minutes an easy Spot check (DC 12) will show the same man they've noticed perhaps several times before sitting by himself in a shadowy booth next to the hearth. He is watching the PCs and once he notices that they recognize him, he will display a subtle smile and nod.

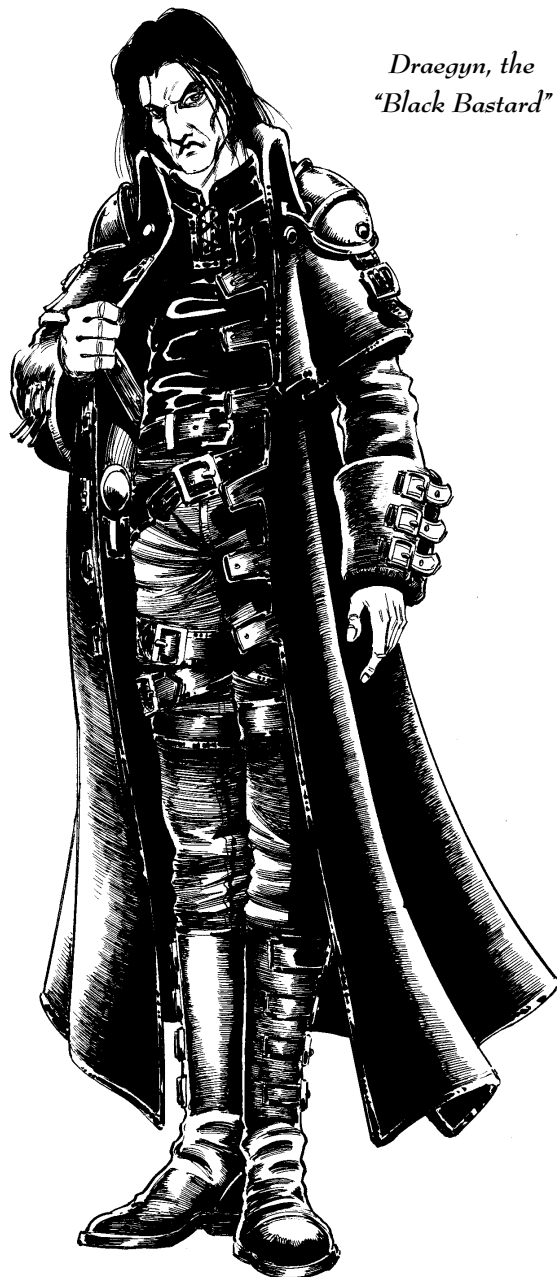
After a few more sips of his tankard, Draegyn (human male, Rog6) will stand up and amble over to them. He's a narrow-waisted, wiry fellow with clean-shaven, angular features, sunken eyes with green pupils, and long strands of oily black hair hanging down in his face. He wears a leather great-coat worn over a black shirt, and dark gray leather breeches wrapped up in a multitude of leather straps and silver buckles. A long knife hangs at each of his hips, and two more knife-hilts protrude

from his thick leather boots. He cuts an intimidating figure, despite being lean of stature. Without invitation, he'll have a seat and begin speaking:

"Seems we both been watching each other of late, so let me cut to the quick of it. My employer has a job he needs done. He had something stolen from him three days ago and he needs it stolen back. So he's charged me ta find a band of worthies ta take this on. You toughs seem to have the fire in yer guts fer such a thing. You think mebbes yer right fer this little job?"

Gauging their reaction, he'll procure a stained parchment and push it across the tabletop with a

*Draegyn, the
"Black Bastard"*



dark-gloved hand. It contains directions regarding where the stolen item is believed to be located. It is referred to strangely as a “thunderwicket” and Draegyn will simply explain that it is a prototypical device with an ambiguous purpose. The directions on the parchment point to a locale on the backside of the merchants’ bourg of Corvis. Draegyn wants the PCs to infiltrate an abandoned warehouse where the “thugs” are holed up and find the item.

Herein lies the “fool’s errand” since Draegyn is lying about the nature of the “thunderwicket.” Again, if the PCs have played TLN, Hamil Bodak has had his people watching them since his informants at The Falling Star told him about their meeting there with Captain Helstrom just before The Longest Night (TLN 50). Bodak had his trusted “Bastard” devise a “test” of sorts for the PCs in order to gauge their resiliency. If the PCs have not played TLN, they were simply noticed by Draegyn at some point and now the Bastard is directing them into the heart of a rival’s territory to strike at one of his employer’s adversaries. (Bodak believes that the Griffon gang had arranged a hit on one of his storehouses, so this is a bit of the old “tit for tat.”)

The Griffons (TLN 10) are the least powerful of the three major gangs in the city, but still formidable enough that a party shouldn’t be inclined to raise their ire. Unfortunately for the PCs, they don’t know any of this, and Draegyn’s not about to tell them (what he will tell them is in the interview below). If the PCs agree, as soon as the Bastard leaves their group, he’ll rush to meet one of his contacts who has a man on the inside with the Griffons and, like a whispering bird, set it up so that the rogues in the “abandoned” factory—a newly dubbed guild safehouse—are fully aware of the PCs imminent arrival. To really raise their dander, the nameless informant has also provided that this group (the PCs) is under the employ of the Gertens family, who happen to be the most powerful crime family in Corvis and an adversary of the Griffons.

Some questions the PCs may ask Draegyn:

Q: Who are you?

A: The name’s Draegyn.

Q: Who is this “employer” of yours?

A: Sorry, lads. He must remain nameless at this time.

Q: Who stole it?

A: Some two-bit thugs who got lucky.

Q: How many of them are there?

A: Not sure. We think maybe four or five broke into my employer’s shop. (This reference to a “shop” is a subtle slip on Draegyn’s part.)

Q: Will this entail us having to kill people?

A: I don’t know. That’s up to you.

Q: What the hell is a “thunderwicket?”

A: It’s an experimental device, an unfinished project. You’ll know it when ya see it.

Q: What’s in it for us?

A: You’ll be paid a handsome sum. My employer takes good care of his people. It’ll be worth your time. Trust me. (Observant PCs—Spot at DC 15—will see that Draegyn wears two intricately worked silver bracelets easily worth 35 gp each.)

Q: Once we get this thing, then what?

A: Bring it back here. Ask “The Bull” to take you to the Galley room, upstairs.

Q: How did you get this information?

A: My employer has his ways. Trust me.

Q: The way you’ve been skulking around, why should we believe you?

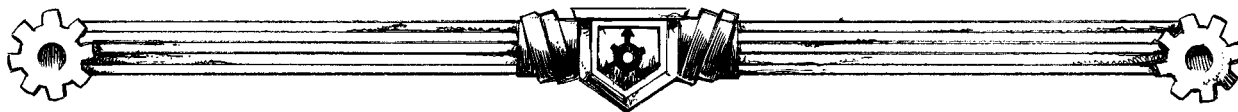
A: Look, it’s yer choice whether ya wanna believe me or not, mates. If ya don’t wanna do it, I can always find someone else.

If the players refuse to take on the job, Draegyn will offer to give them a day to think on it. If they change their minds, he’ll be in the bar the following evening at the same time. Any more investigation on the rogue will reveal little, aside from the replies above. If the PCs staunchly refuse, then he will take back his parchment and say, “Too bad, then. Guess I was wrong about ya... mebbe yer not the ones fer this job.” And that will more than likely end the adventure before it begins, unless the DM can think of another way to get them involved. A suggestion is to have the party waylaid by several thugs (Experienced Thug NPCs; Appendix B) when leaving The Falling Star and then Draegyn and a group of his “associates” (yet more Experienced Thugs; Appendix B) can rush in and offer reinforcements to a fight that should show all the signs of going badly for the PCs, at least without his aid. Of course, Draegyn will not put himself in too much physical danger, but if he manages to pull their fat out of the fire, he’ll toss them the parchment, tell them they “owe him one,” and then he and his fellows will hastily depart.



Act II

Wherein the adventurers experience the menace of Filchers' Crossing at night and steal into the "abandoned" warehouse to retrieve a stolen item.



Filchers' Crossing



Draegyn's directions guide you to a northern sector of the city called Filchers' Crossing. It's a seedy district, half-submerged in the harbor, which results in most of the streets having long since become watery canals. Travelers either pole along in small boats or navigate a web of ramps and archways between the buildings and the higher, drier surfaces of the area. Much like the waterfront district, Filchers' Crossing at night is no place for the sane to be alone, or even in small groups. In fact, this portion of the city seems grossly more insidious, as the lack of bars and other entertainment offers no reason for anyone to be about. The only intention that would place someone in this faintly populated backside of the Industrial 'bourg in the wee hours is plain: lawlessness. Consistent with that thought, you have no doubt that this is where you'll find Draegyn's suspected thieves.

As the PCs continue toward the abandoned factory, there is ample opportunity to have them jumping at shadows. Some various things that can be encountered in Filchers' Crossing after midnight are:

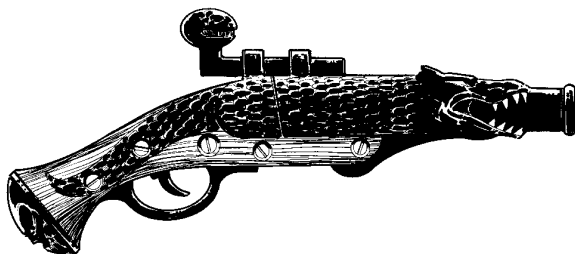
- ▶ A dead body laying face down, pouches and pockets pilfered. Investigation reveals that the poor sod was garroted and little else. If they do investigate, a Search check (DC 12) will reveal a tattered ribbon of canvas in the man's grip and upon prying it from the dead man's hand, they will see it is wrapped around a marked coin with a squarish hole punched through the middle. The coin is inscribed with a peculiar sigil and a successful Knowledge Local check (DC 18) divulges that it is a secret symbol of the Gertens family, although its true meaning is left up to the DM to determine.
- ▶ As the PCs cross an arched bridge, a lone boatman poles along the canal beneath them. If they gesture at the figure, he will point at his ears indicating he is deaf, and move along swiftly, refusing to acknowledge them further.
- ▶ Running footsteps appear to be coming from the next street over. A dog will begin barking and then several more footsteps will follow, apparently in pursuit of the first pair. After another minute, it is silent once more. If they try to investigate, the sounds will fade away before they can get close enough.
- ▶ A few bits of masonry from a high balcony or some clay slats from a rooftop will fall in an alley next to the PCs, followed by a hail of dust and debris. Nothing more.
- ▶ A fresh pool of blood; a body appears to have been dragged onto a bridge toward one of the canals, and then dumped.

After a few or all these events have transpired, the PCs should realize that Filchers' Crossing isn't to be taken lightly. They will presumably be alert and on-edge as they arrive at the abandoned warehouse indicated on Draegyn's parchment.

Your destination lies just ahead of you now, an abandoned steam factory bordered by a wall of crumbling granite no more than eight feet high. A padlocked black iron gate is on this wall at the front of the compound. The building appears long neglected. There are some windows higher up on the structure, but it looks as if there are none on the ground floor; at least from what you can tell. The building is hulking, and completely dark. No illumination comes from within at all.

The PCs can gain access into the factory yard a variety of ways, by either scaling the wall (Climb DC 10), picking the lock (Open Lock DC 25), by magical means or some other, but what's imperative is that they are silent while doing it. If there is undue noise during their entry, the DM may wish to raise the attention of anyone nearby, such as a pair of Watch guards or a gang of young hooligans looking for trouble (Experienced Thugs, Appendix B).

Once the PCs have attained the yard, there will be a sixty-foot open area between the wall and the building that they must cross under the dim light of the moon as it peeks from behind black clouds. The entire yard is wreathed in a pale gray mist about six inches from the ground, just enough to cover the PCs' feet, and jutting from the mist in various places are an assortment of machine parts both great and not so great. All of these are nigh unrecognizable, unless a PC has one or more of the industrial skills (TLN 10). If so, on an industrial skill check DC 10, they will recognize pieces of various forms of machinery, including old, rusted steamjack parts.



The Abandoned Factory



This "abandoned" factory is actually a newly established Griffon safehouse. The leader of this particular band, Malek Redgrave (Appendix B), is fully aware of the "mission," and he waits inside, accompanied by his gang of some two-dozen rogues (Experienced Rogues, Appendix B). They are quite eager to meet the PCs (see Ground Level Map, area 4 and "Malek's Ambush").

Entry to the factory can be handled in a variety of ways, the most obvious entry being the front doors (hardness 5, 20 hp, break DC 30). These are large double doors constructed of thick oak and reinforced with metal rivets and large, rusty, iron hinges. Inspection will reveal that the thick rust has been recently scraped away from the hinge creases. The front doors are held in place by an oaken plank barring them from the inside. If they manage this somehow, go to Ground Level Map, area 7.

There is also a normal-sized door on the backside of the factory that is inset into a massive entryway comprised of horizontal slabs. These are operated from inside and it's impossible for them to be opened from the outside, simply because the door is on a pulley system and weighs quite a few tons. However, the inset door is rusty-hinged (the rust is scraped away, just like the front doors), conveniently unlocked and swings inward. Some large wooden crates block it. The crates are empty, however, and the door can be pushed enough (Strength DC 16) to allow the PCs to slip inside one at a time. Doing this makes a moderate amount of noise as the crates are shoved little by little. Proceed to Ground Level Map, area 1.

There is a row of windows high up on the eastern and western sides of the building. They are

approximately forty feet from the ground, and the roof is another ten feet higher than that. If the PCs scale to the windows (Climb DC 15), they will discover that they are iron shuttered (hardness 10, 60 hp, break DC 25). A crank on the inside of the building opens the shutters.

If the PCs scale the building to the flat roof (Climb DC 18 because of a projecting lip of weakened masonry), there are four iron flues approximately five feet in diameter that can be accessed. They have grated tops that can be removed with a Strength check DC 30. Two PCs can try together. A medium-sized humanoid can then fit inside these flues and descend into the factory within a 50' arrangement of piping. They will end up inside the main furnace. Each PC performing this action is required to make a Climb check (DC 10) for every 25' of piping and a final check (DC 12) to descend into the large, spherical furnace. A failed check will cause the rusty rivets to come loose in that PCs' portion of the flue, dropping them thirty feet to the ground for 3d6 points of damage, unless they make a successful Climb check (DC 35) to grab onto something that will keep them from falling. If the final check is failed, the PC will drop into a tumbling slide and land in a heap inside the furnace, automatically surprised by the rogues waiting within. Proceed to Ground Level Map, area 6.

Long ago, this factory manufactured parts for all forms of steam-powered machinery, specializing in ship parts. It is comprised of two levels, the Ground Level and the Catwalk Level. The Ground Level is where the bulk of Malek's men lie in wait, hiding in the dark amongst the various structures and debris within. The factory is fairly littered with stacked crates, destroyed crates, scrap metal, carts, stalls, and the now-defunct furnaces, offering plenty of places to conceal one's self. The Catwalk Level is twenty feet above the ground floor. A grilled walkway encircles the main furnace and eight walkways extend outward from it in a spoke-like fashion. Countless thick chains are suspended in the factory. The chains are very large and provide cover equal to nine-tenths concealment (PH 133) and can also be utilized to ascend or descend (DC 15) to and from the catwalks. Brachiating from chain-to-chain (horizontally) is a bit harder (Climb DC 18). In addition to the rogues hiding on the ground floor, four rogues are up among the catwalks with loaded light crossbows.

1. Ground Level: Smelting Area

Assuming the PCs have entered the factory through the door. If not, omit the first two sentences in the spoken text box below.

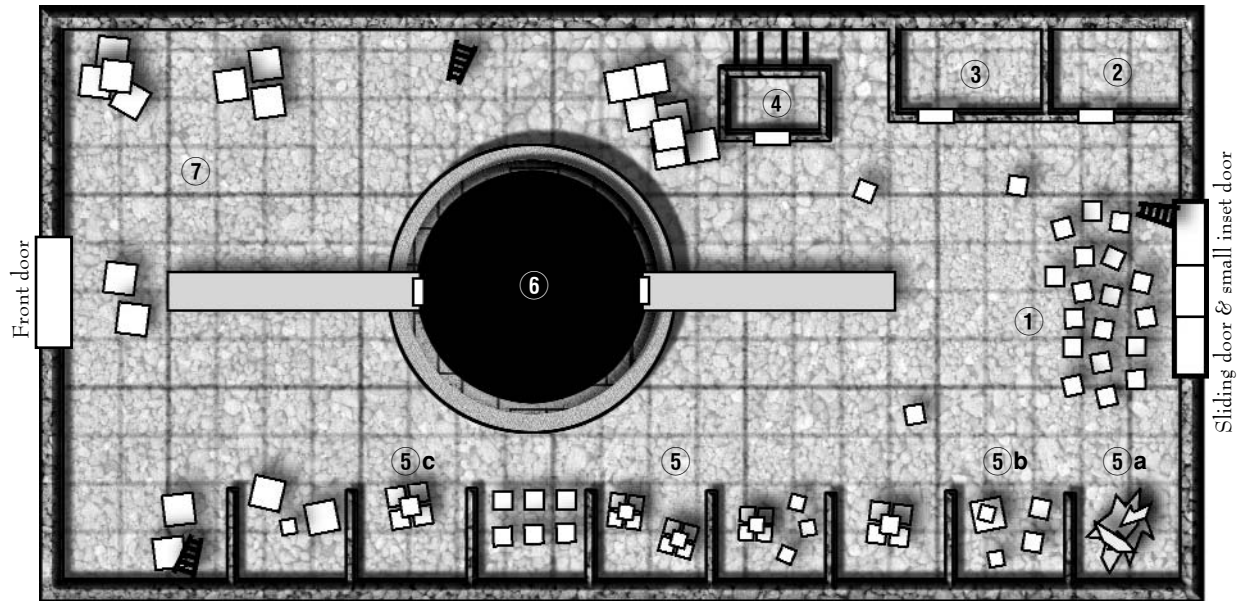
You squeeze through the door and have to navigate single-file through several wooden crates that are stacked two and three high. Moving past these, you enter the main of the factory. The factory floor is dimly lit from an unseen light source, allowing you to see most of the area around you. This interior is littered with bits of debris, overturned crates, a few wheeled carts, and more hunks of iron refuse similar to those outside. Along the north wall is a line of stalls that drift into darkness. Above, you can barely discern a series of catwalks amongst a forest of suspended chains ending in various large hooks and wide leather straps. A few ladders, barely visible in this dim lighting, extend up toward the catwalks.

Perhaps one hundred feet away, at the edge of blackness, looms a huge, tear-shaped structure. Iron pipes jut from its belly and rise upward, disappearing into the dark. At the end of a long ramp, there appears to be an entrance into the formation.

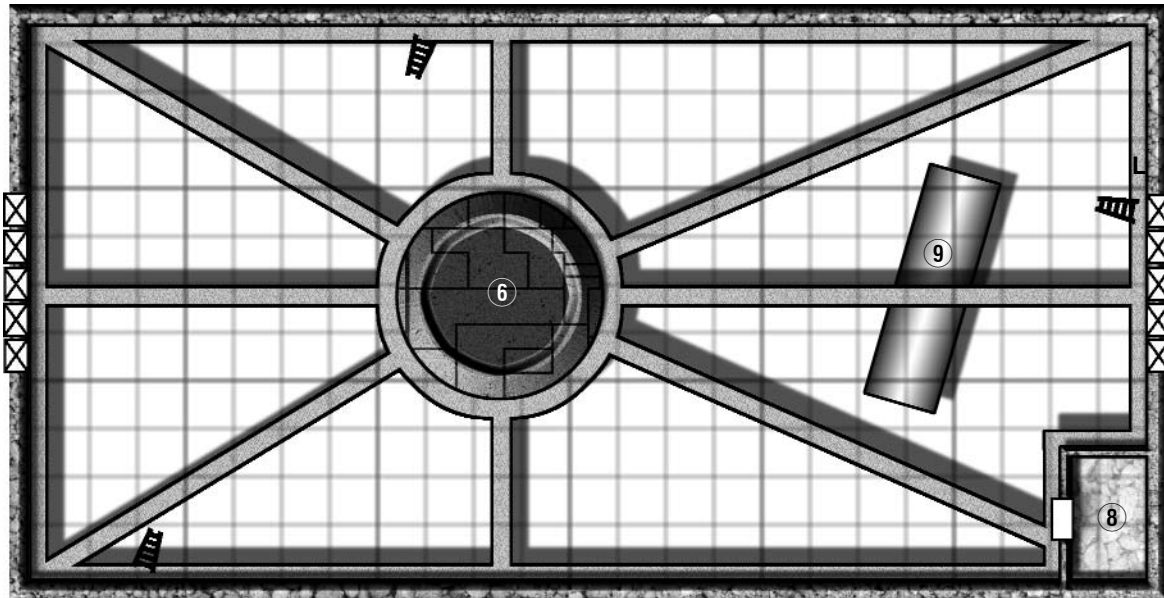
The three carts in this area are filled with slag metal, but they can still be pushed if the brakes on the rear right wheel are kicked up (partial action). The crates are either empty or filled with worthless metal refuse such as screws, pipes, rods, ball bearings, and larger pieces of junk. The suspended chains are within reach to PCs over five feet tall. They can be climbed (DC 15).

The lighting to the right comes from a lantern in the Overseer's Stall (2) while to the PC's left, Griffon rogues are hiding in stalls (5B & 5C). They are awaiting Malek's signal. If the PCs begin to move toward these stalls, Malek will choose this time to hail them from his hiding spot behind the secondary furnace (4), calling out and approaching from the darkness with his pistol beaded on them. Otherwise, he will lie in wait until they approach.

The Factory: Ground Level



The Factory: Catwalk Level



- 1. Smelting Area
- 2. Overseer's Stall
- 3. Breakroom Stall
- 4. Secondary Furnace
- 5. Storage Stall

- 6. Main Furnace
- 7. Staging Area
- 8. Operator's Stall
- 9. Suspended Smokestack
- L. Shutter control lever

- Crate
- Ladder
- Rubble
- Shutters

5 ft. per grid square

2. Ground Level: Overseer's Stall

Dim orange light flickers from the open door of this closed-in stall. Upon entering, you discern a desk with a hooded lantern resting on top of it. There are several chairs in this room about the desk and hanging on the far wall is a large piece of cloth. Below the cloth is a long shelf abutted to the wall, and various items are placed upon it.

This is Malek's office. He has vacated it for now, preferring to take his hiding place in area 4. He felt no need to grab his personal items, so they are found here. The cloth hanging on the far wall is a crudely drawn map of Filchers' Crossing with names marked upon it in various sectors; these are territorial markings, indicating which Griffon gang leaders control what section. Guildhouses and safehouses are not located on the map. For a PC to make heads or tails of the map takes a successful Innuendo check (DC 15). This map is very revealing and may fetch quite a sum in the hands of Draegyn, a Gertens family member or any experienced figure in the Corvis criminal underworld.

On the desk is a single, hooded lantern and on the shelf along the far wall underneath the map is a set of 4 daggers, a black greatcoat, a black woolen balaclava, a silk bag of dice, some game chips, and a 12" x 6" x 6" metal coffer. The daggers are of decent make and the greatcoat is quite fine (40 gp). It functions as padded armor (+1, can be worn over Light Armor) and features an inner silk lining and lots of pockets on the inside and outside. The coffer contains 200 gp, a large amethyst (130 gp), and 4 flasks of acid (PH 113) that Malek frequently uses to weaken locks and bars.

3. Ground Level: Breakroom Stall

The door to this stall has been removed and lies on the floor outside of it. Inside, the room is rather featureless except for a long table littered with scraps of half-eaten fruits, breads and cheeses, and a few pewter mugs. There are two oaken benches on opposite sides of the table.

Some closer inspection of this room, separate Search checks of DC 15 and 20 respectively, will reveal boot prints in the dust of the flooring and a

rift in the flagstones. The boot prints are freshly made. The crack in the flooring runs from a far corner of the room, all the way across it and underneath the wall. The slight rush of water can be heard emanating from the rift on a successful Listen (DC 10) check.

4. Ground Level: Secondary Furnace

A large, box-like shape dominates this section of the factory. Behind it, four arched flues, roughly two feet in diameter, disappear into the wall. Otherwise, this area is rather empty.

Closer inspection of the furnace will reveal a square access hatch on the front of it. The hatch is roughly three-feet square and has a simple access lever that can easily be opened. If the PCs choose to do so, the caustic stench of a charnel house will assault them. If they shine a light inside of the furnace, they will see a myriad of bones and ash. Obviously, the furnace's latest function has been for something other than its original industrial purpose.

The secondary furnace serves as Malek Redgrave's hiding place unless he has already revealed himself to the PCs. If not, Malek crouches behind the far corner of the furnace, accompanied by four of his rogues. If the PCs come close to this corner, he will step out of the darkness with his pistol pointed at them. See "Malek's Ambush" below for instructions on how this battle should play out.

Malek Redgrave is fully aware and looking forward to mixing it up with these guys who are entering his territory. How did he find out? Chalk a ruse well played up to Draegyn and Bodak in order to keep the "game" going. This going back and forth between the Griffons and Bodak has been an ongoing feud that both factions seem to actually enjoy, although Bodak seems to be stepping it up a bit as things are starting to turn lethal! Perhaps the loss of money is tiring the man. Who knows for sure? As stated before, after meeting with the PCs, Hamil Bodak's rogue associate called on some contacts of his who are on the inside with the Griffons gang. He leaked just enough info—that the Gertens family has hired some muscle to make a hit on a Griffon safehouse—to warn Malek about the imminent arrival of the PC party. Draegyn's infor-

mation, of course, is a lie, but Malek doesn't know that. He assumes that the PCs are Gertens' hirelings. He has placed his twenty-two Griffon churls strategically and he also has an even greater surprise awaiting them (4A): Thunderwicket, an archaic, refurbished steamjack (Appendix A)!

5. Ground Level: Storage Stalls

Stalls made of thick granite line the wall here as far back as you can see. The ones at the western end contain large piles of refuse, mostly wood and metal scrap that literally spills over the sides. Those toward the middle are nearly empty, as far as you can tell.

True to the spoken description, the middle stalls are empty, but the western stalls are filled with more than just scrap. The first stall (5A) reveals a collapsed stairwell that now resembles a pile of rock and metal rods. The stairs once led to the basement of the factory but were destroyed on purpose some years ago by the city when the factory's basement flooded with sewage. The magistrates of Corvis are obviously aware of Undercity activity and, at some point years ago, deemed it a worthy endeavor to destroy this means of access.

At first glance, stall 5B contains pallets, lots and lots of pallets stacked and thrown haphazardly, literally spilling over the sides, and little else. In actuality, there is a bit of room to squeeze through this stall to the back, and five of Malek's Griffons are here watching awaiting their leader's signal.

Stall 5C contains several more pallets along with large chunks of indeterminate scrap metal and four more Griffons lying in wait.

6. Both Levels: Main Furnace

Assuming the PCs approach the main furnace from its exterior, read the following aloud:

The main furnace towers fifty feet above you, with a massive, circular base that spans more than half the width of the factory. It is rimmed twenty feet above by a catwalk and a thirty-foot ramp inclines up toward doors on the side of the furnace. A series of dangling chains ending in hooks and straps—perhaps a dozen in all—are suspended next to the ramp, and a singular wheeled cart, overturned and empty, lies near the bottom of it.

If the PCs accessed the factory via the flues on the rooftop, they will more than likely descend into the belly of the furnace. Read this aloud in lieu of the description above:

The flue suddenly ends at an open area and you can make out a dim, flickering light below. You can't seem to make out the source of it, as it is at an angle that you have difficulty making out from your current vantage point.

It's a thirty-foot drop from where the flue opens up into the furnace. In the belly of the furnace, Malek has positioned one of his especially tough rogues. This particular Griffon (Rog3), an experienced rogue of the Cutpurse archetype (see TLN 61), is armed with two light crossbows (PH 100), one in each hand, ready to fire. If the PCs are outside of the furnace, he will wait for Malek's signal to emerge. If the PCs have accessed the factory by descending (or tumbling if they failed their Climb check) into the furnace, the rogue will fire at whoever descends or lands at his feet and then attempt to escape out the furnace door, yelling an alarm for the rest of his comrades. When the rogue in the furnace fires his crossbows, he is at a penalty of -2 primary hand/-2 off hand.

The furnace itself, like the secondary furnace, is made of tempered black iron. The main furnace has a raised, grated floor on the inside of it. Vicious DMs might consider that PCs who fumble any small items inside of the furnace may lose them through the grillwork.

7. Ground Level: Staging Area

This section of the factory was obviously the staging area where materials ready for shipment were gathered on pallets. Piles of crates, many of them open and empty as they have long since been rummaged through, are scattered about, as well as the debris of several destroyed crates. A thick oaken crossbar secures the main doors on the far wall. In the northeastern corner is a ladder that leads to the catwalks above.

Four Griffon rogues are hiding here behind some stacked crates in the southeastern portion. Once again, they are awaiting Malek's signal before revealing themselves. There is nothing else of interest here.

8. Catwalk Level: Operator's Stall

As you enter this area, the floor is grilled like the rest of the catwalk. There are several large levers of various design protruding from a heavy iron control booth. A pair of iron-shuttered windows is on the far wall.

This area once operated the suspension system and the large bay doors, but the levers are now unworkable. The windows on the far wall have their own crank to open their iron shutters.

9. Catwalk Level: Suspended Smokestack

From your position on the catwalk a huge silhouette becomes apparent; some fifty feet in length, a massive pipe hangs precariously from multiple chains. You've seen the likes of this instrument, spewing puffy white smoke from the tops of the steam-driven ships along the riverways and in the city's harbors.

This massive ship part (50' x 10') was left behind for some reason when the factory was abandoned and it dangles unsteadily from several chains that have weakened over the decades. In fact, a few of the chains have given and snapped, resulting in the precarious angle at which it now hangs. Any additional weight has a great chance of bringing the entire smokestack crashing down to the floor below... and beyond. See "Malek's Ambush" for details.



Malek's Ambush



Malek's plan is to lure the PCs deep into the factory so that his Griffons can surround them. Whenever the PCs come inevitably close to discovering Malek's or any of his men's hiding places, they will hear a loud whirring and chugging noise start up and the gangleader will step out of the

shadows with his pistol trained on them, accompanied by Thunderwicket the steamjack and the four men in hiding with him behind the secondary furnace (4). He'll greet them sarcastically, belittling their skill on infiltrating his compound, and remarking on "the audacity of the overconfident Gertens." As he does this, the rest of the Griffons close in on the PCs from their hiding places in 5B, 5C, 6, and 7. The PCs will quickly realize that several more than a dozen figures surround them; there are twenty-three of them, in fact, including Malek and the four Griffons on the catwalks above with their crossbows aimed and ready.

Perhaps having never heard of the Gertens, the PCs reaction to this remark may prove interesting, but even so Malek will not be swayed into believing that they don't work for the rival guild. "Mad" Malek—as he is sometimes called—simply can't resist gloating and displaying his ingenuity by indicating the refurbished steamjack.

How Malek Initiates Combat

1. A thunderous noise will break the silence. It is the chugging hiss of Malek's renovated steamjack (Appendix A).
2. From its place of concealment, a massive, steam-hissing, rattling, thing of iron and rust steps into the light. A rectangular plate is bolted to its chest that is engraved: THUNDERWICKET.
3. Malek will then reveal himself, accompanied by four of his rogues. He will have his pistol pointed at the PCs, saying something such as, "Welcome trespassers, to your last night alive!" He'll tell the PCs how he'll enjoy watching them die so he can send their "heads back to the Gertens in a sack." At the same time as this, all of the Griffon rogues on the Ground Level will move in and surround the PCs.
4. Malek will order his comrades and Thunderwicket to attack the PCs, yelling, "Say hello to my little friend!" followed by the all-important order: "Kill them all!"
5. Thunderwicket will attack the nearest person, be it rogue or PC (and more than likely a rogue in order to provide the distraction the PCs need to scatter).

Malek has no interest in capturing the PCs. He wants to eliminate them, plain and simple. He'll

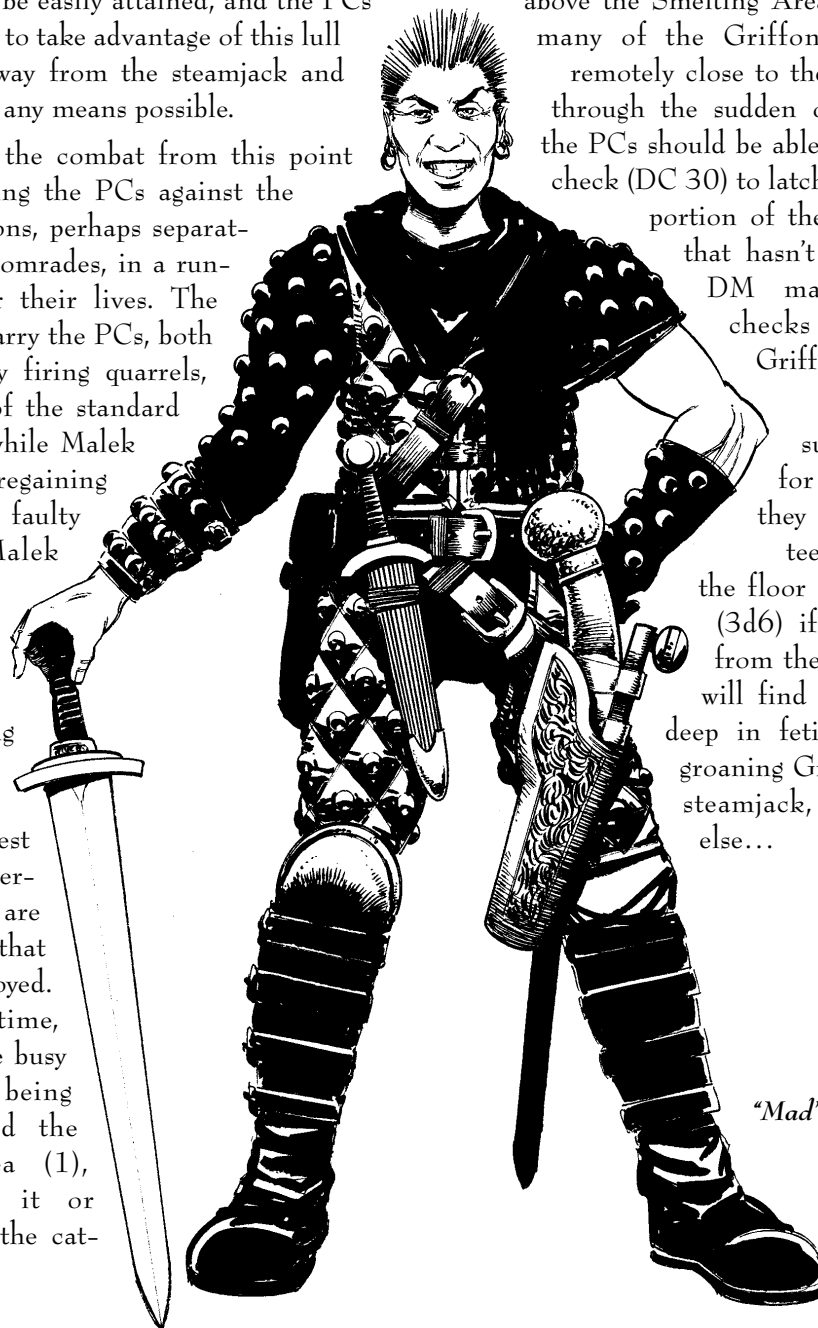
order the attack, and once the archaic steamjack receives its directive, it will interpret the words “kill them all” quite literally! It will rush in, raising its massive fists and begin taking swings at whoever happens to be nearest to it, be they PCs or Griffon rogues! The chaos erupts as all the Griffons backpedal from the iron giant and Malek waves his arms, yelling at it to “Stop! Stop! Stop!” The steamjack will comply with Malek’s flailing and screaming and the Griffons will all be hesitant and dumbfounded by this little blunder, especially if one of their own was pummeled by the confused construct. At this point, the DM should emphasize any nearby ladders and/or hanging chains or other means that can be easily attained, and the PCs should be urged to take advantage of this lull by scattering away from the steamjack and the Griffons by any means possible.

The goal of the combat from this point forward is pitting the PCs against the pursuing Griffons, perhaps separated from their comrades, in a running battle for their lives. The Griffons will harry the PCs, both on foot and by firing quarrels, and cover all of the standard escape routes while Malek struggles with regaining control of the faulty steamjack. Malek will indicate the fleeing PCs—possibly even physically describing them to the construct—and doing his best to make it understand that they are the “only” ones that he wants destroyed. In the meantime, the PCs will be busy fleeing and being ushered toward the Smelting Area (1), either within it or above it upon the catwalks.

Eventually, it will seem as if Malek has made Thunderwicket understand its objective. It will attack any PCs on the ground and if it spots any of them on the catwalks it will attempt to bring them to the ground by smashing or yanking down any supports for said catwalks. The construct’s actions will cause a chain-reaction, as the careening catwalks will crash into the Suspended Smokestack (9) and result in it coming loose and hurtling towards the weakened floor—as evidenced possibly by the PCs in the form of a rift in the floor of the Breakroom Stall (3). The impact collapses the entire area from the Secondary Furnace (4) to the Storage Stalls (5) as well as all of the catwalks above the Smelting Area. Thunderwicket,

many of the Griffons, and any PCs remotely close to the area will tumble through the sudden opening, although the PCs should be able to make a Climb check (DC 30) to latch onto a chain or a portion of the hanging catwalk that hasn’t broken free (the DM may allow Climb checks for the falling Griffons, as well).

Fallen PCs, after sustaining damage for every ten feet that they have fallen—fifteen feet (1d6) from the floor or thirty-five feet (3d6) if they have fallen from the Catwalk Level—will find themselves waist-deep in fetid water amongst groaning Griffons, a whirring steamjack, and something else...

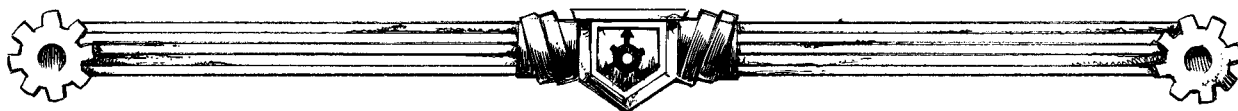


“Mad” Malek Redgrave



Act III

Wherein the adventurers are suddenly plunged headlong into the drink!



The Undercity



Underneath Corvis there is a massive network of sewer tunnels knotted through the sunken passages and warrens of the Undercity. Although the city does try to maintain the sewers, many of the maps have long been lost (if they existed at all). It is said that a sewer worker must be both soldier and madcap to carry out such a perilous job, and the PCs are about to find out just how perilous the sewers of Corvis can be!

10. Undercity Level: Thrullg Nest

As the dust from the collapsed floor settles, you find yourself struggling in near darkness, impeded by what can only be described as "muck." Soft light filters from the complex through the large hole above and it takes a brief moment for you to realize you've fallen into the city's sewers. Fetid water courses steadily through an open archway and you're standing waist-deep in it amid other large chunks of rocky debris and a few of your hacking and cursing attackers. The steamjack is several feet away from you in a whirring and thrashing fit as it attempts to right itself.

This area (10) is the home of a magically mutated beast called a Thrullg (Appendix A). The creature was occupying its lair and immediately dove into the water to assess the situation when everything came falling through. It is *not* happy. The PCs receive one full action before the remaining Griffon rogues, except for the crossbowmen (and Malek, unless he already fell), drop ropes down into the hole and begin swiftly lowering themselves in order to continue pursuit.

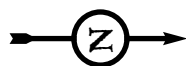
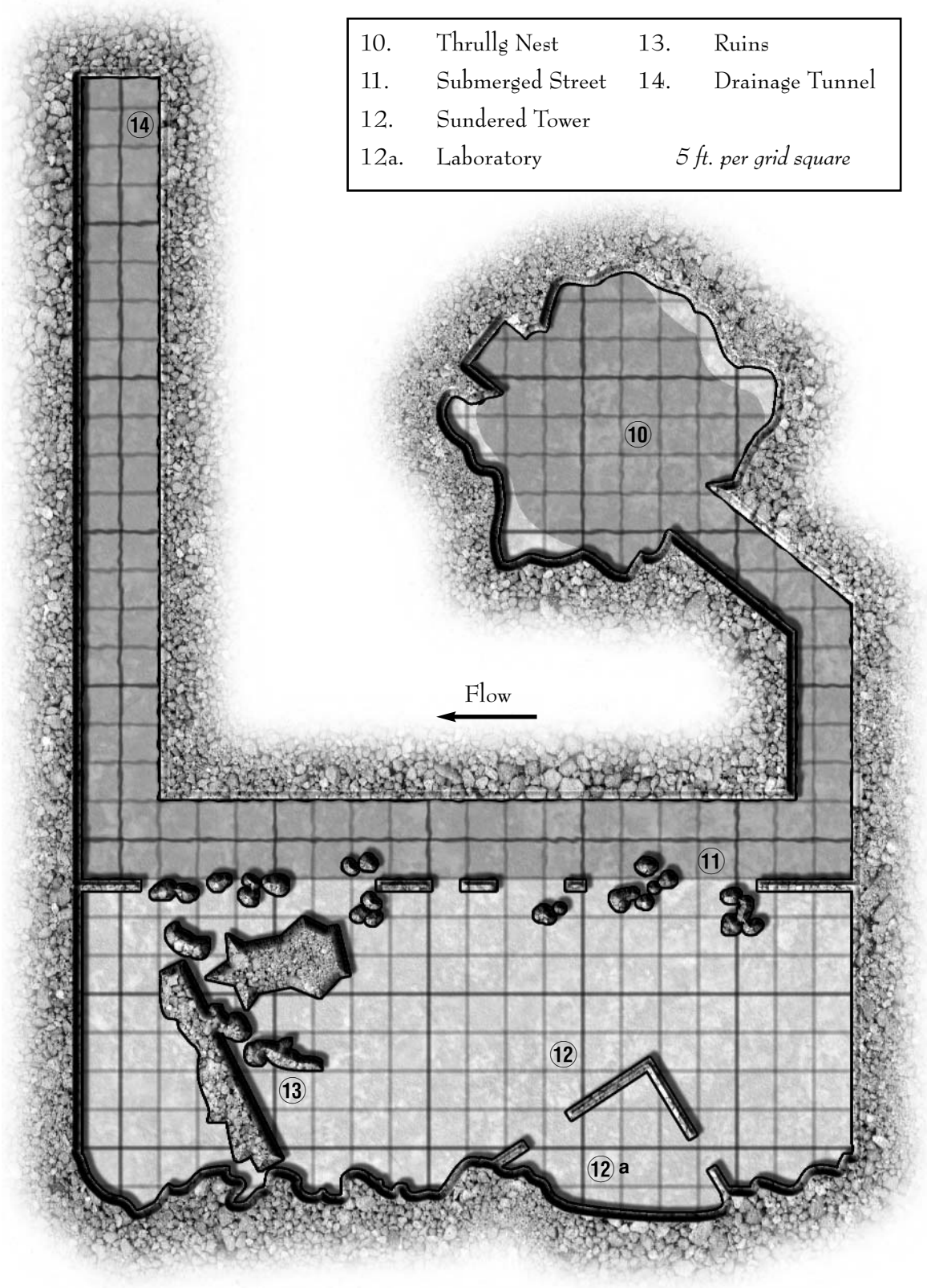
As the rogues regroup and begin a renewed effort, their crossbow-wielding comrades will fire a volley at the PCs. The rough edge of the collapsed floor, the darkness, and the dust provides 25% concealment (PH 133) for all combat in this area. The coursing sewer water provides a moderate obstruction, hampering movement equal to three-quarters the normal rate (PH 143).

After one full round of this, the Thrullg will make its move. Read the following aloud:

Suddenly amongst all of you, the fetid water begins to churn and roil. Everyone becomes hushed as a long, rumbling moan rolls throughout the area. Two tentacles break the surface of the water, followed by a wide, reptilian head with two glossy black eyes. The maw, from which the tentacles coil and flicker, is a ring of jagged fangs. Its hulking frame is strangely humanoid and its palms and long fingers are covered in a layer of saucer-shaped suckers. A long tail snakes out from behind it. The beast glares, examining each of you as well as your opponents, and then with a screech leaps to the attack!

The Undercity

- | | | | |
|------|------------------|-----|-----------------------|
| 10. | Thrullg Nest | 13. | Ruins |
| 11. | Submerged Street | 14. | Drainage Tunnel |
| 12. | Sundered Tower | | |
| 12a. | Laboratory | | 5 ft. per grid square |



The Thrullg will attack a random PC or Griffon simply seeking to repel the invaders of its nest. One full round of combat ensues, however once Thunderwicket rights itself at the beginning of the second round of combat, the Thrullg will turn its attentions toward the irresistible pull of the steamjack's magic-rich cortex, ripping and tearing at its armor-plated hull! In the meantime, the Griffon rogues are throwing themselves in a panic out of the beast's way, scurrying for the ropes to escape this new threat. Malek roars at them to continue the pursuit, even going so far as to point his pistol at his own men, if need be.

Thrullg Attack!

If the PCs are higher level and not suitably weakened to the point where they all agree not to beat a hasty retreat, the DM may wish to allow them to engage the Thrullg and/or the Griffon rogues in several rounds of combat before the steamjack known as Thunderwicket rights itself, thus gaining the attention of the magic-seeking Thrullg.

A successful Spot check (DC 15) by any PC will result in them noticing that Thunderwicket's nameplate has been ripped free from its rusty rivets and now lies on a ledge mere feet from their grasp. Along with the nameplate on the nest's ledge are strewn bones, scraps of cloth and bits of leather. Hidden amongst the trash are a few trinkets. A Search check (DC12) will reveal 4d8 silver coins, 2d8 gold coins, and 1d4 small gems (20 gp). If the PCs decide to try for any of these items, they might provoke an attack of opportunity from a nearby rogue or two at the DM's discretion.

Injured PCs, or those of a lower level, should be encouraged to take advantage of the Thrullg's distraction to get out of the area. The only apparent means seems to be the archway where the water is flowing. This is a 150' tunnel on a slight angle and the sides and bottom are slick enough to force a Climb check (DC 15) for every 50', or otherwise the PCs will slip and the current will carry them unceremoniously to area 11.

11. Undercity Level: Submerged Street

The conduit suddenly opens up and the water gushes from an opening, dumping into a wide tunnel six feet below you. At one point

this tunnel was probably connected to the higher one by a large flue, but it is long since gone and the entire area has fallen to pieces, revealing a large cavern beyond the flowing water below. The cavern is littered with a massive amount of stones ranging from fist-sized rocks to enormous boulders.

In this area, the smelly stream from the tunnel abruptly dumps out into another half-collapsed and reeking sewage channel. The drop is a slight one, only about six feet. The water is deeper here, but slower moving, and there is plenty of debris from the collapse in the form of large pieces of stone in and alongside the channel. A Climb check DC 10 will enable the PCs to pull themselves from the tunnel onto semi-dry land, which is really little more than a sludge-covered incline littered with blocks and small boulders. What is most impressive here is that the collapsed tunnel has allowed the once-contained sewer tunnel to flow freely and, over the years, the changing water level has carved out a section of this place, revealing a long-lost portion of the Undercity. The whole site is weirdly illuminated by foul-smelling, blue-colored lichen that clings to the stones, granting a very otherworldly feel. If gathered or even held in-hand, this lichen will continue to glow for about one hour after it is uprooted, providing light equal to half that of a torch.

Area 12 can barely be distinguished as a large black shape in the even blacker darkness.

12. Undercity Level: Sundered Tower

Underneath your feet, worked rocks resembling cobblestones are intermittent with the soft surface. To your left the entire area is on a steep grade of dense sludge and odd-shaped, angular boulders, and what seemed at first to be a weird formation of rock is now more evident. It's an ancient part of Corvis' Undercity, a very oddly shaped building constructed almost entirely of iron. This man-made creation emerges from the ground, leaning toward you at a precarious angle, before vanishing once more into the ceiling above.

The soft ground here makes footing difficult but not impossible. If the PCs clamber up to the building, they will ascertain that it is an exotic looking

structure, ringed with what appear to be the remains of metal walkways, and the entire building is fluted and buttressed with sizeable columns of fungus-encrusted, dark metal. There is an accessible entry-way by means of a large hole in the side of it; a hole that appears to be corroded, as if eaten through by acid. Over the years, the shifting earth has pushed the entire structure, so the DM should emphasize the uneven footing throughout.

The interior of the ruins reveals that it perhaps served as some type of industrial or experimental laboratory (12A). It contains very little now, as the shifting has caused most of the items within to fall, perhaps decades or even centuries ago, out of a large hole in the northern portion of the structure at the bottom of the incline. The earth has risen to the top of a spiral staircase in the far corner of the room, so that it can no longer be descended. An open arch-shaped doorway is several feet high on the far wall. It can be attained by climbing up the spiral staircase and this could possibly be used as an escape route, if need be, as it leads out onto one of the dilapidated walkways. It is a ten-foot drop to the ground from the rickety walkway. A Jump check (DC 15) yields no damage, but a failed check results in 1d6 points of subdual damage.

In another corner at the bottom of the incline is a huge, metal rolltop desk riveted to the stone flooring. It is closed and the rolltop is somewhat rusted from the years and moisture requiring a Strength check (DC 13) to force it open. Inside the desk there is a shuttered lantern with an interesting magnification attachment that focuses the light into an adjustable beam for double the range of a normal bullseye lantern (PH 108) with a half pint of oil still in it, a masterwork stiletto (functions as a punching dagger; PH 98) emblazoned with a stylized "P." A pair of drawers containing eight wax-sealed vials of acid (PH 113), twelve thin plates of beaten iron—some of them etched with sequences of symbols that appear to be some type of cryptic formulae—and an exquisite silver

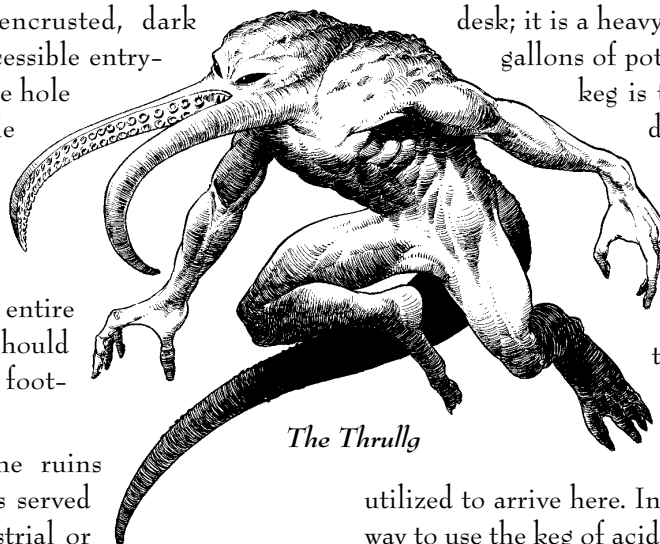
ring (30 gp); the ring bears the inscription: *In Cyriss There Is Truth*. On a Spot check (DC 12) the PCs will spy a cask of some sort beneath the desk; it is a heavy stone keg containing 10 gallons of potent acid. The acid in this keg is the same as found in the desk, used as a metal solvent for various purposes (see DMG 88 for information on acid).

At some point during the PCs' search of this area, Malek and his remaining rogues will emerge from the same pipework that the PCs utilized to arrive here. Inventive PCs might find a way to use the keg of acid to their advantage. It can easily be opened by cutting and pulling back the ring of wax that seals it shut. If this copious amount of acid is poured anywhere near the metal supports of this building—that is barely standing as it is now—the building will collapse in a mere 2d4 rounds. This may serve as a distraction or worse to the PCs pursuers (damage 10d6 to any hapless fool in the way of the collapsing building).

13. Undercity Level: Ruins

There are more ruins here, consisting of odd chunks of large granite that, once upon a time, were structures. Not far from you stands a broad wall more than fifty feet long and ten feet wide. You can only imagine that this wall was perhaps thirty feet tall or more when it was above ground, but now you can simply climb to the top of it, which is little more than eight feet from the surface. Near the coursing sewer tunnel, a minaret easily forty feet in diameter and decorated with effigies of winged battle-maidens, materializes from the ground.

This area may provide various forms of cover from "Mad" Malek and his Griffon rogues. Malek and his men will be to dog the PCs from the safety of darkness, randomly firing his remaining pistol rounds at them. Hopefully, this will flush the PCs toward the drainage tunnel (14). If not, the DM has the option of having the Thrullg arrive at this portion of the adventure, as well (in all likelihood having defeated the archaic steamjack by



The Thrullg

consuming its magic or submerging its firebox in the dank water). Heralding its presence from a distance with a long, drawn-out cry, the Thrullg will provide a distraction by attacking any remaining rogues.

14. Undercity Level: Drainage Tunnel

The Undercity suddenly seems to end here. The sewage canal to the left diverges before you into two directions: it courses swiftly and disappears underneath a somewhat collapsed portion of the tunnel, but in another area the brackish water eddies before a tall but narrow conduit, flowing less swiftly into it. There does not appear to be any another exit.

The drainage tunnel is the only way to exit the Undercity Level besides fighting back through all of the other monsters and rogues and also ascending the slick 150' tunnel (Climb DC 30) between areas 10 and 11. The tunnel itself is dark and narrow—too narrow for the Thrullg to fit into—and the current becomes quicker and more forceful as the water level continues to rise from approximately four feet to nearly six feet by the time the PCs reach the end

of it. The good news here is that it ends at a rusty iron grate (hardness 5, hp 45) that can be battered or wrenched loose on a Strength check of DC 20. Two or more players can try together.

Once the grate is knocked free, the PCs will spill outside, dropping less than ten feet into the Black River. The river will carry them downstream into the harbor, but they will be able to catch onto a dock, wall or some other structure and hoist themselves from the river. Vicious DMs can force successful Swim checks (PH 74) to do so, but haven't they been through enough already?!!





Epilogue: A Fistful Of Vouchers



The PCs will have most definitely escaped their pursuers—given that any of them survived—once they are dumped into the river. Even if any Griffons have pursued the PCs into the drainage tunnel, they will lose them once they climb from the river and disappear into the foggy darkness of the City of Ghosts.

What next then? First of all, the PCs have most likely deduced that they've been suckered, and even if they're so dense that they haven't, they'll probably end up going back to The Falling Star to look for Draegyn. The seedy dive will be open as usual, even at this wee hour, and once the bedraggled PCs enter, Dando will notice them immediately, wave them over, and say:

"Yer a sorry looking lot, aren't ye? An' ye bloody well smell like old Borloch's arse! Damn, lads, what happened to—ah, er—never mind, I don't wanna know! Look ye, first things first, mates. The Bastard paid fer a round of me best." The large man sets down a grimy tankard in front of each of you, filling it with a brackish, dirty blonde pilsner which is his own special concoction, fittingly called 'Bull's Brew'.

When looking at Bull's Brew, the DM might smilingly remind the PCs of the sewers they've just been through and how the stuff looks and smells very similar. In fact, they're aware that this stuff is jokingly referred to (in whispers, of course) by patrons as the 'Bull's Piss!'

Dando eyes you all, obviously waiting for you to partake of his brew, when a barmaid

approaches and whispers in his ear. The Bull nods and dismisses her with a wave of his large hand before saying, "Right then, mates. Grab yer tankards and follow me. The Bastard's here and he wishes ta see yez now." And, that said, he heads toward one of The Falling Star's various rickety stairwells. He leads you up to the second story and down a hall to the left, stopping at a thick door with a chalky-glassed porthole fixed into it. A plank is above the door that reads: The Galley.

Dando opens the door and shifts his massive girth back against the wall to allow you all to pass. "In here, mates. If ya want for anything, there's a bell to the kitchen in the corner. Enjoy." That said the Bull leaves your presence to return downstairs.

Once the PCs enter, read:

The Galley is a lavish room with a long oaken table dominating the center of it. The familiar figure of the Bastard, Draegyn, sits at the table, a silver tray in front of him containing some fruits and cheeses. He sips something steamy from a pewter mug and nods to you as you enter. In a corner of the room, near a tasseled pull cord, sits three darkly garbed men playing a game of chance at a small table. All three of them are wearing swords at their hips and they do not look up as they continue playing, undisturbed by your approach.

Unlike the Bull, Draegyn will not comment on the PCs' appearance. In fact, he will say nothing at all to them, inclined to wait for them to speak instead. All questions will be answered with either a shrug or a wave of his hand, although Draegyn will make a point of saying the following:

"Blast me, mates, we didn't really expect ta lay eyes on ya again. Well done! Ya really put it ta those bastards, eh? What now then, eh? Hmmm. Good question. Alright there, let's see what we can do for yez, 'cuz believe me when I say this, you mates really did a good turn for the bossman tonight, aye, ya did." Saying this, Draegyn produces some slips of thick parchment from his jacket and tosses

them on the table. In addition to this, he also pulls a fist-sized sack from another pocket and it clinks as it hits the tabletop. “Mebbes this’ll take care of matters then, eh?”

The parchments are stamped vouchers good for one masterwork weapon of choice from any of Bodak’s Blades locations within Corvis. The bag contains 300 gp in small mixed gems. Of note, if the PCs actually came away from the adventure with a token of some sort, such as the “thunderwicket” nameplate or the cloth map of Filcher’s Crossing, Draegyn will show his astonishment with a wide grin followed by a dry chuckle. He’ll commend them at that point even more than he already has.

Now if things aren’t so genteel, the men at the table are Draegyn’s back up (see Experienced Thugs, Appendix B). He is hoping not to have to call on them, of course, but that is up to the PCs. If the PCs are feeling sore or angered and go so far as to insult Draegyn, raise their voices or approach him menacingly, the three fighters will stand up and draw their steel. They will still wait for Draegyn’s word before attacking, however they will focus warily on the PCs from that point forward.

Once all transactions are complete, Draegyn will depart with his men, but since he has reserved the Galley for the evening he will tell the PCs they’re welcome to stay as long as they like, perhaps saying, “It’s a great night ta be alive, mates. All yer drinks tonight are on me. Throw yerselves a party,” and then, with bodyguards in tow, the Bastard of Corvis departs.

A Dish Best Served Cold

If the DM wishes to draw out some subplots from this adventure, one in particular might be concerning the ever-lovely “Mad” Malek. If the Griffon scoundrel survived the night, he will do everything in his power to track down the PCs and get his vengeance. Malek will approach more of his contacts within his guild in order to gather information and he’ll definitely hire more muscle to pursue his agenda. However, Bodak’s interest in the PCs has probably been piqued and he’s very interested in making use of them in the future, so when his ears catch wind of Malek’s mad-on, he may likely intercede on the PCs’ behalf, or possi-

bly consider sending them on another campaign—one that’s not so much of a ruse—against that “uncontrollable fool of a man.”

If the PCs try to shop around the underside of Corvis looking for a better price for some of the “souvenirs” acquired from their romp, they may draw some much-unwanted attention from the wrong kind of people. For instance, PCs flashing the Griffons’ map of Filcher’s Crossing about may soon find themselves at the end of some Griffons’ blades. As well, the Gertens crime family might also no doubt be interested in discovering who these “buffoons” are—going around sullyng the Gertens name and such!—especially if the PCs found the coin on the dead man in the Crossing and let it be seen by the wrong eyes!



Appendix A: Creatures



Steamjack (Archaic)

The steamjack that Malek has discovered and renovated dates back at least sixty years, perhaps more. It’s certainly not been used in over a decade, which is roughly when the old steam factory was abandoned. The rogue gangleader found the construct when the Griffons moved in to the abandoned building approximately a month before “Fool’s Errand” takes place, and having little more than amateur skill, he put the thing together. It is currently running on poor fuel and is obviously commanded by an inept handler in “Mad” Malek Redgrave. Bodak’s man on the inside of Malek’s Griffons has provided information about the machine and its peculiar nameplate that reads: THUNDERWICKET.

Steamjack: CR 8; Large construct; HD 12d10; Init -3 (Dex); Spd 15 ft. (can’t run); AC 22 (-1 size, -2 Dex, +15 natural); Atk +17 melee 1 slam

(2d10+7); SQ construct, steamjack abilities, damage reduction 10/+1; AL Always N; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +3; Str 25, Dex 5, Con: —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1

Treasure: None

For more information and stats for steamjacks, visit ironkingdoms.com.

Thrullg

Standing more than eight feet tall, the humanoid Thrullg is a horrid beast. It has a leathery, mottled green hide and the palms of its hands and bottoms of its feet are covered in saucer-shaped suckers that enable it to climb sheer surfaces easily. Two telescoping, squid-like tentacles dominate its wide head and it also sports a jagged, tooth-filled maw. A foul creature born of magical and alchemical waste, the Thrullg dines mainly on a fare of vermin and trash. It also has a craving for magic—the stuff from which it was created—and it is at these times that it comes into conflict with man, although this beast attacks primarily to defend its nest or in the presence of magical auras.

Thrullg: CR 4; Large magical beast; HD 4d10+12; Init +1; Spd 30 ft., climb 15ft., swim 15 ft.; AC 17; Atk 2 claws +8 melee (2d4+4), bite +6 melee (1d8+2); SA Improved Grab; SQ absorb magic (below); AL Usually N; SV Fort+7, Ref+5, Will+0; Str 19, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 7.

Skills & Feats: Hide +11, Spot + 9, Climb +9, Multiattack.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability the Thrullg must hit with a claw attack.

Absorb Magic (Su): Upon latching onto its target, the Thrullg pulls the victim into its toothy jaws for a bite attack and wraps its tentacles around the victim (if he/she is a spellcaster) or the tentacles search over the victim's entire person looking for a source of magic. Often, if no source is found, the Thrullg will purposefully drop the victim in favor of another. This attack has the following effects:

- ▶ A magic item with charges in contact with the Thrullg's tentacles loses 1d4 charges upon initial contact and every round thereafter. The Thrullg permanently gains 1 Hit Die for every 10 levels of magic it absorbs in this manner.
- ▶ A magic item without charges in contact with the Thrullg's tentacles will have its powers

negated as long as it remains in contact with the tentacles and for 1d4 rounds afterward.

- ▶ If a character in contact with a tentacle attempts to use a potion or scroll, the affects do not take effect until 1d4 rounds after the character breaks contact with the tentacle.
- ▶ Artifacts do not operate while in contact with the Thrullg's tentacles and for 1 round after breaking contact.

Spellcasters lose one random prepared spell upon initial contact with the tentacles. Each round the spellcaster remains in contact with the tentacles, they lose an additional random spell. The Thrullg permanently gains 1 Hit Die for every 10 spell levels it absorbs in this manner.

Treasure: Standard



Appendix B: Dramatis Personae



Draegyn (The Black Bastard)

A prominent figure in the criminal world of Corvis, Draegyn is a formidable information broker and man-on-the-streets under the employ of a significant person in Corvis by the name of Hamil Bodak. Draegyn is a mystery man, coming and going at will with nary more than a whisper and he is almost always unsympathetic and demanding of those with whom he deals, contributing to his nickname, "The Black Bastard" or simply "The Bastard." To some, that is the only name by which they know him, and it's probably already more than they'd ever want to know.

Draegyn, male human Rog8: CR 8; Size M (5 ft., 10 in. tall); HD 8d6+8; hp 37; Init +4 (+4 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+4 Dex); Attack +7/+2 melee, or +10/+5 ranged; SV Fort +3, Ref +10, Will +6; AL CN; Str 12, Dex 19, Con 12, Int

12, Wis 19, Cha 12.

Skills & Feats: Craft (Small Arms) +11, Disable Device +11, Forgery +6, Hide +12, Innuendo +15, Jump +11, Listen +14, Move Silently +4, Perform +7, Profession +14, Search +11, Spot +15, Use Magic Device +10, Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Small Arms), Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot.

Possessions: 4 Daggers, greatcoat, small pistol, 20 pistol charges, 1700 gp, 2 1000 gp emeralds, 2000 gp in other gear

Gajan

The mysterious Gajan has worked for the Bull since before the establishment was “passed down” from the previous owner. No one knows this man’s full name, or where he comes from, but Kildair seems to have shared a past with him; the two trust each another implicitly. Despite his slight stature, those who are wise to Gajan offer him a wide berth, especially if the word’s out that he’s not in the best of moods.

Gajan (ga-han), male human Ftr4/Rog3: CR 7; Size M (5 ft., 7 in. tall); HD 4d10 + 3d6; hp 32; Init +3 (+3 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+3 Dex); Attack +9/+4 melee, or +9/+4 ranged; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +4; AL LE; Str 16, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills & Feats: Appraise +6, Climb +11, Craft (Small Arms) +8, Hide +3, Knowledge (Underworld) +3, Listen +4, Move Silently +3, Perform +6, Read Lips +5, Search +4, Spot +4, Swim +10; Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Small Arms), Point Blank Shot, Quick Draw, Run, Weapon Focus (dagger).

Possessions: Leather armor, 2 small pistols & 25 charges, 2 daggers, 400 gp, 4500 gp in other gear

Kildair, Dando (The Bull)

Dando “the Bull” Kildair is the inheritor and proprietor of The Falling Star, a seamy tavern on the waterfront, as well as the dark underside, of Corvis. As the erstwhile bouncer of the tavern, Dando had occasioned to “thump many a noggin” and now as the existing owner, the Bull trusts only himself and his right-hand man, the slight, pistol-packing Gajan, with the safety of his tavern. Despite being older and his waist several inches wider, the Bull is still a formidable fighter and he

doesn’t hesitate to “go fisticuffs” if the need arises.

Dando “the Bull” Kildair, male human Ftr8: CR 8; Size M (6 ft., 6 in. tall); HD 8d10+8; hp 48; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Attack +12/+7 melee, or +9/+4 ranged; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +1; AL LN; Str 19, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 8, Cha 14.

Skills & Feats: Climb +11, Craft (Weaponsmithing) +11, Hide +1, Jump +9, Knowledge +2, Listen -1, Move Silently +1, Spot -1, Swim +11; Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Improved Critical (greatsword), Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatsword).

Possessions: Greatsword, studded leather armor, club, 400 gp, 5000 gp in other gear

Redgrave, Malek

“Mad” Malek is power-hungry and vindictive towards his enemies. He is the leader of a small branch of the Griffon guild located in an abandoned factory in the seedy district of Corvis known as Filchers’ Crossing. Malek has been informed by one of his contacts that were fed false information by Draegyn that the looming PC party is actually a group of hitmen employed by the rival Gertens family. Malek hates the Gertens with a passion, so he’s quite incensed by the PCs’ arrival at his safe house and will do anything, even at the expense of his own men, to eliminate the PCs.

Malek Redgrave, male human Rog3/Ftr3: CR 6; Size M (5 ft., 11 in. tall); HD 3d6+6 + 3d10+6; hp 43; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+3 Dex); Attack +7 melee, or +8 ranged; SV Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +3; AL NE; Str 15, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 12.

Skills & Feats: Balance +9, Climb +8, Craft (Small Arms) +7, Decipher Script +7, Diplomacy +4, Disable Device +7, Escape Artist +5, Handle Animal +6, Hide +9, Innuendo +7, Intimidate +7, Jump +3, Listen +8, Move Silently +3, Profession +6, Spot +3, Tumble +7; Combat Reflexes, Endurance, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Small Arms), Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot.

Possessions: Longsword, leather armor, 2 daggers, club, small pistol, 12 pistol charges, 1500 gp, 1 500 gp garnet, 500 gp in other gear

Experienced Guards (Watchmen)

Watchman (Experienced): Ftr3; CR3; Medium-sized humanoid (human); hp 20; Init +4 (+4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (chain shirt + small shield); Atk +4 melee (1d6+1 subdual/2x sap, 1d6+1/2x club, 1d8+1/19-20/2x longsword), AL LN; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Special Attacks: If two or more Watchmen are attacking the same target, and inflicting subdual damage, each Watchman gets one extra attack each round.

Skills & Feats: Climb +2, Handle Animal +1, Intimidate +2, Jump +1, Knowledge (Law) +3, Ride +2, Swim +3; Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Quick Draw.

Experienced Rogues

Rogue (Experienced): Rog3; CR1; Medium-sized humanoid (human); hp 11; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (leather); Atk +2 melee (1d4/19-20/2x dagger, or 1d6/2x club), +4 ranged (1d2/2x dagger); AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Special Attacks: Sneak attack +2d6.

Skills & Feats: Appraise +3, Bluff +2, Climb +1, Disguise +3, Escape Artist +2, Gather Information +2, Hide +3, Innuendo +1, Intimidate +3, Listen +2, Move Silently +3, Open Lock +2, Perform +1, Pick Pocket +4, Spot +2; Ambidexterity, Dodge, Uncanny Dodge.

Experienced Thugs

Thug (Experienced): War3; CR3; Medium-sized humanoid (human); hp 13; Init +4 (+4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (leather); Atk +5 melee (1d6/19-20/2x short sword), +3 ranged (1d2/2x dagger); AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 11, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 9, Cha 10.

Skills & Feats: Bluff +1, Climb +1, Intimidate +1.5, Knowledge (Underworld) +1, Swim +3; Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (short sword).

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