



# TERROR IN FREEPORT

ROBERT J. TOTH

*A Shadow of the Demon Lord Adventure for Expert Characters*

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*A Freeport adventure for Shadow of the Demon Lord*

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*Terror in Freeport* leads the group deeper into the intrigue first glimpsed in *Death in Freeport*. The investigation takes the characters from the corridors of power to the bowels of the underworld, and along the way they gain terrifying insights into who really controls the city: the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign!

Milton Drac, Freeport's Sea Lord, hides his affiliation with the Brotherhood behind a veneer of respectability and executes his sinister plans via a network of ignorant flunkies. Since taking the position of Sea Lord after Anton Drac's assassination, Milton Drac has used his power to push through the lighthouse project, nearly bankrupting the city to fund the construction of a new "world wonder." What no one yet realizes is that the lighthouse's construction is a crucial component in a horrific plot to summon forth the Unspeakable One.

## MILTON'S DUPE

Milton Drac knew that the circumstances under which he claimed the title of Sea Lord would draw suspicion from members of the Captains' Council, and that pushing to build an expensive lighthouse to carry out his nefarious plan would likely meet a great deal of resistance. Rather than move directly and openly, he recruited a patsy to work on his behalf, and he found no better agent than Verlaine, a minor businessman with a cool disposition and carefully masked ambition. Drac offered to make Verlaine the wealthiest man in Freeport in exchange for becoming his agent on the Council.

Verlaine had no interest in being another man's flunky, but the appeal of fantastic wealth and power was too great to refuse. So, he kept his pride in another way: he made sure no one could doubt his ability and cunning. After a successful election campaign—financed by Drac—Verlaine made a name for himself as a ruthless manipulator on the Council. He cultivated powerful allies and weeded out his enemies using blackmail and threats. By the time he became leader of the Council, everyone on it owed him something.

Since coming to power, Verlaine used his position to take a piece of every industry in the city. Most recently, when Drac announced his lighthouse scheme, Verlaine invested in the city's masonry businesses, which made his fortunes even greater. The flood of gold into his coffers blinded him to the fact that Drac was playing him for a fool.

Verlaine has no idea what Drac plans, or of the Brotherhood's involvement. He suspects the Sea Lord of having had a hand in his cousin Anton's murder, but he takes comfort in the knowledge that most politicians have done worse and so he really doesn't care. As far as he knows, the lighthouse is just another opportunity for graft.

Living in denial, Verlaine has an explanation for the recent events involving the serpent temple discovered under the city. When Milton Drac brought Milos on as a special advisor to the lighthouse project, Verlaine believed him to be nothing more than an architect willing to work for cheap. As for Milos's involvement in the matter of the kidnapping and dark temple, Verlaine saw no connection between the lighthouse project and the man, since people find themselves drawn into all manner of strange societies and situations. As for Milos being a serpent person, he refutes the allegations, chalking them up as just more mad ravings from religious fanatics of the Seer's temple.

Milton Drac, Verlaine believes, handled the matter of the temple, sending handpicked troops to clear it out and destroy the relics. What Verlaine does not know is that those troops were members of the Brotherhood, and those cultists then created another temple of the Unspeakable One in the catacombs beneath Verlaine's own home, transferring the unholy ritual objects to the new site.

Verlaine's political maneuvering—and hunger for the public eye—will cost him dearly in the end. As things stand now, all clues point to *him* as the Brotherhood's inside man, not Drac. By tying Verlaine's fortunes to those of the Brotherhood, while leaving him unaware of that fact, Drac created the perfect dupe. Verlaine doesn't know enough to embarrass Drac and wreck his plans—but he has enough at stake in Drac's plans to protect them, even if he isn't aware of exactly what they are. And the Sea Lord won't hesitate to use Verlaine's vulnerabilities to his advantage.

## GETTING STARTED

*Terror in Freeport* begins about a month after the events described in *Death in Freeport*. If the group went on other adventures after *Death*, find a way to get them back to the city. If you pick up right where you left off, talk with the players to decide what they did in the interim—worked odd jobs, explored the city, and so on. Once more, the adventure begins with Brother Egil, who, terrified, believes the Brotherhood remains active in the city. He sends a messenger to the player characters, asking them to meet him at the Scholar's Quill that evening.

## LEVEL ADVANCEMENT

*Terror in Freeport* is intended for a group of expert characters. The group should be at least level 4 during Part II, level 5 during Part III, and level 6 during Part IV, advancing to level 7 when the adventure ends.

# PART I: THE SERPENT'S SKIN

*In which the group discovers that a snake might easily discard an old covering in order to grow*

Scholars, acolytes, and more fill the Scholar's Quill the evening the player characters are to meet Brother Egil. The young priest arrives on time, but characters watching him notice he appears nervous, mopping his brow and wringing his hands. As he wends his way through the crowd, a plate falls with a clatter, causing Egil to spin and shout in terror. He realizes his error and hastens to the group.

## SHADOWS GATHER

Upon taking a seat, Egil makes small talk with the group. He asks after them and what has happened since he saw them last, but it's clear he's distracted and nervous. If the characters question him, or if the conversation lulls, Egil scans the room and explains the reason why he called the meeting.

Since the characters unmasked Milos and discovered the Temple of the Unspeakable One, he has felt he's being watched. He's heard people following him, but found no one behind him, spotted faces peering at him in his periphery, but when he turns to look, there is no one there.

Last night, he saw something that troubled him greatly, something that leads him to believe that the Brotherhood might still be active. Lucius has been having a difficult time returning to his old life. Some days, he just collapses at his desk and, when this happens, Egil or one of the other priests carries him home. It was his turn last night.

After carrying Lucius home, Egil sat to rest and nodded off in his chair, but was woken when he felt someone or something in the room with him. He stayed still, scanning the room until he spied a patch of darkness gliding across the room. It opened the cabinets and sifted through the books on the shelves until it finally found a long roll of parchment, which it then tucked inside the folds of its cape and left as silently as it entered. Egil thought it might have been a dream, but a strange odor lingered, dry, musty, like that of a snake.

Egil didn't tell Lucius for fear it would unravel what's left of his sanity. He fears some new plot is afoot and now doubts that the Captains' Council has done anything to clear out the temple; there is no way they could have missed something like this intruder. His order is not a militant one, so he's turning to the characters for help once more. He wants the characters to discover the real situation at the cult's temple and to find out just what, exactly, Milos was up to in Freeport.

Egil offers the characters 5 gc each to take the job and he gives them a lead: through quiet inquiries he learned Milos, under an assumed identity, rented

rooms at an inn in the Old City. Egil doesn't know the name of the inn, but he knows Milos's alter ego was Devlin and that he posed as a struggling merchant.

## WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON?

Egil's paranoia is justified: the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign has the temple under surveillance, but the watchers have nothing to do with the break-in at Lucius's house. The burglar Egil spied in Lucius's home was a serpent person, but was not a member of the foul cult. Rather, the intruder, whose name is K'Stallo, is a devotee of Yig, the snake god of the ancient Valossan civilization. He has been masquerading as Thuron, the high priest of Egil's temple. Having spoken with Lucius, he believes the librarian brought back from his travels a long-lost document, so K'Stallo slipped into his home to retrieve it. Thus, the burglary is nothing more than a red herring to involve the player characters in the story, but K'Stallo will become a crucial player in the story's conclusion.

## LOOKING FOR DEVLIN

The most likely starting place for the investigation is Milos's apartment. While there are a few inns in this district, the most likely place for someone looking to keep a low profile is the Marquis Moon, a seedy inn with a bad reputation. Any character familiar with Freeport knows this automatically or the characters can spend about an hour asking around the district. If the characters ask around about a man named Devlin, they discover he had a room in the Marquis Moon, but no one has seen him in a while.

## LOCATION I: THE MARQUIS MOON

The Marquis Moon is two stories of haphazard brick in the Old City. The mood inside is subdued. There are better places to eat and sleep in the city, and everybody here knows it—from the pair of quietly drunk dwarfs in the corner, to the scowling man behind the desk cleaning his fingernails with a knife.

The man behind the desk is the innkeeper's son, Ficca (as a **Commoner**). A dull and uninteresting fellow, Ficca's father left him in charge for the day and Ficca repays that generous act by brushing off potential customers. If the characters approach him, Ficca refuses to let the characters search Devlin's room, but at any show of force—or coin—Ficca will hand over the key.

## BUILDING THE TERROR

Key to running this adventure is building the tension until the player characters become just as paranoid as Brother Egil. You can accomplish this in several different ways, such as making meaningless rolls, calling for Perception challenge rolls with numerous banes, or periodically rolling on the following table to come up with random suspicious activities the characters can encounter during their investigation.

d20	Suspicious Activity
1-2	The characters see a robed figure duck down an alley. If the characters enter the alley, the figure is nowhere to be seen.
3-4	A couple of clay shingles fall from a rooftop to shatter on the street.
5-6	A strangely spotted seagull seems to follow the characters wherever they go.
7-8	A toothless beggar screams at the characters, "The King in Yellow is coming!"
9-10	An old woman watches the characters from a distance, withdrawing if approached.
11-12	The characters spot the Yellow Sign painted on a wall.
13-14	Mad laughter echoes down the street.
15-16	The group finds their rooms have been searched, though nothing is missing from them.
17-18	A character spots through a window a doughy, pale man standing on the street and staring back.
19-20	The character with the highest Insanity total sees a shimmering city appear in the sky, its towers climbing behind the moon.

## DEVLIN'S ROOM

The characters can find Devlin's room on the second floor at the end of a long hall lined with doors. The characters can hear grunting sounds, laughter, and strange barking coming from the other rooms. The door to the room has a lock, but it is unlocked and ajar.

The small room is crowded with bookcases loaded with scrolls, books, half-melted candles, icons, and polished rocks. Sticks, canes, and other ornamental trifles fill the gaps between the cases, and a stove in the center of the room gives off a faint smell of incense. Thick, tasseled pillows lay on the floor near the stove. A portable writing-stand is pushed against one of the bookcases. Finally, a neat pile of folded clothes has been stacked against one wall.

**Canes and Sticks:** The canes and sticks show intricate carvings and all have serpent heads for hands, but are otherwise ordinary.

**Pillows:** Poking around the pillows turns up several large snake scales.

**Shelves:** One of the icons on the shelves depicts the Unspeakable One in the form of a knot of writhing tentacles.

The objects that appear at a glance to be large, polished rocks are in fact oddly shaped jars. Each holds an albino cave rat preserved in a syrupy black fluid. If a character moves or stares into the jar, the rat awakens, hisses, and starts scratching at the glass. Any character witnessing this must get a success on a Will challenge roll or gain 1 Insanity.

A character searching the shelves and getting a success on a Perception challenge roll turns up another jar filled with black fluid and what looks to be a small cloth bag. The bag holds 20 ss.

**Bookcases:** The books cover a number of scholarly topics, most dealing with architecture, masonry, and construction. Characters inspecting the bookcases notice a fair amount of dust covers them, however, with a success on a Perception challenge roll, a character notices someone has been pawing the books, as evidenced by fingerprints, and several books appear to be missing.

One book, *An Account of Metalls Base and Pure*, fell behind the shelves and has become wedged against the wall. A searching character can find this book automatically. Sketched onto the back page of the book is a full-page drawing of a lighthouse, covered with arcane mathematical formulas. Arrows point to a number of blocks on the structure. In the margins is a recurring doodle: the letter V superimposed on a circle. Give the players **Handout A**.

**Stove:** Greasy ashes fill the stove and a block of incense wrapped in paper sits on the floor.

**Clothes:** The clothes are fashionable, but otherwise unremarkable.

## A POSSIBLE LEAD

The characters might interview Ficca to get more information, though he's unhelpful, saying, "I don't know nuthin." If the characters spend a minute or more trying to coax information from Ficca, one of the dwarfs, a bull-headed old drunk named Rottenjones (as a dwarf), overhears the conversation and staggers over to say, "I couldn't help hearin' you askin' after goings-on upstairs. Could be I know a thing or two." If the characters buy him a drink, he reveals, "I was headin' up to me room one night, maybe a couple o' weeks ago, when I bumps into a couple of strange-lookin' fellers leaving that room. They told me to sod off, saying they was on official Council business."

If asked for any other details, he looks expectantly at the empty mug. Once refilled, he says: "I remember somethin' else now. Took me back to me boyhood, it did. Them folk smelled like tunnels of my homeland."



## A SHOUT IN THE STREET

Upon leaving the Marquis Moon, the group hears a cry for help coming from down the road. There, 3 hulking orcs (see below) surround a spindly teenager clutching a messenger's satchel. The scene is a setup designed to draw the characters into danger. The messenger is a cultist named Cal who was sent to watch the inn and take care of anyone nosing about in the cult's business. When the characters went to Milos's room, Cal rounded up his hired thugs to stage the fight.

If the characters move to intervene, the orcs lose interest in the messenger and focus their attention on the group. If the characters ignore the scene and go on their way, the boy recruits 3 more orcs and follows the characters at a distance until they can strike without attracting much attention.

If Cal sees a character carrying a book, Cal uses the cover of the fight to retreat behind the characters and, when he has an opportunity, attempts to steal the book. If the character holds the book in his or her hands, Cal instead attempts to disarm the character and then run away.

### HULKING ORC

DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1 orc

**Perception** 10 (+0); shadowsight  
**Defense** 13 (hard leather); **Health** 27; **Insanity** 1; **Corruption** 2  
**Strength** 12 (+2), **Agility** 11 (+1), **Intellect** 9 (-1), **Will** 9 (-1)  
**Speed** 12

#### ATTACK OPTIONS

Battleaxe (melee) +2 with 1 boon (2d6 + 2)

### CAL

DIFFICULTY 10

Size 1 human

**Perception** 11 (+1)  
**Defense** 12; **Health** 16; **Insanity** 4; **Corruption** 3  
**Strength** 10 (+0), **Agility** 12 (+2), **Intellect** 11 (+1), **Will** 11 (+1)  
**Speed** 12

#### ATTACK OPTIONS

**Dagger** (melee or short range) +2 with 1 boon (1d3 plus 1d6)

#### SPECIAL ATTACK

**Steal** Cal makes an Agility attack roll with 1 boon against the Perception of one creature he can reach. On a success, he takes an item he can hold in one hand from the target. The item must be one the target is not holding and the target is unaware that Cal took the item. On a failure, he triggers a free attack from the target.

#### SPECIAL ACTIONS

**Flee!** Cal uses an action to move up to three times his Speed. Once he uses this talent, he cannot do so again until he completes a rest.

If the robbed character realizes what's happened, the "messenger" flees down the side streets to the bricked-up building that once housed the cult.

If the cultist does not see the book, Cal takes a different tack. He cowers behind the group while they engage the orcs. He then attacks the most vulnerable character. After this cheap shot, he leaves the orcs to finish the job, fleeing to the bricked-up house as described above.

## CHASING THE CULTIST

If the characters pursue the fleeing cultist, he leads them on a merry chase. The streets bustle with people and Cal darts through shops, restaurants, and down alleys to ditch his pursuers. There are a couple ways for you to handle this scene.

**Story:** Simply narrate the chase, being evocative in your descriptions, but eventually have the group spot Cal ducking into the bricked-up house at the end.

**Attack Rolls:** The chase lasts twelve minutes. Every three minutes, the fastest pursuing character must make an Agility attack roll against Cal's Agility. On a success, the group keeps up with him. On a failure, they fall behind. When the lead character gets a failure, you can have any member of the group make a Perception challenge roll with a number of banes equal to the number of failures. On a success, the group spots Cal and removes one failure. If the characters get three failures, they lose him. (Capturing Cal is not strictly necessary for the adventure to proceed, since the characters are likely to investigate the bricked-up house on their own anyway.) If the characters get three consecutive successes on the Agility attack rolls, they catch him. Otherwise, the characters spot Cal ducking into the bricked-up house at the end of the chase.

**Chase Rules:** You can use the rules covering chases in *Forbidden Rules* to handle this scene.

## CAPTURING CAL

If the group captures Cal, he feigns innocence. He claims to be a simple lad off the street and asks, "how could I turn down some good money when some strange men told me to ambush anyone who visits those apartments?" If the group turns Cal over to the watch, he disappears into the system and is never seen again, unless you decide otherwise.

## LOCATION 2: THE ABANDONED TEMPLE

Whether the group chases the false messenger or decides to check things out on their own, at some point they should investigate the bricked-up house. If necessary, you can steer them here through Brother Egil's conversation, as he is interested in the status of the former cult temple.

The house is much as the player characters left it: a rotting hovel situated along a rarely used side street. One-story and made of knotted planks with bricks for windows, it would appear abandoned, if not for the three guards (as veterans) standing guard out front.

## THE SITUATION

Milton Drac put Councilor Verlaine "in charge" of cleaning up the temple, but he instructed the councilor to post guards only on the outside—he's sending a team of specially trained mercenaries, experienced with magic, to take care of the work inside the temple. Of course, the "team" happens to be the cultists, who have been bringing the sacred objects and materials to the surface and delivering them, via Verlaine's unwitting guards, to the new base of operations, a temple hidden in the catacombs beneath Verlaine's own home! The guards don't know these "workers," but they have no reason to suspect anything is wrong.

## THE GUARDS

The guards appear to be mercenaries, but they each wear armbands on their left arms. The bands display a stylized V superimposed over the city seal. The symbol is the same as the one found in the book discovered at Devlin's apartment. Furthermore, if any characters have lived in the city for a month or longer, they recognize the emblem as indicating those who serve Verlaine, the head of the Captains' Council. Otherwise, the characters can ask the soldiers, who readily reveal they work for the Chief Councilor and that he's overseeing the cleanup of the temple.

**The Fleeing Cultist:** If the characters ask about a person racing into the building, the guards become hostile and tell the characters to be on their way. A good cover story and a success on an Intellect attack roll against the guard's Intellect gets them to admit they permitted a worker to go inside and that there has been a crew working in the ruin for several days now, clearing out the place. If asked about the items taken out of the temple, the guards reveal they have sometimes carried temple relics out for examination by the authorities. The guards haven't been inside the temple and that's fine by them.

**Getting Inside:** The guards are not about to let the characters inside without good reason. The guards are dumb enough to gossip, but they won't leave their posts. If the characters come up with a good reason for the guards to let them in, have the lead player make an Intellect attack roll against the guard's Intellect. The guards let the group in on a success.

The characters can try other means as well. They might distract the guards while other characters pry bricks from a side window or go into an adjacent building, leap from roof to roof, and then break through the rotten timbers. Waiting for nightfall or a shift change can make the situation even easier.

Of course, the group can just attack the guards and force their way in. Attacking local deputies with no proof or provocation earns them a swift ticket to prison if they fail. The guards are tough as well, which the characters ought to notice easily enough. If they manage to defeat the guards, the group will have to complete their investigation as fugitives.

If a fight does break out, one of the guards blows an alarm whistle as a minor activity. The sound alerts everyone inside the complex and draws 6 members of the Sea Lord's Guard (as patrollers), who arrive in 5 rounds, with 6 more coming 3 rounds later.

### INVESTIGATING THE LIGHTHOUSE

If the PCs decide to investigate the lighthouse construction site, they find nothing of interest, as the place is filled with building materials, tools, and scaffolding. No matter how thorough the search, there is nothing to find here at this time. The lighthouse comes into play in the series' dramatic conclusion, *Madness in Freeport*.

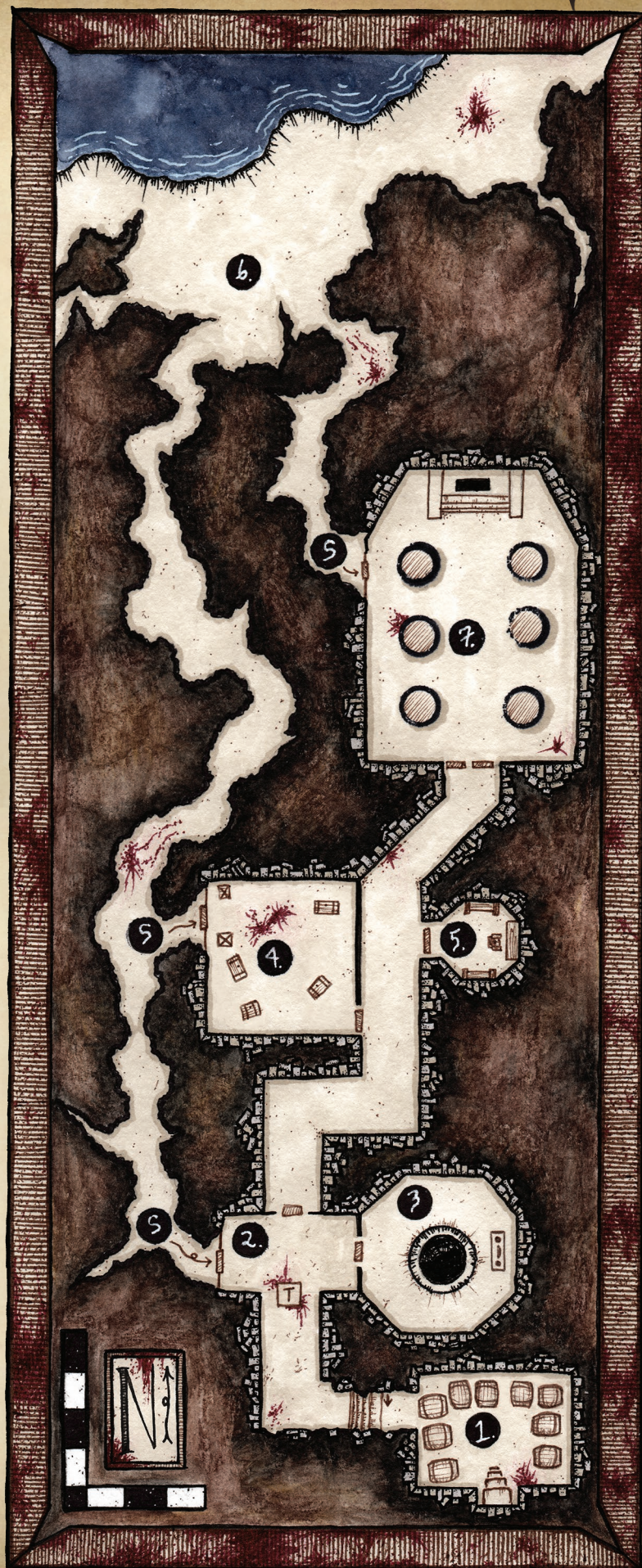
### EXPLORING THE TEMPLE

Although the place remains much as the characters left it, subtle signs indicate that evil has not yet abandoned this place. A character with the tracker or a similar profession can spot faint footprints and marks on the floor—some of which are clearly not human, pinpoint holes in the dust where the toes ought to be, indicating keenly sharp claws, and big, sweeping grooves that could only be made by a tail.

The cultists stripped most of the rooms bare, removing curtains and even statuary, but there's an air of menace here, as if the place was pregnant with evil.

The following locations correspond to the temple map. If a numbered location lacks an entry, it has been emptied and there is nothing of interest in the location unless you decide otherwise.

**1. Wine Cellar:** The cask containing the secret passage is propped open. Any character examining the floor notices scratches in the rock floor between the cask and the stairs, as if something huge and heavy has been dragged across the room.



**2. Intersection:** The pit trap has been jammed open. The secret door in the west wall is not open, however. If the group didn't find the door before, they can find it by examining the wall containing the door and getting a success on a Perception challenge roll. Opening the door reveals a rough-hewn tunnel stretching off into the darkness. Any character with a Perception of 11 or higher can hear faint sounds of scrambling and scraping off in the gloom.

**4. Treasury:** The room is completely bare, but again the secret door is not open. If not discovered yet, characters can find it by examining the wall and getting a success on a Perception challenge roll.

**6. Cave of the Degenerates:** If the group comes here before entering the temple proper, they stumble upon a squad of **6 degenerate serpent people** acting as bodyguards for a single human cultist, **Batora**. She is heading to the surface to deliver a crate to the guards for shipment to Verlaine's house. Two degenerates carry the crate, but they drop it when they notice the characters.

## DEGENERATE SERPENT PERSON DIFFICULTY 5

*Size 1 serpent person*

**Perception** 8 (-2); **darksight**  
**Defense** 12 (large shield); **Health** 11; **Insanity** 8; **Corruption** 5  
**Strength** 11 (+1), **Agility** 10 (+0), **Intellect** 8 (-2), **Will** 9 (-1)  
**Speed** 10

### ATTACK OPTIONS

**Spear** (melee) +1 with 1 boon (1d6 plus Venomous Bite on attack roll 20+)

**Large Shield** (melee) +1 with 1 boon (1d3)

**Venomous Bite** The degenerate serpent person makes a Strength roll against the target's Agility. On a success, the serpent person bites the target, dealing 1d3 damage. In addition, the target must get a success on a Strength challenge roll or take 1d6 extra damage and gain 1 Insanity.

## BATORA DIFFICULTY 25

*Size 1 human*

**Perception** 10 (+0)  
**Defense** 15 (mail); **Health** 29; **Insanity** 3; **Corruption** 2  
**Strength** 13 (+3), **Agility** 11 (+1), **Intellect** 10 (+0), **Will** 11 (+1)  
**Speed** 10

### ATTACK OPTIONS

**Spear** (melee) +3 (1d6)

### SPECIAL ACTIONS

**Prayer** When a creature within short range of Batora makes an attack roll or challenge roll, she can use a triggered action to grant 1 boon on the triggering roll.

### MAGIC

**Power** 2  
**Destruction** *ruin* (3), *dissolve* (2), *rend* (2), *entropic power* (1)

Cal (see "A Shout in the Street") might be here too, if the group has not yet dealt with him.

## ESCAPING CULTISTS

If Batora or Cal gets away, the cultists and their hidden leaders learn of the group's activities. The leaders might respond with harrying attacks against the group or set the Sea Lord's Guard against them by informing the Guard that the characters are troublemakers or, even, agents of the serpents. Consider throwing a few extra encounters against the group as they continue their investigation to keep them on their toes.

The crate bears a label on the side that reads:

*From: Bierce Vintners*

*To: 100 Wave Ave. (Cellar)*

The address on the crate is Verlaine's. The councilor, as well as his guards (who oversee the deliveries), know of the shipments going to his house and that they come from the serpent temple. The crates go straight to his wine cellar. Before Verlaine can inspect them, Brotherhood agents sneak up from the catacombs and enter the house through a secret door. They then spirit off the temple relics from the crates and leave behind treasures such as coins, goblets, and other replaceable valuables. Thus, the councilor and his accomplices never suspect these contain anything more than booty from the caves, graft in return for a job well done.

The crate contains six ornate goblets (worth 1 gc each) and a number of bricks. The bricks appear ordinary, but a mason or a character that gets a success on a Perception challenge roll with 1 bane notes a seam running through the middle of each. Chiseling away around the seam and pounding vigorously splits the brick to reveal a replica of the temple's strange yellow symbol, printed in shimmering gold ink, in the center of each half.

The sketch in Milos's book had arrows pointing to a number of points in the Lighthouse of Drac. Award Fortune to any player who makes the connection between the illustration in the book and the bricks liberated from the crate. The bricks, crafted by the serpent priests and placed throughout the lighthouse at significant occult points, will produce an apocalyptic show at the structure's inauguration.

**7. The Temple of the Unspeakable One:** The seat of the Unspeakable One's cult sits empty—yet somehow it's more ominous for all that. The altar and statue have been hauled off, gashes in the stone floor marking their exit. The yellow symbol that once graced the far wall has been chiseled away and removed. There has even been some chipping at the frescoes lining the room.

If the group comes here before exploring the cave of the degenerates, Batora and her squad spring through the secret door to surprise them. In this case, the group drops the crate in the caverns before ambushing the characters.

# PART II: A THREATENING POSTURE

*In which the adventurers learn that a snake in the grass is worth two in the cave*

By now, the characters should have enough information to be interested in Verlaine. This part explores what the characters might find by pulling on this thread.

## VERLAINE'S HOUSE

The characters might go to the home of the councilor based on evidence they have uncovered so far. If so, they can find his house on 100 Wave Avenue, a street in the Merchant District lined with fancy houses. Of course, if the characters discovered the crate in the Unspeakable One's temple, they find the same address stamped on the container.

## LOCATION 3: 100 WAVE AVENUE

Wave Avenue runs through the Merchant District and it's quite a change from the shabby austerity of the Old City. Carefully tended trees and wrought iron lampposts line the boulevards. Quaint storefronts display expensive foodstuffs and curios; trim, tidy townhouses spill laughter and low whispers through their windows—and more often than not have a private guard stationed out front.

From the homes lining the streets, it becomes clear Wave Avenue is home to the wealthiest and most influential people in the district. The homes have elaborate gardens, some large enough to contain gazebos and fountains. A few of the buildings even have coach houses. Each house boasts a number of discrete and dangerous guards.

The characters can easily find the house on the street. For one thing, a considerable number of guards (as veterans)—six in the front and four on the roof—watch over the place. Each guard wears Verlaine's seal on his or her arm, as does the captain of the guard, Reikart Lloyd (see the sidebar).



### REIKART LLOYD



When Verlaine set out to build his security team, he bought the best muscle gold could buy. And for the captain of his guard, he recruited the toughest, smartest fighter in the crew: Reikart Lloyd.

Unlike most swords-for-hire, Lloyd came from the right side of the tracks. For decades, his family made candles and shipboard lanterns out of a large shop in the Old City. The third youngest of four children, Lloyd didn't stand a chance at getting his hands on the family business. However, he was never enamored with the idea of being cooped up in a shop all day stifling.

At school—one of the finest in Freeport—he was a sullen and distracted student. He took up with the sons of other merchants for all-night carousing sessions. After a few benders, his parents threatened to cut him off. He took them up on their offer and headed to sea. It was a tougher life than he ever imagined, and his name didn't buy him any breaks. He spent a long year swabbing decks and loading cargo. By the time he jumped ship in a distant port, he was stronger and wiser than he'd been—but by no means humble. He knew he'd been lazy before he hit the ocean, but he figured he'd paid his dues, and the world owed him a reward. So he found a saloon, hooked up with a group headed into the hills, and found himself in the occupation of choice for tough guys with something to prove: adventurer. By the time he came back to town, he had the blood of many monsters on his hands and a sack full of coin.

Lloyd didn't return to Freeport by choice. Over the years, he'd tire of hacking and slashing in one town and hop a ship without ever asking the destination. One of those ships dropped him off back home. He found his anger toward his family had burned out, but he kept the rest of the Lloyd clan at arm's length, and went out trolling for work. As it turns out, work found him.

Coming out of a tavern one evening, he was jostled by a passing stevedore. His instincts worked faster than his brains, and he cut the dockworker in half. Moments later, the local watch showed up and informed Lloyd that he was a hero: the stevedore had just butchered the first mate of the *Eye of Krom*. Lloyd's panic melted and his salesmanship kicked in. He wangled himself a job on the watch, where he quickly caught the attention of the new Sea Lord, Drac, and his right-hand man, Councilor Verlaine.

Lloyd now oversees Verlaine's private security, directing and training a team of several dozen guards, and generally taking care of anybody who makes trouble for the councilor. He can't say he particularly likes Verlaine—or, indeed, anybody else he meets—but the guy knows how to pay a retainer. For all his bluster, Lloyd doesn't know a thing about the plans swirling around his boss. In fact, the enormity of the evil underfoot would probably awaken his long dormant conscience.

**An Old Acquaintance:** Captain Lloyd appears for the first time in this adventure. If the group went on other adventures after *Death in Freeport*, they might have run into Lloyd carrying out his job—giving his first “official” appearance in *Terror* some added wrinkles. Will it be easier or harder to outwit the captain of the guard if the adventurers already know him?

A variation on this idea: if you plan to run the Freeport adventures, but haven't yet, have the group encounter Lloyd before he returns home—while he's still adventuring. Perhaps he could even be the lure that brings them to Freeport in the first place!



## INTERACTING WITH THE GUARDS

The only thing the guards tell the player characters is that the building does belong to Verlaine and that the characters aren't welcome here. Lloyd and his soldiers do know about the deliveries from the serpent temple, so they're cagey and defensive about the shipments, but not for the reasons the characters might think.

The group won't get past the guards without taking extraordinary measures. They can try to use deception to get inside, but Lloyd's been with Verlaine a long time and he's seen his share of tricks. Even a believable story grants no boons on rolls against his Intellect, and a lame story imposes 3 or more banes.

The group might be clever enough to bring the crate and say they're making a delivery; however, standard operating procedure is to turn over all deliveries to the house guards, who then carry them inside. Thus, attempts to bypass this protocol are suspicious.

Finally, the guards are expecting other members of Verlaine's force (members they know) to make the delivery and don't buy the standard "Gragnar was sick, so he sent me" line. Disguises that include Verlaine's emblem can legitimize their presence here, but getting into the house is still not part of the procedure, and efforts to do so invariably attract Lloyd's attention.

If the group makes a scene, the soldiers answer with violence, and they have the law on their side. Fighting a squad of professional soldiers on a private residence, with reinforcements nearby and the City Watch at their command, is not likely to end well for the group. Combat here likely involves Reikart Lloyd (see top of next column) and the 10 guards.

## REIKART LLOYD

DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 human

**Perception** 10 (+0)

**Defense** 18 (plate and mail); **Health** 38

**Strength** 13 (+3), **Agility** 11 (+1), **Intellect** 10 (+0), **Will** 10 (+0)

**Speed** 8

### ATTACK OPTIONS

**Bastard Sword** (melee) +3 with 1 boon (3d6 + 1 plus Combat Expertise)

**Combat Expertise** Once per round, the attack either deals 1d6 extra damage or Reikart can attack a different target at any point before the end of his turn.

### SPECIAL ACTIONS

**Catch your Breath** Reikart uses an action, or a triggered action on his turn, to heal 8 damage. Once he uses this talent, he cannot use it again until after he completes a rest.

If the characters do enter the house, they might be able to scope out a room or two before being noticed and apprehended (refer to **Location 8: Verlaine's House**).

If caught, go to **The Shakedown** on page 12. If they manage to escape, they are now fugitives and are sought by both Verlaine's guard and the Sea Lord's Guard. In this case, skip the Courts and have the encounter with "Egil," described in **Part 3: The Serpent Strikes**, occur on the street.



## THE PAPER CHASE

The characters likely make little headway into the investigation at Verlaine's house, so they might regroup to discover what they can about the head of the Captains' Council. If they approach Brother Egil with what they have learned so far, he becomes grave and anxious, urging them to investigate further. He suggests the Office of Public Records could reveal a few clues, confessing he is somewhat in the dark when it comes to politics—he knows little more than the names of the city's prominent people.

## GATHERING INFORMATION

Asking around town about Verlaine reveals most people consider Verlaine a tough, nasty hatchet man for the Sea Lord's operations. In addition, the characters can gain the following information by speaking to their contacts or just interviewing locals.

- Verlaine came out of nowhere, just after Anton Drac's assassination. It's common knowledge that Anton never cared a bit for him. Maybe Verlaine had nothing to do with the assassination, but on the other hand, just look at how rich he is now!
- Everybody knows Drac's obsessed with that lighthouse, but some say Verlaine is the one who really wants the thing built—he pushed it through the Council when nobody in his right mind would have.
- Verlaine's got his hooks into everything in Freeport. He bought up all the masonry outfits in town just before Drac announced his plan for the lighthouse.

## LOCATION 4: OFFICE OF PUBLIC RECORDS

The Office of Public Records is a grandiose title for a disorganized collection of papers stuffed inside an old storehouse in the Warehouse District. Pirates don't tend to keep many written records, so these documents largely relate to recent history. A craggy, gruff ex-ship's cook named Reed (as a **commoner**) tends to the place, spending most of his day searching the files to settle disputes between mariners and ship-owners over who owes what to whom.

Reed's attitude is initially unfriendly; he grudgingly supplies requested documents but offers no help. He's been through so many scrapes that he can't be easily threatened and he's comfortable enough that he can't be easily bought. His intractability imposes 2 banes on attack rolls made to influence or intimidate him. He can be charmed, however. A sympathetic ear to his troubles, a few kind words about the state of his records, and the characters can win him over. If so, he guides them through stacks of records—an all-day job, but well worth the effort. If the characters get on his bad side, he becomes singularly unhelpful and snaps, "Who d'ye think you are—Verlaine's thugs?" If the characters can establish or restore good relations with Reed, though, they'll find him quite talkative.

*"I kin tell you ain't with Verlaine. Good. I've no love for him or his gang. Ye've got no patches—the V, you know—but that's no guarantee. They come storming in here, out o' uniform sometimes, but I knows 'em just the same. A couple come in only last week, saying they was from the Council and demandin' maps—as if I's put on this world to serve 'em! Horrible customers! No manners at all I tell you."*

*"They wants street maps fer the Eastern District an' Scurvytown. So I digs up the stuff, and the pair of 'em skulks off to a corner and starts jabbering over the documents. Then one stomps back to me desk and asks for 'more ex-ten-sive plans.' 'Just what would ye be meaning by that?' says I. 'Sewers,' he says. Plans showin' how the sewers in the Eastern District match up with the Merchant District and the rest of town. 'They ain't no such maps,' I tells him. 'Sides, the sewers for the Merchant District is sealed off, with their own outlet, and the manholes need special keys, so no louts can go sneaking underground to rob them rich folk. But they keeps at me, so I brings out what I got: street maps and old buildin' records an' such. That got 'em excited."*

If the characters press for more information, Reed hauls out the maps the so-called Council agents were looking at. He grunts and points at a grimy spot on an old map of the Eastern District: "Lookit the mess they made!"

The spot is almost exactly where the bricked-up house now stands, though on this older map there also appears to be a sewer grating. Apparently, this access was abandoned and later covered up during the house's construction. Any character inspecting the map can make out a rough fingerprint, and if they look closely, they notice a faint pathway tracing through the Eastern District and the Docks neighborhood to the Merchant District.

After examining what records there are on Verlaine, the characters learn that before he took office in the confused days following Anton Drac's assassination, Verlaine was a wealthy but unremarkable merchant with stakes in several ships sailing to and from Freeport. He became an immediate presence on the Captains' Council, dominating meetings and managing to bend even the most reluctant councilors to his will. He amassed a power bloc and managed to have himself elected head of the council. He then pushed through most of Drac's platform, making a forceful argument for the lighthouse. While in office, he diversified his holdings, including a big chunk of the city's masonry trade, growing even wealthier in the process. He currently oversees a number of projects for the Sea Lord, including construction of the lighthouse—and one of his main consultants on that project was Milos.

## THE SHAKEDOWN

Drac, having heard about their investigations from the Brotherhood, told Verlaine the group must be working to embarrass the government and sabotage the planned lighthouse festivities. Verlaine takes the hint and arranges to have the characters brought in for questioning; he figures if he turns up the heat a little, they will leave town and stay out.

Almost as soon as the party leaves the records office, six of Verlaine's guard (as veterans) approach, under the command of Lloyd (see **Location 3**). The captain informs the PCs that Chief Councilor Verlaine has requested their presence at the Courts in connection with their unlawful entry into a restricted area—the serpent temple.

If the characters decide to fight, it's going to be a challenge. If they insist, conduct the combat until either the guards have subdued the group—Verlaine doesn't want them dead, just scared—or the group routs the guards. In the first scenario, simply continue with the group being led to the Courts—a little bruised and battered, but in one piece. In the second, skip ahead to **Part 3: The Serpent Strikes**, but have the encounter occur on the street.

## LOCATION 5: THE COURTS

Lloyd and the guards lead the group through the streets to a walled section of the Old City called the Fortress of Justice. He leads the characters across the plaza where a wide, low-slung building of gray stone stands on the opposite end of the square and boasts the city seal carved above a pair of imposing steel doors. Inside, he leaves the group in a large, open area filled with benches. The characters are then disarmed, but their weapons are placed in view, though out of their reach. The guards make it clear they are expected to wait patiently—and peacefully—until Verlaine arrives. If the characters start trouble, two dozen constables (as **patrollers**) show up to subdue them in 1d3 rounds.

## AN IMPRESSIVE PERFORMANCE

Verlaine gives the PCs some time to stew before making his entrance. Though he recognizes their work exposing the hidden temple, he doesn't cut them any slack. He thinks they're working for his political enemies and that they want to link him to the serpent people and cause a scandal. Perhaps they are aiming to have him removed from office or reveal his business holdings and embarrass him. Verlaine is simply trying to protect his interests and questionable political deals. The easiest way to do this is to convince the characters to leave town.

To the group, this might seem proof Verlaine is in league with the cultists. The group's research suggests he has helped the Brotherhood gain wide access to the city, including—for whatever reason—the lighthouse project, and now he's lying about it to cover his tracks. This is exactly how Drac planned things, of course.

When the characters have had time to wait, Verlaine sweeps in through the double doors, revealing himself to be a thin, stern man dressed in fine robes on which has been embroidered the city seal and his now-familiar emblem. He glares at the group for a moment

and then launches into a diatribe acknowledging their great service to Freeport in exposing the temple, but condemning their current activities, as breaking and entering is still a crime. He suggests they might be up to no good and he's not about to put his city in peril “from a bunch of drifters.” He wants them out of the city by dawn.

Verlaine grudgingly lets the characters talk, but he's not about to let anything slip (although questions about the deliveries to his house make him visibly nervous for a moment before he regains control).

Verlaine isn't likely to answer all of these questions and he certainly won't address more or allow any follow-ups. When he's had enough, he snorts a curt goodbye and leaves, giving orders to Lloyd to show them a bad time and then put them on the first boat out of Freeport.

**Do you know anything about Drac's intentions?** The Sea Lord has many enemies. People whisper behind his back and run away when he turns around. He's done more for this town that most can ever know.

**Are you working with Drac?** We both have a stake in keeping Freeport the greatest maritime city in the world. We're the best ones to do that job.

**How did you get involved with Milos?** It's no secret we brought in consultants for the lighthouse project. Do you really think something of that size sails on one engineer's say-so? Milos was one of those advisers. I can't keep up with the personal life of every single city employee, though of course we're grateful you uncovered the threat.

**How are things going with the temple cleanup?** The operation is proceeding. Do you think I'm not concerned about monsters under our feet? I want them gone as much as anyone else.

**Did you know there are still serpent people there?** Every time a gang plunders a ruin, the place is infested again in no time. Monsters are tough to keep down. We're doing what we can.

**Are you sure *any* cleanup work is being done?** How dare you question my authority? Why don't you worry about you and let me handle the city.

**What about the deliveries to your house from the temple?** Those beasts stole a lot from this city—a good chunk of it from me and my businesses. I'm simply taking back what's mine.

**What about the bricks being delivered to you?** Bricks? In a wrecked temple? How should I know? Maybe the snakes were doing some construction. Maybe they broke into one of the delivery crates and used it to haul their own garbage.

**The city records suggest some suspicious activities. What do you have to say?** If you're trying to dig up dirt, you'll have to try harder than that. Everything I've done is a matter of public record. You're hardly the first to disapprove of city government. More people than I can count have tried to find some stain in my background. They've all gone home disappointed.

# PART III: THE SERPENT STRIKES

*In which the characters learn that some poisons are not immediately fatal*

The lighthouse—and the horrible task Milton Drac intends for it to perform—rapidly nears completion. However, he doesn't need a group of do-gooders to bring any suspicion down on his project, nor does he need Verlaine to start asking questions—the man is a toady, but the characters just might arouse his curiosity. The Sea Lord, and the Brotherhood, have always had it in for the Seer's priests and their prying into secret affairs. Egil indirectly causing the discovery of the serpent temple was the final straw. So, the Sea Lord has hatched a plan to deal with the characters, the priests of the Seer, and his councilor in one fell swoop.

His plan is devious and intricate. First, he has an agent disguised as Egil lead the group into a deathtrap from which there is little chance of escape, while planting evidence that the characters have been working with the Brotherhood all along. The real Egil, who is currently in the Brotherhood's clutches, will be branded with the Yellow Sign and executed. Then, cultists, disguised as priests of the Seer, move to infiltrate the temple of the Seer, kill the acolytes, and brand their corpses in the same manner as Egil. As for Verlaine, the Sea Lord has sent a pair of assassins to eliminate him and leave proof that the player characters were responsible for the act.

Assuming everything goes as planned, Drac will be able to reveal the sinister details to a stunned city: that the temple of the Seer was a cover for the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign all along. He will explain that Verlaine had suspected as much and hired the characters to infiltrate its ranks and produce proof. While the characters partly succeeded by exposing the temple, they betrayed the councilor by keeping the larger secret. To enrich themselves, Drac will explain, the characters sought to blackmail the Brotherhood, who agreed to pay them off in exchange for murdering Verlaine. In the end, the characters were themselves double-crossed when the Brotherhood refused to pay, so the characters slaughtered them all. And the characters? They were victims of their own greed, having been crushed to death when they tried to hide out in Verlaine's concrete factory. With a heavy heart, Drac will lament the loss of a treasured servant of the people, but he will also assure the city that the serpent menace is gone forever.

Of course, none of this happens if the player characters are clever, tough, and resourceful.

## TIMELY RESCUE

If the characters went to the Courts to be interviewed by Verlaine, Lloyd and his guards start making threatening comments with the intent of intimidating the group and convincing them to get out of town. It should be clear that the guards toy with the characters before moving in to make the kill. If the group did not go to the Courts, Lloyd and company finds the group on the street and approaches them with the same purpose.

In either case, just as things are looking darkest, Brother Egil rushes in to save the day. The guards are surprised to see him, but defer to his status as an official of the Seer's temple. Besides, it isn't their job to harass respectable citizens—they're just giving some undesirables the bum's rush.

Brother Egil approaches Lloyd and shares some quiet words. The guard captain appears unconvinced, but Egil produces a scroll and hands it to him. Lloyd examines it, grunts, and shrugs. He calls back his guards and allows the characters to collect their belongings or just departs with his guards in tow if encountered on the streets. Egil bows stiffly and then approaches the group.

## THE FALSE EGIL

Unfortunately, the man who came to the group's defense is not what he seems. He is, in fact, an agent of the Brotherhood named Nikko and he has come to lead them into a trap. Nikko is skilled in the art of disguise and has enhanced this talent with a magical ointment that makes him appear as Egil. Any character who can perceive magical auras, such as by using the *sense magic* Magician spell, can pierce the disguise.

If his disguise holds, Nikko expresses relief at finding them in time and voices his suspicions that the guards might have had the same fate in mind for them as that which has found Lucius. He then tells them the serpent people took Lucius again, but before he says more, he leads the group to a place where they can speak without being overheard. Once he's sure no one else is around, he fills the characters in on the situation. The salient points follow.

- He was at the temple when he heard a cry from Lucius's room. He raced to his chambers and found papers scattered on the floor, the desk upended, and everything in disarray. He went out to the street, but saw nothing.

- Egil went to where the characters were staying, but found no one had seen them in some time.
- If the characters went to Courts, Egil claims to have inquired with a member of the Sea Lord's Guard and discovered the group had been arrested and brought before Verlaine. Otherwise, Egil raced about the city until he found the characters.
- Egil explains that his order still carries some authority in the city and he and the high priest Thuron found a sympathetic councilor to write up an order making the group wards of the temple. The order protects the characters from arrest and brings death to anyone who harms them.
- He tells the characters they are safe for now, but he exhorts them to help him rescue Lucius before the snakes complete the job they started. He does not know where the cultists could have taken him as the temple is now empty.

At this point, all the clues should point to Verlaine, with the answer likely to be found in his cellar. If the characters don't remember the business of the sewers immediately, "Egil" drops some choice hints ("I heard about a suspicious-looking group heading toward the Eastern District," for example). In truth, he hopes to lure the characters into a deadly trap.

### NIKKO "FALSE EGIL"

DIFFICULTY 10

Size 1 human

Perception 10 (+0)

Defense 11; Health 21; Insanity 3; Corruption 3

Strength 10 (+0), Agility 11 (+1), Intellect 10 (+0), Will 11 (+1)

Speed 10

**Mad Devotion** When Nikko makes an attack roll or challenge roll, he can choose to make the roll with 1 boon. On a failure, he gains 1 Insanity.

### ATTACK OPTIONS

**Short Sword** (melee) +1 with 1 boon (2d6)

### MAGIC

Power 1

**Destruction** ruin (2), rend (1)

If the characters are suspicious and refuse to follow "Egil," he tries to guilt them into a rescue operation by announcing that he'll undertake the mission himself, help be damned. If this display doesn't move them, and they check things out at Egil's temple, they find Lucius alive and well—and Egil missing without explanation. At that point, either the basement of Verlaine's house or the sewers of the Eastern District are the most promising avenues of investigation.

If the characters manage to penetrate Nikko's disguise, he tries to slip away down side streets (heading for the Eastern District, though). He fights

if cornered, and if the group defeats him they find a rough map describing the sewers with notes scribbled at key points that seem to indicate a trap of some sort.

If the group goes directly to Verlaine's house, they meet precisely the same resistance they found before, but if they make it inside, skip to **Location 8: Verlaine's House**. The characters can then search for the secret door into the catacombs.

If the group starts poking about the sewers of the Merchant District, remind them of what Reed said: the manholes are locked down, and the City Watch has the keys. Also remind them of the private guards on the street, and how suspicious a heavily armed party will look trying to pry up a manhole cover.

## LOCATION 6: THE SEWERS

Clues should point the characters to the sewer entrance in the Eastern District. If the characters reveal this information to the false Egil, he urges them to hurry before it's too late. Throughout the trip to the old sewer grating, Egil acts nervous and plays the part of a fish out of water. When the group reaches the vicinity of the old sewer grating, "Egil" gets particularly upset, asking if they really have to go down there. He puts on a good show, though, of toughing it out to save his friend if going in is the only way.

The disused sewer access is partially behind the bricked-up house, but the group will have to avoid attracting the attention of Verlaine's guards (see **Location 2**), who likely still watch the entrance. The grating is buried under scrubby weeds and piles of trash, but some determined digging reveals it easily enough.

A damp, dripping tunnel, reeking of excrement and rot, stretches beyond the gate. Narrow walkways flank a river of effluvia oozing down the middle. The walkways are wide enough for people to walk single file.

If the characters memorized—or took—Reed's map, they can find their way to the border of the Merchant District. However, the maps are not perfect, and it's easy to take a wrong turn or two—especially with such obvious signs to mark the way. The cultists subtly misdirect the group toward a factory bordering the Warehouse District. Even without the aid of maps, the cultists have left plenty of clues. At important intersections, the characters find dropped articles that Egil identifies, with a shudder, as belonging to Lucius.

Since Brotherhood members move secretly around town via the sewers, the characters should periodically hear scuffling and splashing in nearby tunnels. They might also spot claw marks on the walkways. The echoing passages should make it impossible to track the sounds accurately, though



if the characters make a serious go of it, they might catch a glimpse of a hooded and robed figure darting down a side passage.

On the edge of the Merchant District the passage is supposed to be blocked by an iron grating, cemented in place, but anyone inspecting it notices the bars have been sawed through in the middle: it is a simple matter to remove them and step through. After that, the signs point to a seemingly dead end not much farther: a bricked-up tunnel. Examining the dead-end reveals the outline of a door in the passageway tiles.

The ease in finding the “door to the temple” reflects the Brotherhood’s intent to make certain the characters find this opening. The real door to the new temple site, a little way back up the corridor, is much more artfully concealed and requires a success on a Perception challenge roll made with 3 banes. If the group does find the real door, however, or defeat Nikko as he attempts to trap them, skip this section and move on to the Serpent’s Nest.

“Egil” has really been guiding the group to a masonry factory on the edge of the Warehouse District, not far from Verlaine’s house. With Verlaine’s involvement in the city’s masonry business, the Brotherhood easily installed an agent there to assist in a scheme that will eliminate the meddling characters for good. The “secret” door opens into a storage bin where limestone is dumped before being ground up

for cement manufacture. The Brotherhood’s fiendish plan: to incorporate the characters into the masonry of the Lighthouse of Drac!

## ROCKS AND A HARD PLACE

A latch is found. The door opens easily, and so the trap is sprung.

Beyond the door is a small room filled with thick, dusty darkness. It has a low ceiling, only about 6 feet above the floor. Massive shapes, indistinguishable in the dark, are scattered about. Looking closely reveals these shapes to be heaps of irregular rock chunks. Most are piled up around the edges of the room, though a few boulders lie on the floor. The air is heavy with a chalky-smelling dust.

If the characters enter this room, “Egil” slams the door behind them and locks the group inside. If anyone hesitates before entering the room, “Egil” tries to persuade the characters with anxious comments about the danger poor Lucius is in. If one character remains outside the room, “Egil” tries to shove the character inside and then, whether he succeeds or fails, closes the door. Otherwise, he just shuts the door and attacks any stragglers in the hall outside. Once the door closes, the operator, Lon (as a **commoner**), in an adjacent room viewing the chamber through a slot in the wall, switches on the machine.

If the group has already unmasked the false Egil, they should expect a trap here. As long as they don't close the door, Lon won't get the signal to start the machinery, and the group has time to examine their surroundings. The characters can easily jam the door open.

## THE DEATH TRAP

The operator in the mill engages the gears that connect the factory's steam-driven wheel to the crushing apparatus, which causes the room to shake and fills it with the roar of machinery. The trap runs for 6 rounds. The following entries tell you what happens during each round.

**Round 1:** Some rocks slide from the heaps. Each character on the floor of the trapped room must get a success on an Agility challenge roll or be struck by the sliding rock and take 1d6 damage.

**Round 2:** The machinery roars and the shaking intensifies. More rocks tumble from the heaps. Each character on the floor must get a success on an Agility challenge roll with 2 banes or take 2d6 damage from the sliding rock.

**Round 3:** The floor tips slightly and the hinged wall hangs partially open. The rock heaps slide downward and out into the pit. Each character on the floor must

get a success on an Agility challenge roll with 3 banes or take 2d6 damage. In addition, each character on the floor must get a success on an Agility challenge roll or fall prone, slide out the door, and fall onto the crushing mechanism (see Round 5 for details).

**Round 4:** The floor tips to a 45-degree angle. The hinged wall gapes wide, and the two massive grinding cylinders are clearly visible. The noise from large masses of rock being ground up in the crushers causes everyone in the room to become deafened until round 6. The remaining rock in the chamber slides into the machinery. Each character on the floor must get a success on an Agility challenge roll with 5 banes or take 4d6 damage.

In addition, the steeply canted floor is almost impossible to stand on. Any character on the floor must get a success on an Agility challenge roll with 5 banes or slide down to the waiting death below (see Round 5 for details). A success on a Strength challenge roll with 3 banes allows a character to become wedged in a corner.

**Round 5:** The bin bounces several times to shake loose any remaining rocks and characters. Only a success on a Strength challenge roll with 5 banes can prevent a character from falling into the grinding machinery.

Anything that falls into the machinery takes 6d6 damage plus 6d6 extra damage at the end of each round until the crushers are shut off. A character can climb out of the machinery with a success on a Strength challenge roll made with 5 banes.

**Round 6:** The bin returns to its standby position and the hinged wall closes. The grinding racket continues for the next two minutes, however. After that time, the operator (who has been watching through the opening opposite) opens the top bin doors slightly to make sure the job is done.

## EXIT STRATEGIES

Characters trapped in the room face almost certain death, but they might extricate themselves from this situation through clever play.

**The Door:** The metal door through which the group entered this room locks behind the characters. There is no keyhole or catch on this side, so a character using tools cannot unlock the door. The door has Defense 5 and Health 25. A character can break it down with a success on a Strength challenge roll made with 3 banes.

**Hinged Ceiling:** Any character inspecting the ceiling notices it has a seam running down the middle and there's a lock holding it closed. There's probably not enough time to pick the lock, but it can be destroyed (Defense 5, Health 10) or smashed with a success on a Strength challenge roll made



with 1 bane. Removing the lock allows a character that can reach the ceiling to push it open with a success on a Strength challenge roll made with 1 bane.

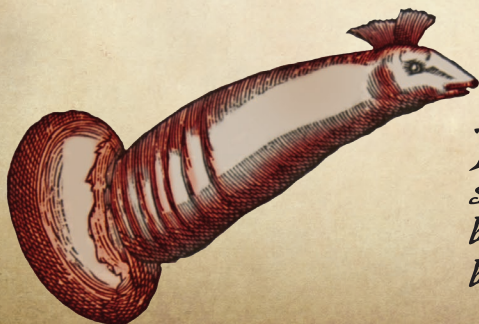
While the ceiling is held open, characters can scramble out from the room into a lidded bin above. The walls are sheer and without handholds, but the bin lid above is not locked. Characters finding a way up to the top can push open the lid and exit into a small masonry factory filled with workers who are most likely surprised to see the characters exiting from the bin.

**Hinged Wall:** Any character inspecting the walls notices the wall opposite the door is seamed, opening outward from the top (the rock spills out into the grinding machinery). A character can lift the wall section with a success on a Strength challenge roll with 2 banes. Doing so reveals the crushers a few feet below.

**Operator's Station:** On the opposite wall is a small opening through which the operator can observe the process; it is wide enough to admit a Size 1/2 or smaller creature. A Size I creature can attempt to squeeze through with a success on an Agility challenge roll with 3 banes. Once inside the station, and after the operator has been dealt with, a character can attempt to shut off the machinery. Doing so requires the character to use an action and get a success on an Intellect challenge roll with 1 bane. A character with any profession related to engineering or machinery gets an automatic success on the roll. Alternatively, the characters could use magic to convince Lon to shut off the machinery.

**Spells:** Any character attempting to cast a spell in the room after the trap has been triggered must make a Will challenge roll to maintain concentration amidst the vibrations and noise. The character makes the roll with 2 banes after the first round and 4 banes during the fifth round. The character casts the spell on a success, or the spell has no effect and the casting is wasted on a failure.

Be generous in interpreting whether a spell can aid the player characters. Any spell that arrests movement should keep characters from falling into the trap. Similarly, spells that allow rerolls or turn failures into successes can also help keep the characters trapped in this room alive.



*The anguile erupted from an egg the bosun had swallowed whole on a dare. It erupted from his backside during dinner, causing a torrent of blood and feces to spill out.*

## EVERYONE DIES

In the event everyone dies, the adventure ends. However, if you and your players wish to continue in spite of this, let them create new characters. Start them at the Temple of the Seer, where they have gathered to hear a request from Thuron to find his missing priest, Egil. The return of a group of wounded priests interrupts his briefing. Resume the adventure with **Part Four: The Siege**, skipping directly to "The Brotherhood Attacks." Egil will not be present and will most likely be dead. Slaan and McNeil (see **Location 8: Verlaine's House**) successfully frame the original group—posthumously—and join the cultists for the attack. If the new characters survive the battle, modify the **Aftermath: Thuron's Confession** to reflect the changed circumstances.

## MASONRY FACTORY

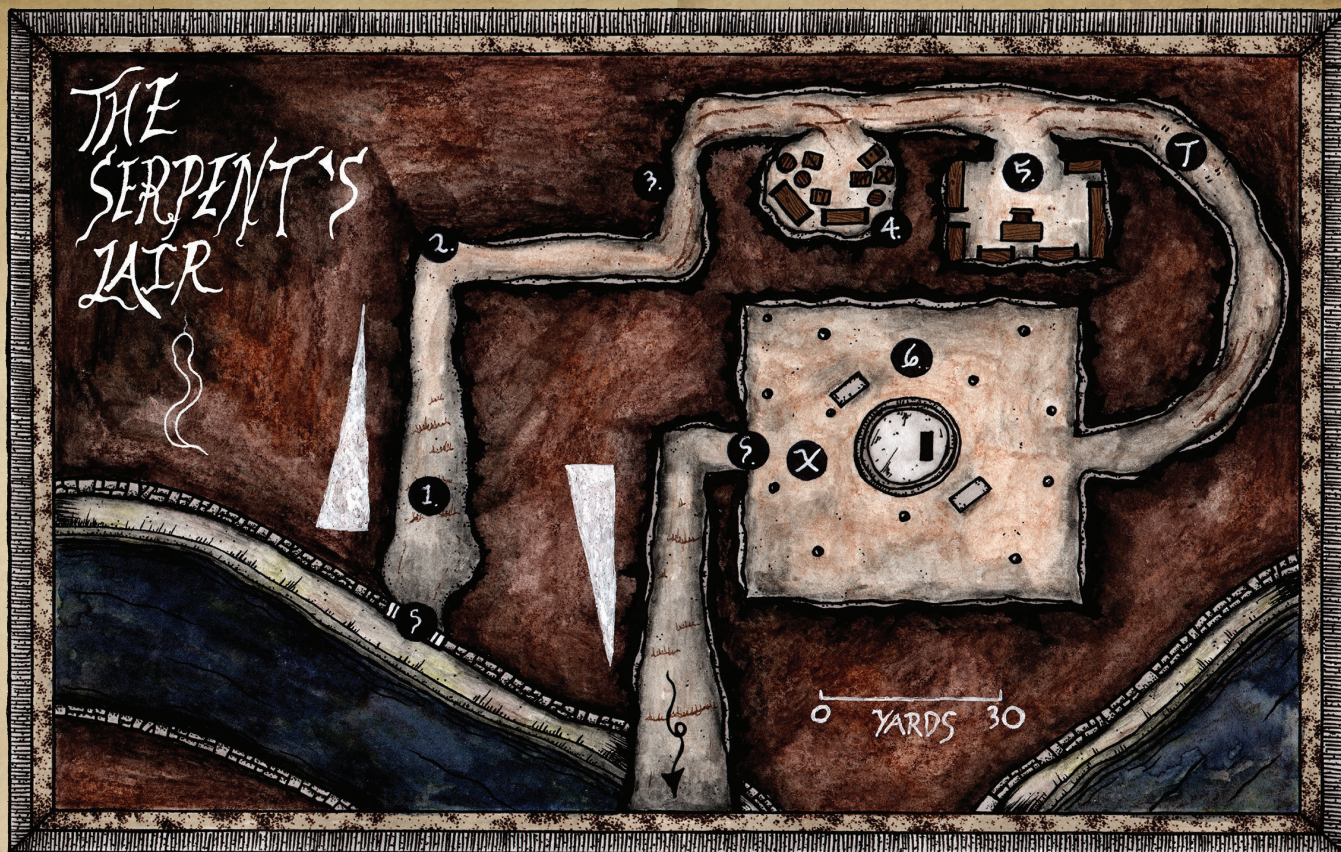
The group can investigate the masonry factory if they choose. The place is called Crocker's Brick and Mortar, and it's only a few minutes from Verlaine's house. Crocker (as a **commoner**) owns the place. He made a lot of money from the lighthouse scheme but he'll be furious if his machinery has been wrecked. If the characters describe the operator they saw, Crocker identifies him as Lon, a new employee. "He kept to himself," Crocker says, "and spent a lot of time praying." After the death trap is sprung, Lon never returns to work if he gets away.

## LOCATION 7: THE SERPENT'S NEST

If Nikko locks the PCs in the death trap, he runs down the sewer to the real temple and goes inside. If the characters escape the trap and return to the sewer, anyone examining the floor for tracks can find the ones Nikko left with a success on a Perception challenge roll made with 1 bane. A tracker, hunter, or similar professional automatically finds the tracks. In any event, the tracks lead to the better-hidden door and the temple beyond.

Unless otherwise mentioned, all locations are dark.

**1. The Drop:** This passage has rough-hewn walls, a low ceiling (about a 5-foot clearance), and slopes down at a steep angle until it turns east. Characters can move down the passage as if it were difficult terrain, but if they move more quickly, they must get a success on an Agility challenge roll or fall, sliding to the bottom and taking 2d6 damage when they reach the end.



**2. Corridor:** These corridors were originally tunnels connecting a series of caverns once inhabited by degenerate serpent people. When the Brotherhood moved in, they started to widen the tunnels and smooth out the walls. They haven't had much time to make much progress, however, nor have they been able to set up such extensive defenses as the old temple had.

**3. Long Hallway:** Characters inspecting the floor of this hall spot serpent tracks along the floors, as well as signs that numerous heavy objects have been dragged through.

**4. Storeroom:** The shelves lining the walls of this ellipsoid chamber suggest it serves as a storeroom. The shelves have been nailed into the rock with long spikes and hold cartons of all shapes and sizes. Among the goods are incense, black candles, oil, inks and dyes of unknown origin, ceremonial daggers, various animal parts in jars, and the like (the total value of these things is about 5 gc, but their bulk and quantities mean hauling out all the goods will be difficult).

**5. Library:** Shelves line the walls of this chamber, each laden with books—all manner of tomes, written in the incomprehensible script of the serpents. Against the far wall of the room is a desk, whose top is uncluttered.

The obscure volumes are difficult to understand even if deciphered. Examining them leaves a sense of disquiet but nothing of practical use. The entire

collection might fetch 10 gc from a collector. If the characters search the desk, they find the drawers full of writing paper and ink.

A more careful examination, and a success on a Perception challenge roll with 1 bane, uncovers a small book bound in leather. The tome bears the title, in the Common Tongue, *The True and Secrette Historie of the Brotherhoode of Free-Port*, and has the Yellow Sign impressed upon the front cover. The text, also in the Common Tongue, is filled with illustrations and out-of-date maps. If the characters inspect this book, they come away with a summary of the early history of Valossa, including the appearance of the Unspeakable One, but with a twist. The book claims Freeport's temple of the Seer was founded by the Brotherhood to allow disguised serpent people to move about in the surface world. For a complete summary, see **Handout B**.

Everything in the book is true—except for the final detail. The document is a plant, which Drac plans to flourish to great effect during his speech after this night's scheduled bloodbath. "A history found in the very clutches of the serpents themselves," he will announce, "proves the Seer's priests were actually the Brotherhood all along!"

**6. The Temple Reconstructed:** As shown on "The Serpent's Lair" map, there has been placed a magical trap. Characters moving through the area cause a chime to sound in the temple beyond, alerting the cultists there to the presence of intruders. However, the Brotherhood have not been expecting the

characters to find their new temple, trusting in Nikko to dispose of them, so they are not well prepared to deal with this threat.

A searching character can make a Perception challenge roll with 3 banes. On a success, the character discovers a gleaming sigil painted on the center of the floor inside the circled section of passage. Any spell or ability that can end a rank 1 spell can remove this security measure.

The passage ends at an enormous hall dripping with stalactites, walls formed of stone that seem to bend impossibly in upon themselves. Flames from braziers illuminate the room and reveal a gargantuan statue of the Unspeakable One at the center, with the trappings of the former temple surrounding it. Nearby, a hooded figure slowly waves a censer. A brazier of hot coals, an iron heating in it, stands next to the altar, and strapped to the altar's top is none other than Egil.

A lone cultist (see below) watches over Egil and conducts preliminary sanctification for the planned ceremony. He raises the alarm to summon assistance from degenerate serpent people (see below), who begin arriving from the tunnels in 3 rounds (2 per round, until a total of 6 have entered the temple).

Nikko (see page 15) might also be present, if the group has not yet dealt with him. He arrives with the first wave of reinforcements.

## CULTIST

DIFFICULTY 5

Size 1 human

**Perception** 10 (+0)

**Defense** 10; **Health** 15; **Insanity** 3; **Corruption** 6

**Strength** 10 (+0), **Agility** 10 (+0), **Intellect** 10 (+0), **Will** 11 (+1)

**Speed** 10

**Mad Certainty** When the cultist makes an attack roll or challenge roll, it can choose to make the roll with 1 boon. On a failure, the cultist takes 1d6 damage.

### ATTACK OPTIONS

**Long Knife** (melee) +0 (1d6)

### MAGIC

**Power** 1

**Destruction** ruin (2), dissolve (1), rend (1)



## DEGENERATE SERPENT PERSON

DIFFICULTY 5

Size 1 serpent person

**Perception** 8 (-2); darksight

**Defense** 12 (large shield); **Health** 11; **Insanity** 8; **Corruption** 5

**Strength** 11 (+1), **Agility** 10 (+0), **Intellect** 8 (-2), **Will** 9 (-1)

**Speed** 10

### ATTACK OPTIONS

**Spear** (melee) +1 with 1 boon (1d6 plus Venomous Bite on attack roll 20+)

**Large Shield** (melee) +1 with 1 boon (1d3)

**Venomous Bite** The degenerate serpent person makes a Strength roll against the target's Agility. On a success, the serpent person bites the target, dealing 1d3 damage. In addition, the target must get a success on a Strength challenge roll or take 1d6 extra damage and gain 1 Insanity.

The cultist defends the altar until reinforcements arrive, at which time he tries to flee and warn the temple elders, if he survives that long, while the serpent people fight to the death. If Nikko is present and sees the battle going badly, he slips away to warn the Brotherhood.

The interim temple priest (a serpent person named K'Ral) is not present, being engaged in the greater assault on the Seer's temple. However, the magic alarm in the corridor leading to this room has alerted her to the presence of intruders. This forces her to move up the schedule by several hours—if the characters act quickly, they will just barely beat the attackers to the temple.

## A FIENDISH PLOT

If the characters examine Egil, they find him covered in bruises. He doesn't trust them at first, sure that they're disguised cultists carrying out another bizarre scheme. But if the characters untie him and tend to his injuries (he has 10 damage), he realizes the characters are whom they claim to be.

The brazier contains a branding iron with the Yellow Sign cast into it. Egil tells the group that the serpents were planning to brand him, for some purpose he could not understand. He doesn't remember much more, though. He was ambushed while on an errand for the temple. Several hours of nightmares followed—the only thing he remembers clearly is a voice saying, "After tonight, your kind will be out of the way for good."

*Although the creature was diminutive, roughly the size of a small dog, each tentacle was covered in suckers that could tear one's flesh off if removed forcefully while grappling.*

Searching around the temple turns up, with a success on a Perception challenge roll, a hidden niche containing a document written in Ancient Valossan and inscribed with the Yellow Sign. Literate characters can make out their own names interspersed occasionally, but without the assistance of someone fluent in the language, they can glean little from this document. Translating the document by any means reveals it is the outline of Drac's speech to the city. It's an important piece of evidence. Egil can suggest that someone at the temple might be able to translate it.

## LOCATION 8: VERLAINE'S HOUSE

While standing near the altar, any character might notice, with a success on a Perception challenge roll, that the candle flames and incense smoke flicker from an unseen source of air. A bit of poking around reveals a secret door behind the statue of the Unspeakable One. It opens onto an ascending ramp—a twin of the one that descended into the catacombs. Characters can move up the passage as if it were difficult terrain,

but if they move more quickly, they must get a success on an Agility challenge roll or fall, sliding back down to the bottom and taking 2d6 damage when they reach the end.

At the top is another door, easily opened, which leads into Verlaine's wine cellar.

**1. Wine Cellar:** This room is well stocked with wine. A staircase climbs up to the floor above (see **room 2**) at the far end of the room. Open crates are scattered about, now stripped of their treasure and temple relics. The "Bierce Vintners" stamp is visible on their sides.

**2. Main Hall:** The stairs from the cellar end here and a second staircase ascends to the top floor. If the characters head upstairs, halfway up they hear a cry of pain.

The stairs up to the top floor are lined with paintings of Verlaine's merchant freighters. From the top of the stairs, the characters can see a pool of blood seeping out from under the door to **room 7**.

**3. Kitchen:** The kitchen is small but well appointed. The larder is full of spices and a variety of smoked meats and fish; the cabinets are filled with numerous finely crafted sets of silverware and china. Examining the cabinets reveals the silverware is in disarray, and much of it seems to be missing.

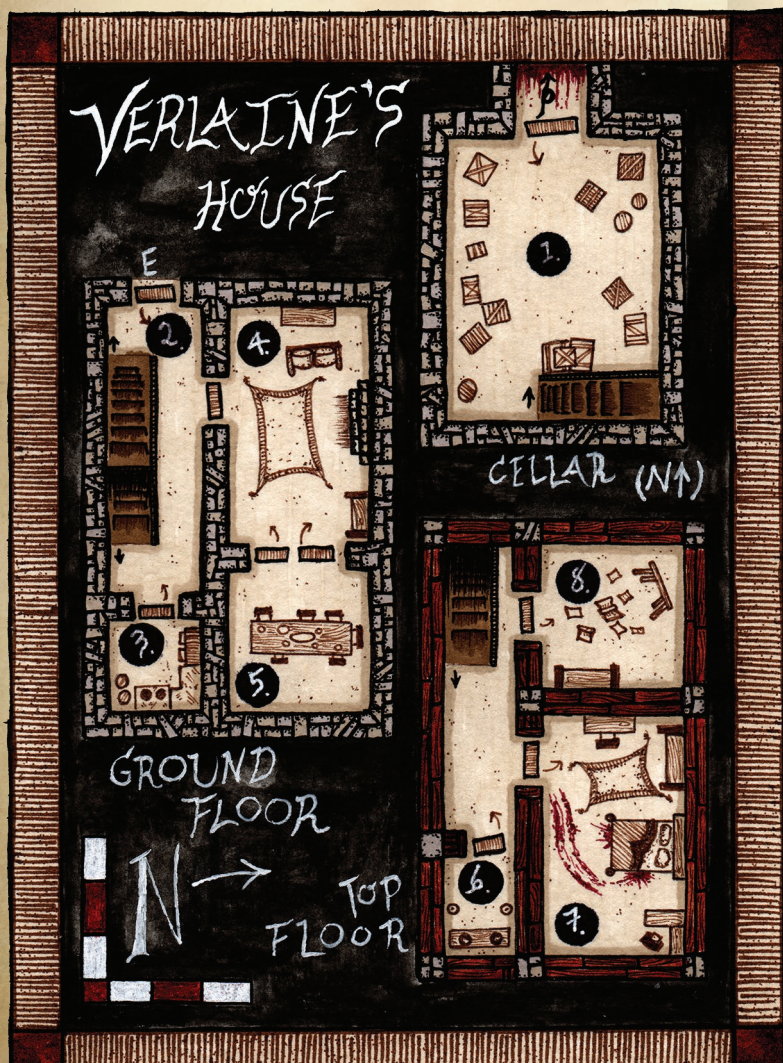
**4. Living Room:** A richly furnished room, full of overstuffed couches, chairs, and divans, it boasts large bay windows that overlook the street and a fireplace against the far wall. On the mantle are trophies of indeterminate origin. Over them hangs a portrait of an elder Verlaine.

**5. Dining Room:** A lavish meal has been laid out on a long table of polished oak wood. The silver plates and utensils mark Verlaine's station well. Their delicate etchings are artfully rendered, and seem designed to show that Verlaine is not just a rich man, but also a man of taste. The sumptuous food spread across the table is untouched and cold.

**6. Bathroom:** Aside from a few copies of the *Shipping News*, there's nothing of interest here.

**7. Bedroom:** A room in dark oak, heavy wardrobes line the walls and a canopy bed stands in the center. The bed holds what's left of Councilor Verlaine, and four dead guards lay on the floor, including the captain, Lloyd (though if you plan to make further use of him, you can have him be dying instead of dead). All have been hacked almost beyond recognition. Any character that can see this room must get a success on a Will challenge roll or gain 1 Insanity.

When the characters enter the room, they get a nasty surprise: a Brotherhood assassin, Slaan (see below), springs out of a wardrobe, taking the group by surprise. After the first round, his accomplice, McNeil (see below), joins him from **room 8** if he has not been dealt with first.



## SLAAN

DIFFICULTY 50

### Size 1 human

**Perception** 11 (+1)  
**Defense** 15 (hard leather); **Health** 31; **Insanity** 1; **Corruption** 3  
**Strength** 10 (+0), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 11 (+1), **Will** 11 (+1)  
**Speed** 10  
**Uncanny Skill** Slaan makes all challenge rolls with 1 boon.

### ATTACK OPTIONS

**Scimitar** (melee) +3 with 1 boon (4d6 + 1 plus Assassinate plus Poison)  
**Long Knife** (melee) +3 with 1 boon (4d6 plus Assassinate plus Poison)  
**Bow** (long range) +3 with 1 boon (3d6 plus Assassinate plus Poison)  
**Assassinate** If the target was surprised or if Slaan was hidden from it, the target must get a success on a Strength challenge roll or take damage equal to its Health.  
**Poison** A living target must get a success on a Strength challenge roll or take 1d6 damage and become poisoned for 1 minute.

### SPECIAL ACTIONS

**Nimble Recovery** Slaan can use an action to heal 7 damage and then move up to half his Speed without triggering a free attack. He cannot use Nimble Recovery again until he completes a rest.  
**Quick Reflexes** Slaan can use a triggered action on his turn to hide or retreat.

## MCNEIL

DIFFICULTY 25

### Size 1 human

**Perception** 10 (+0)  
**Defense** 17 (mail, large shield); **Health** 22; **Insanity** 1;  
**Corruption** 1  
**Strength** 12 (+2), **Agility** 11 (+1), **Intellect** 10 (+0), **Will** 9 (-1)  
**Speed** 10

### ATTACK OPTIONS

**Sword** (melee) +2 with 1 boon (2d6 + 2 plus 1d6 on attack roll 20+)  
**Crossbow** (long range) +1 with 1 boon (2d6 plus 1d6 on attack roll 20+)

### SPECIAL ACTIONS

**Catch Your Breath** McNeil can use an action, or a triggered action on his turn, to heal 5 damage. He cannot use Catch Your Breath again until he completes a rest.

The cultists are fanatics, like all Brotherhood members, but they also recognize that the mission—framing the characters for Verlaine's murder—is of prime importance. The cult can't afford to have their bodies found as evidence, so if it looks like they cannot defeat the player characters, they leap from the window to escape. These two know the neighborhood intimately and can quickly disappear down side streets. Characters attempting to follow them must get successes on Perception challenge rolls with 2 banes. If there is no chance of escape,

the cultists smash flasks of oil about the room and light the place on fire. They stay and burn with the rest of the building if there is no other recourse, destroying all trace of their identities.

Once the characters dispatch the cultists, they can find several interesting items on their persons. Both are carrying numerous valuables—golden goblets, silverware, jewelry, and about 50 gc, most of it marked with Verlaine's seal. Keep in mind that if the characters make off with the loot, it counts as stolen property, which might result in further repercussions.

McNeil possesses a rough map of the Seer's temple—with arrows pointing to the entrances of the building (see **Handout D**). Slaan also has a document, written in the Common Tongue, allegedly addressed to the characters by Verlaine (see **Handout E** for the full text).

The cultists were going to plant the phony deputation order in Verlaine's study, which would be "proof" of Drac's version of the massacre. The map was distributed to a number of Brotherhood agents, who are to descend upon the temple this night and carry out the remainder of their grisly scheme. The cultists were planning to stash the loot in the group's lodgings, to show just what kind of lowdown double-crossers they were. (Of course, the characters might aid in their own framing if they carry off the loot.)

If the cultists make their escape, they warn K'Ral of the party's interference and can be present at the attack (see **Part Four: The Siege**, below). The incriminating note can't be left in Verlaine's house now, so they plant it in the group's lodgings.

Slaan's document isn't likely to make much sense, but the map should make something click. If the players are still somewhat confused, have them make Intellect challenge rolls. On a success, they remember what Egil heard about the Brotherhood wiping his order out tonight. This nudge ought to be enough to make them realize that the Brotherhood plan to attack the temple this very night and that there's not a moment to lose!

**8. Study:** This room is a mess. Empty bookcases line the wall while their books lay scattered on the floor. A big, dark-wood desk is similarly ransacked. The cultists destroyed most of the papers in the room (nothing incriminating, they just wanted to make it look convincing). They were going to put the group's "contract" near the top of the heap.

If the PCs enter this room before investigating the bedroom, they encounter McNeil here. After one round, Slaan arrives, sneaking to take the group by surprise.

# PART IV: THE SIEGE

*In which the characters fight for their lives, and a snake sheds his skin*

The group, with Egil in tow, can slip out of Verlaine's place easily. They can use the secret passage again or try the street—the other guards on the block aren't paid to watch any buildings but the one to which they have been assigned, so they don't pay the characters much mind.

If the characters try to contact a member of the Watch on the way back to the temple of the Seer, they find that, mysteriously, none are to be found. Drac has pulled them back to the Courts and the Council building on the pretense of heightened security, thus facilitating the temple invasion.

## LOCATION 9: THE TEMPLE OF THE SEER

The center of worship of the Seer in Freeport, this great building has twenty-eight cells to house the priests on the first floor. The two rear towers house the High Priest and his second in command. The upper floors contain all the library stacks and documents. The side doors to the temple are locked to the outside but can be used as exits as they unlock from the inside. The temple's upper levels are not described in detail, as they do not play a part in this adventure.

**1. Reception Desk:** All visitors to the temple must pass the long desk occupied by the on-duty priest, who points visitors in the right direction and generally greets all who visit the temple. Those who seek an audience with the temple leaders are shown to one of the two sitting rooms (area 2). A small gem under the desk can be used to alert the temple to danger. One merely has to touch the gem and a loud chiming noise sounds through the entire temple.

**2. Sitting Rooms:** These two rooms are richly decorated and contain comfortable chairs and sofas. Visitors awaiting an audience with temple leaders are sent to wait in one of these two rooms. The doors leading out are locked.

**3. Access Towers:** These towers provide access to all floors of the temple. Only members of the temple are permitted to use them.

**4. The Great Atrium:** Skylights set in the ceiling some 30 yards overhead light this enormous atrium. Archways line the walls and lead to the cells on the main floor and to the libraries on the upper levels. Numerous staircases line the walls of the atrium in a crisscrossing pattern that allows access to the many levels of the temple.

**A. Statues:** Several statues depict the Seer in his scholarly and wise incarnation, while others represent renowned heroes of the priesthood.

**B. The Radiant Arch:** A steady, bright, yellow light illuminates this archway, representing the light of knowledge.

**5. Priest Cells:** These areas are cells for housing the temple's priests and acolytes. With few furnishings other than beds and trunks, each cell houses two to four occupants.

**6. High Priest's Office:** The high priest uses this chamber as an office and, from here, conducts the day-to-day business of running the temple. There are always 2 acolytes here waiting on the high priest when he is at work. Lockable sliding panels can close off the archways leading to this area when necessary.

**7. Office of the High Priest's Assistant:** A mirror of the high priest's office, the temple's second in command uses this room.

**8. High Priest's Tower:** The high priest lives here. The tower rises up the entire height of the building and is quite luxurious. The door to this area is always kept locked.

**9. Assistant's Tower:** This tower is identical to the one occupied by the high priest except that it only encompasses the first two floors of the temple.

## SPEAKING WITH THURON

When the group arrives, they might gain an audience with the high priest, Thuron, if they insist on the importance of their message. At first, the high priest distrusts the characters, but he does come around after hearing Egil's story. If the characters have brought the recovered document with them, he reacts with alarm, stating that he has known this day would come since he first learned of the Brotherhood's activities in the city. He tells the characters he will reveal what is written in the document if they survive the night, but he believes the enemy will descend upon them soon, so he tells Egil to awaken the acolytes and to prepare for the attack.

Finally, Thuron asks the group for their help in protecting the temple. He will not abandon the holy place to the Brotherhood, nor will he allow his acolytes to be hunted down, one by one. If the group agrees to help, Thuron suggests they wait at the entrances marked on the map. He figures the Brotherhood planned to catch the priests asleep and unprepared. With any luck, they won't realize their scheme has been found out and will simply attack as planned. Just as the characters move to the doors, however, they open.

## THE BROTHERHOOD ATTACKS

Six acolytes (for a total of 18 Brotherhood cultists plus K'Ral) of the Seer arrive at each entrance. Many appear wounded. The acolytes claim that they were ambushed by shadowy figures in robes carrying long, crooked knives while out in town. They split up, but they are certain they were followed. At this point, the acolytes start shouting out conflicting suggestions: evacuate, call the Watch, leave the temple to take care of its own, and so on.

The acolytes are all fakes, of course. They murdered the real acolytes and appropriated their clothing, smearing their clothes and bodies with blood from the slaughter. Then, using magic, they adopted the appearances of the dead acolytes. K'Ral, a serpent person priest in human guise, leads the group at the western door. If Slaan or McNeil made their escape from Verlaine's house, they are encountered here. Slaan stands with the unaccompanied acolytes, while McNeil is with K'Ral's group.

## UNCOVERING THE RUSE

If the characters call on Thuron or Egil, they identify the priests as being legitimate.

The false acolytes confuse the situation by shouting and arguing. K'Ral acts reasonable, although scared. She even suggests using magic as a good way to test for intruders.

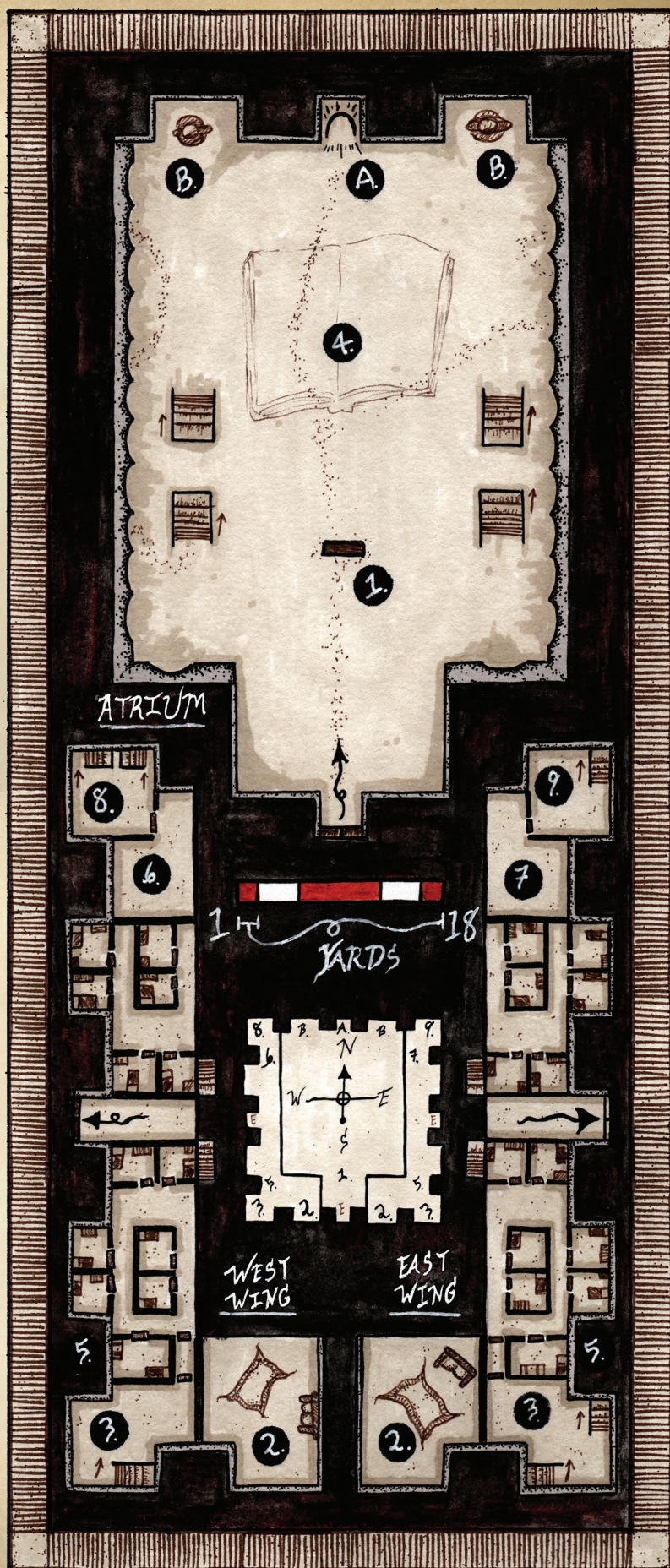
Any character inspecting the cultists can make a Perception challenge roll with 1 bane. On a success, the character discerns the illusions disguising the cultists.

As well, a character who gets a success on a Perception challenge roll with 3 banes notices a heavy gold ring on K'Ral's finger. If that doesn't raise suspicion, have the player make an Intellect challenge roll with 1 bane. On a success, the character remembers something Egil said long ago: his order takes a vow of poverty.

Finally, characters interacting with K'Ral might smell a faint scent of caves on him. A success on a Perception challenge roll reveals that the other priests have a similar odor about them too.

If questioned about their backgrounds, or about the Seer's temple, the disguised cultists become evasive. They can give plausible enough answers to general questions on temple operations, and even the layout of their rooms (Milos did very complete surveys), but they start to fall apart on personal questions. In the unlikely event that the PCs don't reveal *any* of the imposters, Thuron can step in to lend a hand, explaining that he has a "special skill" in this area.

Once revealed, or if Thuron takes action to identify the intruders, K'Ral gives the attack order.





## K'RAL

DIFFICULTY 25

*Size 1 serpent person*

**Perception** 10 (+0); **darksight**  
**Defense** 15 (mail); **Health** 27; **Insanity** 3; **Corruption** 3  
**Strength** 10 (+0), **Agility** 11 (+1), **Intellect** 10 (+0), **Will** 11 (+1)  
**Speed** 10; swimmer

**Sorcery** Whenever K'Ral casts an attack spell, she can use this talent to make the attack roll with 1 boon or to impose 1 bane on challenge rolls made to resist the attack.

Each time she uses this talent, she gains 1 strain. If she has any strain when she completes a rest, her strain total drops to 0.

### ATTACK OPTIONS

**Rapier** (melee) +1 with 1 boon (2d6 + 1)  
**Teeth** (melee) +1 with 1 boon (1d3 plus 1d6)  
**Bow** (long range) +1 with 1 boon (2d6)

### SPECIAL ACTIONS

**Catch Your Breath** K'Ral can use an action, or a triggered action on her turn, to heal 6 damage. Once she uses this talent, she cannot do so again until she completes a rest.

**Change Shape** K'Ral can use an action to assume the form of a different living creature. The new form must have a humanoid shape and be either Size 1/2 or Size 1. K'Ral remains in this form until she becomes incapacitated or she uses a triggered action to return to her normal form. She can use this talent twice and regains expended uses when she completes a rest.

### MAGIC

**Power** 1  
**Destruction** *rend* (2)

### END OF THE ROUND

**Sorcerous Outburst** At the end of any round in which K'Ral has gained 1 or more strain, she must make a Will challenge roll with a number of banes equal to her strain total. On a failure, magical energy explodes from a point within her reach into a sphere with a radius in yards equal to her strain total. The energy deals 1d6 damage to everything in the area other than her. A creature in the area that gets a success on an Agility challenge roll instead takes half the damage. Once K'Ral triggers her Sorcerous Outburst, her strain total drops to 0.

## BROTHERHOOD CULTISTS

DIFFICULTY 5

*Size 1 human*

**Perception** 10 (+0)  
**Defense** 10; **Health** 14; **Insanity** 4; **Corruption** 2  
**Strength** 10 (+0), **Agility** 12 (+2), **Intellect** 10 (+0), **Will** 11 (+1)  
**Speed** 10

### ATTACK OPTIONS

**Long Knife** (melee) +2 with 1 boon (1d6)

### SPECIAL ACTIONS

**Unhinged Effort** When a cultist gets a failure on an attack roll, it can take 1d6 damage to turn the failure into a success.

If the cultists are identified, two rush Thuron, two attack Egil, ten attack the group, and the rest fight the temple attendants. To confuse the situation, K'Ral pretends to defend the temple (holding back her blows; the blood disguises this fact) until she can get a clear shot at the group's most obvious threat.

Unless K'Ral is revealed by the time the fight is over, she is still in a position to cause great damage to the temple. Looking around after the fight, the characters might realize, with a success on a Perception challenge roll, that their erstwhile ally is nowhere to be seen. A search of the temple finds a couple of the cells locked. In one of these, K'Ral has already dispatched a pair of minor temple attendants, and she is in the process of putting the sword to two more in the other. If interrupted, she fights to the death in an effort to do as much damage as possible.

Thuron and Egil roused a dozen acolytes to help in the defense of the temple. They begin appearing a round or two after the cultists arrive at the entrances. The resident priests are not skilled combatants, but trust in Thuron's leadership in the battle (or in his absence, that of a charismatic player character).

## ACOLYTE

DIFFICULTY 1

Size 1 human

**Perception** 10 (+0)  
**Defense** 10; **Health** 10; **Insanity** 0; **Corruption** 0  
**Strength** 10 (+0), **Agility** 10 (+0), **Intellect** 10 (+0), **Will** 11 (+1)  
**Speed** 10

### ATTACK OPTIONS

**Club** (melee) +0 (1d6)

In the unlikely event that Thuron is killed in the battle, the player characters are in for a nasty surprise: the old priest's body reverts to the horrid form of a serpent man! Egil knows nothing of this and reacts with shock. In this situation, you'll have to convert much of the conversation below into documents hidden in the high priest's quarters.

You might find that running a fight with dozens of combatants can be challenging. If so, focus the combat on the player characters and just describe what happens around them. If the characters are winning the day, so too should the Seer's temple. If not, Brother Egil and the remaining attendants might start falling.

## BROTHER EGIL

DIFFICULTY 5

Size 1 human

**Perception** 11 (+1)  
**Defense** 10; **Health** 14; **Insanity** 0; **Corruption** 0  
**Strength** 10 (+0), **Agility** 10 (+0), **Intellect** 11 (+1), **Will** 11 (+1)  
**Speed** 10

### ATTACK OPTIONS

**Dagger** (melee or short range) +0 (1d3)

### MAGIC

**Power** 1  
**Divination** *eavesdrop* (2), *augur* (1)

## THURON

DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1 serpent person

**Perception** 13 (+3); *darksight*  
**Defense** 10; **Health** 26; **Insanity** 0; **Corruption** 1  
**Strength** 10 (+0), **Agility** 10 (+0), **Intellect** 12 (+2), **Will** 13 (+3)  
**Speed** 10; *swimmer*

### ATTACK OPTIONS

**Club** (melee) +0 (1d6)

### SPECIAL ACTIONS

**Change Shape** K'Stallo can use an action, or a triggered action on his turn, to transform into a different living creature. The new form must have a humanoid shape and be either Size 1/2 or Size 1. He remains in this form until he becomes incapacitated or uses a triggered action at any time to return to his normal form. K'Stallo can use this talent three times and regains expended uses when he completes a rest.

**Shared Recovery** K'Stallo can use an action to heal 6 damage and let one other creature within short range heal damage equal to its healing rate. K'Stallo can use Shared Recovery twice and regains expended uses when he completes a rest.

### MAGIC

**Power** 2  
**Arcana** *arcane armor* (3), *arcane sight* (2), *unerring darts* (2)  
**Divination** *eavesdrop* (3), *foretell* (2), *reading* (1)



*The creature's umbrella-like maw was magnificent! It was so large that it swallowed one of the jolly boats whole, crew and all, as it skinned the surface of the water.*

# AFTERMATH: THURON'S CONFESSION

When the battle ends, Thuron, Egil, and other survivors tend to the fallen to the best of their abilities. Any cultists taken prisoner can reveal the basics of their plan to wipe out the temple and implicate the priests as being cultists. After, Thuron invites the characters to accompany him to the tombs, where they can speak in private.

The tombs sit underneath the temple and are cold and quiet, lit faintly by luminescent moss growing on the walls. Thuron leads the characters to an unmarked sarcophagus and then reveals the truth.

"I have lied to you all. I went astray for the best of reasons—but nonetheless I went astray. I can only swear to you I had no part in what you are about to see." With that, he opens the sarcophagus to reveal the real Thuron's remains.

"I am not Thuron. My name is K'Stallo. I am the last priest of Yig.

"The Brotherhood were not the only serpent people to survive the destruction of Valossa with their intellects intact. Yig preserved some of his faithful in the farthest corners of the world, but evil—and stupidity—have a greater attraction over the centuries than does peaceful worship. Many of my number reverted to simple animals, or worse, joined the Brotherhood.

"Lucius found us, during his wanderings, in a small mountain village on the continent. I realized the knowledge he had accumulated might be able to lead us to a closer communion with Yig—an understanding of the divine that has all but faded away over the centuries. So I followed him during his search and eventually to this city.

"I slipped into this temple in human guise one evening to look through the scrolls Lucius had brought back from his wanderings. While I was searching, I discovered Thuron dead at his desk. His heart had given out during the night. At that moment, I made a fateful choice, perhaps not a wise one, or even a brave one, but one that made the most sense. I took Thuron's place and devoted myself to studying the scrolls. I even slipped into Lucius's chambers one evening to see if he had held onto any others. I believe I startled you, Egil. For that I apologize.

"I should have spotted Milos at once, but I was too engrossed in my work. When I learned of your adventures with the Brotherhood, I should have abandoned my charade, but I was too greedy for knowledge.

"Now I will render you the only service I can—far too little, far too late. This document promises great danger for Freeport—and for the world. It is a public speech, an explanation of tonight's events. I will translate it without remarking upon the obvious—it is all lies."

Refer to **Handout C** for the complete text of this document.

"It is the next part of the document that troubles me the most. For the note is addressed to Sea Lord Drac. And his name is marked with the Yellow Sign."

What will Drac do now that his scheme has been foiled? What was Milos putting in those lighthouse plans? And will the Unspeakable One plan a return engagement in Freeport? *Madness in Freeport*, the conclusion of the trilogy, answers all these questions and more!

## FURTHER ADVENTURES

If the group has not yet reached level 7, you can run some interim adventures before moving on to *Madness in Freeport*. Some ideas follow.

**A New Patron:** Whether K'Stallo keeps up his impersonation is up to you, but if he does, with help from the characters, he could be a great source of interesting information. He can locate items of interest and then send the characters on missions in the city or beyond to retrieve them.

**A Finger a Week:** The characters run into Brother Egil one day, and notice he's been roughed up. He brushes off the incident, blaming it on local toughs. A few days later, they see him again, and his left hand is bandaged. It seems that the good brother is missing his pinky finger. A little prodding gets Egil to reveal his secret. Egil's order takes a vow of poverty, yet Egil had a large amount of gold to hire the group on two different occasions. As it turns out, he borrowed the gold from a moneylender and now it's time to pay the man back. Brother Egil hasn't been able to raise the money, so the moneylender's enforcers have taken his pinky, and promised to take another finger for each week he doesn't pay. The characters might take it upon themselves to get involved, thus encountering the criminal underworld of Freeport for the first time. They could take on the moneylender, but he has powerful friends....

**On the High Seas:** The group discovers exotic goods are flowing into Freeport for the construction of the lighthouse. They might decide to get a ship of their own and engage in a little enlightened piracy (which is, after all, a Freeport tradition). Locating and interdicting ships with vital supplies could slow the construction of the temple while the characters try to figure out what Drac's plot is all about.



*Handout A*

## The True and Secrette Historie of the Brotherhoode of Free-Port

Thousands of years ago, serpent people ruled the world. Their empire centered on a continent called Valossa—a vast island of cyclopean cities, its population devoted to the peaceful worship of Yig, the serpent god. Then this great race vanished overnight, their world-spanning civilization destroyed by the hand of the Unspeakable One, a loathsome deity born outside describable space. Most of the serpent people degenerated into savagery, but a few retained their sanity, including some of the cultists who had summoned the grotesque god.

The Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign, for that is what the cultists called themselves, persevered and transmitted their black secrets down the generations. The cult found a home in the remains of the once-great Valossa. You know it as Freeport. Over the centuries, the Brotherhood flourished along with the city. And it found a way for its members to move about in the daylight world. Its craftiest, most powerful priests disguised themselves as humans and established a church above ground: the temple of the Seer.

*Handout B*

### *Handout C*

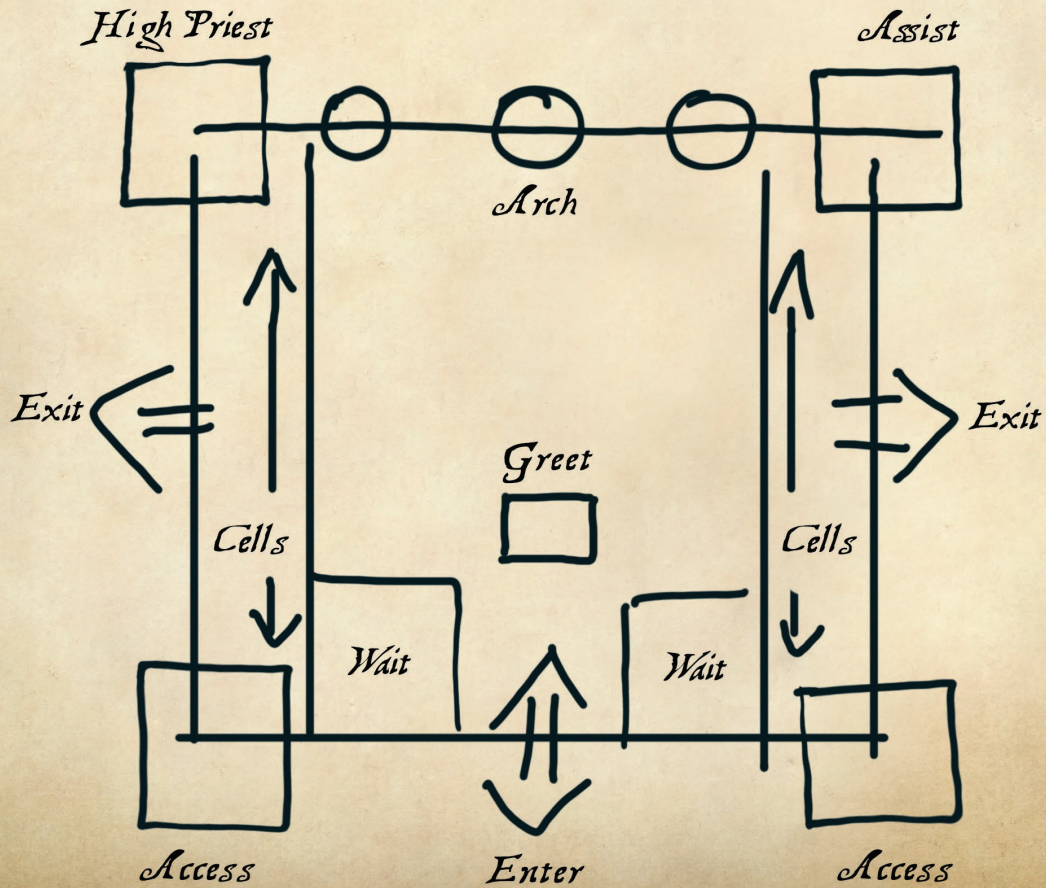
This evening, Councilor Verlaine and the clergy of the God of Knowledge have been slain. Their murderers are the adventurers who of late discovered the caverns beneath our town. After an investigation by the Council and the City Watch, we have pieced together the truth.

Chief Councilor Verlaine, that great servant to the city of Freeport, heard rumors about town of unwholesome activities at the temple of the God of Knowledge. He hired the wandering mercenaries to investigate, and they made a tremendous discovery: the temple and its priesthood were a cover for the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign, a grotesque cult of serpent people. The mercenaries joined the temple to gain its secrets, but they proved treacherous to both masters. They revealed the caves beneath the city and threatened to expose even more secrets unless the Brotherhood paid them a fortune in gold.

The Brotherhood agreed to their demands, on condition that the mercenaries accept one final task from their serpent masters—assassinate their erstwhile employer, Councilor Verlaine. The double-crossers carried out the grim job, but they quickly found themselves double-crossed. The Brotherhood refused to pay them their blood money. The mercenaries went mad with rage and were killed in battle while slaughtering the cultists.

We mourn the loss of Councilor Verlaine, but his efforts brought this menace to light and rooted it out, once and for all.

Handout D

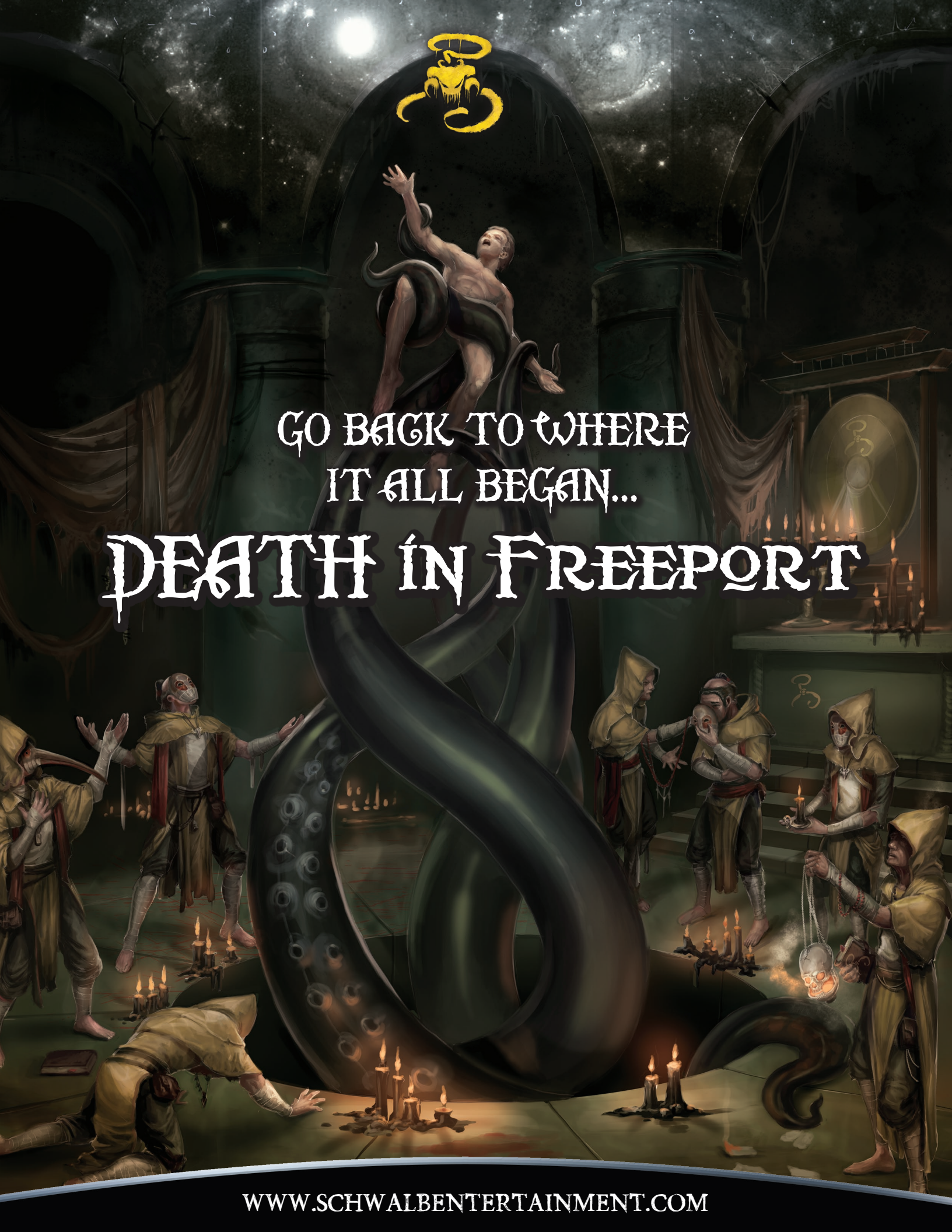


As a duly elected officer of the City of Freeport,  
I appoint deputies of this council to carry out, with  
full discretion and authority, the infiltration of the  
temple of the God of Knowledge, and uncover what  
secrets it may hold.

Signed,  
Councilor Verlaine



Handout E



GO BACK TO WHERE  
IT ALL BEGAN...

# DEATH IN FREEPORT



# THE TERROR GROWS!

*A Classic Freeport Adventure for Shadow of the Demon Lord!*

The Freeport Trilogy continues with this rollicking adventure set in Chris Pramas's dynamic fantasy city. Having uncovered a vile cult in the classic adventure, *Death in Freeport*, the player characters learn that not all cultists lurk beneath the streets, and not all serpent people are agents of evil. This edition of *Terror in Freeport* brings the thrilling second chapter to life for use with *Shadow of the Demon Lord* and gives you everything you need to unravel the tangled plot that represents the greatest danger the City of Adventure has ever faced. While presented as a sequel, you can easily run this adventure as a standalone too, using it to introduce the setting to expert characters.

To make use of this adventure, you need a copy of *Shadow of the Demon Lord*. While not expressly necessary, having the *Shadow of the Demon Lord Freeport Companion*, the *Demon Lord's Companion*, and *The Pirate's Guide to Freeport* from Green Ronin Publishing will certainly enhance your experience.

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