Drakonheim

City of Bones



By Matthew J. Hanson

Sneak Attack Press

Drakonheim
City of Bones

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Drakonheim: City of Bones

Why are we nicknamed the City of Bones?

People first started calling us that when the city's founder killed the dragon Ignomia and used her bones to build the walls of Drakonheim. It took on new meaning after the Empire fell. The marble palaces became skeletal remains of a dead civilization.

Now there is a third reason. The bones of the dead walk the street. Skeletons and zombies. Why don't we fear them? We do, of course. But what choice do we have?

—Gavin Kipper, guide for hire

Introduction

Drakonheim is a fantasy city full of intrigue and surrounded by dangers. Goblins dwell in the sewers, undead walk the streets, and aristocrats scheme for greater power. Hobgoblins ride across the northern plains, lizardfolk rule the southern swamps, and all manner of monsters hunt in the western mountains.

Drakonheim is a system-free setting; you can use it with any fantasy roleplaying game. It can serve as a quick stopping point, or as the center of an entire campaign.



History of Drakonheim

The history of Drakonheim is long and bloody. Here are just a few of the key events from its past.

The Dragon's Home

It began with a dragon.

She might have had another name, something she called herself in her own tongue, but the humans of the Cevali Empire called her Ignomia, the Mother of Fire. Her skin was armor, her teeth were swords, her breath the fire of hell itself. In her wake she left nothing but ash and smoke.

Treasure? Yes, she had a mountain of treasure stolen from her many victims. A mountain of gold and an armory of magic blades. Men and women came, tempted by the treasure hoard. They were nothing but kindling to Ignomia's flame.

It ended with a hero.

The nameless hero. With spear and shield he challenged the beast. The battle lasted for days. A forest burned to ash. A lake dissolved to steam. On the third day, the hero thrust his spear into Ignomia's eye, but that was not her end. She recoiled, pulling the spear with her. She plucked it from her orb, snapped it in twain and under her breath reduced the haft to ash and the head to a useless hunk of molten metal

The hero leaped at the blind side of her face. He tore from her mouth, the longest of Ignomia's terrible teeth. Then took that tooth and plunged it into the dragon's cruel heart. The earth quaked with the power of the dragon's death throes.

The hero skinned the beast and made a suit of armor. He took the tooth from her heart and made it the head of a new spear. Her meat fed a feast for a hundred that lasted a hundred days. As to her bones, he used her bones to build the first walls of a new city, built on the site of her old lair. The dragon's home.

Drakonheim.

The Golden Age

Those were the days of the Cevali Empire. It was so vast that while the sun set on one end, it rose in the other. Drakonheim became the empire's most powerful city in the west. The citizens of the empire built marble palaces and great temples with golden domes.

Smaller cities sprang up around Drakonheim, like Sercaput and Atam north of the city, and Deltanos to the south. It traded with the kingdom of Grendus in the mountains to the west for valuable ores and precious stones. Farms flourished, and orchards bloomed. The few threats that challenged Drakonheim shattered against its mighty walls or fell to the blades of its noble heroes.

The Band of Four

The golden age saw many heroes. The greatest will always be the unnamed hero who slew the dragon Ignomia and founded Drakonheim. After him, the most renowned heroes are the Band of Four. Each of these heroes had a different talent: sword, spell, prayer, and stealth. Each of them was attuned to one of the four elements: fire, wind, earth, and water.

Bards and minstrels tell many tales about the Band of Four: The Troll King's Last Head, The Barbs of the Manticore, and the Love Song of Ikor and Nesail. The greatest epic is the story of their death. Standing against the Lich King Ezarion. They destroyed the lich and his phylactery, but his death unleashed a wave of necrotic energy that killed the heroes as well.

As the Lich King's army melted away, a seer prophesied that they would return again in Drakonheim's greatest hour of need.

Decline of the Empire

The Cevali Empire died the death of a thousand cuts. The process took centuries, such that people could only label it the fall well after it had happened. Even in the present day, many in the far-flung reaches still consider themselves to be Cevali in culture and heritage, if not in terms of political boundaries.

In the heart of the empire, the rulers and bureaucrats became corrupt, and incompetent. They mismanaged the realm, leading to decaying infrastructure, a resentful populace, and weakened armies. Revolts began in the far reaches of the realm, and then spread closer to the center as more and more provinces gained their independence. Meanwhile, foreign invaders targeted the weakened cities, and monsters ravaged the countryside.

Not all the distant reaches needed to declare their independence. Some, like Drakonheim and the surrounding territories, simply received less and less support until they realized they had been abandoned. Trade dried up. Famines and plagues ravaged the territory. Monsters preyed on travelers



and farmers alike. Hundreds fled to Drakonheim from the outlying areas, all while hundreds fled away from it. Petty kings fought for the right to claim Drakonheim as part of any of the new kingdoms that arose while the empire collapsed.

Slowly, a new normal formed. Drakonheim became an independent city-state in all but name. While a shadow of its former self, it remained a patch of civilization in otherwise wild lands. It trades with other cities to the east, and most of the time the caravans make it alive. The classical Cevali culture has evolved and mixed with a dozen others to form a new culture all its own.

The Fall of Grendus

The Grendane Mountain Range west of Drakonheim was once home to the dwarven kingdom of Grendus. While nowhere near the size or power of the Cevali Empire, it was an ancient kingdom with a rich history that created many great works. It terraced large sections of the mountains for farming, and built great cities within the mountains themselves.

As the Cevali Empire declined, so too did the kingdom of Grendus. A civil war between a brother and sister weakened the dwarves, and then the cherufe arrived. The cherufe came from deep within the mountain, deeper even than the dwarven mines, they seemed to be humanoids made of stone and fire. They devoured living flesh, and demanded the dwarves sacrifice their own people to feed the cherufe's ravenous appetite. In the end it wasn't enough. The cherufe called upon ancient magic to awaken the long-dormant volcanoes of Grendus and wipe out the dwarven kingdom once and for all.

The troubles in Grendus sent waves of immigrants to Drakonheim, as they fled from civil war, dwarven sacrifice, and finally the volcanic eruptions.

The Recent Troubles

A major turning point in the history of Drakonheim occurred just six months ago. A hobgoblin warlord name Hazdrol united the normally bickering clans to the north, and recruited ogres, trolls, and even some humans to his banner. He led the army south to Drakonheim confident that his forces could overrun the city. They probably would have, if not for a small band of plucky heroes, and an army of undead.

As the hobgoblins and their allies marched south, an order of necromancers called the Gray Society raised hundreds of skeletons and zombies to serve as unrelenting foot soldiers in the battle. There are many factors that might have turned the tide in the battle, but the Gray Society was quick to claim credit. They spun the story to imply that the city would have been doomed without them, and used that—along with ample political connections—to gain a new-found place in Drakonheim. While the Gray Society had existed for hundreds of years, it had always been in secret. After the battle they began working in the open and their undead minions now walk the streets in broad daylight.

Characters in Drakonheim

This section of the text is designed to help players build characters that fit into the Drakonheim setting.

Races in Drakonheim

Drakonheim is a human-dominated city, but it is cosmopolitan enough that most fantasy races have a place there.

Humans

The Cevali Empire was dominated by humans, and humans still make up roughly two thirds of the population of Drakonheim. Moreover, humans hold the key positions of power in the city, including the lord mayor's office and nearly all of the land-owning aristocracy. Of course not all humans are nobles, and they occupy all roles in society.

Dwarves

Dwarves are the second most common race in Drakonheim, making up nearly a sixth of the population. Many are the descendants of dwarves who came from the now-ruined kingdom of Grendus, and a few of the oldest can remember fleeing from the kingdom as the mountain erupted in fire and ash. Most of these dwarves live in the section of the city dubbed Little Grendus, a dwarven enclave within the city that in many ways is a city within a city.

Elves

Wood elves are more common than high elves in Drakonheim and the lands around it. The forests to the north of Drakonheim used to be home to many bands of elves, but as trolls, hobgoblins, and other monsters expanded their realms, the elves were pushed further and further south. Some of these elves joined the tribal humans just north of the city; many live in the Bone Yards, the ruined parts of the city that are slowly being reclaimed by nature; and some gave up their forest ways completely and integrated into the city proper. At the height of the Cevali Empire, a small number of high elves came to Drakonheim, and a few of their descendants still remain, though many intermarried with wood elves or humans.

Halflings

A few of the farming villages south of Drakonheim are home to about a hundred halfling families. Most halflings are happy to stay on the farm their kin have worked for generations. However, every few years some of the young halflings get the urge to experience the big city. Many end up moving back to the farm after a year or two, but others stay in Drakonheim as everything from peddlers to thieves to adventurers. As a result, a handful of halflings are born and raised within the city walls.

Half-Elves

As humans outnumber the elves of Drakonheim by ten to one, it was not uncommon for elves to take a human spouse, especially after the empire declined. In fact it may be that half-elves now outnumber full-blooded elves, and occasionally two people who look completely human have just enough elven heritage between them that their child has half-elf traits.

Half-Orc

Orcs were among the first waves of monsters that descended on the lands around Drakonheim as the Cevali Empire fell, but these invaders soon found that more terrible monsters were on their heels. The orcs were crushed between humans from the south and hobgoblins from the north, such that now few if any true orcs remain. A few of the more prudent orc tribes, joined with some of the tribal humans in the area and their bloodlines intermingled such that half-orcs are now common among those tribes.

Goblins

Thousands of goblins live in the sewers below Drakonheim, though many people in the city above are completely unaware. For the most part these goblins keep to themselves, but there have always been a small handful that creep into the city-above under cover of darkness. Recently a few have grown so bold as to come out in broad daylight, though they are careful not to travel alone, and stay away from the fancier parts of town.

Hobgoblins

Hobgoblins are plentiful in the areas north of Drakonheim. When they come south it is usually to raid the humans and other allied races, so they are not welcome in the city. It is possible that a few hobgoblins might rebel against their own kind, but they find no love in Drakonheim. While citizens might consider goblins vermin or dirty retches, they are on par with some of the human scum that lives in the Docks. Hobgoblins, on the other hand, are the enemy and nobody would bat an eye for a hobgoblin that was killed on sight.

Other Races

Other races are rare in Drakonheim, though not unheard of. If a player wants to run a character of another race, it might be the last of a shrinking dynasty, or a traveler come in search of fame and fortune.

Classes and Archetypes

People from all walks of life live in Drakonheim. This section describes how some of the typical fantasy classes might be part of a Drakonheim campaign. Even if you don't use a class system, you can use these guidelines to find archetypes that are similar to the character you want to create.

Barbarians

North of Drakonheim live several communities of tribal hunters and gatherers. They are primarily humans, with a few elves, half-elves, and half-orcs among them. The bravest and fiercest warriors often take on totem animals and learn to channel their anger into a berserker rage.

Bards

Entertainers are popular in Drakonheim, from the parlor concerts in High Town to the taverns of the Docks. The dwarves of Little Grendus have a long tradition of passing down oral history through songs, and using war chants to rally their troops. From these performers, a few true bards arise, able to weave magical patterns in songs to heal, bolster, or entrance. Most of these are self-taught or learn as an apprentice to another bard. There are no bardic colleges near current-day Drakonheim.

Clerics

There are five major temples in Drakonheim dedicated to the gods of learning, life, battle, trade, and creation, and there are dozens of smaller congregations and cults that meet in unused buildings or back rooms. Not all the priests are spellcasters, but all of the temples have clerics who can channel the power of their gods, and even some of the minor faiths have one or two.

Druids

Few in the city proper of Drakonheim follow the old ways, though they are common among the tribal people to the north. In particular, the Willow Tribe venerates druids and shamans and trains several in each generation. A few wood elves who fled their forest homes also brought druidism with them and practice it alongside the tribal humans or in the Bone Yards.

Fighters

There is plenty of work in Drakonheim for somebody who knows their way around a sword. The town watch patrols the streets and the noble houses have their own guards. Mercenary work is common enough as anybody who ventures far from the city is likely to run into one kind of danger or another. In the lead up to the hobgoblin attack, the city trained many new militia members. Most went back to their previous lives afterwards, but a few decided their new martial skills were more valuable.

Paladins

Holy warriors are rare in Drakonheim as no knightly orders remain in the city. Occasionally such knights arise from warriors who train at the great temples or spontaneously from those with a particularly pious heart. Sometimes paladins travel from other cities or other lands, hoping to save the declining city. Most are overwhelmed by how deep the decay runs.

Rogues

There's no end of opportunities in Drakonheim for somebody with quick hands and few moral compunctions. The Docks district is a haven for the ethically flexible, but that is far from their only home. High-class con men dine in the best inns of High Town, and some dwarven locksmiths from Little Grendus can use their knowledge to open locks instead of just crafting them.

Rangers

Because the lands around Drakonheim are wild, there are plenty of people who live on the edge of civilization. Some live in town and just go off to hunt during the day, while others live in the semi-wild areas called the Bone Yards. The tribal humans who live to the north of the city are also known for their skills as trackers and hunters.

Wizards

The Academy of Nalan was once among the most renowned wizard academies in the land. While it has declined, and the wizards who now teach are only moderate spellcasters at best, it still produces a handful of mages each year with enough skill in the arcane arts to ply it as their permanent trade. The Gray Society also trains wizards, though all of them specialize in necromancy.



Gods in Drakonheim

To allow you to easily drop Drakonheim into a larger campaign setting, this book doesn't use specific names for gods, but instead refers to them by their archetypes. The most prominent gods in the city are the five who still have standing temples: the Sage, the Lifegiver, the Warrior, the Merchant, and the Smith.

The Sage is a god of knowledge and study, and likely is associated with arcane magic. He is popular with the well educated, including wizards, scholars, and many members of the Gray Society

The Lifegiver is a goddess of healing and growth, including raising crops and animals. She is popular among all classes in Drakonheim, but especially with the farmers south of the city.

The Warrior is a god of battle, as well as strength, honor, and valor. Naturally he is the patron of soldiers and the city watch. Many who have never been in battle but romanticize the idea of it also venerate him. In the wake of the hobgoblin attacks he has gained even more popularity.

The Merchant is a goddess of wealth and trade, as well as civilization in general and things related to it like cities, laws, and industry. She is well liked by the upper classes of Drakonheim, and the lord mayor is a regular at her services.

The Smith is a god of creation, and popular among craftsmen and artisans. He is especially well loved by the dwarves of Little Grendus.

Key Questions

The following questions will help ground characters in the city based on recent events (as described on page 6). We recommend all characters answer them as part of creating their backgrounds.

Where were you during the battle to defend Drakonheim?

How did you react to undead walking the streets of your city?

Major Powers in the City

Drakonheim is a city full of many competing interests. While Lord Mayor Brandon Crote may seem to have the ultimate authority in the city, his rule is really balanced on the edge of a knife, as other powers—open and secret—prop him up or threaten to tear him down.

City Government

We live in the finest city in the realm. Just stay away from the bad parts.
—Lord Mayor Brandon Crote

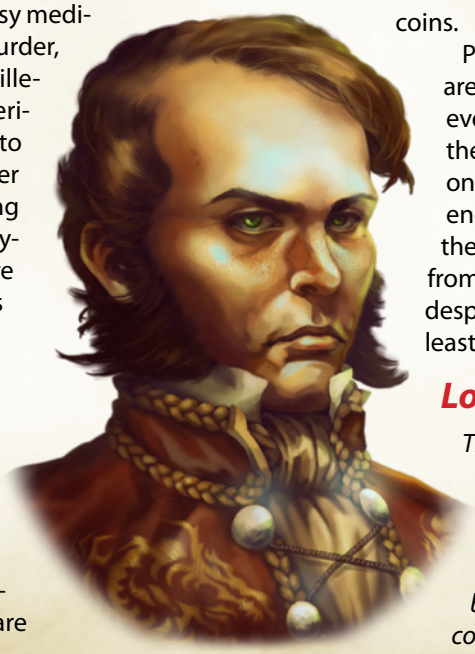
During the height of the Cevali Empire, the government of Drakonheim was a model of efficient administration. The mayor was appointed by the provincial governor and city officials were chosen based on merit and integrity.

In the wake of the empire's fall, rule of Drakonheim became a hereditary title, and the lord mayor the most powerful position in the region. With rare exception, political patronage is now more important than competency, and corruption runs rampant among city bureaucrats.

The lord mayor is the ultimate authority in Drakonheim, but in practice he delegates many of his responsibilities to the mayor's council, all of whom he appointed.

Crime and Punishment

Drakonheim's laws are similar to that of most fantasy medieval cities. Theft, murder, and slavery are all illegal, as is the very serious crime of failing to pay taxes. Many other activities, like running a market stall or carrying a weapon require a license, but this is really just a way for the lord mayor to generate revenue rather than to protect the public good.



Those arrested have the right to stand before a magistrate, all of whom are appointed by the lord mayor. In theory any citizen can appeal their judgment directly to the lord mayor, but he usually only renders judgment when the crime involves members of the aristocracy.

Punishments are swift. Depending on the severity of the crime, it might be a fine, a brand, or execution. Long-term imprisonment is rare. The watch has a small jail in its arena headquarters, but they only use it to hold criminals before trial or to let drunks sleep off their stupor.

Because the watch is underfunded and partially corrupt, crime runs high in the city, especially in the Docks district, and vigilantes sometimes take the law into their own hands.

The dwarven dominated part of the city called Little Grendus has its own parallel system of laws and punishments. The laws are quite similar, but the justice focuses more on public shaming and community pressure. Days in the stocks and exile from the district are common punishments.

Bureaucrats and Tax Collectors

The White Keep, the heart of the city government, is filled with clerks and bureaucrats. They are responsible for granting licenses to vendors, approving new construction, overseeing the budget, and all other manner of mundane tasks. Most got their job because of who they know, and they are almost never dismissed, so most are complacent and corrupt. The wheels of government turn slowly, unless of course somebody greases that wheel with a few coins.

Perhaps the only officials who are not lazy are the tax collectors who make sure to get every cent the White Keep is owed—and then some. The collectors are paid based on how much money they bring in, which encourages them to sometimes overcharge the citizens of Drakonheim. They are far from popular, and are occasionally attacked, despite the fact they always travel with at least two members of the city watch.

Lord Mayor Brandon Crote

This middle-aged man is dressed in fine clothes embroidered with a golden dragon. His fingers glitter with golden rings. His chin is clean shaven but he has bushy side burns, and his brown hair has been cleverly arranged in a futile effort to cover his bald spot.

The title of lord mayor of Drakonheim is passed down from parent to child. The current ruler is a middle-aged human named Brandon Crote. He is well liked by the upper crust of Drakonheim, but not loved by the common man. At best, most commoners try to go about their lives without thinking about him. At worst, they curse his name and blame his tax collectors for ruining their lives.

It's not that the lord mayor is an especially cruel man, or evil in the classic fantasy RPG sense of the word. He is simply self-involved and self-centered. He cares foremost about his own well being, then for his family, and then for his friends and social contacts. He simply doesn't have enough time or energy to care about the plight of the common man.

The lord mayor relies heavily on his council to handle much of the day to day operations of the city. They are all people he appointed, and like most of his decisions he thought more about currying favors than the competence of his councilors. Some like Lady Saldor want to improve the city and bring it to a new golden age, but most follow the lord mayor's example and think primarily about lining their own pockets.

Lord Mayor's Council

The lord mayor's council is a small group of councilors appointed by the lord mayor to aid him and offer him advice. In practice they make most of the key decisions in Drakonheim, and only seek the lord mayor's approval on the most important or most controversial questions.

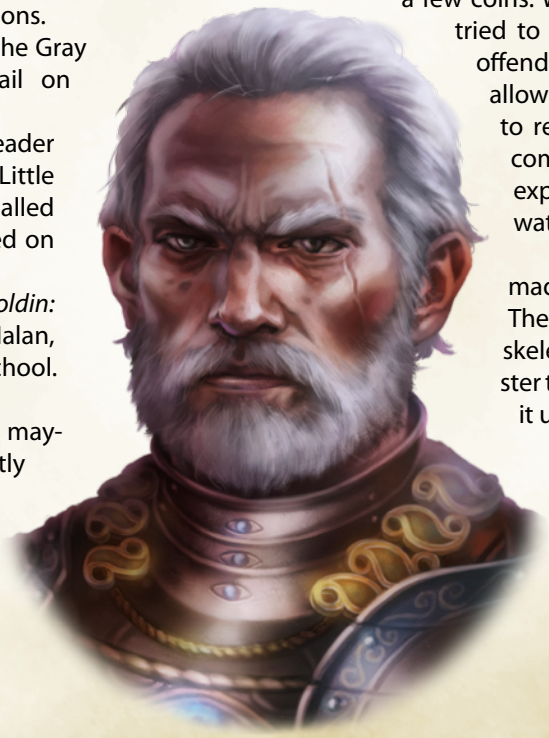
Lady Saldor: Leader of the Gray Society, described in detail on page 12.

Boroff Emeraldeyes: A leader among the dwarves of Little Grendus, and sometimes called the "Token Dwarf." Described on page 25.

High Wizard Gelisa Coldin: Head of the Academy of Nalan, Drakonheim's wizards' school. Described on page 20.

Martin Crote: The lord mayor's brother. He is also secretly a member of the Seekers of the First. See page 16.

Ober the Reader: A priest of the Sage and member of the Gray Society. Described on page 18.



City Watch

Scream all ye like. Nobody'll come f'r ye. This ain't High Town.

—Unidentified mugger in the Docks district.

The city watch in Drakonheim is overworked and understaffed. They have only a few dozen men and women charged with protecting a city of several ten thousand. So they have been forced to make some tough choices.

Different parts of the city receive different amounts of protection. High Town has the most, not because it needs it, but because the lord mayor insists on it. The Arena District and Market District also have a decent presence, though not enough to catch half the crimes that happen there. Little Grendus has set up its own patrols, so they receive only token support, mostly because the lord mayor wants to make sure the dwarves know they are still part of Drakonheim.

Only a few patrols venture into the Docks district, and then only in daylight. They used to patrol the Docks at night, but after a few too many members of the watch disappeared; they gave up and let the people of the Docks fend for themselves. The city watch doesn't recognize the Bone Yards as part of the city proper, so any "hermits and lunatics" who live there don't deserve their protection.

Many members of the watch have fallen to the corruption that plagues so much of the city and will gladly look the other way in exchange for a few coins. While Captain Anathor has tried to root out the worst of the offenders, he has been forced to allow a few of the lighter ones to remain for fear that after a complete purge not enough experienced members of the watch would remain.

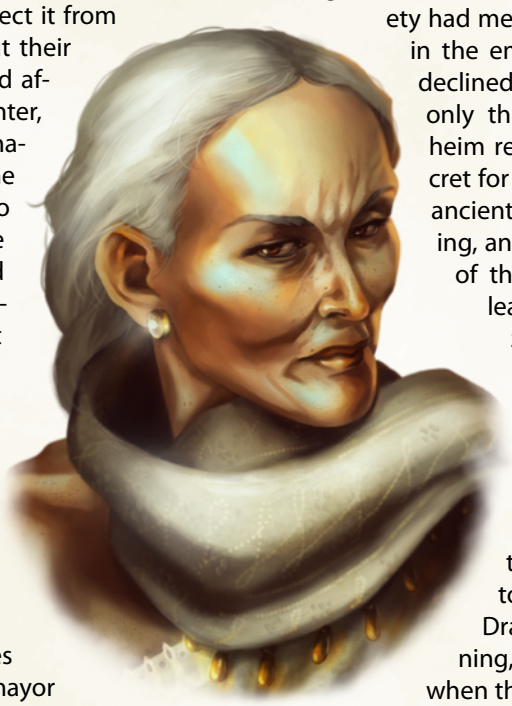
Recently the watch made another compromise. The Gray Society offered them skeletons and zombies to bolster their forces. The captain left it up to the guardsmen to decide individually whether to take undead along with them. Initially members of the Gray Society went along to help the guards learn to command the undead. Now half the patrols

in Drakonheim contain a few corpses to assist the living guards.

Captain Miles Anathor

This man's armor bears the blue eye of the watch. His hair and beard, both neatly trimmed, are white as snow. His eyes are pale gray like the sky on a cloudy day. Though he stands tall, he moves as though a great weight pulls him down.

The captain of the watch is a grizzled man named Captain Miles Anathor. He has seen more combat than nearly all the rest of his troops put together. He grew up in one of the last villages north of Drakonheim, and tried to protect it from clansfolk and monsters. But their efforts weren't enough, and after a particularly bad winter, the villagers fled south. Anathor found himself in the city, where he signed up to be a guard. He patrolled the streets for many years and helped bring down an organized crime family in what ended up being a bloody street war.



Slowly Anathor rose through the ranks until he became captain of the watch. As his titles grew he felt like he was making less and less of a difference, and he grew bitterer by the year. He sees how each year the lord mayor provides fewer coins to pay his men with. Even the recent surge leading up to the hobgoblin attack has all but gone away. He sees criminals growing stronger and acting without fear. He sees vigilantes tired of the watch ignoring their pleas taking matters into their own hands. All Captain Anathor wants to do is help the city. He just doesn't know how.

The Gray Society

Some call it the dark art, as though all necromancy is inherently evil. Of course it isn't. People just fear what they don't understand. You don't blame the hammer used to murder a man. You blame the one who swung the hammer.

If you think I did something wrong when I raised the dead to defend our city, then blame me. If you think I do something wrong now that I ask those corpses to rebuild the city, then blame me. But do not blame necromancy. It is only a tool.

—Lady Nalyka Saldor

The Gray Society is a gathering place for necromancers, but they are not worshipers of a dark god or crazed wizards bent on world domination. They are intellectuals, driven by curiosity. They are fascinated by the gray land between life and death, and see the reanimation of the dead as the ultimate art.

The Gray Society traces its roots back to the height of the Cevali Empire. At its peak, the society had member halls in nearly every city in the empire, but just as Cevali itself declined, so did the Gray Society, until only the branch housed in Drakonheim remained. They operated in secret for a thousand years, poring over ancient texts when no one was looking, and performing rituals on nights of the new moon. They long ago learned to animate skeletons and zombies, and strove for higher necromantic arts. Then they strove for acceptance.

The Gray Society was tired of working in shadows. Under the leadership of Lady Nalyka Saldor, the group laid the groundwork to promote tolerance of necromancy within Drakonheim. After years of planning, they made their goal a reality when they used an army of undead to defend Drakonheim from a hobgoblin invasion. In the wake of that battle, they continue to put their undead to good use repairing the attack's damage to the city.

Of course, reactions to the Gray Society are mixed. Some welcomed them as heroes, some cursed them as betrayers, but most avoid the society and try to get along with their lives. They might fear them, but feel they can do nothing about it. The Gray Society has the support of the lord mayor and his council, and they have an army of undead.

Lady Nalyka Saldor

This woman's gray hair is woven in a tight braid that runs down to the small of her back. She stands tall, wiry, and toned despite her advancing years. She has a slender nose, and dark brown eyes that look like they could cut you to the bone.

Lady Nalyka Saldor is used to power. She comes from a long line of aristocrats who own great swaths of land to the south. She studied wizardry at the Academy of Nalan and her talent quickly outpaced her teachers. It was there that she first heard whispers of the Gray Society. She uncovered their secrets and joined the society by the time she was sixteen.

For years she cultivated political connections until she gained a spot on the lord mayor's council where she is now one of the most powerful voices. After the previous leaders of the Gray Society passed away, her peers elected her to lead them for life. When word of a massing hobgoblin army reached her, she was the one who hatched the plan to move the society into the open.

Lady Nalyka is highly intelligent, and a voracious reader. She is a skilled necromancer, but that is just one of her passions. She also studies history, especially the Cevali Empire. In her heart, Nalyka dreams of returning Drakonheim to its former glory and forging a new empire that will endure for centuries to come.

Norel Kalynn

This curvaceous woman boasts a head of luxurious blond hair. Her green eyes sparkle and she speaks with a melodic voice.

Norel Kalynn is one of the wealthiest citizens in Drakonheim. She was born the daughter of a miller who hoped for a son, but Kalynn was the only child who lived past infancy. Kalynn quickly developed a head for business. Early in life, she leveraged the money from her father's mill to become a money lender and earned a large fortune. Kalynn now has her hand in just about every form of business in Drakonheim, both legal and illegal.

Kalynn was first attracted to the Gray Society when she heard rumors that other powerful citizens were members. She believed it was simply a secret society where the powerful met for their mutual benefit. She did not realize it was a sect of necromancers. However, as she slowly learned more, she realized the society's true nature and saw it as a way to escape her greatest fear. Kalynn knows death cares nothing for riches and one day will claim even her. But what is dead cannot die, and Kalynn hopes that through the Gray Society she will one day transcend death. She has studied all she can about the rituals required for lichdom, but is still far from being able to successfully complete the transformation. After Baron Karlos Vasili arrived she asked him several times to turn her to a vampire. He refused, as he has refused all such requests, earning the vampire Kalynn's animosity.

Kalynn maintains a reputation as a gregarious socialite with a quick wit and a charming smile. Few realize that she is also a ruthless and power-hungry woman who will stop at nothing to obtain her goals. Obstacles might delay her for a while, but she is patient, and in the end gets her way with a well-placed word, a dark spell, or a hired knife.



Julius Pliny

This muscular man's hair and full but well-trimmed beard are both brown. He dresses all in black and wears a silver ring on his right hand. The top of the ring is shaped like a human skull with two red stones set in the eyes.

Julius Pliny is one of the newest members to join the Gray Society. While many like Nalyka Saldor see the society's public works as a means to an end, Pliny sees good works as an end unto themselves. Julius Pliny fancies himself a hero.

Pliny was an apprentice at the Academy of Nalan when the hobgoblin army attacked Drakonheim. Though he knew little more than a few minor spells, Pliny thought it was his civic duty to aid the city's defenses. In that time he worked side by side with a necromancer from the Gray Society. He saw the way the necromancer drained life straight from his foes and commanded skeletons to rush fearlessly into battle. Pliny knew then that he had found his calling.

Pliny impressed the Gray Society with his enthusiasm and magical aptitude, and they accepted him into the society. He mastered the art of raising corpses in a matter of weeks. Now Pliny is determined to use his power to save people any way that he can. He sends skeletons into burning buildings to rescue trapped people and orders zombies to stop muggings in the Docks.

Oddly enough, not everybody appreciates Pliny's efforts, and some refuse to be rescued by the "monsters" he controls, but Pliny remains undeterred. They'll come around. They just need a little time.

Civic Involvement

A major part of the Gray Society's plan to gain acceptance is to demonstrate that the city is better off with them than without. The battle against the hobgoblins was only the first step in the plan. The next step is to help rebuild areas of the city that were destroyed in the attack—from the breached walls to the burned houses.

Even these plans upset people in the city. Many of the builders and day laborers who would be paid good coin to complete the work aren't happy to compete with the undead that work for free and need not worry about feeding themselves let alone three whelps at home with another on the way. When she realized this, Lady Saldor directed the undead to focus on the poorer parts of town where people were less likely to hire laborers and repairs might be neglected.

Initiation Rites

Though no longer secret, the Gray Society is still exclusive. Since the society revealed itself, a drove of potential members have petitioned to join. In the wake of the expanded interest, the society has altered its initiation process.

Candidates must first convince an existing member to sponsor them. The sponsor then argues the point before a group of elders. If convinced, the elders invite the pledges to meet with them and answer a range of questions. The society looks for a number of things from new members. First the candidates must have a true interest in the study of undeath, not just a desire to make powerful contacts. The society also looks for candidates who will strengthen the organization, be it magical talent, access to arcane libraries, or wealth and power. Finally, they want to weed out anybody who might besmirch the society in the eyes of the public.

If the elders are sufficiently impressed, they induct the new member in a ceremony at Graystone, the society's headquarters. There, the initiate swears to protect the Gray Society and guard its knowledge. Once they swear the oaths, they become initiates of the Gray Society. They are permitted to access Graystone, but certain knowledge and arcane texts remain off limits until the initiates have "proven themselves" which can take as little as a few days, or never happen at all. Once they prove themselves they become full members. Members who have been part of the society for at least twenty years become elders.

Death Contracts

Necromancers are always looking for corpses to animate or experiment on. While the Gray Society once stooped to grave robbing, now that they operate openly they've turned to a new source for their bodies.

The society offers contracts to any permanent resident of Drakonheim or the surrounding countryside. In exchange for a handsome sum of money, the society gains the right to that person's corpse after he or she dies, and just to put people at ease, if there's any suspicion of foul play, the survivors may cancel the contract without returning any funds.

Already, hundreds of people have signed these contracts, though only a few of those have passed away. Like so much else about the Gray Society, the contracts are extremely controversial. They have led to several fights within families. At least one signatory agreed without informing his next of kin, and his children attacked the representative of the Gray Society who came to collect the corpse. Another time, the widower of a woman who signed was so upset about his wife becoming a zombie that he burned the corpse before "those necrophiles could get their cursed hands on her."

Knights of the Eclipse

When the law is unjust, when monsters walk the streets, it is the duty of every righteous man to break the law, and take to the shadow. They might brand us outlaws, they might hunt us down, but we know the truth. The gods are on our side.

—Sir Arturo Vales

Despite all the efforts of the Gray Society, many in Drakonheim do not trust them. For too long necromancy and the undead have been a source of terror and the province of dark gods and demon lords. Most who feel this way simply avoid the Gray Society as they feel powerless to stop it.

The Knights of the Eclipse, however, are fighting back. Despite what the lord mayor and the city watch say, the abominations are evil and must be destroyed. The Knights of the Eclipse wage a crusade that started by attacking the skeletons and zombies that roam the streets at night. Twice now they have also killed minor members of the Gray Society.

There are a few paladins and clerics among the Knights of the Eclipse, but most are common folk who simply cannot abide what has happened to their city. They organize themselves into small cells that work independently so that if captured they cannot divulge who are in the other cells or what the others are plotting.

Sir Arturo Vales

This young man has hair of golden curls that fall to the base of his neck, and blue eyes that shine brighter than any sapphire. He wears a sword at his side, the crossbar styled like angelic wings.

Arturo Vales was the second son of one of Drakonheim's aristocrats. At a young age his parents sent him to a monastery of the Warrior in a distant city where he trained as a holy knight. There he learned about healing and warfare, about the words of the gods and the faces of evil. He shone as the ideal knight, and his superiors believed him destined for greatness.



On the day when Sir Vales finally completed his training and was anointed a paladin of the order, he received a letter from his parents. An army of hobgoblins marched toward his family home in Drakonheim. Sir Vales rushed to Drakonheim. Everywhere he saw scenes of destruction and ruin. Walls had been smashed and homes burnt. The hobgoblins were nowhere to be seen, but in their place was an attacking army of undead. Or so he thought. Ever the holy knight, Vales attacked the zombie horde without thought of his personal safety.

That is when the city watch arrived. They broke up the fight and brought Sir Vales before a magistrate. Thanks to his parent's influence, and the "extenuating circumstances," he paid only a minor fine for destruction of property and disturbing the peace. Sir Vales swallowed his pride and accepted the judgment, but he knew he had been in the right. It galled him to see these evil creatures so easily accepted, and even praised. Sir Vales sought out like-minded individuals, and before long the Knights of the Eclipse were born.

Though Sir Vales despises the necromancers, his family station means he regularly comes in contact with members of the Gray Society at social events. This obligation is only magnified by the fact that his elder brother died in the hobgoblin attack, and Arturo now stands to inherit the Vales land and titles.

Seekers of the First

The schemes of men and dwarves, even elves are nothing compared to the great ones. Their naps last longer than men's lifetimes. And the power! Blood and fire. Magic and death. We shall harness that power, and make it our own. We shall be kings among men. Nations will quake in our presence. The schemes of men and dwarves and elves, will be nothing to us.

—Martin Crote

Legend says that Drakonheim was founded above the lair of the dragon Ignomia. The Seekers of the First want to find that lair.

Nearly everybody in Drakonheim has heard rumors that much of the dragon's treasure still lies somewhere nearby or buried under the city, and if anybody ever catches a member of the Seekers exploring below, or investigating plans, that's what they say they are doing.

In truth, they believe that Ignomia didn't die in the battle against that first champion of Drakonheim. Instead, she was wounded and fled back to her cave. There she fell into a deep slumber that would last a thousand years. The Seekers want to find Ignomia in her slumber. They believe that through her blood they can perform magic to make themselves immortal and gain the power to rule the world.

In addition to looking for Ignomia's resting place, the Seekers also look for any magic or artifacts related to dragons, including ways to control dragons, befriend them, or draw power from them, and items crafted from parts of dragon corpses.

The Seekers are a clandestine organization, even more secretive than the Gray Society was in its day. It has become so secretive, in fact, each member can only invite one other over the course of their lifetime. Typically membership passes from parent to child, though it isn't always the case. (If a

member dies without declaring an "heir" the rest of the group elects a successor from candidates the group nominates.)

Once indoctrinated in to the group and sworn to secrecy, they start to learn the lore of the group, including the many spells and rituals they have learned, and the caverns that they have mapped near and below the city.

Martin Crote

This man is completely bald except for a narrow strip of short hair that runs along the outer perimeter of his head. He wears fine clothing embroidered with the symbol of a dragon and a single golden signet ring with a similar image.

Martin Crote is the younger brother of Lord Mayor Brandon Crote. He lived a life of privilege, but always felt as if he was in his brother's shadow. He took the scraps his brother offered, like a comfortable job and a seat on the council, and always said thank you, but secretly he lusted for more. Martin formed clandestine alliances with everyone from aristocrats to criminals.

One of his allies was a member of the Seekers of the First, a secret society that hoped to gain power by finding the great dragon Ignomia. Martin became enamored by this idea and pledged his life to the organization. He dredged through ancient tomes, explored caverns below the city, and used his government influence to aid the group and its mission. The other members noticed his hard work, and he became the de facto leader of the group.

Serio Montague

This man looks as though he was once a handsome youth. He is tall with dark hair, tan skin, and piercing brown eyes. He has an ample gut that protrudes over the waist band of his tailored trousers, and soft hands that are uncalloused except for a recent scar that runs jaggedly across his left palm.

Like most of the Seekers, Serio Montague lusts for power. Unfortunately he doesn't want to put in the work that amassing power often requires. He grew up coddled in a large aristocratic family, but as the youngest child, he stands to inherit little or nothing. He enrolled at the Academy of Nalan, assuming he would easily master the arcane arts, but after years of study he managed only the most basic level of spells.

When he joined the Seekers, Montague thought this finally was the key to power that he'd searched after, but even there he was frustrated that his fellow cultists expected him to pore through dusty tomes and even travel to wild lands. It was during one such journey to these wild lands that Serio's life changed.

Montague was following a rumor passed through oral tradition by one of the barbarian tribes that a hundred years ago a clan of orcs worshiped a dragon god. Montague, along with guards and scouts, followed rumors until he came to a hidden cavern in the Grendane Mountains. There he discovered, and awoke, a terrible and ancient dragon called Kolrax. Montague's guards were foolish enough to challenge the dragon, and were quickly immolated. Montague begged for his life and swore to serve the dragon.

Kolrax accepted and forged a magical link to Montague. Now the dragon speaks to Montague in vivid dreams that the human always remembers the next day. Montague is charged with gathering intelligence on Drakonheim, and slowly preparing the Seekers of the First to accept Kolrax as their lord. Montague also discovered that the link with the dragon has increased his magical talent and he can now perform more powerful spells than anything he could accomplish on his own.

Montague is a talented liar, which he needs because of all the secrets he hides. He hides Kolrax from his fellow Seekers, just as he hides the Seekers from the city at large.

Aristocracy

There are dozens of noble houses that dwell in Drakonheim, most of whom own large swaths of land in the area around Drakonheim, though most live in the city proper and leave the management of their lands to hirelings. For every land-holding family, there are two more families that claim lands to the north or west, but such land is abandoned by humans, and such claims are on paper only. Furthermore laws of inheritance state that land passes only to the eldest child, and thus there are many younger siblings who must rely on their family, or find other means to support themselves.

The aristocrats are just as varied as any other group of individuals, but by and large, most lead lives of leisure, and feel entitled to the taxes they collect from the farmers who work their lands. While they live in decadent comfort far beyond the level of the common folk, many scheme for more. They see it as a game of building alliances and political maneuvering. Occasionally these "games" erupt into lethal house feuds, though the aristocrats seldom put themselves in actual danger—just their pawns.

In addition to the members of the aristocracy listed below, several other members are described elsewhere, including Brandon Crote (page 10), Martin Crote (page 16), Julius Pliny (page 13), Arturo Vales (page 15), and Serio Montague (page 16).

Baron Karlos Vasili

The man stands tall with an air of confidence that threatens to overpower you. His hair and eyes are dark, but his skin is pale as snow. His lips twitch with the hint of a smile. Not a happy smile. A hungry smile.



Karlos Vasili came to Drakonheim only recently after word reached him that necromancers worked openly in the city. He too was tired of living in the shadows, so after he arrived in the city and restored an aging manor home, he announced his true nature. Baron Vasili is a vampire.

The Baron is not especially interested in the academic study of necromancy, so he hasn't joined the Gray Society, but the Gray Society is very interested in him. He has given several interviews to members of the Society. He has open access to Graystone, and Vasili and members of the society operate in similar social circles. Some members of the society have even requested that he turn them to vampires, though to date he has refused all such requests. In fact Baron Vasili has become so popular among the society that Lady Saldor worries that he might make a power play to wrestle control of the group away from her. He has not made any such move yet, but he is doing everything he would need to lay the groundwork for such a confrontation.

Baron Vasili gets his blood from seven young women that he calls his "Blood Brides." The seven are all peasants and commoners who accepted an offer: he treats them to a life of luxury where their needs are provided for, and they may even send money home to their families. All he asks in exchange is to drink their blood. The women are free to leave at any time, but after becoming used to the Baron's riches, none have done so. Vasili rotates his feeding among the seven such that none ever risk dying from it.

The Widow Augusta

This woman's long golden hair falls down to the small of her back, and her eyes sparkle like sapphires. Her dress is simple, yet elegant and expertly tailored. Her laugh sounds like a choir of fairies.

Born Augusta Vales, later Augusta Dedrici and then Augusta Lorenz, to save confusion people now just call her Lady Augusta to her face, or the Widow Augusta behind her back. Augusta grew up in one of the wealthy land-owning families in Drakonheim. She married young to a man twice her age, and was a widow less than a year later. With no other heir, August inherited her late husband's considerable wealth, which only attracted more suitors for her next marriage. She soon remarried, again to a wealthy noble with no heir. This marriage lasted longer, almost three years, but again her husband died under mysterious circumstances, and again she inherited all his wealth.

People now whisper that the widow Augusta murdered both her husbands, though nobody says it to her face nor makes a public accusation, and no hard evidence has ever come forward. Even with the rumors, her youth and wealth mean she is still courted by many suitors, but she has yet to find one that matches her.

Augusta styles herself as being concerned with the common folk, giving out bread to feed the hungry and wood to warm the cold in winter. She's publicly questioned some of the lord mayor's decisions, saying taxes are too high and the watch too small. She's been especially critical of the recent decision to unleash a horde of undead upon the city.

Though she acts as though she cares about the little people, and to some extent she does, she really sees them as a tool to increase her own power. For too long, Augusta was a tool for men to use and she will never allow that again. She hopes to one day unseat Lord Mayor Brandon Crote and take power for herself, but she won't move until she has gathered sufficient allies and power. She has already made deals with aristocrats Crote has upset, dwarves seeking independence, and common folk of great skill but little political power.

The City and Its Districts



The Cevali built walls to protect Drakonheim, but before long the city overflowed beyond the walls, and thus new walls were built. This occurred again and again, creating natural divisions within the city which were later codified into districts. These districts evolved over time, and many fell to ruin. Now five main districts remains, High Town, Market District, Arena District, Little Grendus, and The Docks.

High Town

The streets of High Town are clean and safe. The buildings are well maintained, and those too old to fix are demolished and replaced with something more stable. Even the undead are well dressed. Skeletons are preferred of course, as they've had the decency to dispose of that rotting flesh and don't leak the occasional puddle of bile.

In short, High Town is where the wealthy of Drakonheim live. It is in the oldest part of the city, the central ring that surrounds the White Keep. Those who look out of place in High Town are often followed by members of the watch to ensure that they aren't up to no-good.

White Keep

The White Keep was originally built as a last defense against invasion, but over the years it has become Drakonheim's center for government. This is where the lord mayor meets with his council, and where bureaucrats manage the city's day-to-day functions like issuing permits, collecting taxes, and distributing funds. These bureaucrats are mostly the friends and family of the city rulers, and they pad their modest city wages by taking bribes. Any who fail to give the clerk a few coins find their efforts delayed, while large bribes expedite the matter and might keep it off the official record.

Temple of the Sage

The temple to the Sage is an impressive stone building that dates back to the golden age of the Cevali Empire. When the public enter, they pass through a narrow entryway into a large sanctuary. Stained glass windows depict scenes of divine inspiration attributed to the Sage. The temple holds services once per week, but the sanctuary is always open and there are always at least a few of the faithful within. In addition to the sanctuary, the temple contains meeting rooms, offices, priests' quarters, a kitchen and dining hall, and an impressive library.

Priest Ober the Reader

This rotund man boasts a bushy mustache that connects to his sideburns. He wears priestly garments and his fingers are stained with ink.

Ober joined the Temple of the Sage at a young age in hopes that he could live off the church rather than the family's dwindling fortunes. Ober took to


16
19
8
The Boneyards
11
Arena District
1
9
2
10
High Town
4
Market District
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5
6
7
The Boneyards
18
20
14
Docks
13
21
Little Grendus
17
22
12
15
The Boneyards
The Boneyards
MAP KEY
1. White Keep
2. Temple of the Sage
3. Academy of Nalan
4. Market Square
5. Temple of the Lifegiver
6. Temple of the Merchant
7. Saucy Mermaid
8. Area
9. Temple of the Warrior
10. Dead Man's Tap
11. Earl's Garden
12: Bellows' Bellows
13. Temple of the Smith
14. The Knotted Vine
15. Red Pier
16. Green Bough Cemetery
17. Serpent Bridge
18. Golden Bridge
19. Rain Gate
20. Mountain gate
21. Queen's Gate
22. Lion Gate

the priesthood readily and was soon an ordained member of the temple. He views learning and gathering knowledge as part of his holy duty. He does not contemplate the "morality" of any kind of knowledge, and thus studied several texts on necromancy and undead from the temple's library. It fascinated him from an academic perspective, which eventually led him to join the Gray Society, and then recruit several more priests of his faith.

Ober was recently appointed to the lord mayor's council, and the choice is extremely controversial. He took the seat vacated by the resignation of Borleen Nistal, high priest of the Temple of the Lifegiver. Nistal resigned to protest the lord mayor authorizing the Gray Society and other necromancers within the city. Not only did it upset many people that Nistal's replacement was a member of the Gray Society, it also upset many within the Temple of the Sage that the head priest was passed over. Ober himself didn't seek the appointment, but Nalyka Saldor convinced him to accept it.

Ober is a quiet but amiable man, who enjoys intellectual discussions and speaks in long strings of polysyllabic words. He gets along well with others, but doesn't often involve himself in the scheming that so many of Drakonheim's aristocrats do.

The Academy of Nalan

Through effort comes learning
Through learning comes knowledge
Through knowledge comes understanding
Through understanding comes power
—Motto of the Academy of Nalan

Like most institutions in Drakonheim, the Academy of Nalan has declined drastically since the height of the Cevali Empire. Once a powerhouse of arcane learning, it churned out wizards of the highest caliber, and the faculty were legendary spellcasters capable of stopping time, calling down meteors, and opening gates to other planes of existence.

While the academy remains prestigious among the people of Drakonheim and exerts tremendous influence in the city, the quality of the wizards teaching and learning there is a pale shadow of what it once was. Many students master only basic cantrips, and some not even that. The faculty is little better, and even the head wizards can barely pull off enough power to cast a single fireball spell. There are occasional exceptions who surpass these banal expectations—like Lady Saldor, whose knowledge now vastly outstrips her former teachers. A true archmage would either laugh or weep if she saw the state of the school.

High Wizard Gelisa Coldin

This woman's wavy black hair falls past her shoulders, but it doesn't cover her pointed ears. She has smooth olive skin and dark brown eyes that seem so deep a man could fall in. She wears well-made robes that glitter with a light of their own, and she carries an elegant ebony staff.

Gelisa Coldin is a half-elven wizard who leads the Academy of Nalan, and also serves on the lord mayor's council. She claims to trace her heritage back to a great sorcerer queen of a far-off elven kingdom. She knows a little of all forms of magic, but her forte is illusions and enchantments, both of which she uses to make herself seem more powerful than she really is. While she is one of the most powerful wizards in Drakonheim, that's not saying much. She owes her position at the school just as much to her charisma and social contacts as to any arcane prowess. Gelisa is a charming and gregarious woman, and though now well over seventy years old, her elven heritage keeps her looking young and radiant.

Market District

Named for the great square at its heart, the Market District is the center of Drakonheim's economy. In addition to the daily throng of vendor stalls that fill the square, the district is also home to many craftspeople and shopkeepers who have a store at street level and a home above.

The Market District is the most populous district, and contains a wide range of people, from beggars to well-off trades people, though none rival the wealth to be found in High Town.

Drakonheim's Market Square

There is a wide flat open area in the heart of the district. Each day before dawn, peddlers and merchants arrive to set up shops. Many come from the southern villages, while others are city folk who do not own their own shops. Perhaps once a month, traveling merchants from other cities arrive to hock exotic goods.

All the venders must buy a license from the White Keep, and the watch patrols the market square looking for thieves and illegal goods, but otherwise the sellers are left to fend for themselves. Though it seems chaotic, a kind of order emerges as the lines of booths and stalls form across the square. Long-time sellers have regular locations, and fights have broken out when somebody new tries to take the spot of an old-timer.

Godrick Olsben

The halfling has straight brown hair fashioned in a simple bowl haircut. His clothes are well made, and he wears a pair of gloves. Those who observe him closely notice that the pinky finger on his left hand never moves.

Godrick Olsben is one of the few halflings who left the southern farms and never went back. He has a reputation as an eccentric, and frequently goes on tangents, telling allegories that seem completely unrelated to the topic or recalling the many recipes he's eaten throughout his lifetime. He has uncharacteristically little to say about his left pinky. If asked, he will take off his glove, revealing that it is missing and the joint where it should be is covered with scars. "I made a poor choice," is the only explanation he offers.

Despite his oddities, Godrick Olsben has carved out a lucrative niche in Drakonheim. He acts as a middleman of sorts, acquiring things that are rare and expensive, and finding buyers for them. Much of his trade is magical items, though he also deals with precious stones, works of art, and just about anything else legal to sell in Drakonheim. If the heroes end up with valuable loot that they want to exchange for cash, Olsben is the one to talk to. The halfling's place of business isn't a magic item shop with wares laid out in glass cases. But, if the heroes have specific needs Olsben might be able to make a few inquiries If the item is relatively commonplace, he can find it for a reasonable price.

Temple of the Lifegiver

The Temple of the Lifegiver is the largest temple in Drakonheim, and it stands overlooking the market square. It's the most popular temple in the city, and thousands of congregants attend the weekly services which preach a message of hope, growth, light, and rebirth.

The temple is built in the classical Cevali style. Round stone columns form a rectangle on the outside of the temple, and also support a sloping stone roof. Solid stone walls stand within the pillars. Most of the interior is a single massive room where the faithful gather to worship, though there are a few small rooms behind this for storage and clerical work.

High Priest Borleen Nistal

This middle-aged woman stands taller than most men, and her posture says she is happy to be looked up to. She has copper skin, brown eyes, and a single braid of black hair. She wears priestly robes with a cornucopia subtly embroidered upon them.

High Priest Borleen Nistal wasn't always religious. She grew up on the streets, begging and stealing to get by. That changed one day when she tried to pick the pocket of a traveling friar. The friar caught her, but instead of handing her over to the guards, he made Borleen his assistant as he went to preach the word of the Lifegiver to the villages south of Drakonheim.



Nistal learned the lessons of the Lifegiver and saw the beauty in all creation. When she came of age, she discovered that she had been touched by her god. She had the power to channel divine energy and heal with a touch. She continued traveling, meeting up with other wanderers, and helping villagers however she could.

Years later Nistal returned to Drakonheim and tried to use the church's power to help the poor and downtrodden. She worked her way up the church hierarchy until finally she became high priest. Though she knows she has done much good in the city, she often feels like little has changed, and she has accepted that it may take generations to make Drakonheim the shining city that Nistal dreams of.

High Priest Borleen Nistal met Lady Nalyka Saldor through their charity work. The two learned they shared a vision for a brighter future, and soon became fast friends. It broke Nistal's heart when she learned that Lady Saldor practiced the dark arts. Nistal opposed the plan to legitimize necromancy, and when the mayor's council disagreed with her, she resigned from that body.

Nistal still opposes the undead, and speaks against them, though she has learned to be cautious and often talks in metaphors and allegories. She sympathizes with the Knights of the Eclipse, and might offer them safe harbor, but she isn't prepared to act in such a destructive or clandestine fashion. She prefers to believe that words and the will of the people can sway the decision.

Temple of the Merchant

The Temple of the Merchant is the newest of the five major temples in Drakonheim, built under the direction of Brandon Crote's father when he was lord mayor. It stands at one end of the market square opposite the Temple of the Lifegiver. Some of the Lifegiver's faithful view this as an attempt to undermine that god's power in the city, though the clergy of the Merchant vehemently deny this. After all, services are on different days, so people are free to worship the Lifegiver and the Merchant equally.

The Temple of the Merchant draws a smaller crowd than the other temples, except the Sage. Most are peddlers, merchants, and aristocrats. The number of aristocrats is bolstered by the fact that the lord mayor is a regular attendee.

The temple is a large stone building with a large arched entryway and two tall steeples. The interior is full of stained glass showing the teachings of the Merchant. In addition to the central temple hall, there are two private chapels as well as many small rooms for storage, meetings, and offices.

Saucy Mermaid

The Saucy Mermaid is the kind of tavern where it's a good idea not to look too closely at the food and drink you're served, but it's popular with many crafters and shopkeepers in the district.

Salty Pyte owns the Saucy Mermaid and tends bar. He's a quiet man who knows that most customers just want to talk, not an opinion about what they say. He employs a few servers, the best known a half-orc named Dorah. She flirts with the customers and responds well to flattery. She is also up on all the latest gossip about town, from the dealings of the high lords to the romances of the common folk.

Arena District

As the name implies, the Arena District is home to a massive arena where the ancient Cevali used to hold gladiatorial games. Though it no longer serves this purpose, the arena is such an impressive landmark that people still use it to navigate.

The city watch has taken over the arena itself and now use it as their headquarters, barracks, and training ground. The district is also home to others with martial training, such as caravan guards, mercenaries, and adventurers, as well as those who support them like weapon smiths, fletchers, and leather workers. The Arena District is one of the least populated districts in the city, and overall tends to be bleaker than the Market District.

The Arena

The oval arena is the largest structure in Drakonheim. During the Cevali Empire, it hosted regular gladiatorial matches, but as the population dwindled death matches fell out of favor. The arena was abandoned for many years, until the man who then led the city watch decided to use the open central field as a training ground for new recruits. As their old offices became dilapidated and the city refused to build new ones, the watch eventually moved their headquarters into the arena, as the centuries-old Cevali architecture held up better than newer buildings only decades old.

The city watch has at least one small station house in every official district, but the arena is now its central home. It houses offices, an armory, barracks, and a jail, and there is still plenty of extra room that it left empty. Members of the watch regularly check the empty rooms and corridors, as it would not do to have criminal squatters in their own home.

Temple of the Warrior

One of the first buildings the hero of Drakonheim constructed was a temple to the Warrior. The original structure was destroyed a few centuries ago by a fire, but a new temple was built near the arena. The new building was constructed toward the end of the Cevali Empire. It is rare in that the building is circular with a domed roof, rather than the normal rectangle with a slanted roof. Like most Cevali temples it features a ring of pillars around the outside with a smaller brick building within.

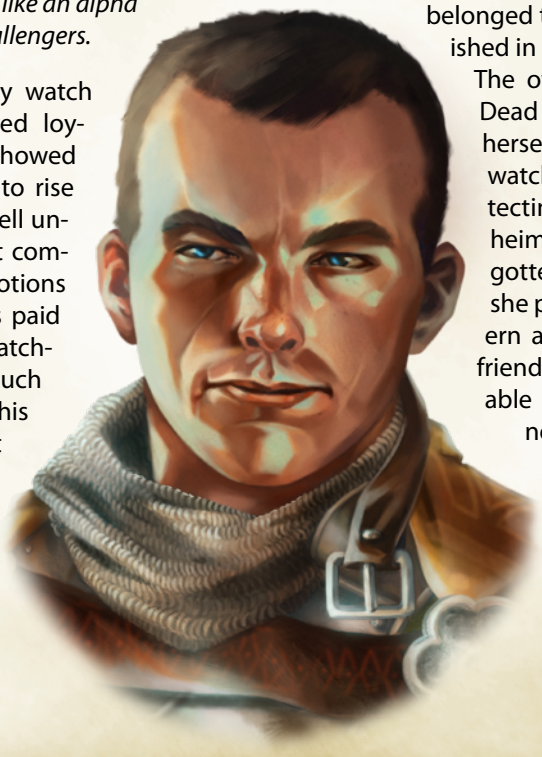
There are two sorts of people who regularly attend the Temple of the Warrior. Some are the types of people who normally identify with the Warrior: guards, mercenaries, and adventurers. But the majority of the congregation comes from the aristocratic class in Drakonheim. Many are trained in swordsmanship, and some are trained as heavy cavalry, but few had seen true combat before the recent hobgoblin attack, and some avoided combat even then.

Each week there are two services at the temple: an early morning and an afternoon service. While there is no official rule or even a verbal suggestion, by tradition the actual warriors attend the early service, while the aristocrats attend the later one.

Jurg Steiner

This man has short-cropped brown hair and blue eyes that seem to pierce through you. He holds himself with an air of confidence, like an alpha wolf that has defeated all challengers.

Jurg Steiner joined the city watch at a young age and served loyally for many years. He showed great promise and started to rise through the ranks until he fell under the control of a corrupt commander who based promotions more on the bribes he was paid than on the merit of the watchman. Unwilling to stomach such graft, Steiner finished out his term and then struck out on his own. He started as a bodyguard-for-hire, and soon was able to hire a few friends and like-minded individuals forming a small mercenary company called Steiner's Irregulars.



Since its inception, Steiner's Irregulars has grown to a company of roughly two dozen men and women. As the name implies they come from a wide range of backgrounds, including former members of the watch, tribals from the north, former criminals, and even a couple of wizards. Steiner is always on the lookout for new talent, and allows members to come and go as long as they complete any job they accept. (As such, it is a natural fit for player characters looking to earn some extra coin.)

The Irregulars' specialty is escorting nobles and merchants in to the lands beyond the comparatively safe walls of Drakonheim, though they are open to other work, as long as it's legal and honorable (as determined by Steiner). They fought against the hobgoblin invaders, and fared much better than most.

Steiner himself is a stoic man who has little time to pity fools. As his company grows, he finds himself pushed more and more into the role of administrator. He feels uncomfortable ordering men into danger and not being able to be able to help when danger strikes.

Dead Man's Tap

The Dead Man's Tap is the most popular tavern in the Arena District. The food and drink are reasonably priced and filling. It's also one of the safest taverns as half the clients are off-duty members of the city watch, and most of the others work some kind of martial employment. The walls are adorned with swords, spears, and shields, all of which once belonged to former patrons who perished in the line of duty.

The owner and operator of the Dead Man's Tap is Cordelia Pinel, herself a former member of the watch. After many years protecting the streets of Drakonheim, she finally decided she'd gotten too old for that stuff, so she put her savings into the tavern and with the help of some friends turned it into a profitable business. Cordelia is a no-nonsense woman who is still quick with a sword. She remembers every person who comes into her tavern, but won't talk about them unless she's got a darned good reason.

Earl's Garden

Earl's Garden is a tea house constructed over the buried ruins of a temple from the height of the Cevali Empire. Its original purpose was a front for the Gray Society, whose true base was in the temple ruins below. Because many members of the society were also tea enthusiasts, it is a working business with a wide variety of imported teas.

When the Gray Society's true nature became public, it wasn't long before most people guessed the establishment's true purpose. While there are a few people who still come for the tea, most of the patrons are either members of the Gray Society or aspire to be.

Graystone

Graystone is the headquarters of the Gray Society. It is built in the subterranean ruins of a Cevali temple. The wooden building on top of it is a tea house called The Earl's Garden, and members of the Gray Society enter though a trap door in one of the back rooms. Only members of the Gray Society or their special guests are permitted into Graystone, and living and undead guards are always stationed outside the entrance.

The headquarters below is far larger than the tea house above, and it includes a meeting hall, library, offices, and areas to experiment on the undead. At any time of day, there are always at least a few members of the society present, and dozens of undead servants follow their orders, or simply wait to be called upon.

Little Grendus

Twas then we felt the mountains ache.
The stones did scream the ground did quake.
Our halls became a funeral pyre.
All on the the day of ash and fire.
—The Song of Ash and Fire

The dwarven enclave in Drakonheim began in the days of the Cevali Empire. At its height, the city's population grew fast and infrastructure needed to expand faster than local workers could manage. Dwarves from the kingdom of Grendus came to build the roads, bridges, aqueducts, and great buildings needed to support Drakonheim. Some of these workers moved to Drakonheim permanently and brought their families with them. They congregated together in a section of the city that came to be called Little Grendus. In the wake of the many disasters that struck Grendus, thousands more dwarves fled to Little Grendus, such that is now the largest dwarven settlement in the region.

Little Grendus is a city within a city. Some of the most insular dwarves spend their whole lives within the confines of Little Grendus, never even learning the human language. Through officially it answers to the lord mayor, and Boroff Emeraldeyes is on the lord mayor's council to "represent the dwarves," a separate dwarven council oversees what goes on in Little Grendus. It maintains its own infrastructure and has its own city guard. Lately many within Little Grendus have talked about taking their independence even further. They pay taxes to the White Keep, but what does the lord mayor give them in return?

Little Grendus is known for its artisans, especially metal and stone workers, and many of the aristocrats swear it is the only place to get a custom sword or suit of armor.

Thea Brimstone

This young dwarven woman's face is hard and sharp, as if cut from living stone. Her hair is brown streaked with white, and her eyes are slate gray.

Thea Brimstone is a third generation resident of Little Grendus, and she is perhaps the loudest voice calling for change within the dwarven part of the city. She has long advocated that Little Grendus should handle its own taxes and oversee their distribution. They already do just about everything else themselves. She has gathered quite a popular following, but of course Lord Mayor Crote doesn't give her demands a second thought.

For Brimstone, the last straw came when the lord mayor welcomed the undead into the city. She tells everyone, "he cares more about the dead than the living," every chance she gets. Meanwhile, she is organizing a campaign that she calls the "three-quarters movement." She has convinced many dwarves to quietly pay only three-quarters of their taxes to the city government and give the other quarter to a shadow government that she organizes. Brimstone and others in her shadow government are helping the merchants cook their books so the tax collectors don't automatically realize they are being cheated, but they are also using a large chunk of the taxes they collect to outfit and train their own militia just in case things turn ugly.

Boroff Emeraldeyes

This handsome dwarven man's eyes sparkle like emeralds as he smiles. His hair and beard are fire red, and both are long but neat and adorned with golden threads.

Boroff Emeraldeyes's ancestors supported the wrong side of the civil war in Grendus, and afterwards fled to Drakonheim. While they lost the war, they retained much of their wealth and political influence, and soon became the most powerful dwarven family in Drakonheim.

Boroff Emeraldeyes inherited his family's wealth, and continues to earn more, primarily as a moneylender, though he has his ringed fingers in a little bit of everything. He is a member of the lord mayor's council, as was his father before him. Though he is supposed to "represent the dwarves" on the council, he really represents himself and his business interests.

Boroff Emeraldeyes remains popular throughout Little Grendus, however, as he uses his wealth and influence to aid his close allies and his speaking skills and charisma to placate the masses. He's quick to take credit for anything positive that happens in the city, and points to the recent victory over the hobgoblin army as proof that he and the lord mayor care about the people, and more importantly that the lord mayor and Emeraldeyes are "the only ones that can keep you safe."

Bellows' Bellows

The armors crafted at Bellows' Bellows not only protect wearers from harm, they also strike fear or awe into all who see them. The dwarven master armorer Fel Bellows runs the smithy, located in the heart of Little Grendus. He has half a dozen apprentices, including his two sons, all of who aid him and learn the trade. The shop is best known for creating armors with intricate designs and unique colors and helms that resemble dragons, demons, lions, eagles, and anything else the customer desires.

All the armor, of course, is functional as well. Bellows and his apprentices are quite capable of making more utilitarian arms and armor, though Bellows still charges high prices for even the most basic work.

The Voice of the Mountain

The dwarves of Grendus had a rich tradition of passing on their history through songs. Whenever clans gathered, the elders sang the great tales while the younger dwarves listened and learned. New songs and verses were written and revised over generations.

The music itself is normally either sung completely a cappella, or as voice plus percussion. The dwarves use drums, but are just as likely to simply stomp their feet or bang their shields.

This oral tradition continues in Drakonheim. Some humans heard the songs of the dwarves, and were enraptured by the rich harmonies and throbbing bass notes. Some dwarves started performing at temple services, private parties, and public concerts. The most successful performers are a group of twelve dwarves called the Voice of the Mountain. These dwarves are now household names throughout the city, and music aficionados from other cities even risk the dangerous trek to Drakonheim to hear them perform their annual public concert.

The Temple of the Smith

The Temple of the Smith is a large stone building with massive square stone pillars in front. While there is no official prohibition against other races, nearly all of the regular congregants are dwarves. The building was constructed after the civil war in Grendus by those who fought on the losing side, and anybody who knows about architecture can identify the dwarven style of the building with no difficulty.

The Temple of the Smith holds services twice weekly, and most congregants attend one day or the other, but not both. The temple is open every day of the week, and dwarven crafters frequently come to ask the priests to bless their iron, stone, or lumber as they begin work on a new project.

The head priest of the temple is an elderly dwarf named Oalf Silverstar. He avoids politics and focuses on the spiritual health of his congregation.

The Docks

During the height of the Cevali Empire, Drakonheim shipped barges up and down the river, but now there is nowhere to go. Civilized people have abandoned the territory north of the city, and the canals that the empire dredged through the delta have long since been clogged up.

The riverfront has become home to the less desirable elements of the city. It's the place to go when you need somebody to do a job and not ask questions.

The Queen's Guard

Several gangs battle for turf and the right to control various criminal enterprises in Drakonheim. One of the most successful calls itself the Queen's Guard. They have their hand in just about everything from smuggling to assassinations, and little goes on in the Docks without their knowledge.

The Queen's Guard are always interested in acquiring new talent, from lookouts to cut purses to vagrants not opposed to a little murder. Recently the Queen's Guard started dealing with the goblins from the Rat Kingdom using the sewers to move silently through the city, and convincing goblins to perform tasks that even people from the Docks find distasteful.

The Queen of Beggars

Dressed in the tattered remains of a once elegant ball gown, this woman looks both ancient and youthful at the same time. Her skin is smooth, but her hair is streaked with gray, and her posture, eyes, and expression suggest many decades of experience.

Nobody knows the real name of the Queen of Beggars. Some say she never had one. She has perpetuated a hundred stories about where she came from, that she was raised by rats, that she is the runaway daughter of some far-off king, that she is a demon who clawed her way out from the depths of hell.

Wherever she came from, several years ago the Queen of Beggars started gathering power and absorbing smaller gangs through a combination of diplomacy, guile, and a well-placed blade or two. She rules with an iron hand in a velvet glove. Those who please her are rewarded, and those who upset her disappear without even leaving a corpse floating in the river.

The Knotted Vine

Taverns don't get much lower than the Knotted Vine. Choices for drinks include watered-down ale and a clear liquid that burns terribly as it goes down. Food is a thin brown soup, and if you are lucky, a tough bread cut with sawdust. Mice dart in and out of holes in the common room, and the furniture is infested with fleas. Still the Knotted Vine attracts a crowd every evening. Many are criminals, others are just hard-working folk looking to forget about their troubles.

The owner of the bar is a tanned half-elven man named Korelus. He employs a goon squad of bouncers who deal with frequent unruly patrons, but no servers. If people want something they can damn well get it themselves.



"Almighty" Lou-Ann

At first this woman seems as unremarkable as her common gray clothes. Looking more closely, slightly pointed eyes peek out from her long blond hair, and her blue eyes sparkle with a keen wit. Her frame is slender yet taut, like a dancer, or a cheetah about to pounce.

The woman Lou-Ann thought of as her mother, found Lou-Ann as an infant floating in the Serpenes River. The only clue to her identity was her swaddling blanket—rich cloth embroidered with the letter P. It was noble fabric, and this woman knew that nobles didn't just drop their children in the river. She asked around, but met only silence that she took as confirmation of her theory. The child was some noble's bastard, probably had with a servant. When the aristocrat refused to acknowledge the child and sacked the mother, the poor thing ended up in the river.

Like most children in the Docks, Lou-Ann grew up quickly, but she appears younger than she really is, thanks in part to the elven half of her heritage. Like most people of the Docks, she did many things to survive, but earned most of her bread as a con artist. She found it far easier and safer to convince somebody that they want to give you money, than it is to just take it from them.

The hobgoblin attack marked a turning point in her life, though not because she saw much action. She saw men and women she'd known since childhood sign up for the militia and get slaughtered by the dozen, while the rich nobles pranced around on their horses, safely encased in a second skin of iron.

It was the rich man's war, but the poor man's fight. Just like it always was.

The aristocracy drained the blood from the common people and gave back nothing in return. Lou-Ann resolved to take her fight to the real enemy. She donned a mask, and using every trick she had learned in the Docks, hoodwinked the lord mayor's tax collectors out of a full collections purse. The next day people throughout the Docks awoke to discover a few extra coppers where none had been before. When the city watch questioned them, they only said that it must have come from "The Almighty."

Since then Lou-Ann has gathered a small band of followers. They keep on the move between the Docks, the

Bone Yards, and the villages south of town. They steal from the wealthy and redistribute the money to the poor. Naturally, Lord Mayor Crote has put a large bounty on her head and the head of her followers. But as Lou-Ann sees it, that just means her plans are working.

Father Gisepi

This short human has a bushy beard and short curly hair. He wears simple clerical robes. He uses a cane as he walks, supporting his left foot.

Father Gisepi grew up the son of a miller, but soon found a calling to become a priest of the Lifegiver. He believes his calling is to help the least fortunate of all, and in Drakonheim, those are the people of the Docks. He preaches to criminals, vagrants, and the poor. More importantly, he tries to help them live better lives. Father Gisepi tries to teach the people how to take care of themselves and to find an honest day's work without resorting to a life of crime. He also serves the community by tending the sick and injured, and easing the dying.

Father Gisepi lives in the ruins of a Cevali pavilion. The ground floor holds beds for the sick and needy and a simple shrine to the Lifegiver. His own meager residence is on the second floor. The gangs and criminals of the Docks consider Father Gisepi's home neutral territory. The few people who ignored this unwritten law, disappeared soon after.

Thrandell Bloodaxe

This dwarven man has dark skin and dark features. His long black hair is held together with a single golden clasp. His beard is short and neatly groomed. He has several golden, jeweled piercings in his ears, and a single gold and ruby stud piercing his nose.

Thrandell Bloodaxe was born in Little Grendus, but left just after reaching adulthood for reasons he does not discuss. Since then he's done a little bit of everything, and gotten to know a lot about everything.

Thrandell Bloodaxe is an information broker. He has eyes and ears throughout Drakonheim and beyond. If you need to know something and Bloodaxe doesn't already know, he can find out, assuming you can afford the price. Common knowledge is cheap, but rare secrets are extremely expensive, making Bloodaxe a wealthy man. For those who cannot pay in coin, he sometimes accepts a trade in kind of secrets for secrets, but the secret he gains must always be more valuable than the one he gives away.

Bloodaxe gathers most of his information through contacts all over the city: the watch, the temples, and the criminal gangs all have informants who report to him. He also has an extensive library of ancient tomes to consult for more esoteric knowledge. When that is not enough, Bloodaxe has one more trick he can play, one that he keeps a guarded secret. He is, in fact, a self-taught diviner. Through ancient tomes of magic, he learned how to read omens and contact spirits of the dead.

The Red Pier

The Red Pier takes its name from the rusty-red stone that the pier it is made out of. Boats seldom dock there, but it has become a gathering place for anybody looking for a day's work and anybody willing to hire them. Employers come from all parts of the city, from aristocrats of High Town looking for cheap labor, to the crime lords of the Docks, looking for people who won't ask questions.

The Bone Yards

The Bone Yards are nature's way of keeping us in our place. "Look at us," we say. "We're so great. We built a city! We built a statue! We built a monument! We'll live forever!" Then look how quick it all comes tumbling down. In the end, everything you've done, everything you've loved, all your children, and your children's children, and your children's children's children. It's all just dust.

—Ilsa Noorin

At its peak Drakonheim housed over a hundred thousand people, and now it has less than a quarter of that. Whole sections of the city are completely abandoned. Many of the old stone buildings still stand as monuments to the ancient empire.

These abandoned sections of the city are collectively called the Bone Yards.

These sections of the city are overgrown, with weeds and shrubs, and some of the longest abandoned have small copses of trees. Wildlife is common to the area, from squirrels to feral dogs. While most people consider it abandoned, a small number of people live in the Bone Yards. Some work in the city while others hunt and trap the nearby game, or gather wild plants.

Ilsa Noorin

This elven woman moves with the grace of a wild creature. Her hair is chestnut brown, her skin is tan, and her eyes are dark violet. Her expression betrays no emotion.

Ilsa Noorin grew up among one of the tribal communities north of Drakonheim. Her parents were wood elves who fled lands further north as the monsters encroached on their forests. Her new tribe fought a series of small wars with the Moonless Tribe, and lost badly. The survivors fled south and settled in the Bone Yards of Drakonheim. Their number dwindled as youngsters left the tribe and the oldest died off, but Noorin with her elven blood outlived them all.

Now Ilsa Noorin lives alone. She sleeps in a ruined Cevali pavilion and hunts or gathers everything she needs. Nobody knows the land near Drakonheim as well as Noorin, and sometimes city folk can convince Noorin to work as a guide. She doesn't care for coins or gems, and asks no payment. Instead she aids people that she believes are honest and kind-hearted.

Green Bough Cemetery

During the Cevali Empire, this necropolis was the resting place of the city's wealthy and well-connected citizens. It is filled with stone mausoleums, and while the once well-maintained lawns have gone to weeds and copses of trees, most of the stone structures remain.

The Gray Society frequently uses the cemetery. Members first came to loot bones to animate as skeletons. Later they started performing experiments and rituals there that they were unable or unwilling to perform at Graystone. They have also used it to meet with unsavory characters, and they warded several mausoleums to trap undead which they cannot control but wish to observe.

While the Gray Society tries to keep Green Bough safe for all, the many years of necromantic magic sometimes causes unpredictable results, and every now and then their wards of binding fail and the undead they were holding escape to work their own ravenous will.

Zoe

This olive-skinned woman has luxurious wavy black hair, full lips, and wide brown eyes. She is dressed in colorful traveling clothes.

People who venture into the Bone Yards at night often tell strange tales of the things they see there. One common story tells of a woman known only as Zoe. People in the Bone Yard are often drawn to the twinkling light of her cook fire. Approaching, they find a young woman roasting food over the open flames, with a colorful peddler's cart nearby. Zoe always welcomes people to her fire and offers to share her food. She happily shares folk stories and ancient legends, but she reveals little of herself.

People sometimes sleep near her fire or come back again after morning light, but always find Zoe gone, with no sign of fire nor wagon. Some have found her again on other nights, often months or years later—though she never seems to age. Also, she acts as though she does not remember her past encounters. Rumors say that a few times brigands have tried to rob Zoe, but they are found stone dead the next morning without a mark on them.



Many think that Zoe is only a rumor, but she is very real (in a sense). Zoe is the ghost of a peddler woman who was murdered in the Bone Yards a century ago by brigands who she took pity on and shared her fire with. She never accepted her cruel fate, and her spirit still clings to the mortal world.

Many members of the Gray Society suspect Zoe is a ghost and frequently go to the Bone Yards hoping to learn more about the nature of ghosts, but Zoe never appears to them. It may be that she senses the kinds of questions they might ask—questions she does not want to answer.

Sewers

During Drakonheim's golden age, the city planners designed an extensive sewer system beneath the city. The wealthier homes connected directly to these sewers, while the poorer folk used public latrines. In their time, the sewers were marvels of engineering, but as the empire declined they fell into disrepair.

Many sections of the sewers have collapsed while others have become blocked. Many people still dump refuse into the city sewers without thinking about where it goes, thus there are many large midden heaps below the city streets. The waste of

the city above has spawned a whole ecosystem in the sewers. Rats, centipedes, and slimes of all sizes feed off the trash and off of each other. Occasionally these vermin wander into the streets above, or an unlucky explorer becomes lost in the sewers, but for the most part the people of Drakonheim are blissfully unaware of the dangers beneath them.

Sewer Goblins

When Gozzy was a child, Gozzy thought humans were angels. Humans give us gifts from the sky. Then Gozzy learned that they think it is trash that they give us. Gozzy thought humans were blind. They miss so many things. Throw away shiny things even. Gozzy saw some humans stumbling around in the dark. They walked right into rat's nest. Missed all the signs. Who does that? Lots of biting. Gozzy had to save them.

Now Gozzy knows the truth. Humans are not angels. They are not blind. Just stupid. It's not their fault. They were born that way. It's Gozzy's job to save them.

—Gozzy the Quiet

Rats and bugs weren't the only things that moved into the sewers. A few hundred years ago a small band of goblins entered one of the drainage pipes and found the sewers to be a perfect home. They have been thriving and multiplying ever since, and now nearly a thousand goblins live beneath the streets of Drakonheim.

Most sewer goblins make their living scavenging trash and hunting the other creatures in the sewers. A few warrens within each kingdom also cultivate mushrooms. Most are simple food mushrooms, but some are hallucinogenic, and one variety grown by members of the Rat Kingdom is a powerful poison. A few brave goblins try to steal food, tools, and weapons from the city above without being seen. Fewer, braver goblins actually attempt to trade with humans.

The goblins organize themselves into "kingdoms." Over the years many kingdoms have come and gone. Currently there are three kingdoms named for totem creatures that also live in the sewers: the Rat Kingdom, the Centipede Kingdom, and the Gelatinous Cube Kingdom (which the goblins call the Slergrad Kingdom). Each kingdom is divided into a dozen or so warrens, and each warren houses from six to a hundred goblins. The goblin kingdoms are almost always at war with each other. Often two align against the third kingdom, but these alliances seldom last more than a month. As the name implies the goblin kingdoms all have kings, who are typically just leaders of the largest warren, and not necessarily a hereditary title.

Within the kingdoms the goblins practice a "vote with your feet," kind of democracy. Goblins who are unhappy with their warren leader can move to another, though they would almost never move to a different kingdom. Warren leaders use different strategies to attract followers. Some show martial strength, others grant gifts, and still others threaten those who might leave.

Centipede Kingdom

The goblins of the Centipede Kingdom pride themselves on being builders. They don't just collect the garbage the humans above throw away, they use it as raw materials and transform it. They can make a spear of any stick of wood and hunk of metal, and their warrens are filled with traps and snares.

The Centipede Kingdom believes that goblins should stick to their own kind, and doesn't like seeing the other kingdoms working with the humans above. They like the sharp swords and vials of acid, sure, but how long before the humans start using their swords on goblins? The Centipede Kingdom keeps a long oral history, and that history is full of humans, dwarves, and elves slaughtering goblins for no reason. They know it's foolish to provoke the humans and would never dream of attacking them on the surface, but if a few fools disappear in the tunnels below the city, nobody from the Centipede Kingdom would shed a tear.

The current king of the Centipede Kingdom is a wrinkled old goblin called Drek Sharp Knife, and he's ruled the kingdom for as long as most goblins can remember. Some think his age would make him weak, but those who challenge him soon find that he's still deadly quick, and twice as smart as any other goblin.

Rat Kingdom

The Rat Kingdom has the most warrens of the goblins, but each individual warren is smaller. This tends to lead to more infighting than in other kingdoms, but they are quick to unite against an outside enemy. The Rat Kingdom is also full of diggers, and they have added many side tunnels to the already convoluted sewer system. Their tunnels are less stable than the cement-lined Cevali passages, so collapses are common, but any goblin who can't dig his way out doesn't deserve to survive .

The Rat Kingdom is the most accustomed to working with humans, though most humans they work with are of the seedier element. A few of the

warrens have standing relationships with garbage collectors, smugglers, and thieves. They appreciate human craftsmanship and will work for quality goods, especially weapons. They'll take jobs that are too dirty, dangerous, or despicable for most surface dwellers.

The goblins in the Rat Kingdom used to provide bodies to the Gray Society, but since the latter has gone public, they no longer use goblins to get their corpses. This has pushed the Rats to seek more criminal work, and many now work with the street gang called the Queen's Guard.

The king of the Rat Kingdom is a volatile title, but right now it belongs to a warren leader named Zarky Long Ears. Zarky took over his warren after killing the previous leader, and then bullied the other warrens into accepting him as king. He is always watching his back, and has allied himself with the Queen's Guard after they gave him a suit of dwarven-made armor (sized for a halfling) that he hopes will keep him alive.

Gelatinous Cube Kingdom

The Gelatinous Cube Kingdom is the most social of the three kingdoms. They acknowledge that two goblins are stronger than one, and a hundred are stronger than two. Most of them at least try to solve their problems with words before resorting to violence, though violence is still quite frequent.

For some time a few members of the Gelatinous Cube Kingdom have been in contact with the surface city, but that contact has increased lately. After they heard word that humans accepted zombies and skeletons on the streets, they figured it would be safe for goblins too. Most goblins prefer their lives in the sewers, but a few are exploring the city above, and the king has appointed an ambassador to the surface world.

The king of the Gelatinous Cube Kingdom is Big King Flurx. He rose to power after making some deals with some humans in the city above to provide new gear for the goblins in his warren. This attracted new goblins and soon his warren was the biggest and most powerful. The former king acknowledges Big King Flurx's victory, but now plots to regain his crown, one way or another.



Gozzy the Quiet

This creature is small even by goblin standards, with pale green skin, and only a small fuzz of hair upon his head. His ears are large, like the ears at of a bat, and seem to twitch as if searching for some unknown sound.

Gozzy the Quiet is a member of the Gelatinous Cube (or "Slergrad") Kingdom, and he lives in Big Flurx's warren. He is good at creeping along unnoticed and finding things that others miss. He is clever and inquisitive about outsiders. He is particularly interested in magic and shiny things. Gozzy uses the term "human" to describe all PC races, whether they be human, elf, dwarf, or halfling.

After Gozzy successfully aided a band of humans and earned new shiny things for his warren, King Big Flurx appointed Gozzy to be the first ambassador from the Slergrad kingdom to the city above it. Gozzy finds the human world simultaneously fascinating and horrifying. He has a few human contacts that have already helped him learn more about the city and introduced him to ways he can bring glory to the Slergrad Kingdom.

The Caves

Before Drakonheim was built, the Serpenes River valley, where it now sits, was filled with caves cut through the limestone by underground rivers and lakes. The greatest of these was Ignomia's treasure chamber, but that was only one of dozens.

Some of these caves were appropriated by humans, serving as natural store houses, or connected to the sewer system, but many remain unused or unexplored. While not used by humans, all kinds of animal life lives in the caves. Most is harmless, but some hold deadly slimes, or vicious predators. Some are also used by criminals and cultists to hide from the law. Some caves were once used by the desperate people generations ago, and while the people who used them are long dead, the traps and magical wards they crafted remain.

Treasure hunters frequently venture into the unexplored caves, hoping to find the fabled lost treasure hoard of the dragon Ignomia. Her hoard, if it still exists, has never been found, but adventurers occasionally find other valuables, including caches from the Cevali Empire, smuggler's store houses, and the bodies of other explorers who lost their way in the dark.

Surrounding Territory

Though many city dwellers forget it from time to time, Drakonheim is at the mercy of the lands around it, whether it be the farmers who feed the city or the hobgoblins who try to invade it. The following are just some of the most important people, places, and creatures near the city.

Farmlands

City folk make a big fuss about wolves. A pack goes after somebody's flock and all o' sudden there's big-shot wolf hunters down from the city. Not that I like the wolves o' course, but it's the least o' our troubles. Blight. Drought. Taxes. Those kill tenfold what any wolves do. Still a better life than living up in some dead city walled in with a bunch of brain eating zombies. Give me the farmer's life any day.

—Anonymous farmer

Drakonheim used to be surrounded in all directions by farmlands, but now the fertile land to the north has been completely abandoned. Many farms remain to the south of the city, stretching down to the southern swamps, and close to the foothills of the Grendanes.

Life for the farmers is hard, and hardest for those near the outskirts. Wolves and worse venture from the hills to prey on livestock and occasionally farmers who go out after dark. The farms are clustered around small villages that are claimed by the aristocrats of Drakonheim. Each village has a mill, and the miller and the nobles always take a cut of the farmers' harvests. Every year it seems like they take a little bit more.

Cornilia Sparo

This short and squat but powerful woman seems to be covered in a layer of flour. She has green eyes, and her hair is sandy brown and worn in a simple bun.

Cornilia Sparo runs the largest mill in the area, just half-a-day's walk south of Drakonheim along the Serpenes River. She answers directly to Lord Mayor Crote, collecting a share of the crops as payment from the farmers, and of course, collecting her fair share. Lately she's been taking a little more than her fair share. In her reports to the lord mayor, she blames the farmers for withholding crops, while to the farmers she blames the lord mayor for increasing taxes.

Tribal Lands

Many bands of tribal humans live in the area north of Drakonheim. Most once lived further away, but have been pushed south and east by other dangers. The Moonless Tribe and Willow Tribe are the two largest tribes, but there are many smaller groups in the area.

Moonless Tribe

The Moonless Tribe is the most fearsome of the nearby tribes. They live primarily by hunting, but frequently also raid other tribal communities. They value strength, martial prowess, and hunting skills. They tattoo themselves as part of their religious rituals, and many tattoos have special significance that other members of the tribe can read.

The Moonless Tribe aided the hobgoblins in their recent attack against Drakonheim, and suffered heavy losses, including their former leader. Since then, they have withdrawn into the woods to lick their wounds, but it's only a matter of time before they regain their strength.

Wolf Brother

This man's eyes are yellow and seem to shine with a light of their own. They are the eyes of a hunter and watch everything as though it were prey. He wears animal leathers and furs, and carries a bow and arrows behind him with a sword at his side.

The tribe's previous leader, Bone Cracker, died in the attack against Drakonheim. Afterward, several brave warriors tried to gain control of the tribe. Wolf Brother won that contest.

Wolf Brother earned his name because he seems able to communicate with, and possibly control, wild wolves. He started with just one wolf companion, but now has a whole pack that aids him in battle and on the hunt.

Wolf Brother was found in the wild, only a few years old, dressed in city clothes. The tribe assumed his parents were dead and took him in as one of their own. He was always a bit of a loner, and when he started talking to wolves he became even more so.

Now that he leads, many in the Moonless Tribe are nervous about what he will do, but those who were brave enough to question his leadership are all dead, so the living follow his orders.


GRENDANE MOUNTAINS
KOLTHAX'S LAIR
KIL KAUTH
(Ruins of Secaput)
Urgus
RUINS OF ATMA
ATMA RIVER
SERPENES
DRAKONHEIM
RUINS OF DELTANOS
CITY
RUIN
ROAD
RIVER
FOREST
FOOTHILL
MOUNTAIN
SWAMP
N
1 Hex = 12 miles

Willow Tribe

The Willow Tribe is larger than the Moonless Tribe, but much less aggressive. The Willow Tribe relies primarily on gathering plants to eat, along with some fishing and trapping. Though most know something about combat, few are true warriors. They do, however, possess a rich shamanistic tradition and have a number of spellcasters among their ranks.

The tribe moves their settlements frequently, both to prevent over-harvesting one area, and to stay out of the way of the more aggressive tribes. The people of the Willow Tribe are suspicious of city folk, though not outright hostile. Sometimes youths from the tribe are intrigued by the wealth and power that they see and leave the tribe to explore Drakonheim. Most later return to the tribe, but some find a permanent home in the city or follow the wandering path of an explorer or adventurer.

The Willow Tribe is led by a middle-aged woman named Winter Breeze. Winter Breeze is a shaman and revered as the wisest woman in the tribe. Her goals are to keep her people safe, and she believes that staying away from conflict is the easiest way to do this

Ruins of Atam

North of Drakonheim lie the ruins of Atam, another city built by the Cevali. It is the smallest of the cities in the region. In the days of expansion, it was a built as a fort. It attracted a small number of settlers, but never as many as Drakonheim to the south or Sercaput to the north. As the empire waned, the number of troops assigned to the fort steadily decreased, until at last the garrison was abandoned. With no troops to support them or protect them, the rest of the population quickly fled.

Now Atam lies in ruins, uninhabited except by wildlife and the occasional troll that takes up shelter in the long abandoned stone buildings. The most notable feature of the ruins is Atam Bridge. A marvel of engineering, it crosses the Atam River valley, spanning 650 feet (260 m) in length, and at its highest is 200 feet (80 m) above the river. Though it was built over 900 years ago, the bridge still stands strong.

Swampland

The Serpenes River flows south from Drakonheim until it reaches the sea. There, the river delta forms a murky swamp. The swamp is home to alligators and venomous snakes, but the lords of the swamp are the lizardfolk.

Ruins of Deltanos

As Drakonheim grew, the people of Cevali hoped to use the Serpenes River to trade. They dredged channels in the delta so river craft could freely travel, and built docks to transfer goods between riverboats and ocean-going ships. They built a fort to protect the port and a small city—Deltanos—grew up around it.

As the Cevali Empire declined, less trade came through Deltanos. River dredging stopped and sediment piled up in the river beds, making the delta again dangerous to navigate.

All this weakened the city of Deltanos, but the final straw came from a powerful hurricane. Strong winds knocked down buildings and tore off their roofs. Worse, storm surges and rainwater flooded the city. The empire didn't have funds to rebuild the city, so most who survived the storm fled. A few stayed, because they were unwilling or unable to travel, but their numbers soon dwindled until no humans were left in the swamp.

Very little of Deltanos remains, though small hints of the ancient city still dot the swamps. The heads of stone statues peek out above the water. Half-submerged pillars reach for the sky. Here and there one can even find a stone building or two covered with moss and vines. Despite this, treasure hunters comb the swampy ruins looking for caches of valuables that ancient residents left behind, and once in a while they find something.

Trade

The river delta is difficult to navigate, and only a small boat can manage it at all, so transporting anything from the river mouth to Drakonheim is only profitable if it is small but valuable. In practice just about the only people who ship goods this way are smugglers, bringing in some of the few things that are illegal in Drakonheim.

Recently, some merchants have started trading with the lizardfolk, offering worked metal items in exchange for plants and animal products found only in the swamp. These efforts are still small-scale as the lizardfolk have no interest in long-term contracts or mass production.

Lizardfolk

Lizardfolk are native to the swamp, and have dwelt there since before the Cevali Empire. When Deltanos was at its height, they were displaced and mar-

ginalized, but never run out of their swamp completely. The empire's loss was the lizardfolk's gain, and they now inhabit all of the swamp.

While lizardfolk frequently clashed with humans at the height of the empire, those days are long gone and forgotten. Now they have little to do with the humans to the north, and they like it that way. Travelers through the swamp likely encounter lizardfolk patrols, but small groups are usually left alone, especially if they bring gifts. Metal tools and weapons are some of the lizardfolk's favorite presents.

The lizardfolk subsist primarily by fishing and gathering river plants, and they enjoy just about anything pickled. A few times, when bands of lizardfolk were starving, they have raided human villages to the north, but these instances are extremely rare.

Most lizardfolk live in single-room houses made of clay with thatched roofs, though a few have taken over the ruined buildings built by the Cevali. The lizardfolk live in small bands scattered throughout the delta, though there is a great amount of trade and socializing between the groups. The most powerful lizardfolk is given the title of king or queen. The monarch's chief duty is to settle disputes amongst other lizardfolk that cannot be resolved among themselves. The king or queen is also responsible for making decisions about outsiders, though the need to do so is much rarer.

King Sazroz

This male lizardfolk stands tall and broad. His scales are brownish green flecked with patches of darker scales here and there. He carries a bronze trident and wears a battered bronze breastplate.

The current king of the lizardfolk is named Sazroz. He earned the title after the previous king died and he defeated all other challengers. He is a powerful warrior with a bronze corslet and trident that he discovered in the ancient Cevali ruins.



Sazroz is also a pragmatic leader. He is intrigued whenever he sees humans traveling through his lands, and always has scouts keep a close eye on them. He hopes to gain gifts from the humans to increase his own power, but also fears that they might try to take his land by force someday. Sazroz's views of humanity are colored by the fact that most humans he sees are smugglers or treasure hunters.

Tomb of the Four

When the heroes known as the Band of Four died fighting the Lich King Ezarion, a soothsayer foretold that they would come again in Drakonheim's greatest hour of need.

The prophecy is not exactly true, and it is not exactly a prophecy. The soothsayer was a friend of the four, and he helped them design their tomb, which is one of the greatest wonders magic has ever achieved.

The tomb is hard to find, because it doesn't have a fixed location, and is often not even in this world. Most of the time it resides in one of the elemental planes, cycling between them. Through powerful divination magic the tomb can "sense" when Drakonheim is in danger. In these times of great need it returns to the material world always in a different location, but always near the city.

The tomb has the power to grant magic items to those it deems worthy. To determine peoples' worth the tomb tests both their motives and their abilities. The supply of magic items is limited, so it only wants to grant them to people who truly wish to help Drakonheim, and to those capable of defeating the current threat. The precise nature of the tests varies, but they are tied to the elemental themes of the Band of Four.

The tomb appeared quite recently, as Hazdrol marshaled his hobgoblin army. It vanished after the battle and nobody knows when or where it will reappear again.

Hobgoblin Lands

We are the raging fire. We are the crashing wave. We are the avalanche, and we will bury you.
—Hazdrol, Hobgoblin Warleader

The lands far north of Drakonheim are home to hobgoblins—the same hobgoblins that launched the recent failed attack on Drakonheim. While many died in the assault, plenty survived and fled back to their homelands, and those too young, old, or infirm to fight never left.

The hobgoblins who don't live as raiders survive primarily as herders watching over flocks of goats or sheep. Their communities are called warclans—even when they are not at war—and they frequently fight against each other. They raid for food, wealth, and slaves; try to claim the best grazing lands; or simply go to war when one clan's leader besmirches another's honor. Historically, raiders preferred to attack non-hobgoblins, but most other races have either fled south or have already been utterly destroyed.

While most hobgoblins in the north lead nomadic lifestyles, there are a few permanent settlements, most notably a city the hobgoblins call Kil Kauth, what was once the Cevali city of Sercaput.

Kil Kauth — Ruins of Sercaput

Kil Kauth, the "capital" of the hobgoblins, was once known as Sercaput, and—like Drakonheim—it was part of the Cevali Empire. It stood on the banks of a great lake, and while it never reached the size or regional power that Drakonheim did, it was still a sizable city before the empire fell.

When it fell, however, Sercaput fell much harder than Drakonheim. Monsters and cruel humanoids ravaged the surrounding countryside, and refugees fled south. Finally, hobgoblins sacked the city and claimed it as their own.

As frequently happens, the alliance of hobgoblins who took the city fractured once they claimed their prize. In the generations afterward, warlords fought over rulership of Kil Kauth. Recently the ruins of Sercaput served as the base for the hobgoblin Hazdrol, the warchief who united the clans and led the failed attack against Drakonheim. After the defeat, the clans once again fractured, and while many hobgoblin leaders claim the city, none yet has enough strength to hold more than a small fraction of it.

Kil Kauth is in many ways a bloody reflection of Drakonheim. It is dotted with wondrous architecture that lies half in ruins and is full of political scheming. In Kil Kauth, however, the scheming is far more likely to end with a sword in the gullet. Like Drakonheim, Kil Kauth is also home to countless citizens who want nothing to do with the schemes of the clan leaders. They are the smiths and weavers who just want to sell enough wares to buy a leg of mutton and a stein of ale.

Torviran

This female hobgoblin has red eyes and dull orange skin. Her hair is tied up in a simple bun upon her head.

Hobgoblin society tends to be dominated by male warriors. Torviran questions that paradigm. She is both a woman and a powerful spellcaster. Her magic can kill just as well as any blade, so she believes she is worthy of just as much power. Hazdrol disagreed and left her behind during his attempt to conquer Drakonheim. But she has convinced many other hobgoblins to follow her ways and she now leads a powerful, if small, warclan of her own.

Torviran's clan grazes sheep in the lands near the ruins of Kil Kauth, and they frequently go into the city to trade and to try to gather any secrets they can from the ancient city. Torviran has taught several other women in her clan the art of spell casting, giving the whole clan a reputation as "witches" among many of the other hobgoblins.

Ragnor

This hobgoblin man is large, even by the standards of his kind. He is covered with scars, and his nose has been broken and healed crookedly. He wears steel armor and carries a long halberd.



Ragnor once led the most powerful warclan in the hobgoblin territory, or so he thought until Hazdrol used superior tactics and defeated Ragnor's army on the battlefield. Ragnor had to choose between swearing loyalty or dying, so he swallowed his pride and bent his knee to Hazdrol.

Ragnor was against the attack on Drakonheim, if nothing else simply to be contrary to Hazdrol. When the at-



tack failed, the surviving hobgoblins either praised Ragnor for his foresight or accused him of sabotaging the battle. Now Ragnor has regained control of his old warclan, though it's a pale shadow of what it was before Hazdrol's campaign.

Ragnor's clan is one of the most violent, and survives by gathering tribute from weaker clans, or raiding from any that dare oppose him.

Kiotan

This young hobgoblin stands tall and proud. His black hair hangs in a loose braid. The pupils of his yellow eyes are not the normal circles. Instead they are slit like the eyes of a cat or a snake.

Kiotan's clan was one of the most loyal to Hazdrol and was utterly smashed during the battle against Drakonheim. The top leaders and more than half the warriors of the clan were all killed. Afterward, no single survivor stood out as a clear leader, causing further losses as they squabbled among themselves. This struggle continued until Kiotan met a new ally.

Fleeing an attack from rivals, Kiotan escaped into the northern part of the Grendane Mountains. He took refuge in a cave, and discovered that it extended much farther into the mountain than he first thought. He explored and discovered that the cave led to the lair of the dragon Kolrax.

Kolrax made Kiotan a simple proposition: serve or die. Kiotan chose servitude, and now works as Kolrax's eyes and ears among the hobgoblins. Kiotan argued he could achieve far more as leader of his clan, so Kolrax gave the hobgoblin a few gifts, including a magic sword and shield. Most importantly of all he gave Kiotan an elixir that increases his strength and endurance, but which wears off in a matter of days. Kiotan must continue to return to Kolrax if he wants more of the elixir, thereby ensuring his loyalty. Kiotan used his new gifts to gain control of the fractured remains of his warclan. He has even allowed some of his most loyal lieutenants to imbibe Kolrax's elixir, though he doesn't share where he gets it from.

Kiotan's clan herds goats in the foothills of the Grendane Mountains, though with the recent strife, much of their herd has escaped or been taken. Under Kiotan's leadership, his warclan are once again holding their own territory, and striking back at some of their long-time enemies.

Grendane Mountains

West of Drakonheim there is a long chain of mountains running from north to south called the Grendane Mountains or the Grendanes. Before the mountains proper, many foothills rise and fall, making the terrain difficult and wild. The dwarven kingdom of Grendus once claimed a section of the mountain range, though it was only a small slice, and much of the mountains were wild even at the height of Grendus.

The foothills and mountains are home to all manner of monsters. Small communities of ogres and trolls live in caves throughout the landscape. Dire wolves prowl the night and wyverns hunt from the sky.

The mountains are an isolated place where few civilized people dare venture. Still, rumors of valuable treasure, ancient secrets, and great glory attract a handful of explorers and adventurers each year.

Ruins of Grendus

Northwest of Drakonheim lie the ruins of the dwarven kingdom of Grendus. Now it is buried under a yard of ash. Rumor has it, however, that some entrances to the underground cities within the mountains can still be found, and within remains all the great wealth the dwarves failed to carry away. One rumor says a river of molten gold now flows through the mountains, while others promise diamonds the size of your fist and armor woven with runes of protection.

There is truth to these rumors, but few venture to the mountains, and fewer return. The cherufe, the creatures of stone and flame who destroyed the kingdom, still live there, and that is not all. More rumors says that once the cherufe had eaten the flesh from their victims, the bones rose as flaming skeletons to serve as guards and servants, and that the eruption that destroyed Grendus was part of a great summoning spell that called forth a powerful demon who now rules a kingdom of ash and flame.

Urgus

We are the true people of the mountain. We bought it with our blood and our sweat. Go back to your city. You wouldn't like it here.
—Dorel, shield maiden of the Urgus

Not all the dwarves from Grendus fled to Drakonheim on the Day of Ash and Fire. Many sought refuge in other parts of the mountain range, hoping to rebuild their civilization. Most of these failed, destroyed by weather, famine, disease, and monsters.

One small community of dwarves survived and became the Urgus. The dwarves use the term to refer to themselves as a people, as well as the cave "city" where they live. (The Urgus call it a city, though only a few hundred dwarves live there.) Urgus the place is a natural cave with only some minor alterations, such as bringing in gravel to level floors and building steps into steep slopes. The Urgus have nothing near the great stone carvings of ancient Grendus.

The people of Urgus primarily hunt and gather their food, with a particular emphasis on hunting. They suffered many desperate years in their new home and as such aren't picky about the source of their meat, and ogre is a common dish for the Urgus. In bad winters they save the bodies of fallen comrades "just in case."

The harsh conditions have also made the Urgus militant and xenophobic. All the Urgus train to fight at a young age, and are expected to help protect the city and fight its enemies. They are suspicious and hostile toward outsiders, even other dwarves, and their many years of isolation means that they no longer speak the common tongue.

Kolrax

Why do you tremble so? Are you cold? Perhaps I should . . . light a fire. "No?" "No, master," I think you mean to say.
—Kolrax

Deep in a cave in the northern part of the Grendane Mountains, lives a great wyrm who calls himself Kolrax. Kolrax was just an egg when the fabled hero of Drakonheim killed his mother. He hatched in a distant egg cache, and his first act was to devour his brothers and sisters.

Kolrax grew slowly. He took centuries to fully explore the world around him and learn what he was capable of. When he came into his own he terrorized and ruled the lands far north of Drakonheim and west of Sercaput. A clan of orcs worshiped him as a god, and brought him great offerings from their raids against the Cevali Empire. Kolrax grew wealthy and powerful.

Then as often happens when dragons grow older, he slowed and went to sleep for two hundred years. He awoke just a year ago when a human interloper named Serio Montague found his way into Kolrax's cave and woke the sleeping dragon. Kolrax interrogated his new guest and was dismayed to discover that the orcs who once worshiped him had been wiped out, and few of the hobgoblins who took their place even know his name. His hoard was safe, but Kolrax misses the adulation and absolute obedience that godhood once gave him.

Now, Kolrax is slowly working to regain his power. He has found a clan of hobgoblins that he can manipulate into doing his bidding, and he is even gathering intelligence about Drakonheim from his human spy. Kolrax prefers not to leave his home, and has a few intermediaries whom he allows to enter his domain. He would, however, leave it in extreme circumstances, like if thieves dared to take a cup from his treasure hoard.

Adventure Outlines

This chapter describes several adventures set in Drakonheim that you and your gaming group might play out. These adventure outlines hopefully provide enough story information to give you plenty of confidence to run the plot, but because Drakonheim is meant to work with any fantasy roleplaying game, we don't provide stats for the antagonists or details about the exact rewards the heroes find.

The final three outlines are a trilogy of linked adventures designed to work together, though not necessarily to be played one right after the other.

Scouting Sercaput

After the victory against the hobgoblin force from the north, there are many in the city who think Drakonheim should now go on the offensive. They think that the attacking army were all the forces the hobgoblins had, and an army from Drakonheim should be able to easily destroy the remnants. Some, like Lady Saldor, hope to retake the ruins of Sercaput and establish a new town there.

Many others think this plan is too dangerous. Despite the victory, their losses were great, and the militia the city cobbled together is far from a professional army. They feel Drakonheim should work to solidify its defenses and rebuild the city. A few people even point out that they would do better to build new infrastructure or help the less fortunate citizens of the city.

In the end, the lord mayor and his council decided to put the decision off until they learn more about the true threat they face. They plan to send a scouting party north to explore the ruins of Sercaput and the nearby area, and they are willing to pay the player characters some good coin to explore the area and give a detailed report, including the numbers of hobgoblins, what defenses they have, and warning of any other trouble that might lurk in the ruins.

Along the Way

The journey north takes several days, and along the way characters are likely to encounter any number of dangers from hostile tribesfolk to wild animals.

Atam Bridge

The Atam River cuts a deep valley through the terrain north of Drakonheim. The Cevali Empire constructed a bridge over the river to make land travel easier. It also serves as a natural choke point, and over the ages everything from bandits to natural predators have used it to extort travelers or catch prey. Most recently, a family of giant spiders have taken to using the bridge to catch prey. They spend most of their time below the bridge where they have spun several webs to catch flying creatures. They have also spun a web in the central archway at the center of the bridge. When they detect any disturbance in their web, whether it's heroes caught or them burning it, they climb from below the bridge and attack.

Hostile Hobgoblins

As the characters travel farther north, they doubtlessly encounter hobgoblin patrols and raiding parties. If the heroes are lucky, the hobgoblins might give them a chance to surrender all their valuables in exchange for their lives, but more likely they attack on sight.

Scared Hobgoblins

Not all the hobgoblins are looking for trouble, but that doesn't make them welcoming to humans. These hobgoblins try to avoid the heroes whenever possible. They might see a shepherd fleeing in the distance, or come across camps that have been recently abandoned.

Interrogating Hobgoblins

The hobgoblins are not inclined to speak to humans or other PC races, but with some talented diplomacy, valuable bribes, or forceful intimidation, the characters might be able to gain some useful information. Characters likely need to overcome a language barrier as few hobgoblins speak the languages of humans, elves, or dwarves. Most hobgoblins can tell some details about their own clans, as well as the general information in the section about hobgoblin lands beginning on page 35.

Kil Kauth

The ruins of Sercaput, what the hobgoblins call Kil Kauth, has a smaller population than Drakonheim, and even greater parts of it lie in ruin, but as the characters survey it and get a sense of the hobgoblin's defensive capabilities, anybody who knows much about warfare concludes that trying to invade it would be a bloodbath, and that Drakonheim's forces would almost certainly lose. They also doubtlessly see hobgoblins fighting each other on the streets, and might conclude that the way

to defeat the hobgoblins is to continue to promote infighting among them.

Meeting with Clan Leaders

Characters who wish to meet with clan leaders find a range of reactions. Some, like Ragnor (page 35) are openly hostile and at best bribes allow the heroes to live. Others like Kiotan (page 36) might feign cooperation, but are quick to betray the heroes and the city-state of Drakonheim the first time it seems profitable. Only a few, such as Torviran (page 35) would earnestly work with the heroes, but even then they want something in return, such as recognized control of Kil Kauth.

Undead on the Loose

The Gray Society has gone to great lengths to emphasize how safe the undead they animate are, and how they will not even defend themselves when attacked. Since they came into the open, no undead have attacked the living.

Until now. Undead have started to attack and kill the people of Drakonheim. If just finding the source of the trouble is not enough for the heroes, they might be asked to either prove or disprove the Gray Society's involvement by an interested party.

Ghouls

The first signs are a pack of crazed ghouls who tore through the Docks district. Critics claim that ghouls were let loose by the Gray Society to see what effect they'd have on the population. The society claims they captured the ghouls and were debating what to do with them, but somebody else destroyed the wards that were holding them in place and set them free.

Characters who examine the mausoleum in Green Bough Cemetery (where the ghouls were held) find evidence to support the society's claims. The area was heavily warded, and a close examination can tell that the wards were deactivated. It was very subtly done too, and whoever did it obviously understood a lot about magic, but they weren't very skilled at skullduggery and left a golden button at the scene. The button can be traced to a tailor in High Town who is well liked by the aristocracy, but she has used such buttons in many outfits, and cannot trace it to a single individual.

Zombies

Several nights later, several zombies go on a rampage, attacking innocent civilians in the street. By chance or design, the heroes are close enough to the attacks that they can hear the screams, and if they rush to the scene they arrive in time to destroy the zombies and rescue some of the bystanders.

In this case the corpses used provide clues. They are all former street dwellers who lived in the Docks, and none of them signed corpse contracts (see page 14). Canvassing the Docks, characters can hear that a rotund middle-aged man hired two day laborers to pick up any dead bodies they found.

Fighting Fire with Fire

The truth is that the undead plague is the work of a man named Coren Filoni, who works at the Academy of Nalan teaching how to create various wards and abjurations. He believes necromancy is the vilest form of magic there is, and has joined the Knights of the Eclipse. With the help of a few other members of his cell, he conceived a plan to show how dangerous undead could be. He is the one who broke the wards in the cemetery and then animated the zombies.

If the characters confront Filoni about the attack he first denies it, then tries to justify it, saying any damage he caused is far less than what the Gray Society and its undead horde will cause in the future. If the heroes don't buy it, he tries to run, and only fights back if there seems to be no hope of escape.

War beneath Our Feet

The goblins living in the sewers below Drakonheim war with each other almost perpetually. Big King Flurx of the Gelatinous Cube Kingdom thinks that this needs to end. King Flurx knows that a simple peace agreement will never last, and that it will take something stronger. Thus he hopes to claim all of the sewers for the Gelatinous Cube Kingdom, and thinks the surfacers are the key to making his vision a reality. He sends his ambassador, Gozzy the Quiet, up to find humans that can help, and naturally Gozzy thinks the player characters are perfect for the job.

Flurx offers great rewards for the heroes, and promises them that a united goblin kingdom will be a much better neighbor than three squabbling ones. Flurx has a lot of ideas about things that the heroes could help with.

Fight

Of course he'd be happy to have the heroes fight alongside him, and the goblin storytellers would tell epic tales of their deeds. There are a lot of battles to be fought, however, and the PCs probably can't be at all of them. So Flurx wants them to think about the big picture too.

Arms and Armor

Many goblins in the Gelatinous Cube Kingdom have only makeshift weapons and dirty rags for armor. Most of the forged weapons they do have were made for larger hands, making even those less than ideal. Flurx would love for somebody to craft weapons and armor for the goblins of his warren, and then his whole kingdom, though Flurx doesn't have nearly enough coin. He settles for high quality cast-off goods.

Training

Even with new equipment, most goblins have little formal training, and most simply learn as they go. Flurx would love for a skilled warrior to train members of his warren about combat and tactics.

Undead

Flurx has seen the zombies that walk the streets above, and he's sure he could end the goblin wars quickly if he had his own undead to control. He'd be happy to provide goblin bodies to animate, all he needs is somebody to cast the spell and help him control them. He's even looking to send a goblin to the Gray Society to learn the magic, a prospect that likely meets with deaf ears.

Diplomacy

Of course Flurx doesn't want any of his people to die needlessly. He'd like to reason with the Rat and Centipede kingdoms, but worries they will be unreasonable unless he first make an overwhelming show of force. The humans, as disinterested third parties, might have more luck convincing them to see the light however.

Bread and Circuses

At the height of the Cevali Empire, Drakonheim's arena attracted tens of thousands of citizens for grand performances, gladiator battles, and civic speeches. Boroff Emeraldeyes's latest scheme it to restore it to a fraction of its former glory.

Emeraldeyes doesn't think Drakonheim is ready for gladiator battles where two humanoids fight to the death. Instead he plans to start with venatio, where intelligent humanoids battle dangerous monsters. This is a colossal undertaking, as the arena hasn't been used for its original purpose for hundreds of years. Emeraldeyes is currently gathering support and funds for his idea. Once the characters have made a name for themselves, he is likely to approach them for help. There are several things the heroes might assist with.

Current Tenants

One of the greatest challenges to restoring the arena to its former glory is the fact that much of the building is currently occupied by the city watch. If Emeraldeyes just tried to muscle his way in the watch could cause him problems, so if any of the heroes have a relationship with members of the watch, especially Captain Miles Anathor, Emeraldeyes asks them for help.

Not surprisingly, the city watch is not excited about the plan, however they might be able to get behind it if they can get something out of the deal. At the least, Captain Anathor wants a new headquarters to replace the one he'd have to give up. And he means new, not some decaying office building. After that he'd really like the budget to hire some new bodies for the watch. Living bodies. The more people he can get out patrolling the streets, the better he'll like it.

To make sure that these demands are actually fulfilled, characters need to go the lord mayor and his council. It will probably be a tough sell and require some diplomacy to convince them to find extra cash in the city's budget. Emeraldeyes, himself a member of the council, readily gets behind the proposal, but nearly everybody else initially opposes it.

Animal Wranglers

Once Emeraldeyes has secured the arena and begun repairing it, he needs wild beasts for his gladiators to fight. Fortunately the lands west and north of Drakonheim are teeming with beasts, but transporting them to Drakonheim is the real challenge. Thus Emeraldeyes is offering a handsome reward to anybody who can catch some vicious predators, the stronger the better. Wolves or a bear might fetch a small purse, but more fearsome foes like wyverns or giant spiders are far more valuable. If somebody were to catch a dragon, that find would be worth its weight in gold.

The first step for heroes looking to cash in is to find the monsters. They could simply wander the dangerous areas in hopes of randomly encountering something, but it is probably a lot quicker for heroes to use their tracking skills or knowledge of nature to find their quarry.

Once they find what they are looking for, the heroes need to capture the beast without killing it. They might knock it unconscious, ensnare it, or use magic to befriend it. To make these hunts more challenging, the beast might behave like real-world animals and try to flee when they are injured, unlike fantasy RPG animals which tend to fight to the death.

Finally, characters must transport their find back to the city, which could be very difficult depending on the creature's size and temperament. Most beasts will try to break free on their way back to the city. If the journey is far, they also need food and water to survive the trip.

Warriors

Once Emeraldeyes has his arena and his monsters. He needs some people brave or foolish enough to fight them. Adventurers like the heroes are the natural choice, and Emeraldeyes offers them a reward based on how ferocious the monster they fight will be.

Battles in the arena are not just open brawls in a giant oval. Emeraldeyes has his people alter the arena to create challenges for the heroes and show off the beasts' abilities. He might bring in trees for a forest dweller, or flood the arena for an alligator. He might also build temporary walls and other structures to slow down the heroes, or require them to come through different doors, each member of the party starting the fight alone.

There are also rules the characters need to follow to make sure that the audience gets a good show. Most of the time ranged weapons are forbidden, unless the creature is quite fast and powerful or also has the ability to attack from afar. Magic spells might also be limited. Flashy spells are crowd-pleasers, as long as they don't end the fight too quickly.

Trouble at the Mill

For generations, each village south of Drakonheim had a single mill, and farmers never brought their grain to another village. It's the way that things had always been done, and it was a great system for the millers and the aristocrats who owned the land.

In the small village of Weyshire that dynamic abruptly changes when news arrives that the mill in the nearby village of Hawksvale is milling flour for a fraction of the price. Now some of the farmers from Weyshire are trekking their harvest to Hawksvale to get the better price.

The man who owns the land that Weyshire sits upon, a minor aristocrat named Drake Mulera is outraged by this. He sees it as a clear attempt to usurp what is rightfully his. In some ways he's right, but the Widow Augusta, who owns the land in Hawksvale, never admits it. She claims that she is simply trying to provide a fair price to the farmers who have been exploited for much too long. Though since Mulera pressed the issue, August reexamined her late husband's papers, and it seems that many of the farmers who used to go the Weyshire mill, actually farm on land belonging to Augusta. Mulera claims these papers are fabricated, but the whole issue is quickly bogged down in the bureaucratic quagmire that is the Drakonheim government.

Burn It

Unless they are interested in political scheming, in which case they might become involved much earlier, the heroes most likely enter the story when Mulera decides to hire ruffians to burn down Augusta's mill. Depending on the moral inclination of the heroes, they might be said ruffians, or the Widow August might get word of the plan and hires the heroes to protect the mill. Either way a fight occurs in what is likely to be a flaming building full of giant spinning cogs.

Continued Hostilities

The arson attempt isn't the end of the arguments. Whether the attack on the mill succeeds or not, Augusta uses it as justification to further go after Mulera. She tries to find evidence that he was involved (possibly enlisting the heroes to do so), but pushes on even without it. She hires mercenaries and sends her own personal guard to "arrest" Mulera and bring him to justice.

Lord Mayor Crote does his best to stay out of the situation, as he has little love for either Mulera or Augusta, but with sufficient pressure to somebody he considers important, he might be swayed. The city watch also offers little support as the villages are far outside their normal territory and they cannot waste precious men on such a minor squabble.

The heroes might be able to negotiate a truce between the two land owners, but they will need to convince each that they will profit from the deal. Otherwise this conflict probably won't end until either Augusta or Mulera has been captured or killed.

The Dagger's Demon Trilogy

The following three adventures are linked together. If you want to play a very short campaign, you can run all three of them right in a row. However, if you are running a longer campaign set in Drakonheim, we recommend that you space them out with other adventures between the different parts.

Exploring Caves

The Seekers of the First have explored many of the caves below or near Drakonheim, and they contin-

ue to explore more. Recently, one member named Calista Rosario discovered a cave that looks promising. Unfortunately it looks so promising because it has dangerous traps and guardians. The Seekers, never eager to put themselves in danger, are looking for somebody else to do their dirty work.

Thus Rosario tries to hire the player characters to "escort" her through the caves. If they have already made a name for themselves, she might seek them out directly, otherwise she asks around and some third party, such as Dead Man's Tap owner Cordelia Pinel, passes along the job request.

Rosario explains that she discovered the cave looking for lost caches of Cevali wealth, but once she noticed that it was magically warded, she decided to seek support to explore the cavern. She offers the heroes an equal share of any monetary treasure they discover, as well as magical weapons and armor, though she wants any wizardly items and any stores of knowledge.

Rosario is a minor wizard, who knows little more than a few cantrips, most of which are not well suited for adventuring. While she accompanies the heroes on the mission, and can provide them information, she stays out of the way when anything dangerous happens.

Hundreds of years ago, this cave was used by a diabolist named Gaius Scorpius to practice his forbidden arts. Such magic was illegal and dangerous, so he included many layers of protection to stave off outsiders. Scorpius was still actively using his lab when he was killed, so everything is pretty much as he left it.



Magical Wards

The first layer of protection is a ring of wards, which are invisible unless somebody detects magic (as Rosario did). The first layer of wards simply protects the location against scrying and teleportation, and alerts Scorpius of any intruders (or would have alerted him, if he wasn't long dead).

Mechanical Traps

Scorpius's next layer of defense is a series of several mechanical traps so well made that they still function. These include a spiked pit trap, a crushing room, and a gauntlet of scythe blades.

Bound Demons

Once past the traps, characters encounter a pair of minor demons that Scorpius bound centuries ago. In true demonic fashion, these fiends follow the letter of their agreement which says they must stop anybody from passing through the door they guard. The demons are happy to converse with anybody not trying to pass through the door, and happily ignore anybody who attempts to circumvent the door (teleporting is still ineffective unless the heroes undid Scorpius's magical wards, but something like burrowing through the cave wall might work).

Bedroom

However the heroes pass the demons, they find a bedroom that seems to be in miraculous condition given the age. While Scorpius sometimes slept here after long nights of demon summoning, it's primarily another line in Scorpius's defenses. Several items in the bedroom have been magically animated and attack the heroes when they least expect it. The bed cords try to strangle them, while the rug smothers them and the table tries to crush them.

Heroes find some monetary treasure here, such as a stash of Cevali coins or some of Scorpius's jewels or art objects.

Laboratory

The animated bedroom furniture is the last barrier between the heroes and Scorpius's laboratory. Here there are many arcane tools and a small library of ancient scrolls. Many of the scrolls are damaged by the years, but some are readable in all or in part. Rosario is very excited about these scrolls, as well as some of the magical reagents.

There is also a magical dagger with a golden hilt and a ruby in the pommel. The dagger is magical, but it also houses the spirit of a demon, which tries to influence the thoughts of anybody who wields it.

Murder Most Foul

Though the cavern that Calista Rosario discovered and the characters explored didn't contain any traces of Ignomia, Rosario and her fellow Seekers are happy to examine the magical information that they do have. The scrolls are tattered and incomplete, and many of the arcane rituals are highly advanced. Rosario collaborates with

another member of the Seekers named Davro Ingali. Ingali is secretly a priest of the Secret Keeper, a god of secrets, lies, and dark magic. Together they are able to decipher some of the arcane writing, just enough to cause a whole world of trouble.

Rosario and Ingali summon a demon to the mortal world, but have no way of controlling it. Thus it escapes and starts to wreak havoc in Drakonheim. While physically weak, the demon that they summoned can possess mortal bodies and bend them completely to its will. Being a demon, it uses its host to sow death and chaos. It starts by possessing Rosario and using her body to torture and murder the residents of a flop house in the Docks, then hops to the body of the last remaining docker and moves on.

Slaughter by the Docks

The first the heroes likely hear of the demon is a tale so horrible that it quickly spreads through all the drinking holes in Drakonheim. Twelve bodies were found in one of the seediest flop houses in Drakonheim, all of them terribly mutilated, and there is no apparent motive for the deaths. Most were common folk, but one was the daughter of an aristocrat, a woman named Calista Rosario.

The watch sends a couple of officers to check the scene, but they are stretched too thin and the Docks is the lowest of their priorities, so with no clear suspect they chalk it up as one more unsolved crime.

If the heroes make it to the scene quickly, they might be able to examine it before everything is cleared away. The deaths were just as bad as the reports said. The victims are missing limbs, have their entrails torn out, and their skin flayed. Characters with proper knowledge realize that most of this was done while they were still alive.

Perceptive characters notice that near where Rosario died, is a pattern drawn in her own blood, a circle with seven crossing diameters. Characters who can detect magic or powerful evil might be able to catch a faint lingering trace of such forces at work here.

The flop house isn't the sort of place that keeps records of people staying there, but if characters compare the used beds and personal effects to the number of bodies, they can figure out that the number of dead seems to equal the number of people who were at the flophouse. This seems normal at first, except when one considers that somebody like Rosario would never stay in a place like this.

The Dagger

If the heroes still have the dagger they took from Scorpius's cave, it reacts to the killings. It gives off a warm tingly feeling when the murders occur, and whoever holds the dagger smells a sickly sweet odor, like over-ripe fruit, at the scenes of carnage. Should they later encounter the demon, they detect that same smell from whoever is hosting it.

Investigating the Symbol

The symbol that Rosario drew with her own blood was part of the the ritual that she used to summon the demon. Her dying hope was that somebody might figure it out and get revenge for her. Characters with sufficient knowledge of their own might be able to recognize it as part of a summoning ritual. Otherwise, they could consult the Academy of Nalan. In the latter case, the heroes must be quite diplomatic, as bandying about dark symbols runs the risk of upsetting some people.

Investigating Rosario

Characters may choose to investigate Rosario. Some information is easy to learn. She came from a wealthy family, and learned a little bit of magic from a private tutor. In recent years she lived on her own with only a few servants, and kept to herself.

Other information takes quite a bit more digging, but characters skilled at such things may uncover some more details. In particular Rosario was sometimes seen leaving her house in the dead of night, or allowing visitors who sneaked in through the servants' entrance under the cover of darkness. Most recently she was seen meeting with another recluse, a man named Davro Ingali.

Characters who want to physically search Rosario's home must first either talk their way past the household staff, or sneak in when nobody is looking. Most of Rosario's belongings are pretty ordinary, but a thorough search reveals a hidden compartment in her bedroom bureau, which contains a large tooth (a dragon's), and a small writing book. On the front cover Rosario scratched a circle with a single curved line through it. Inside the book is a jumbled mess of notes and drawings.

The book is difficult to make sense of, but the heroes can probably put some pieces together. There are frequent references to the "Seekers" and "The First." Some of the drawings are arcane diagrams, but many are just doodles. Draconic imagery is common throughout, including eyes, claws, teeth, and wings. One drawing seems to show Rosario riding a dragon, which breaths fire on many people below it, one of whom might be Lord Mayor Crote. The writing in the book references other

people, but always by their initials. One entry in particular is likely to resonate with the heroes, as it concerns them. The book refers to hiring adventures to explore a warded cave, and lists the heroes' initials. Then it says "No sign of The First, but other interesting magic. Consult with D.I." A symbol of a circle with seven lines through it is sketched near the margins.

Investigating Ingali

Characters may learn about Davro Ingali while they research Rosario, or they might notice him at the scenes of the murders and want to know more.

Should characters talk to Ingali, he first says that he knew Rosario professionally. He is a scribe who works for many of the aristocrats in High Town, including Rosario. If the characters find some additional evidence, or push harder, he may admit that he helped Rosario examine the scrolls she found in the caves. He recognized them as a ritual of demon summoning and warned her never to try them. With further pushing he might admit that he actually helped her attempt a ritual. At first it seemed not to work, as no demon appeared, but now he's not so sure. Only the most persuasive heroes can convince Ingali to admit that he and Rosario are both members of the Seekers of the First.

With some convincing, Ingali might help the heroes track down the demon, including showing the heroes the scrolls containing the ritual he used.

Characters who search Ingali's dwelling also find a small locked chest hidden under a trapdoor in part of the floor. The chest contains the scrolls that Rosario recovered from the cave, as well as a petrified dragon egg, a prayer book of the Secret Keeper, and a book of Ingali's research notes. He is more organized than Rosario, but also more cryptic. His book is written in the Draconic language, and even then uses many code phrases. For example, for his recent dealings with Rosario, he says he, "Helped the Flower Girl illuminate her new toy. Did not go as expected." He doesn't mention the Seekers of the First by name, but instead refers to them as "some friends."

More Deaths

If the heroes do nothing, or if they take a long time to investigate, the demon strikes again, and it continues to attack every few days until either the heroes stop it, or it murders all of Drakonheim. Each time it attacks, it changes host, leaving the previous host dead at the scene, and moving into the last survivor of its victims. Each new scene should give the heroes some additional clues about the killing spree.

Characters who visit the murder scenes start to notice a familiar face that also goes to each death: a man dressed as a scribe who is taking notes on the deaths. This is Davro Ingali, and if characters want to find out more about him, consult the above section Investigating Ingali.

The next few murders are as follows. If the heroes are still unable to stop the demon after all of these, you need to invent your own deaths.

Elves in the Bone Yards

The next deaths are a family of elves who fled to the Bone Yards after their home was ravaged by hobgoblins. In addition to the elves, there is a scraggly human among the dead. The elves were butchered with a blade, while the human was punctured by arrows of elven make. Despite this, there are neither bows nor unused arrows at the scene.

Dwarves in the City

The next victims are a family of dwarves who lived in Little Grendus. They were tied and gagged, and shot with dozens of arrows. An elf also lies dead nearby, her skull smashed in. A neighbor heard some commotion in the night, and saw the eldest son, Drundus, fleeing from the scene carrying a dripping hammer.

The Good People of High Town

The next to die at the demon's hands are a group of prosperous citizens of High Town, bludgeoned to death and dragged into an ally while they were walking home late at night after a session of heavy drinking. This time the city watch arrived on the scene, and killed the perpetrator, the same dwarf who was seen fleeing the previous murder. Despite being only one dwarf, he was powerful and fierce and only one member of the watch survived the encounter.

The watch believe that by slaying Drundus, they have closed the case, but in reality the demon now inhabits the officer of the watch who slew Drundus, and is eager to kill again.

Stopping the Demon

Hopefully the heroes realize that the true murderer is possessing various hosts before they confront the murderer directly. If not, one of them might become the demon's next host. There is no way to stop the demon from attaching itself to the hero, but the hero might be able to fight to gain control of his actions. Once the player characters realize what they are dealing with, there are a few ways to solve the problem permanently.

The Dagger

The simplest solution is actually the dagger that the characters discovered in Scorpius's lab. The dagger was designed specifically to bind demon souls, so if the host is killed by that blade, the demon passes into the dagger itself, not into another living creature. Adding another demon soul makes the dagger a stronger weapon, but also increases its ability to influence the wielder.

Imprisonment

The demon can only transfer to a new host when the current host dies, and it always goes to the killer. Thus if they can permanently imprison the host, it will not transfer to another, even when the host dies of natural causes. Of course the drawback is that the demon will do everything in its power to escape such confinement, and it may have a very long time to be able to do so.

Exorcism

The best way to get rid of the demon is to exorcise it from this world. The exact details for this depend somewhat on how magic works in the system you use, but most likely the heroes first have to capture the host alive and keep him bound while they perform a ritual to drive the demon out. Once the demon is out, the host is safe from future danger, but has to live with the emotional scars left by the demon.

Demon from the Dagger

The longer a hero possess the ruby-hilted dagger, the more apparent it becomes that it is trying to influence the hero towards evil. Thus characters may seek a way to dispose of it safely. If it occurs to them to research the dagger on their own, they can find out quite a bit about it.

The dagger was originally crafted during the height of the Cevali Empire, before Drakonheim was even founded. It and several other similar daggers were meant to fight demons by trapping the soul of any demon they slew. As the daggers gained more souls they were able to harness some of that energy and become more powerful weapons. Unfortunately, there was a problem that the creators had not foreseen. The souls within the daggers began to influence the wielders, and over time even the most pious bearer became corrupted by the evil.

The characters' research references another text called the Grindwald Ledger as the authoritative source on these demon daggers, and they discover Baron Karlos Vasili owns the only copy in all of Drakonheim.

A Social Engagement

If the heroes don't seek out more information on their own, enlightenment comes to them at one of Drakonheim's many social functions. It may be that they are invited directly to Baron Vasili's manor, or they could be guests of another event that Vasili attends. Either way, as long as one of the heroes still owns the dagger, he notices it, even if it is concealed, and even if the character didn't bring it to the engagement (his senses see things differently than mortal eyes). He inquires about the dagger, and asks after the health of the bearer. He shares most of the information above, and that he owns a book called the Grindwald Ledger that tells of how to break the demon's power.

Grindwald Ledger

The Grindwald Ledger is a rare tome written by a theologian and religious historian, Pyotr Grindwald. It describes many religious theories, creations, and events. More relevant to the heroes is the creation of the demon-binding daggers, how they caused widespread corruption, and ultimately how they were destroyed.

The priests created great stone altars called soul stones, where the souls of the demons could be pulled from the daggers and destroyed once and for all. The book contains the ritual needed to activate the soul stones, and the locations of all those made at the time the text was written. Fortunately two are close to Drakonheim, but neither is in particularly hospitable territory. One was in the city of Deltanos, now swampy ruins controlled by lizardfolk. The other was in the kingdom of Grendus, which was destroyed by a volcanic eruption. The Grindwald Ledger describes the temples that once held the soul stones, and with some additional historical research, the heroes can locate maps of the old cities that can pinpoint the location with decent accuracy. Baron Vasili doesn't let the characters take the book, but he does allow them to copy the relevant information.

Soul Stone of Deltanos

Characters need not visit the swamp of Deltanos, but it's likely many will try to go there before venturing into the Grendane Mountains. Alas they are bound to discover that the soul stone in Deltanos has been destroyed.

The journey south is safe until they come to the swamp. In the swamp it's possible the heroes might face alligators or dangerous snakes, but these are challenges that experienced adventurers can handle easily.

Lizardfolk do not automatically attack the heroes. In fact, if the heroes are diplomatic about it they might even gain useful information. If the characters describe the place they are looking for, most lizardfolk warn them to avoid it. They say that the land is tainted, and those who dwell there are cruel and kill for pleasure. The lizardfolk know there are ruins, though few know the details, and none know what the soul stone is.

The Tainted

Just before Deltanos was completely abandoned by humans, a few holy warriors tried to use the soul stone one last time. Unfortunately they botched the ritual and rather than destroy the soul, they bound it to the temple, and destroyed the soul stone in the process. Later a band of lizardfolk made the ruined temple their home. The demon spirit whispered into their dreams, slowly bending them to evil. Children hatched from eggs incubated near the temple were physically tainted by the demon. They were deformed, with bat wings, bone spines, or malformed limbs, but many also had unusual strength or magical skills.

These lizardfolk preyed on their neighbors, who soon came to call them "the Tainted." While their fiendish powers make them strong, their constant infighting keeps their numbers low, and they have no grand designs to dominate the swamp.

Raiding Party

As the heroes make their way to the temple, they encounter a raiding party of Tainted as it heads out to steal from weaker communities. The raiding party isn't picky about their targets, so they attack the heroes on sight. These lizardfolk are more powerful than their kin. They resist fire and have great strength, and their leader is a practiced spellcaster.

Temple

The temple containing the soul stone is home to many Tainted lizardfolk, including their leader, a male named Zlorth. Zlorth has functioning wings, and the ability to throw hellish fire. If characters want to attempt the ritual, they need to enter the temple and defeat Zlorth and his followers. They might be able to avoid a fight if they sneak in and examine the soul stone, at which point they discover it is broken and cannot help them.

The Lingering Demon

Characters who know much about spiritual or magical matters can likely determine the cause of the soul stone's destruction and the lizardfolks' taint: the spirit of a demon is bound to this place. Those who think about the bigger picture probably want to destroy it, or at least expel it from the mortal realm. Depending on magic in your campaign this might be possible, but should be difficult.

The dagger also offers a way to contain the demon. The wielder feels pulled toward the soul stone, and if the blade is placed inside the appropriate slit of the stone altar, (where it would be placed to destroy the demons within), it instead draws the lingering demon into the blade. This makes the dagger more powerful in combat, but also increases its ability to influence the bearer.

Grendane Mountains

To reach the temple containing the soul stone, the characters must pass through the Grendane Mountains, which is a dangerous journey in its own right. Along the way, characters should encounter dangerous creatures, such as wyverns, trolls, or mountain lions.

Journey through the Dark

The soul stone is located in Dirunsdark, one of Grendus's many underground cities. In its day, there were several entrances, at least one of which the characters can still use. The door is half buried and stuck closed, but with some brute force or creativity, the characters can find their way into the dwarven halls. The dwarven city is broken and crumbling from the earthquake that accompanied the volcano's rebirth and the subsequent decades of neglect. Heroes must tread carefully to avoid broken sections of floor and unstable pillars.

The dwarves of Grendus created many stone and metal constructs as guards and laborers. When the dwarves left or perished, many of these constructs remained and tried to carry out their previous orders. Those told to keep out invaders perceive the heroes as a threat and attack them.

Wrath of the Dead

When an earthquake rocked Dirunsdark, a dwarven knight named Halgran was trapped below a collapsing roof, but the impact did not kill her. Instead she died of thirst after days in the pitch black with only distant screams to keep her company. Halgran's strong spirit and traumatic death caused her to rise as a ghost after her death. She took revenge on any cherufe she found, but she couldn't stray far from her burial place, and the cherufe learned to avoid her.

The heroes' path leads them near her resting place. Her suffering and solitude have driven her mad. She believes that the heroes are in league with the cherufe, and only the most talented diplomats can convince her otherwise.



If characters discover Halgran's remains, still covered by rubble, and give her a proper burial following the rites of the Smith, her soul is put to rest. The heroes also find her magic helm and hammer in the process.

Cherufe

Fortunately, the soul stone isn't in the heart of cherufe territory, but it isn't far from parts of the mountain they control. As the party draws near the site, they encounter a cherufe patrol. Though not their native tongue, these humanoids of rock and fire know the dwarven language. They might allow most of the party to live if they offer up one member for sacrifice. Otherwise the cherufe attack. They throw gouts of fire and slash with obsidian blades.

Soul Stone

The soul stone is intact within a temple in Dirunsdark. The temple is in decent condition and uninhabited, making it as safe as any place in the ruins of Grendus.

The true danger comes from the ritual itself. It is complex and requires an experienced spellcaster to perform. Failure might result in catastrophe, such as destroying the soul stone or freeing the demons bound within the dagger. Even then, succeeding at the ritual is still dangerous. The Grindwald Ledger describes how other characters can "lend their strength" to the ritual, though it is vague on exactly what lending strength means. Whatever it means, characters must decide to lend their strength at the beginning of the ritual, as they sit inside the ritual circle and have arcane marks drawn on their foreheads.

Into the Gem

The ritual is only the first step in the soul stone's magic. Once complete it draws the demon, the caster, and any who lent their strength to the ritual into a demi-plane created by the soul stone. Any demons trapped in the dagger regain their physical forms. One demon was bound to the dagger when the heroes first found it, and if the heroes trapped any others with it, they manifest as well. The demi-plane is cut off from the other planes, so neither summoning nor dimensional travel function there, and mental effects like charms and domination also do not work. Furthermore, anything that dies within the demi-plane is permanently and irrevocably destroyed, including demons and heroes.

The landscape in the demi-plane is mutable and chaotic, as pits of fire and pillars of stone appear and disappear. This terrain should make life dangerous for the heroes, but also give them additional tools to use against the demons. The demons might appear right away, or the characters might need to search through the plane to find them, but the demi-plane is small, so it doesn't take too much hunting. If there are multiple demons, characters might find them one by one, or all in a group, depending on the strength of the heroes.

Once all the demons are destroyed, all the surviving heroes are transported back to the mortal realm, right to where they left. The dagger has been purged of the demons, and the bearer is free from their influence. The dagger's power has also been weakened back to its original state. It is still magical, however, cutting sharper than any mundane dagger, and it still has the ability to bind further demons, should the heroes find any.

One Hundred Random Citizens

Tens of thousands of people live in Drakonheim. Those described earlier in this book are just a few of the most influential or iconic. In their adventures, heroes will encounter countless more. This table provides one hundred more citizens. You can search it by occupation when the heroes want to know more about their innkeeper or tailor, or you can roll randomly when you just need an extra NPC.

1	Jakavin	Human	Alchemist	Small burns and scars on his hands	Makes his concoctions using chemistry rather than magic
2	Cynthia Grey	Human	Animal trainer	Hides her missing eye behind her shaggy black hair	Normally extremely shy, but commanding when she is working with animals
3	Takriel Damos	Human	Apothecary	No tongue	Communicates easily despite lacking a tongue; ladies' man
4	Ethan Bugatti	Human	Architect	Fair complexion with almost white hair and piercing blue eyes	Quick wit and loves to laugh; has a way with the ladies
5	Calista Dedrici	Human	Aristocrat	Pale skin and black hair	Treats everybody like a servant
6	Dominic Saldor	Human	Aristocrat	Young man who dresses all in black	Extremely pessimistic
7	Dursten Bloodaxe	Dwarf	Aristocrat	Has several gem-studded facial piercings	Bombastic
8	Alun Buttercup	Human	Baker	Plump, round features with a gray mustache and beady eyes	Nosy and gossipy; secretly experiments with tiny, short-lived dough golems
9	Harg	Half-orc	Baker	Blood-red eyes	Hopeless romantic
10	Giuseppe Rossini	Human	Barber	Massive curly mustache	Whistles or hums without noticing it
11	Kyrian Tanys	Halfling	Bartender	Gaunt-looking, but happy	Obsessed about keeping the bar clean, even if futile
12	Nightdancer	Human	Beautician	Girlish figure; unusually low booming voice	Graceful and obsequious
13	Ashran Firebrand	Demon-touched	Blacksmith	Fire hair	Is hiding from his father while contemplating his options for escape
14	Taebyn Zanthys	Half-orc	Blacksmith	Very long black hair in braid	Often tells bad jokes
15	Grimbold Ironhead	Dwarf	Bodyguard	Obviously broken-and-reset nose	Far too trusting
16	Thalia Copperhand	Dwarf	Bookbinder	Luxurious hair braided with ribbons	Has an overactive imagination
17	Noria Len	Human	Bookseller	Wears thick, horn-rimmed glasses	Can recall any book she's read by heart
18	Bram Buckovina	Human	Bounty hunter	Very strong foreign accent	Always emphasizes the individual syllables in his name
19	Alexander Alemaker	Half-elf	Brewer	Green eyes and ginger hair	Infectious laughter; regularly carves trinkets for children
20	Gabriel Corinth	Human	Buckle maker	Large scar on left cheek	Does not like to talk much
21	Troyka "Crimson Palm" Guerry	Half-orc	Butcher; Knight of the Eclipse	Missing left ear	Deep laugh that comes often and easily, but his face is difficult to read
22	Selina Len	Human	Butcher	Missing left pinky finger	Gives advice prefaced by, "Like Grandma used to say..."
23	Kohl	Human	Cabbage seller	Bland and nondescript	Eager to sell his cabbage to anyone
24	Giovani Semonenli	Human	Carpenter	Tall and skinny as a bean pole	Judges his customers moral choices

25	Carol Wellsby	Human	Candle maker	Burn scars on her left arm	Always worried about her children (who are full grown)
26	Yolarran Athronak	Dwarf	Cheesemaker; retired adventurer	Bright orange hair	Obsessed with cheese
27	Kheldas	Human	Cleric	Purple eyes	Wry sense of humor
28	Dorthy Morina	Human	Cobbler	One blue eye and one green	Dwarves make her nervous
29	Pest "Iron Chef"	Half-orc	Cook; retired adventurer	Short and overweight with large canine teeth	Uses kitchen items as arms and armor; talks of the monsters he has killed and eaten
30	Bazron Oldstone	Dwarf	Cooper	Completely bald, including beard	Treats all non-dwarves like children
31	Isaac Len	Human	Chandler	Well-groomed with a thin black mustache	Deferential towards nobles, but condescending toward commoners
32	Brunhilda Copperhair	Dwarf	Cutler	Skin rough from a childhood disease	Laughs at awkward times
33	Alex Liarya	Human	Dancer	Piercing blue eyes that tell a story	Overly sensitive; rebel who cannot be contained
34	Kyliah	Human	Demon binder	Red frizzy hair	Fiery temper
35	Coral Seasinger	Elf	Druid	Tattoo of a coral snake on her left arm, the head on the back of her hand	Keen to protect nature; rarely talks about the past except with other long-lived races
36	Marcoos Lightson	Human	Fisherman	Scar on left cheek, running from eye to mouth	Keeps to himself, unless he sees someone being bullied
37	Gwendolyn Tamara	Human	Fishmonger	Always has a cat perched on her shoulder	Easily distracted
38	Boern Grimhammer	Dwarf	Fletcher; retired adventurer	Elaborate full-body dragon tattoo starting on scalp	Tells stories of his brothers and Clan Grimhammer over ales
39	Portia	Human	Furrier	Curly black hair and green eyes	Loves her work
40	Folto Tikk	Gnome	Gambler	His bright and eerie green eyes	Famous for his terrible puns and love of strong beverages
41	Shu	Human	Geomancer	Left hand is made of living crystal	Traveled a long way to get away from his family
42	Kalinana Soldin	Elf	Glove maker	Pale green hair	Interested in everybody's genealogy
43	Frau Wahrherz	Doppelganger	Grifter	Missing an ear in all forms (thanks to a magical scar)	Enjoys perpetrating long cons against nobles
44	Thea Gelden	Human	Grocer	Midnight-blue hair	She has more to her than anyone thinks
45	Corbin	Human	Harness maker	Walks with a limp	Rude to everybody but a customer
46	Salberry Saldon	Halfling	Haberdasher	Always wears a different hat	Overly friendly with no regard for personal space
47	Aric Sandstorm	Human	Healer and drug dealer	Tanned skin, black facial hair in a pirate cut; healers' robes over clothing	Cunning, shrewd yet outgoing and personable; willing to help for the right price
48	Rattlehands	Human	Hedge wizard	Heavily laden with a variety of knickknacks	Boundless curiosity for curiosity's sake
49	Loxitus	Lizard folk	Herbalist	Short and squat; smells like lavender	Taps foot incessantly
50	Lydia Fynnal	Human	Historian specializing in dragons	Only ten years old; big shark-like grin	Has a knack for getting people to believe her

51	Bertha Axetongue	Dwarf	Illuminator	Walks with a cane; has long white hair past her feet	Always takes her time and hates being rushed
52	Red Lilly	Human	Informant	Red-haired woman with freckles	Elusive, but also friendly
53	Caelym Draegon	Human	Innkeeper	Missing finger from adventuring days	Always talks very loudly
54	Gisella	Human	Innkeeper	Long curly hair and dangling earrings	Overly dramatic
55	Kora Emeraldeyes	Dwarf	Jeweler	Wears a monocle	Paranoid that everybody wants to rob her
56	Bella Defray	Human	Locksmith	Black hair tied in a topknot	Always tells people about the dangers that could strike at any moment
57	Sally	Human	Maidservant	Mole on her left cheek	Timid and shy
58	Gantz Grimtooth	Half-orc	Maintenance worker	Mutton chops	Sometimes steals things while working
59	Golon Oldstone	Dwarf	Mason	Always wears a glove on her left hand	Misuses long, complex words
60	Balore Doomhammer	Dwarf	Mercenary	Eye patch and balding head	Going through a mid-life crisis worrying that he hasn't lived up to his forefathers
61	Flavia Silius	Human	Merchant	Long braid down to her ankles	Always uses "we" and "us" instead of "I" and "we"
62	Albrecht	Human	Merchant of oddities and secrets	Long, straight, dark hair and a crippled shield arm	Mumbles to himself and seems to know more than he lets on
63	Hammy	Human	Millwright	Tall with long curly hair	Grumpy
64	Beorg Ironbreakers	Dwarf	Miner	Pegleg, received from a mining accident	Snorts contemptibly most times before speaking
65	Laflean	Elf	Necromancer	Uses illusions to hide a patch of rotting flesh	Vain hedonist
66	Talia Gerard	Human	Portrait painter	Always has paint splattered in unlikely places	Loves to talk about light and color
67	Dedrick	Human	Plasterer	Curly brown hair that seems to have a life of its own	Complains that life has dealt him a bad hand
68	Galen Ironroot	Dwarf	Priest	Beard permanently singed short	Quick to trust, always helps those in need
69	"Rich & Cozy"	Dwarf	Professional drinking companion	Large and impressive spread bat wings tattoo on upper buttocks	Always late
70	Calinda Corinth	Human	Purse maker	Wears a dozen different rings	Loves riddles
71	Rilliflain	Half-elf	Ranger	Silver hair with deep green streaks	Refuses to leave the city after an encounter in the forest he will not speak of
72	Amorel Wolf	Elf	Ranger	Red hair; scar over his left eye; right eye red, left eye sky blue	Adamant about protecting wolves and keeps them as pets
73	Jake Beaufort	Human	Roofer	Built like a brick wall	Cheerful and likes to whistle
74	Danila	Half-elf	Rope maker	Violet eyes	Dark sense of humor

75	Cecillia Weaver	Human	Rug maker	Bushy white hair	Talks loudly and asks others to speak up
76	Jesse Drew	Human	Saddler	Short and stout	Loves bawdy jokes
77	Thelror Axetongue	Dwarf	Scabbard maker	Bushy eyebrows	Works at night and sleeps in the day
78	Aramil	Elf	Scout	Black hair and trimmed goatee	Raised on the street; gets upset when people assume he knows about nature
79	Leofric Edwinsunu	Human	Sellsword	Eyepatch over missing left eye	Brooding
80	Viola Plum	Halfling	Sewer worker	Scribbles notes in a hand only she can read	Knows a way through the sewers to wherever the PCs need to go
81	Grendel Greer	Human	Silversmith	Hook in place of left hand	Gives life advice to customers
82	Ka Blazen	Fire-touched	Smuggler	Coal black skin, deep red hair; long scar from a blade over left eye	Dark eyes flare when angry; very easy to anger
83	Keli Morganna	Half-elf	Surgeon	Scars on left side of neck and throat	Fascinated with studying anatomy, especially the nervous system
84	Emilian Dalca	Human	Swashbuckler	Capricious glint in his playful green eyes	Charming, impulsive ladies' man
85	Quin	Human	Tailor	Hunched back	Likes to drink and sing
86	Pablo Elanis	Human	Tanner	Dark eyes and short cropped hair	Never cracks a smile
87	Varz Bledmore	Half-orc	Tavern owner	Ancient arcana sigil tatoo on right temple	Calls everyone Alex
88	Lord Theodore Dobbins	Halfling	Tavern owner	Eyepatch over right eye	Given to fits of bravado and boasting
89	Razzgur Sprack-lesprogget	Goblin	Taxidermist	Wears a monocle	Believes that he is a magical construct
90	Eriven	Human	Thief	A cloth covering his left eye	When surprised he puts his hand over his left eye
91	Arakan	Human	Thief	Average and instantly forgettable	Psychopath who, sometimes reverts to a law-abiding alternate personality
92	Dusty Rockwinder	Elf	Thief	Heavily tattooed	Anarchic and disrespectful, but good-intentioned
93	Brummbar Grizzled-iron	Dwarf	Tracker	Bald with short red beard	Cares for two bear cubs like they were his own kids
94	Jaedyn James	Elf	Town guard	Very large scar on face	Easy to get info from as he always loses his pay throwing dice
95	Viaius	Human	Undertaker	Unkempt with poor personal hygiene	Avoids people (and the living dead); talks to himself a lot
96	Frig Doomhammer	Dwarf	Weaver	Elaborate hairstyle	Flirts with everybody
97	Jedryn Mikael	Dwarf	Wine merchant	White-blond hair	Jovial and exuberant unless talking about hobgoblins (which he hates)
98	Charlie Cutter	Human	Woodcarver	Old and wiry	Likes to tell stories of his youth
99	Wulgar	Human	Woodcutter	Long beard and full mustache	Constantly smoothing and rearranging his mustache
100	Occultnitude Tricep	Human	Yogi	Red hair	Interested in foreign history and languages

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