



XEN'DRIK EXPEDITIONS

Fate, Interrupted **Covenant of Light Faction Scenario #10** **An Adventure for 10th Level Characters** **(Scaled for 11th to 13th Levels of Play)**

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Lady Savya, a diviner in Stormreach, is held in great regard by many of its most affluent citizens. Her predictions are considered by most to be iron-clad truth, visions of a guaranteed future. When Lady Savya informs one of her patrons that she sees 'The Gathering of the Light' falling into darkness with all those who hold it sacred, her word is enough to convince him to sever all ties with the Covenant. Now others are canceling their support as well. If the Covenant of Light cannot discover why their fate has become so cruelly interrupted, the Lady's prophecy may become self-fulfilled.

Adventure Background

For some time now, the forces of Dar Qat have been looking to forge an in-road into Stormreach. The port city is seen by the Inspired as a necessary conquest and the first major step towards their goal of dominating the continent of Xen'drik. Though they have other agents working in the area, most of the intelligence they have gathered about the city and its power structures has come from one source – a coldly beautiful woman named Whisper.

When she began her mission in Stormreach, she had no direct agenda other than to observe and report. Now, a year later, her experiences with members of one particular group of would-be heroes has narrowed her focus considerably. Whisper has been continuously thwarted in her aims by champions of the Covenant of Light, a faction of some repute and influence in Stormreach. To her, this interference is intolerable.

One month before the start of this adventure, she decided to stop watching and do something about them. Content to stay in the background and manipulate others, the psionic spy hatched a plan to undermine the Covenant at its most vulnerable and important level, public opinion.

The plan was both exceeding simple and quite complex. Observing a famous soothsayer in the city, she noticed that the woman had a bit of a secret. She occasionally employed Dal, a changeling woman, to pose as her so that she could take sabbaticals while appearing to be ever-present. This revelation gave Whisper the inklings of a plot, one that would cut the legs out from under the Covenant of Light by turning its supporting patrons in Stormreach against it.

Two weeks ago, Whisper slipped a debilitating poison into Dal's dinner. This made the woman violently ill, a condition from which she is still suffering. Then, as a 'concerned neighbor', Whisper agreed to go tell Lady Savya that she was too sick to come in to work for her. Using disguise magic, Whisper then assumed Dal's identity, took Savya's place and performed several days' worth of fortune telling to some of the most influential people in Stormreach. In each divination, she predicted terrible disaster for her clients if they remained aligned with the Covenant, foreseeing 'great danger when the Light fades'.

In the wake of these lies, several of the Covenant's supporters have pulled out of their arrangements and cut off ties to the faction. To help her schemes along, Whisper has gone to the homes of several of these benefactors and used her mental powers to subtly increase their doubts and fears. She has even gone so far as to plague them with terrible nightmares. Panic is sweeping through the rich and wealthy of Stormreach's high society.

Once Lord Corvalis managed to get one of his wealthy friends to explain why the man was withdrawing promised aid to the poor of the city, he immediately jumped to the wrong conclusion. For a long time, the leader of the Covenant has been troubled by a terrible entity called the Lord of Nightmares. Assuming his nemesis had returned, he has rallied his champions to collect as much information as he can from the only source he knows with a connection to these events – Lady Savya.

Adventure Synopsis

Thus, the PCs are sent to Savya on an erroneous mission, seeking to track down a foe that has nothing to do with the faction's current troubles. On their way out of the Covenant's fortress, they are approached by Korvin, a raptoran scout and a good friend of Lord Corvalis. He has deep sympathy for his friend's troubled mind but is also mindful of the true danger facing the Covenant.

He asks them to do as the Lord of Radiant Hold suggests but also requests that they be mindful of the damage the woman's soothsaying has done to their faction. If they can discover why she would foretell a dark future no one else seems to be predicting, it could be vital to closing the rift that has opened between the Covenant of Light and many of its supporters.

The PCs' first stop is the Wandering Eye, a small storefront in the southern part of the city. Here they meet Lady Savya and her young son Canter. Canter shows them in and takes them to see his mother even if they do not have an appointment (which they do not). Both are very hospitable and in no way deceptive, though Savya's mannerisms are purposefully mysterious because that is part of what her customers wish when they come here. The PCs might mistake her obfuscatory attitude for her trying to hide something.

Once they learn that she did not actually perform the readings in question, a secret she will not give up easily, the PCs will be set on the path of tracking down Dal. They find her suspicious, sick and in bed,

suffering from an illness that normal medicine is failing to cure. The PCs may discover that she has been poisoned and if they help her, they will find her far more cooperative.

Before they can finish interviewing Dal, Whisper makes her move. Trying to reinforce the illusion of the Nightmare Lord being involved, she summons a spectral undead and sends it into the room with the PCs and Savva, all the while using illusion magic to make the encounter seem otherworldly and unreal. After the battle, astute PCs might discover the body of an old man, looking as if he died of fright in his sleep.

This is just a ruse. Truly observant PCs will be able to find traces of Whisper's involvement, including an unlocked window, a few strands of hair near the bed, a faint scent from a rare and exotic perfume and traces of the scroll used to summon their ghostly assailant. For better or worse, the traces could easily send the PCs straight to the doorstep of one of the Covenant of Light's most questionable supporters, the necromancer called Grave.

From Grave, the PCs learn that one of his side businesses is selling necromantic magic to a very exclusive clientele. Diplomacy or subterfuge will be needed to find out who bought the summoning scroll from him – a rare goods merchant named Taelic'ador. This name in hand, they can head back into the city to determine why a notable caravan master would want such a thing.

Immediately upon entering Taelic'ador's warehouse, the PCs are attacked by his security team. This is because Whisper has been working several angles in the city and one of these is making Taelic'ador believe there are assassins after him. When she discovered the PCs were on her trail, she began planting rough descriptions of the PCs in Taelic's mind. When the PCs arrive, he 'recognizes' them as his would-be killers and orders his people to attack.

If the PCs are heavy handed in this encounter, it will cost them. The only solid lead to Whisper lies with one of the guards. If he is killed, that trail ends here and the PCs will have no good way to track her further. Taelic'ador knows that he has not purchased anything from Grave in several weeks. If the guard in question is alive, she can reveal that while returning from a few drinks alone, she holed up in a small abandoned building and caught a nap that lasted a lot longer than she intended. This happened on the same night as the purchase of the summoning scroll.

The scene with Taelic'ador is not done; moments after the PCs leave, an invisible stalker set on the caravan master begins to strangle him. If the PCs can make a fairly simple Listen check, they can hear the altercation begin and help him. The stalker has a magical item to call in aid if it needs it and when the PCs arrive back in the room, another foe is summoned for them to fight. Once the battle ends, the PCs will either have a living, grateful ally or another death to mourn.

If the PCs do not get the information from the female guard, Whisper's trail ends cold but the original mission is not lost. Savva is willing to discuss the matter with the PCs and offer a retraction of sorts, especially if they suggest it. She is understandably concerned about her reputation and does not want to come out of this looking like a fool. If the PCs can come up with a way for her to undo the damage done by the false prophecy, she will be willing to do her part to help.

If the PCs learn about the abandoned building, the trail leads them to a small tenement that might seem familiar to them. This was where the serving girl that inadvertently set up Corvalis for a murder charge (CVN-6, Things Fall Apart) once lived. She has moved on but Whisper has been using it (and her appearance) to come and go without raising suspicion.

In this small, run down building, the PCs will not find Whisper. She has realized that her cover is blown and that her mission is likely a failure. Rather than fight the PCs and risk defeat at their surprisingly capable hands, she has grabbed her things and fled back to Dar Qat for now. In her haste, however, she has left behind two genuine clues to her identity and her origins. With these, the PCs finally have definitive proof of one of their faction's most insidious enemies.

Fate has lately been turned against the Covenant of Light. This scenario offers the PCs a rare chance to interrupt the darkness coming for them all.

Troubleshooting

Throughout this entire scenario, you will need to watch the PCs. At the very beginning of the game, they will be cautioned to be subtle, to make as little impact in Stormreach as possible and to be alert for anything out of the ordinary. These behaviors will serve them in good stead if they do this. Otherwise, they will suffer for their lack of discretion. This is a module where skill and cunning will benefit the PCs far better than strength of arms.

Surveillance has been a passing theme in previous CVN adventures but it becomes a constant concern during Fate, Interrupted. Every section of this scenario has a section devoted to the PCs being watched and to what degree. Whisper is a master spy and can observe the PCs from quite a distance using both magical and psionic means; it is unlikely she will be spotted unless she wants to be seen.

Lastly, keep in mind that at the present time in Stormreach, the Covenant of Light is seen in a mixed light by the town's citizens. Be sure to reflect this is people the PCs encounter. Some will be friendly, other fearful. The PCs have become recognizable heroes but to some in Stormreach, the line between hero and villain is becoming very thin. Make sure that the PCs reap what they sow. Stormreach is on a knife's edge where the Covenant of Light is concerned; the actions of the PCs will determine which way the blade cuts.

Adventure Start

In this introduction, the PCs begin as they have in many Covenant Adventures, speaking to Lord Xandrin Corvalis in his office in Radiant Hold. Radiant Hold is the primary stronghold of the Covenant of Light, a fortress only a short ride to the west of Stormreach.

The tall, dark haired man in front of you paces back and forth behind his heavy, wooden desk, brow furrowed in thought. "Forgive me for the lateness of the hour but I need good counsel now and as our faction's first Paragons, I wanted to speak to you first."

Lord Corvalis, eyes sleeplessly dark, gestures to a small stack of parchments. "Please take a look at those and tell me what you see."

The stacked papers are all letters from various members of Stormreach's high society, notifying the Covenant of their intention to end relations with the faction. Some give reasons, others just 'respectfully withdraw' from their agreements. A few are even bold enough to ask for refunds of the monies they have already donated. While each one is not indicative of a great sum, taken as a whole the loss to the faction is potentially devastating.

Once you have described this to the PCs, let them ask any questions they might wish. A summary of possible questions and answers follow below. Adjudicate anything else they might inquire about as you wish, using the background of the scenario and your knowledge of the faction to fashion reasonable answers for them.

- *"What are these?"* "A number of people, many of whom have supported us the entire time we have been here in Xen'drik, have withdrawn their support in the last few days. It's quite alarming, to say the least."
- *"Why are they pulling their support?"* "I don't have an answer for that. Most of them will not speak to us, even people I honestly considered to be friends of ours. My opinion? They seem scared."
- *"You said most. Who will speak to us?"* "No one living, I'm afraid. One of my closest friends in the government of Stormreach agreed to meet with me after terminating his donations. He died before we could talk."
 - *"Can we investigate that?"* "I had him examined by an ally of ours, the necromancer Grave. He was able to get some information from his body, distasteful as that might sound. According to Grave, he died in his sleep. Of fright, no less."
 - *"That sounds familiar."* "Indeed it does. I fear an old enemy has returned to haunt us and I have a terrible suspicion I know what has caused it this time."
(This leads to the "Grave Concerns" section of text.)
- *"What can we do?"* (This leads to the "Seeing the Seer" text section below.)
- *"These people have a right to withdraw their support."* "Indeed they do. While I am troubled at what this drought of funds will do to our ability to serve the Light, I am more concerned that people seem to be dying as well."
 - *"Dying?"* (This leads to the "Grave Concerns" text section below.)
 - *"Just what do we need money for, anyway?"* "Good and Light are not simply achieved by way of the blade, friends. We support relief efforts for people hurt during the recent pirate attacks, we fund an orphanage in Stormreach and we maintain this fortress as a haven for anyone needing refuge. All of that requires coin, a very sad but true fact of life."

Once the PCs have finished asking questions, be sure to try and work in the following sections of text. They are crucial to the plot but should be woven into the story to give the PCs a very real sense of impact on the game. If this information is given to them as responses to their own actions, it will make the adventure feel less linear and more like a natural extension of their actions.

Always remember to paraphrase. Make the text and the adventure your own.

Grave Concerns

Finally sitting down, Lord Corvalis rests his hands on his desk and takes a breath before continuing. "There's more, sadly. This is not just about money. There are apparently lives at stake. Both the threat of neglect as our social programs suffer under dwindling funds and something far more direct."

He takes a thin roll of parchment out of his desk, its bone-white wax seal already broken, and lays it on the desk near where you are gathered. "You'll want to look at this as well."

While the PCs are reading Player Handout One, Corvalis continues:

"I managed to get Kendrick ir'Kavnos, one of the people backing out of our sponsorship agreements to speak with me. He arranged for a morning meeting at a public inn in the city market. Unfortunately, he died that night before the meeting could take place."

"I still have enough pull with the Coin Lords to call in a few favors. I spent one of them to get Kendrick's body to an ally of ours for examination. I know some in our faction do not much approve of Grave and his methods but lately, he's one of the only constant friends we have and his work is second to none. I asked him for an analysis of the corpse and any information he might get us."

"That report is what I got back."

He pauses there to let the PCs finish reading. When they are done, he continues. The following text assumes the PCs have played CVN6 - Things Fall Apart. If they have not, Corvalis will not call the Nightmare Lord by name for fear of calling down the beast's wrath upon the PCs. Instead, he just says that a great evil exists, a dark entity he fears may once again be moving against the faction.

"As you can see, Kendrick died of shock associated with terror and a severe drain to his life force. That convinces me we may be dealing with an old enemy of the Covenant's. More accurately, an old foe of mine – the Nightmare Lord. You already know of him so it is safe to speak of him aloud."

"If he is active and killing again, we need to know. I have stayed passive against his evil long enough. Before I take long overdue action, I must be sure the Nightmare Lord has returned to plague us."

Any PCs wishing to do so (or as an automatic discovery if the PCs seem very focused or observant) will note that Xandrin has not slept in some time, likely since learning of his friend's death. He looks sleep-deprived and is not in the best of mental or physical health.

If they wish to do so, it will take a Diplomacy check (DC 15) or, at your discretion, good roleplaying to convince Lord Corvalis to get some rest. He dearly needs it but he is also terrified that if he does, his dreams might call the Nightmare Lord down upon Radiant Hold and lead to another incident like the one that prompted the events in CVN-6.

This leads to the second text section – Seeing the Seer

I Don't Have CVN-6. What's Going On?

Fortunately, you do not need CVN-6 Things Fall Apart to run this adventure. For all his power, wisdom and influence, Lord Corvalis is dead wrong about the involvement of the Nightmare Lord. However, the PCs may wish to ask questions or poke around to determine what this reference means.

In CVN-6, the PCs had to defend Xandrin Corvalis from a murder charge involving his lost and presumed dead wife. She was taken by an extradimensional horror called the Nightmare Lord, a spectral being willing to kill everyone in Radiant Hold if she was not given to him. Xandrin had no choice but surrender her, a decision that still haunts him to the present day.

Seeing the Seer

Xandrin takes a small scrap of celestially-patterned black silk and hands it over. "This is a token used by Lady Savva, a seer that Kendrick used to go to for advice. Like many in the highest echelons of Stormreach society, he was enamored of her divinations and her personal charms. I have my doubts about the woman's authenticity as a foreseer of the future but if she knows anything at all, it's an avenue of inquiry we can't afford to ignore."

"That," he adds wryly, "and I have no other leads for you."

The cloth is cut in the shape of a notched triangle and is part of a larger bolt of silk Savva uses to ensure that only people who have been accepted as part of her clientele are let in to see her and receive her services. The cloth belonged to Kendrick ir'Kavnos and is now entrusted to the PCs for their mission. You

will find a replica at the end of the adventure (Player Handout Two) that you can cut out and give to your players at this time.

"I wish you luck. By now, you know this place as well as I do so I won't bother having you escorted out. Before you go, one last thing, my friends. Try to remember that our public face has taken quite a bruising latterly. I'm counting on you while you are out there to act like the heroes you are.

"Now please, make haste and may the Light shine upon you. May it shine upon us all."

PCs with the Knowledge (local) skill or Bardic Knowledge class feature might well know of Savya already. Also, PCs may well use skills like Gather Information to find out more about her. She is something of a celebrity, a sort of advisor to the rich and famous of Stormreach. The following chart will let PCs determine what they know or discover.

| Skill or Feature Check | Result |
|--|--|
| DC 10 | Savya is a well-known seer and fortune teller. Many of the city's rich and powerful swear by her predictions. She is also extremely attractive for an older human woman and has garnered a great deal of influence from her looks. |
| DC 15 | Savya is a human female assumed to be in her mid-40s. If rumor is to be believed she takes clients at any hour of the day or night and never seems to sleep. |
| DC 20 | The Wandering Eye, her divination storefront, is located south of the market and only a short walk north of the docks. It says a great deal about her reputation that her well-to-do clients would come that close to the squalor of south Stormreach for her services. |
| DC 25 | Gossipmongers keep an eye on who goes to "Lady Savya" and what she tells them. Interestingly enough, everyone who has withdrawn their support from the Covenant of Light is a known client of hers. |
| Adventure Secret (This can only be learned through Campaign Card use, certain Story Objects or a skill check at DC 35 as noted above.) | Savya is a minor widow-noblewoman (by marriage only) from House Phiarlan. She is very adept at divination magic but chooses to use her talents in the soothsaying profession because her elven husband based a very wealthy business off the same ideas in Sharn. She came here after his death and while she may be somewhat secretive, deceptive and manipulative, she is by all accounts a decent person and a more generous soul than she would ever let on. |

From here, the scene shifts to outside Xandrin's office at the base of the stairwell leading out into Radiant Hold's courtyard. There, the PCs meet Korvin as detailed in the section below entitled, "Birds of a Feather". If the PCs dally and wish to talk to Xandrin further, he will entertain them as much as he can but it should be apparent he wants them to set out on their mission as soon as possible.

Birds of a Feather

A shadowy figure with sable-black feathers from head to toe awaits you at the bottom of a long flight of stairs. He is clad in scouting leathers, armed with a pair of curved blades sheathed at his thin waist and is making no attempt to conceal himself from you.

"Paragons, a moment if you will?" His voice is barely more than a whisper, but still high pitched in the manner of most of his race – the raptorans.

If the PCs are willing to talk, he quickly says the following, glancing up the stairs constantly to make sure Lord Corvalis does not walk in on the conversation. If they do not recognize him from previous adventures, Korvin will quickly introduce himself as Corvalis' seneschal (which is true).

"I know why you were called here so late and what mission now sends you out into the night. While I agree your task is an urgent one, I fear our friend Xandrin is focused too much on one cloud and is failing to see the storm behind it. May I explain?"

"He has spoken to me of his fears about the... entity that may have slain master ir'Kavnos. I share his concern but there is far more at stake here. Regardless of the danger we may be in, the disruption in our public image is only getting worse with these recent denials of alliance. We depend on good relations with the people of Stormreach to feather our nests. Without their acceptance, we will find ourselves cold and alone very quickly."

The raptoran shifts nervously from foot to foot before continuing. "These events all happening in such a short time cannot be a coincidence. I believe someone is again trying to discredit us and I think it may all come to rest at this Savya's doorstep.

"If she is behind the defamation, please discover why and how. If not, determine what part she is playing, willing or otherwise. One way or another, we need to find this threat and pluck it from the ground before it can burrow away and hide again."

Korvin has no direct advice to give aside from informing the PCs that Savya's place of business, The Wandering Eye, is always open and that they can go there now. He wishes them luck and sends them on their way.

The PCs can certainly stay and talk to him but aside from being worried about the faction and about his friend Xandrin in all this, he has little else to say.

This sets the stage for the adventure. When the PCs are ready to proceed to Savya's abode, proceed to Part One: Wandering Eyes.

If the PCs have other destinations in mind (Grave's, the home of Kendrick ir'Kavnos, etc.), do not force them to visit Savya's store first. You can even reward such non-linear adventuring by seeding clues in these locations. Just use your imagination, keep the events of the scenario's background in mind and always keep in mind what Whisper is doing as the PCs roam 'off the map'. As long as the Players are having fun, there is no wrong way to play this game.

Surveillance: None. Whisper lost her contact inside the Covenant some time ago and tightened security has succeeded in keeping her out despite her best efforts. While the PCs are inside Radiant Hold (i.e. for the duration of this introduction), their activities will not be subject to her scrutiny.

Part One: Wandering Eyes

This section deals with the Wandering Eye, Lady Savya's fortune telling house. It is a location-based scene and as such might be reached in any number of ways. Guide the PCs here in any way you wish, from horse-drawn carriage (paid for by the Covenant as the PCs are on official business) to travel on foot. If the Players want to take the time to roleplay while getting to the Wandering Eye, do not force them to simply "jump" to the scene. Make their arrival feel natural and proceed when ready.

Unless the PCs' actions dictate otherwise, this scene happens around midnight under an overcast sky.

The All-Seeing Eye

This small brick-and-mortar establishment is an enviable building in Stormreach as it is actually brick and mortar, an expensive construction technique in this port city. The walls are dark brick accented with black-dyed mahogany and its few windows bear both real glass and stellar-patterned silk curtains. The front door is a single intricately carved piece of duskwood with fittings of fine bronze.

The tableaux hanging overhead is a shield in the shape of an eye, enchanted with a ghostly illusion that makes it seem to constantly be moving. Never still, the image perfectly represents the name of the establishment – The Wandering Eye.

Surveillance: Whisper is following the PCs at a very long distance, using *clairvoyance* to track them and her psychic abilities to remain hidden and undetected. She will be able to tail them to Savya's home but the inside of that building is protected from scrying and whatever transpires there will happen without her knowledge. This frustration is what leads to her actions against the PCs later in the scenario.

Though the PCs could probably force their way in, the doors (one front, one back) are both locked and the windows (two front, one on either side) are latched from the inside. Entry is, however, as easy as knocking. If and when the PCs do this, use the text below. If they enter by some other means, adjudicate as you see fit. Be sure to have the NPCs present react accordingly, especially if the PCs are so bold as to forcibly make their way inside.

The small building is both business and home to "Lady" Savya and her young son Canter. Savya came to Stormreach when she was pregnant with Canter and made a living here doing card readings for the idle rich out of an inn that no longer exists on the north side of town. It was during this time that she developed her flair for the theatrical; back then it was a mean of hiding her growing signs of maternity. After Canter was born and she had enough saved up, she accepted the gift of a would-be suitor and moved to the Wandering Eye. The suitor, whom she genuinely cared for, met with an ill fate during an expedition to the jungle and Savya has not seen anyone socially since.

His legacy lives on in the house he built for her, brick by brick. She rarely leaves it and when she does, it is only to find solace in lonely walks down the beach strand where the two of them used to roam. These "vacations" and her infrequent hours spent asleep are the only time when she does not work. Otherwise Savya keeps herself busy by raising her son and remaining available to her clients day or night.

When the PCs knock, read or paraphrase the following.

Footsteps echo from the behind the door, approaching slowly. The duskwood portal opens a few inches, stopped by a bronze chain about halfway up. Part of a young human child's face becomes visible in the shadows of the opening. As he speaks, his disfocused, milky eyes roam over the lot of you, never pausing or looking at anyone in particular.

"The Lady Savya has no appointments at this hour, good folks. The oracle is resting. Please be off."

Canter adores acting mysteriously and knows that people usually treat him strangely because of his blindness. This suits him fine; it lets him get away with a great deal and provides him with endless amusement because he actually can see, albeit with the aid of an amulet his mother spared no expense in getting for him when he lost his eyesight to an ailment in infancy.

With straight, short black hair and moonstone pale skin, Canter resembles his father so greatly that Savya has never told him who that is for fear he would be able to figure out the man's identity some day. This has left the boy without a male role model in his life, a need he occasionally fills by latching on to male clients that come into the shop. Use this latter behavior as you like but keep in mind that since the death of his mother's lover three years ago, he has found it hard to get close to anyone, even his fixations.

The PCs will have to convince Canter of their good intentions. He is easily persuaded if they use the piece of cloth given to them by Lord Corvalis. If they use any other means of argument, use your best judgment. Diplomacy will work well but threats will not. His mother has taught him well and he is not nearly as naïve as he pretends to be sometimes.

Once the PCs have his attention and have convinced him of their need to speak to his mother, Canter will ask them to follow him to the divination room as follows.

The young boy slips the chain off and opens the door for you to enter. Constantly touching the wall to guide himself, he leads you down a long hallway with careful, methodical steps. "Please follow me. I will take you to where the Lady receives her visions. All will be clear to you then."

This type of conversation might make the PCs nervous, especially as they have no way of knowing if Savya is a legitimate diviner (she is) or a willing enemy of the Covenant of Light (she is not). That is quite all right. At this stage in the adventure, the PCs *should* be cautious and suspicious.

As soon as they enter the room with Savya, read or paraphrase the following. If the PCs did not use the cloth token they were provided, be sure to modify the text.

The door opens into a room draped in violet curtains of faintly billowing silk. A duskwood table rests in the middle of the floor, several high backed chairs surrounding it. On the table, a faceted spherical siberys dragonshard hovers over an engraved bronze stand. A single figure sits behind it, gloved hands resting on the table's surface.

"Greetings," the woman says, her lavender eyes sparkling from the shadows of her hood. "You bear a token I give only to my adored clientele. Their number does not count you among them." Gazing up to regard you, she asks in a soft, calm voice. "I would appreciate an explanation."

Despite the tone, Savya is not upset, only concerned. As a woman with many wealthy patrons, she feels she has little to fear, especially from people she knows to be good-hearted (*detect thoughts* and *detect good*, both cast before the PCs entered the room). She is curious to know why the PCs are here as it is doubtful they look like they want their palms read.

Lady Savya, Oracle: human female wizard (diviner) 6: hp 30

Canter, Seer's Child: human male wizard (diviner) 1: hp 5

The rest of this scene (with the exception of the A Parting Gift section below) can go any direction you desire. The PCs are free to ask her as many questions as they like; her night is free of other clients and she actually was resting when the PCs came calling.

Unless the PCs give her some reason to be hostile or uncooperative, she begins this scene as Indifferent and can be asked anything without responding duplicitously. Reasonable behavior and respect will go a long way towards securing her trust and help, as will simply telling her why they are really here. This is a scene where the more complicated and convoluted the PCs act, the harder it will be to get Lady Savya's help.

In game terms, this translates to either pure roleplaying or Diplomacy checks (your choice). As noted, Savya starts at Indifferent. Good behavior on the part of the PCs can earn up to a +5 circumstance bonus at your discretion. Her concern for the well-being of this city will offer another +2 circumstance bonus if the PCs mention the damage that could result to the city if the Covenant is lost.

The following can be learned at Friendly and additionally at Helpful. Do **not** read this information verbatim; let it occur naturally in conversation. Few things will bore a table of Players faster than a long, scripted speech.

Friendly Attitude

"I sympathize with your plight, I really do. I cannot explain my actions in this without revealing to you a secret I have kept for a long time. Please bear with me while I tell you this and understand that it cannot leave this room.

"I am a true seer and while you may find this hard to believe, I do get visions. I have been known to use... other methods to ensure that a reading is accurate and insightful for a client but in the end what I tell them is a true glimpse of their future. It has earned me a lot of friends, some of which we apparently have in common. You don't stay long in the fortune telling business without a stable of repeat clients.

"That said, the people you are referring to have been misled. I do not want to explain how I know this but I do. They are not your enemies and I believe they genuinely believe what they have been told. The trouble is, good folk, what they heard was not from me.

"I can assure you that if it is in my power to undo what has been done to the reputation of your order, I will do so to the best of my ability. You should not have to live with a mistake on my part nor should Stormreach suffer because the Covenant can no longer provide the aid it offers so selflessly. You can return home secure in that.

"Will that be enough?"

While she is sincere and she can likely reverse most of the damage done, there is still the greater issue of discovering who would do such a thing and how Savya is involved. Sense Motive checks (DC 15) will reveal that while she is telling the truth, Savya knows something important she is not telling the PCs.

To get the next section of text, the lead that can actually move the plot forward, the PCs will have to succeed at a second Diplomacy check to improve her attitude to Helpful. Again, you may allow good roleplaying to augment or even circumvent the need for this roll.

Helpful Attitude

"I must ask that you keep what I am about to tell you completely between us. There would be serious ramifications to my livelihood and my family if this were revealed. Agreed?"

"Very well then. The truth is that I do know how your supporters were misled. I do not know why but I do know how. The fortune-telling that seems to have caused this was not given by me. It must have come from my assistant, a woman who sometimes... fills in for me. I stay open for my clients all day and night. At first it was easy enough but as my client base grew, my ability to handle the work dwindled. After sleeping through a vital appointment, I decided it was time to find another way.

"Because being available at all times was part of my 'mystique', I couldn't change that without ruining what I'd built here for me and my son. If I couldn't do it alone, I needed someone else. I did what anyone would do, I hired out.

"Her name is Dal and she's a changeling. She's also a friend and I do not believe for one moment she would do any of this deliberately. Still, there is something I am worried about.

"Dal has a small place in the Troddens, the poor quarter, as good as I could make it with as much as she will let me pay her. She won't leave it no matter how often I ask her to move to a better area of the city. The trouble is that Dal has always been dependable and loyal. The reason that is a problem is because for the past four days, I have not seen or heard from her.

"I was going to send someone to check on her but the turmoil in Stormreach has kept me rather busy. Nothing brings out people seeking the future than from something that threatens to end said futures. If you want your answers. You could do us both a favor and make sure my friend is all right. What say you?"

This is Savya's way of ensuring her friend's safety and giving the PCs as much help as she possibly can. It is also all she can do for the PCs at this point. If they agree, she will give them Dal's address and send them on their way. If not, she will express her disappointment and understanding, assuring them that if she can, she will undo what has been done.

One way or the other, she will stay true to her word and do everything she can. Once the PCs are ready, she has her son escort them out after one last thing – a private reading.

A Parting Gift

"Before you go, please. I woke up expecting to do a reading and while you may not be clients, it would make me feel better for all the trouble I've caused you if I could do what I am best at. Would any of you like your fortunes told, free of charge? It doesn't take very long and what I tell you might be of great benefit some day."

This offer is made at the end of the scene even if the PCs have been spiteful or rude. Short of attacking her, their behavior only makes a difference as to what kind of reading she does for them – Destiny or Doom. Doom readings are reserved for PCs that have treated her poorly or abusively. This choice, which she makes solely based on your discretion, is done per PC; each one gets a private reading while the other PCs wait outside in the hall with Canter.

Those are her rules and they are non-negotiable. If the PCs do not wish to trust her enough to be alone with her, she thanks them and sends them on their way. If they agree, each PC gets a turn as described below. Run these quickly but provide as much detail as the Player involves wishes. No more than a couple of minutes per PC should be set aside for this.

Destiny

As Savya reaches out to take your hands, her eyes begin to glow with the same burning intensity as the crystal hovering in front of her face. A low, rhythmic chant issues from her lips as she smiles. "Be calm. This is always a little strange for my clients at first but that passes quickly."

Strange magical energies play across her hands, flowing over and around your own. "Yes, I can see it. Your fate is as bright as the sun but fraught with peril. Nothing, I am sure, you do not already know."

As her eyes flicker, fading into a pale yellow glow, she smiles. "Let's see if I can't tell you something new." The crystal slowly rises until it flies in a slow orbit around the table several feet above the ground. Pulses of radiance cast the flowing curtains into sharp relief, shining your silhouettes across them in a pattern of light and shadow.

"I hear a scream in the dark, a door that must be opened carefully lest your fate end this very night."

"I also see a glimpse of your future. Listen close. When fate speaks, it is seldom in words you will remember until the moment is at hand."

And with that, the light overhead flares to near blinding and whatever the Lady says next is lost in the sound of might well be the most beautiful music you have ever heard...

The PC will regain his or her sight within a few moments and be led out into the hall to meet the others. There will be no recollection of what was said aside from the deep seated knowledge that when things are darkest, the Light will be there to see them through it.

This outcome earns the PC the story object Fortune's Favor: For Every Light.

OR

Doom

Lady Savya watches you as you sit down. "Please relax and place your hands on the table. Clear your mind of all fear. All doubt. Together we will see what dangers lie on the road ahead." Placing her palms on either side of the crystal in front of her, she closes her eyes and the room grows darker.

The fortune teller begins to chant, her words stranger and ghostly as the orb in her grasp changes color to a deep, burgeoning crimson. The sphere, now beating like a great heart, shines its scarlet light throughout the chamber, turning the purple curtains as black as flowing pitch. "These are shadows of a doomed future. There may be a path through oblivion, a message that might save you."

"I also hear a scream in the dark, a door that must be opened carefully lest your fate end this very night."

Leaning forward, she opens her eyes and gazes directly into yours. Where once she had violet irises, now she sees out of completely ebon orbs, her pupils as red as the dragonshard in her hands. "Listen closely. Your soul will hear me even if the rest of you is not prepared for the sound of your doom."

Each syllable is like a dirge, every word a blade poised to strike at your heart. Whatever she is saying is lost in the thunder of the storm of Fate coming to claim you forever...

The PC's dire vision will clear almost instantly as he or she is being led out of the room by Canter to rejoin the other PCs. There will be no recollection of what was said but the PC simply *knows* that soon there will be a test, a life or death struggle that could easily mean the end of them.

This outcome earns the PC the story object Fortune's Favor: There Is A Darkness.

Once this section is complete for each PC, the scene is over and where they go next is entirely their call. The lead obtainable in this section of the adventure points to Dal's abode, assuming they received Savya's

help, but they are not forced to follow up on it yet if they have their own idea of how to proceed. The “scream in the dark” is a direct allusion to the *wail of the banshee* trap on Whisper’s door in Part Five. Be sure to give the PCs this warning as the trap can easily devastate the party if they are not careful.

If they do head to Dal’s apartment, move to the next section. Otherwise, continue as you best see fit.

What if Savya Isn’t Helpful?

If the PCs do not act appropriately or for whatever reason do not learn about Dal, you have a few options. The first is the simplest – game over. The PCs have technically completed their primary mission and the Lady is going to repair as much of the damage done by her “false readings” as possible. It is not an ideal outcome but the PCs do not go home entirely empty-handed.

The second option is to introduce Dal in some other fashion. Perhaps another ex-patron, feeling guilty about having withdrawn support, approaches the PCs and his story prompts them to return to Savya with more questions, prompting her to admit the whole truth. Gather Information might turn up a rumor that Lady Savya does not run her business entirely alone. The choice is yours.

The third option is to skip Dal entirely and have the PCs sent to Grave in Part Three and/or the merchant Caravan in Part Four another way. Lord Corvalis might ask the PCs to meet with Taelic’ador to try and implore him to reinstate his aid. This will get them back into Whisper’s sights and while the PCs will not receive the full benefits of having played the entire scenario, it will at least continue game play and salvage the majority of the plot.

Part Two: Sickness and Lies

The Lady’s directions have led you to a row of tenements that open up onto the city docks. The smells of the ocean are strong here – fish, salt and the underlying scent of wood that is rotting faster than it can be replaced. Most of these buildings, damaged by the recent travails of pirates and fire, will collapse within the year, replaced by ramshackle constructions as transient as the last.

One of these is the place Savya told you about, a building with heat-blackened oak shutters over its windows and half-faded chalk scrawls over the threshold door.

Surveillance: The PCs will be under constant scrutiny during this part of the scenario. Whisper has tracked them to this building and watches them from the apartment next to Dal’s. She does not move against the PCs until noted in the encounter.

If the PCs think to check her room before she acts, she is *invisible*, has a *nondetection* effect from an amulet and benefits from a Hide check result of 34. She is holed up in one corner of the suite, well concealed and has the benefits of both magic and psionics to keep her obfuscated. On the off chance that the PCs do somehow detect her, before she springs her trap, she will *teleport* away and have no further impact on Part Two of this scenario. This counts as defeating her spectral surprise.

Why Dal Would Live Here

If there are any changelings among the PCs, they will automatically know the reason why Dal has not abandoned this condemned place. This building has been a refuge for their kind since the founding of the city. People come and people go but at least one changeling always lives here. It is a rare tradition among their kind; there must always be a changeling in the Traveler’s House.

Investigation (as per the feat) might provide the same information, albeit at a DC 25 difficulty. A Decipher Script check (also DC 25) will translate the scrawls as a message of faith to the Traveler. “Here may the children of He That Wanders find a place to rest, if only for a time.”

Once the PCs go inside:

The building is quite different inside. The walls are clean, the floor well-maintained and the stench of the wet world outside is all but gone. Bundles of aromatic herbs lend a heather scent to the air and layers of expertly applied lacquer ward off the decay that seems so prevalent elsewhere.

Savya’s instructions indicate that Dal lives in one of the two apartments on the third floor, the highest level of the building.

Inquiring PCs can discover that while the tenement is not entirely abandoned, only four of its twelve apartments are occupied. A family of three destitute humans lives in one of the rooms on the ground floor and a quartet of worshippers of the Traveler (mixed races, all 3rd level adepts) has taken over a second floor suite as a shrine. Their religion is not strictly illegal in Stormreach and while they may be unsavory in the eyes of some Covenant PCs, the Traveler devotees are not breaking any laws or engaged in any violent services.

The other two occupied apartments are of specific interest to this scenario. The first is Dal's, the one closest to the stairwell. Farther down the third floor's only hallway, the second apartment suite is currently occupied by Whisper, *invisible* and lying in wait for the PCs.

Dal's Apartment

The door to this suite is made from a single piece of local wood, finely worked and well framed. A bronze knocker in the shape of an eye with a hanging tear drop is set at face height and the handle is a simple but solid bronze sphere.

The faint sound of coughing can be heard past inside, somewhere close to the door.

Dal is sitting in her kitchen when the PCs arrive, trying to eat something and failing due to what she thinks is an illness. While she is pale and has all the outward signs of someone with an ailment, she has actually been poisoned and is not likely to get better on her own. Dal does not know this and is trying to 'tough it out' like any good servant of the Traveler would do.

Dal, Replacement Seer: female changeling adept 2: hp 11

She is in her base form, the form she prefers, when the PCs arrive. If they knock before entering or offer her any warning before their encounter, she will change her appearance to her typical guise, a middle aged, non-descript human woman with graying brunette hair and brown eyes. In this form, she is usually just left alone and rarely scrutinized, just the way she likes things.

This encounter assumes the PCs knock and begin things cordially. This is certainly not the only way the scene might transpire; be sure to paraphrase and adjudicate as the actions of the PCs demand.

Nearly a minute passes between your knock and the sound of someone approaching the door. Another soft cough rings out, muffled but sounding severe. "Who is it?" The voice is feminine, slightly obscured by the density of the door in the way.

A Sense Motive check (DC 10) will reveal the voice to be elderly and in some distress. If the check result meets or exceeds 25, the elderly part of the voice is seen as an affectation but the distress is genuine.

Where the PCs take this conversation is entirely up to them. Dal is always suspicious of strangers and it will take force, excellent roleplaying or a DC 20 Diplomacy check just to get into her apartment. If the PCs mention their association with Lady Savya, the Diplomacy check is waved until they do so in a threatening manner (in which case the DC increases to 30).

Once past the door, the PCs can see the following:

The apartment is very finely but eclectically appointed. Furnishings of sometimes clashing types rest comfortably in the suite, a mix of fine taste and often uncomplimentary colors. A heavy divan of sturdy and luxurious Karnathi velvet dominates the sitting room, several blankets piled up on top of its thick cushions. The scent of expensive incense cannot quite mask the lingering odor of stale sweat in the air.

Even if the PCs convince her to talk with them, Dal retreats to her blankets and shivers while they speak. She is feeling terrible and has for quite some time. Though she may want to tell the PCs what they need to know, she is overcome by a coughing fit every time she tries to do so. This is a biological reaction (she is very ill) enforced by a *suggestion* delivered by Whisper while Savya was asleep the night of the poisoning.

If the PCs try to tend to her illness, her fatigue and misery overcome her instinctual mistrust. She just wants to feel better, even if that relief comes by way of total strangers.

Curing her 'disease' will prove difficult if the PCs cannot determine that she is actually suffering from a poison instead. The toxin, a rare blend of foul herbal extracts, can be identified by a PC with either herbalism or alchemical skill (DC 20 in either case) as Khyber Tea. The poison comes from plants that only grow in a few places in the known world, all of which are remote. Knowledge (geography) at a DC 20 will reveal that none of these herbs grow locally.

Curing Dal is automatic with the right magic but will require a DC 25 Heal check if done mundanely. Even with non-magical means, she will start to feel better almost immediately if the attempt is successful. Her full strength will take days to return but her gratitude is instant. Moreover, curing her removes the key element of her *suggestion*, allowing her to speak freely with the PCs.

"Four days? That's not possible. I've been here more than a week, maybe two. I couldn't have made any false predictions because I haven't made any predictions at all. You've got to believe me. I haven't been to the Wandering Eye in..." Dal suddenly looks at into the darkness in the far corner of the room and screams!

The shadows there erupt into a nightmarish shape, a humanoid figure, impossibly black, with burning red eyes. "Long enough have I suffered your lives, heroes. Now they end."

Reaching out of the dark with taloned hands, it attacks!

Foe: Whisper, using a narrow gap in the corner of the sitting room wall for line of sight, summons a dread wraith into the room. Its only desire is to end the lives of every creature present, starting with the very first PC it can reach.

The False Nightmare: dread wraith: hp 100: *Monster Manual* 258.

Tactics: The dread wraith is not subtle nor is it particularly cunning. It only speaks when it first appears, forced to do so by Whisper's control. It immediately attacks the closest PC, focusing its attacks on that unfortunate soul until he or she drops before moving on to the next in line. It ignores attacks, its resolve to destroy its present foe overriding its reactions.

Development: Dal's warning scream negates the chance of surprise on the dread wraith's part. Initiative is rolled normally with the dread wraith automatically going last if the PCs are 10th level.

Any PC with the story object Watched By Nightmares may make an Intelligence check (DC 10) upon first seeing the dread wraith. Success indicates the PC in question is certain this manifestation is nothing like any of his or her visions of the Nightmare Lord. Knowledge (religion) can identify the creature as a dread wraith. If this is done, a second Intelligence check (DC 10 again) will recall that while the Nightmare Lord may take many forms, none of them have been undead.

Scaling the Encounter

This encounter does not scale; it is Whisper's first direct attempt against the PCs and as such, she does not have a proper gauge of their abilities until after this fight. If the battle is too difficult (which is entirely possible if the PCs have an average level of 10), give the PCs a chance to hear Whisper's movements at the gap in the corner of the room (Listen check, DC 20). Any investigation will cause Whisper to panic and *teleport* away, immediately ending the summoning and dispelling the dread wraith.

At your own discretion, you can do away with the check and simply allow the PC closest to Whisper's viewing gap to hear her, ending the fight automatically if things are going poorly for the PC. This is a precursor fight and should frighten the PCs, not slaughter them.

Once the battle, Dal comes out of hiding behind the divan. Even ill, she was able to vault over the couch and seek cover within the first few seconds of the fight. Grateful to be alive, she tells the PCs everything they want to know. She explains how she fell ill two weeks ago and has been here the whole time, tended only by a kind neighbor.

She implores the PCs to take her apologies to Lady Savya, explaining that her neighbor had promised to tell Lady Savya that her "maid" could not come to work because she was ill. The maid title is one she and Savya use to keep the oracle's secret.

Once the PCs are done with her, Dal thanks them for healing her and bids them goodbye. Feeling better, she might actually get a decent night's sleep now. She will object to being moved, explaining to the PCs about the changeling tradition involving this house if she must. She insists on staying here but will not object to a guard or company if the PCs are determined not to let her remain here alone. If the company just happened to be another changeling, preferably male, she might even enjoy the company.

The Other Apartment

This apartment is a Spartan, barren contrast to Dal's abode. What little furniture is here is old and simple, too aged to be of any value or use. There is no rug, only a graying wood floor, and the curtains separating each room are threadbare and nearly transparent.

The only two features of interest in the apartment are the body in the bedroom and the corner where Whisper was crouched during her assault using the dread wraith.

Poor Soul

An old half-orc man, his thick features atrophied with age, lies dead here in a tangle of his own bed sheets. The look on his wrinkled face is one of absolute horror, eyes wide and lips pulled back in a rictus grimace.

This is Whisper's ruse, a body left behind to make it look like the Nightmare Lord came into the waking world through the sleeping mind of an old man near the PCs. A careful examination of the body through use of the Heal skill or the Investigate feat and successful DC 20 check will reveal that he was poisoned through an injection behind his right ear. The poison is a derivative of nightmare leaf, a succulent found only in the southern climes of Sarlona.

A DC 15 Search check will also find three strands of long white hair around the head of the bed. These are too long and too pale to be from the corpse; they had to have come from another source. In fact, they have been planted here to implicate Grave should the old man's demise be investigated.

The Guilty Corner

At first glance, there is nothing of interest in this part of the room. The corner of the bedroom closest to both Dal's apartment next door and the other wall of the building, it seems as empty as the rest of the suite until you look a bit closer...

There are two clues here, one of which can be found automatically because Whisper intended for it to be located by anyone examining the room.

A broken wax scroll seal, pale grey in color, has been recently discarded here. The two fragments, when put together, form a strange crest – a calligraphic G imposed over what appears to be a tombstone. Slight marks suggest lettering on the tombstone but they are unintelligible.

This is a mark the PCs may remember seeing before. Grave uses it as his personal signet when marking scrolls and letters. An Intelligence check (DC 15) will recall seeing a similar broken seal on Corvalis' desk from where he opened Grave's autopsy report before sending the PCs on this mission. Refer to Players' Handout Three.

This is a false clue and has been planted by Whisper.

The real clue is lingering in the air and is a testament to the fact that even a peerless spy can be tripped up by something as simple as the sin of vanity. It takes a Search check, DC 15, and a sense of smell to discover this clue.

A very faint aroma of white orchid and floral spice rests in the air here. This scent of a woman's perfume is fading; its source could not have left here long ago.

With nothing else to go on, it is likely the PCs will move on to Grave's domicile now. All signs point to him as being somehow involved, even if he is not responsible. Grave has always been a quiet but loyal supporter of the Covenant even if his methods have occasionally come into question. The PCs may not wish to believe he could be behind this dark plot, they will probably feel obligated to investigate.

Even if they have already been to see him, this new information will warrant another visit. When the PCs are ready to proceed, move to Part Three below when appropriate.

Part Three: A Grave Mistake

The path to Grave's house outside the walls of Stormreach is a gloomy affair this night. A low fog lingers over the broken trail, swirling in the intermittent wind and flowing like a living thing over every stone and around the base of every tree. The clouds overhead cast the path in a constant dolorous shadow, making the short walk seem ponderously long.

Grave is not expecting company and will be, for once, asleep when the PCs arrive. Assuming they do not try to break in, an action that would not only likely violate their alignments but also prompt retaliation from Grave's bodyguard Tatters, they will be forced to wait a few minutes before any sign of life appears in the dark house.

A candle ignites in the second story window directly above the front door. It opens, curtains parting to reveal a pale, familiar face. "I admit it's cliché for a man of my profession to only sleep during the day but I do occasionally nap. It's bloody late. What do you want?"

His words are tinged with sleep and annoyance but his tone is as jovial as ever.

If the PCs express a need to speak with him, he asks them to wait a moment and he will be right down. Less than a minute later:

A humanoid figure in a tight, black leather body suit complete with full facial hood and a suit of formal attire opens the door and gestures silently for you to follow it. The figure, which does not seem to be breathing, leads you inside and directs you to the sitting room, holding up two graceful fingers before departing.

This is Domo, Grave's zombie butler. The two fingers gesture is meant to show that Grave will join them in two minutes. Instead, it takes him five to wake up, splash a bit of water on his face and find suitable house clothes. In that time, the PCs are welcome to avail themselves of wine and snacks in his well-provisioned and comfortable sitting room.

This is a very good opportunity for the PCs to get in some roleplaying time, especially if they are the sort to discuss options and theories. There are a lot of questions before them, after all. Is the Nightmare Lord involved? If it is, why has it changed its tactics? If it is not, who or what is behind this? Is this yet another a Cabal of Shadows plot? Let them mull over such concerns in this relatively safe setting, providing them a backdrop for such conversation by describing the comfortable surrounds, warm fire and fine refreshments.

When you are ready for the scenario to begin again in earnest, move to the following:

A tall pale man with snowy white hair and darkly shadowed eyes steps into the room. Dressed in black velvet breeches and a finely tailored housecoat with silver skull buttons, he is a familiar face to anyone with experience in the Covenant of Light. Occasional ally, disquieting associate and a frequent topic of heated debate, he is the necromancer known as Grave.

"Forgive the informal dress, fishes, but I was indisposed." Crossing the room, he crouches long enough to restack the fire and stoke it to a full roar. "Ah, that's much better."

Glancing back at you, he rubs his hands in front of the flames and clears his throat. "Hope you don't mind the hearth here. I've had Khyber's own time staying warm these days." Then, with a critical eye and a half-smile, he asks, "To what do I own this midnight visit, my lovely guppies?"

Grave is odd but he is also trustworthy. If approached honestly and openly, he will be a font of information to the PCs and can guide them to the next step of their investigation. On the other hand, he is under no constraints to help and if treated poorly will not hesitate to be a tremendous waste of time. He is a professional and a friend, not a hireling or minion. If he is not treated with respect, he will not aid the PCs without coercion (which will more than likely constitute a serious alignment breach).

Approached with the 'evidence' against him, he can offer the following. The PCs can also use their own investigation methods to determine these facts without needing him to spell it out for them. Let the PCs determine how they learn these things; their actions should define the adventure.

- **The hair?** *"Interesting. Well, if you'd care to take a look, I'll just pluck one out. See? The white's the same but the sheen's all wrong. Besides, that one's got a lovely wave to it and as you've no doubt noticed, mine is arrow-straight. Not sure who that belonged to, but I'd kill for their barber."*
 - The hair came from a completely innocent merchant woman in the Stormreach marketplace near Dal's apartment building. Whisper stole them from the woman's brush while she was asleep two nights ago.

- Grave would not actually kill for a good tailor, but he might be willing to reanimate one if the need arose.
- **The undead?** *"Fascinating. Sounds like a wraith but those usually are not so tough as all that. Certain ones become truly potent manifestations of hate, a sort of dread balefulness if you will. I've dealt with two in the last year. Nasty business. Be glad you aren't dead... or worse."*
 - Grave is not bluffing; the undead are rising in all sorts of forms in and around Stormreach. Negative energies are increasing throughout the city and the undead problem is only getting worse. Grave does what he can to combat it but he foresees a time when his abilities will not be enough to hold back the 'dead tide'.
- **The scroll?** *"That's one of mine all right, fishes. If the seal was more intact, I'd even be able to tell you who I sold it to and when. Alas, the energies of use muddied the wax a bit and the engraving is all but gone now. Lucky for you, I happen to read fluent 'all but gone'."*
 - After consulting a tome on a nearby shelf, Grave tells the PCs that the scroll was sold to an elven caravan master named Taelic'ador a few days ago. He remembers the transaction as it was handled by a female dark elf and he never had to leave the house. *"Damn nice gentleman, or so I am told. His gold was very polite."*
 - **You sold an undead summoning scroll?** *"I'm sorry, how could I have been so criminal. Oh wait! I just remembered; it's not a crime. Summoned undead are like any other summoned creature. They appear, they do what you want and they poof away when you're done. Would you rather I was making undead by request? Custom corpses, perhaps? Now there's a thought..."*
- **The perfume?** *"I look fantastic in a dress but I draw the line at perfume, thanks."*
 - Grave is not bluffing here either. He does look great in a dress but that has no bearing on this adventure.

The important thing to be learned here is that Grave sold the scroll to Taelic'ador and had no part in the attack on the PCs. He is even willing to describe the woman courier (Kerax, one of the merchant lord's bodyguards, not that Grave knows this). If they inquire politely or if they have remained friendly, he will go a step further toward helping them.

Pouring himself a drink, he offers the bottle to anyone who wishes it. "You know, my sweet fish, I am not completely inconsiderate. I may sell necromantic scrolls on occasion but I am quite aware of the havoc they can cause."

Grave pauses to take a sip before continuing. "That's why I always check up on people who purchase my wares. If you'd like, I can show you where Master Taelic'ador is at this very moment."

If the PCs accept his help, Grave has a creepy surprise for them as given below. If they do not accept it or never receive the offer due to their behavior, they can obtain the caravan master's location by other means (skill use, Bardic Lore, etc.) as they see fit.

The Red Eye Flight

Grave steps over to the window and whistles a strangely haunting tune. Within moments, a fluttering sound echoes in from outside. Stretching out his hand, he offers it as perch for a small black bat with glowing crimson eyes.

"Everyone, this is Tera. Tera, these people would like you to lead them to someone. Would you be so kind as to take them into town and show them to caravan master Taelic'ador's warehouse?"

The bat chirps once, a melodic trill that follows it as it lifts off from his hand, circles the room and then leaves out the window once more. "I'd head out if I were you lot. She and I are just getting to know each other but I've already figured out she's not terribly patient."

With a wry grin he holds up his thumb, showing you the tiny half-circular pattern of scars at its tip. "And watch your fingers. She's a biter."

'Tera' is Grave's new familiar and, though the PCs might not like it, a quasit. He will not volunteer this information willingly since it would only strain the already tenuous relationship he has with the Covenant of Light. It might help to note that Tera is chaotic neutral in alignment and while capricious, she is not actively evil. She did not really fit in with her kind, a trait she shares with her new master.

Tera will lead the PCs to the next section, lighting the way with her glimmering scarlet eyes. She will not fight for them or reveal herself to be anything more than a bat unless she must and at the first sign of danger from the PCs, she will flee back to Grave.

Grave Digging

Grave, the oft-likable city necromancer, has been up to a great deal since his last appearance in a Covenant of Light module. Some things remain the same (such as his habit of calling people 'fishes', a figure of speech that comes from Stormreach's sahuagin population) but much has changed about the pale man in the black coat.

PCs that dig for information about Grave will discover that he has been making purchases of rare ritual goods and antiques from expeditions into the jungle, namely ones involving death motifs and ancient burial sites. His reasons for this will be revealed in an upcoming adventure. For now, his motives will have to remain a mystery. If asked about these directly, he will politely decline comment, asking for the PCs to trust that he has a good reason for it all (which he does).

His comment about feeling cold all the time is an allusion to having taken the next step down his inexorable path to becoming undead. The dread necromancer class takes its toll on those who pursue it. Grave did not ask to become what he is but he is determined to make the best of what life he has left...

Once their time with Grave is done, he bids the PCs a fond farewell and good fortune. A mild rainstorm washes over the PCs as they return to town, a shower that acts as a weak reminder of the savage tempests that can sometimes batter this port city and make any kind of travel very dangerous.

One way or another, their next stop is Taelic'ador's warehouse – Part Four, Mind Games.

Part Four: Mind Games

One way or another, the PCs have arrived at the next piece of the puzzle, the next stop along the path – Taelic'ador's warehouse on the Stormreach docks. The most likely way to get to this point is by Grave's familiar's assistance. She delivered the scroll to this warehouse after payment was received and informed her master that the inside looked like it was being used as a residence.

Tera is not wrong; Taelic'ador and his men have been holed up here for several days now because of Whisper's insidious *suggestions*. Taelic'ador has always been a fearful man, certain that his mercantile operations would attract enemies, but his mental state has become far more erratic of late. Paranoid and convinced that assassins are coming for him, he has cloistered here with every intention of leaving Stormreach as soon as his ship arrives.

This makes for a volatile situation for the PCs to find themselves in, one that can easily become bloodshed if they do not exercise caution and restraint. While they will be completely within their rights to defend themselves during the battle to come, more will be gained by showing mercy and understanding.

The warehouse before you looks like it has seen better days. As run down as any other along this dock row, it does have the benefit of extra shoring timbers and a roof that might have been pitched sometime this decade. Sturdy enough to handle serious traffic, it also appears worn and well used.

Light flickers in the buildings only window, a thin square of wooden shutters directly over the building's large double doors. The alleys to either side of the warehouse are cluttered and dark and the rickety walls of old deck planking turn both into dead ends. What passes for a street in this part of the city is paved in broken rocks worn smooth by constant passage, stones that now glisten because of recent rain.

The PCs may have no concrete reason to suspect that the caravan master they are here to speak with has any reason to be hostile. They do have reason to believe he could pose a danger if they think he was the one who used the summoning scroll against them, so they may be proceeding cautiously. Be sure to paraphrase the text below to best match how they approach the warehouse.

The Situation Inside – Round One (EL 10)

Taelic'ador has been slowly going mad for days now. Whisper's subtle mind tricks and coercion have left him a paranoid wreck, so much so that all but his most loyal employees have left for other, saner work. He is holed up here in his rented warehouse with every intention of getting out of Stormreach for good as soon as his chartered ship arrives at the wharf nearby.

Why the sudden need to leave? Whisper has him convinced that his recent finds in the jungle have earned him the enmity of other dealers in the city, people wealthy enough and vicious enough to hire assassins to kill him and take his goods.

On its own, this would be a recipe for conflict but Whisper has taken it one step further. After seeing the PCs and realizing they could actually pose a threat to her plans, she has returned to her merchant plaything

and implanted their appearances in his head. Now that he knows what his 'assassins' look like, he is like a loaded crossbow. The moment the PCs arrive, they will be recognized and attacked!

That said, if the PCs take actions that would prevent this scene from playing out that way, do not force a combat here. If they can be clever enough to circumvent this ambush, reward them for their ingenuity and work the scene into whatever they make of it. Taelic'ador is not an evil man; he has simply been pushed to the brink of his sanity and only wants to defend himself from what he honestly believes to be people out to murder him.

Strange Companions

Even for a city as cosmopolitan (some might say 'cluttered') as Stormreach, a band of drow bodyguards serving a Valenar elf is sure to get attention. Not much is known about why several battle-hardened drow would willingly serve such a master but their loyalty is seemingly without question and their efficiency at keeping him safe in the jungles of Xen'drik have become something of a local legend in Stormreach.

While many rumors about, the truth behind this odd bonding is something very mundane – a birthmark. During his capture by dark elves after his expedition party ran afoul of a patrol, Taelic'ador was saved from sacrifice by the birthmark on his left shoulder, a small dark red patch roughly in the shape of a scorpion. The high priestess of Vulkoor took this mark to mean he was blessed by their god and spared him. Debate among the tribe as to his worthiness led to the current situation. The drow with him are as much his keepers as they are his guards. They watch him constantly, looking for signs of Vulkoor's favor.

So far, they have been disappointed.

The following text assumes the PCs enter the warehouse and can be seen by Taelic'ador when they do so. If not, modify the description to account for their actions. The drow are scattered through the warehouse unless there is a reason for them to cluster. If there is, they will always surround Taelic'ador unless otherwise told to act by him.

Be absolutely certain to describe the drow using non-lethal force. Give the PCs every chance to deal with this encounter like heroes.

Leaning over a table, intently pouring over what appears to be a log book, a black haired elven man reacts quickly to the sound of your approach. He looks up, a mix of curiosity and concern in his eyes. Then he sees you and his expression changes instantly.

"Assassins!" He points your direction and shouts in raw, blind panic. "They are here to kill me! Stop them, stop them!"

From the shadows of the warehouse, there is the sudden glint of steel and the glimmer of magic.

Creatures: The drow here belong to the Blackgrasp tribe, dark elves normally found very deep in the jungles and rarely seen traveling outside their territory. They are not strictly evil but they have no compunctions about killing if they must. They start with non-lethal force as a matter of practicality; in Stormreach, killing can get their charge Taelic'ador in trouble. If attacked after the first round of combat with obvious intent to kill, they change their methods and will no longer fight to subdue.

Vexat and Kerax, shadow snipers; female drow rangers 2/fighter 2; hp 27; See Combat Statistics in Appendix.

Halash'aat, Priestess of Vulkoor; female drow cleric 7; hp 45; See Combat Statistics in Appendix.

Gaxva, firebringer; female drow sorcerer 7; hp 19; See Combat Statistics in Appendix.

Clickfire, Gaxva's pet: alchemy beetle; hp 21; See Combat Statistics in Appendix

Taelic'ador, Merchant Lord; male Valenar elf expert 3; hp 12; non-combatant.

Tactics: The snipers will use cover and concealment as long as possible, seeking to disrupt spellcasting and bring down 'soft' targets with boomerangs until they run out of them and have to join the fray. The priestess prefers to stay near Taelic'ador at all times (she considers him 'hers') and uses support spells whenever she is not directly defending him. Gaxva has her own opinions about who owns Taelic'ador and always tries to keep line of sight on him even when in combat. She limits herself to *ray of enfeeblement* unless the PCs shed blood. If this happens, Gaxva has no compunctions about unloading every fire spell she knows. It's just a city, after all. Who cares if it burns?

Development: If the PCs do not act recklessly here, this fight may not last very long. Something as simple as "We aren't assassins!" will plant enough doubt in Taelic'ador's mind that he orders the drow to hold their fire unless he is being directly threatened. Diplomacy works well here; Taelic'ador is a peaceful

man (even if his life is dominated by four drow women with very different ideas of who he belongs to) and if he can avoid bloodshed, he will.

If this fight does occur, the drow will show no mercy once they attacked with lethal force. Because this battle does not scale for party level, more powerful groups will simply have an easier time dealing with these drow. Taelic is a non-combatant and will surrender if his guards are cut down, wailing all the while about how sorry he is that he got the drow "into this". He will not beg for his life but he will say the following if given a chance:

"I hope you choke on the gold you were paid to do this! Those women were only trying to protect me, murderers! Ancestors be my witness, you'll suffer for what you've done."

It is an empty threat but it might help the PCs realize what a terrible mistake they have made.

Once the battle is over, for good or ill, the PCs will be able to speak with Taelic'ador. He does not have much to tell them since he has no knowledge of the scroll in question and did not have his guards purchase anything from Grave. He does know the man and has sold the necromancer a few death relics but he has never bought anything in return. Neither he nor any of his people had anything to do with this (that he knows of).

This line of questioning will attract Kerax' attention if she is alive and capable of speech. She approaches Taelic, whispers something to him and turns to the PCs unless they do something to prevent her from talking.

Lithe and lethal, the dark elven woman turns to face you, rouged lips parting in an unsteady voice. It is clear she only barely speaks your tongue but she is making an attempt to do so. "I may know something that can help," she says haltingly. "I lost a night. It may have been from drink but it may have not."

The PCs will have to work with Kerax to get the information she has for them. This is a great opportunity for roleplaying since she only speaks her native language with any real fluency. She understands common quite well; she just does not speak it clearly.

Once the PCs get past the language barrier (however they choose to do so), they can learn that Kerax was returning from a dockside bar a few blocks away when she became dizzy and took shelter in one of the buildings recently damaged by pirate attack. It was dark, quiet and offered deep shadows for a quick rest. She slept a lot longer than she meant to and woke up to the light of dawn. She did not think she was that intoxicated but she must have been.

What Kerax does not know is that Whisper is responsible for her passing out and her night-long nap. While she was unconscious, Whisper assumed her guise and purchased the scroll from Grave as a way of settling up a false trail for anyone clever enough to get this far.

Kerax will point out for the PCs where the building she passed out in can be found. She will make special note of it because while it seemed devastated and condemned on the outside, the inside was in fairly good shape and not as disused as it appeared. The PCs, short on leads now, will likely wish to examine it. That site can be found in Part Five: An Empty Lair.

The Situation Inside – Round Two (EL 10)

Now for the ironic part. Taelic'ador actually does have competitors willing to kill to put him out of business. One of them, an hobgoblin arms dealer named Rokath, has recently fallen on hard times because the old battlefields he usually hunt in have been picked clean by Taelic'ador's operations. Upset and cold-hearted, Rokath has paid a mercenary mage to call up an end to his woes. Through Whisper's subtle help, he has been able to find the resources and connections to make that happen.

As soon as the PCs are ready to leave, Rokath's assassin is ready to make its move. While the invisible stalker would prefer to have done this after the PCs slaughtered all of Taelic'ador's guards, it is still tasked to kill its target before its summoning time runs out. Thus, one way or another, it must strike now.

If the PCs are taking Taelic'ador with them or escorting him out of the building, the stalker strikes before he can leave the building, summoning aid before doing so to provide a distraction.

Once the PCs leave, regardless of how they left things in the warehouse, allow them a Listen check (DC 10). If everyone fails it, Taelic'ador is on his own and this part of the scenario ends. Otherwise:

A few steps away from the warehouse, a strange noise echoes from inside. Muffled and quick, it almost sounds like... choking!

Once the PCs get back inside, the situation will greatly depend on how they left things. If the one or more of the drow women are alive, they will be all be engaged in trying to prevent what appears to be Taelic'ador

slowly suffocating, hands at his throat, no assailant to be seen. If not, he is the same but there is no one to aid him. Either way, the invisible stalker has a plan for the PCs.

A writhing mass of shadows erupts from the ground in front of Taelic'ador. The darkness explodes into a howling, tenebrous void, resolving into a vicious, bladed shape of pure malice. Emerging from the dark rift, a spidery creature spreads its lethal limbs and attacks!

Foes: The invisible stalker is a bit of an aberration for its kind, a summoned killer that has taken so many lives and been around mortals for so long it has begun to see itself in a sentient light. It can speak Common though it rarely chooses to do so and it is capable of using magical items like the *bracelet of friends* it just activated to call in back up in the form of a bebilith.

Shhhhh'vrush, invisible slayer: improved invisible stalker; hp 60; *Monster Manual* 160 but is not a combatant. Shhhhh'vrush will be detailed in an upcoming adventure but for the time being, assume it to have sufficient defenses to weather several rounds of attack before being disincorporated.

Rrtychi: bebilith (demon); hp 150; *Monster Manual* 42.

Tactics: The bebilith is a straight-forward fighter with a myriad of tricks at its disposal. Called forth to support Shhhhh'vrush in its assassination attempt, Rrtychi delights in wholesale slaughter and will not hesitate to attack the PCs head on. It prefers to "shell" its foes, meaning it goes after opponents in armor first if possible. It saves warforged for last as there is no visceral pleasure in ripping them open.

Development: Shhhhh'vrush will not fight the PCs and only wants to toy with its victim and complete its mission. When the PCs start this fight, Taelic'ador is at 6 hit points and will lose 1 hit point at the end of each round from strangulation (assume the invisible stalker goes last in initiative order). He is not capable of breaking the stalker's hold and even if his drow guards are alive, they can do little to stop it from killing him before they bring it down.

This means the PCs have six rounds before Taelic'ador falls unconscious. Shhhhh'vrush will do nothing but relish the impending kill on the seventh round and on the either, it makes a coup de grace on the hapless merchant *unless* the drow are still present. If the PCs did not kill or incapacitate the drow, they will be able to save their master by finally doing enough damage to it to break its hold and banish it. This is a 'reward' for good play; the drow, having been spared by the PCs, are able to save Taelic'ador. His survival will net the PCs a considerable reward in gold and experience points.

If the PCs manage to drop the bebilith within seven rounds, Shhhhh'vrush will release its victim and flee, vanishing back from whence it came with a hostile whisper:

"This isn't over, heroes...."

The invisible stalker will also release its hold if a PC successfully hits it for 6 or points of damage from a magical weapon or a damaging spell effect its elemental immunities do not counter. This means the PCs can save Taelic'ador themselves if they focus on getting to him before the bebilith is defeated. Be sure the PCs know Taelic'ador is being strangled while they fight; they should have every opportunity to rescue him if they so choose.

Scaling the Encounter

This encounter is the climactic fight of the scenario, a race against time to save a dying man from a sudden and mysterious end. The battle should be a tough one, a true challenge for the PCs if at all possible. Use the following adjustments to scale the challenge accordingly.

11th-Level Characters: The bebilith appears with an active *haste* effect that lasts five rounds. Caster level for this spell (and others mentioned in this section) is 15.

12th-Level Characters: In addition to *haste*, the bebilith has a magical effect cast on it that adds a +1 to attack rolls and improves its critical threat range by +1 on its natural attacks (critical range is now 19-20, x2).

13th-Level Characters: In addition to the above two improvements, the bebilith also benefits from the spell *unholy aura*. This provides all of the spell's usual benefits and surrounds the bebilith in a dark, ghostly fire that could easily be mistaken for a 'nightmare manifestation'.

Once the battle is done and the hapless elven merchant either saved or doomed, the PCs will effectively be done here. Assuming he survived, considerate PCs might wish to get him to safety as there is every chance the assassin creature will try again. Taelic'ador will accept any help they wish to give, even so far as going back to Radiant Hold with them if they choose.

There is only one clue available in this section of the adventure – the location of the building where Kerax passed out for a night and apparently purchased a scroll of undead summoning without knowing about it. When the PCs follow up on this lead, assuming they get it at all, move to Part Five.

Part Five: An Empty Lair

This section of the adventure is relatively short, as the location's only source of danger has already fled. If the PCs get to this point, they have managed to track Whisper all the way back to her den, a feat she did not think them capable of performing. Knowing they are on their way (through her various means of surveillance), the Inspired spy had abandoned her perch...

...but she left behind a few accidental clues and one very intentional and deadly surprise.

Most of Stormreach shows the scars of its years of hard life. This area of the city is more recently wounded than most, many of its older buildings demolished during the pirate attacks a few months ago. Though many of these old derelict houses still shelter many families too poor to move elsewhere, this building seems to be well and truly abandoned.

Appearances are deceiving as Kerax may have told the PCs; this building is far better off inside than it looks. Since its near-destruction, the tenement has been Whisper's base of operations and hiding hole. Though she regrets having to abandon the place, she is comforted by the hope that her parting gift to the PCs will ensure they never trouble her again.

Let the PCs explore this location as thoroughly as they like, describing how run down and burned out it is in as much detail as you deem appropriate. Tell them about the charred wooden bones of half-consumed staircases and the smell of wet rot from decaying floorboards. Superimpose this with clues as to the reinforcement and repairs Whisper has done to the second floor. Once the PCs get the idea that someone has been living here and hiding that fact, you will be ready to spring Whisper's trap.

Make sure the PCs are aware of where they are and what they are doing when you are ready to have them discover the door to Whisper's room.

Though it does not look it at a distance, the only functional door on the second floor is in extremely good repair. Solid wood and fitted with steel, it is as solid as it is out of place in this ruin. A thin coat of ashen paint has been applied to keep the door from standing out but a closer reveals the truth – this door is brand new and heavily reinforced.

Treat the door as metal for the purposes of breaking it down, though doing so will automatically set off the trap listed below. Successfully picking the lock (Open Lock, DC 25) will also set off the trap unless it has been found and neutralized first.

Psychic Scream Trap: CR 10; psionic device; proximity trigger ([alarm](#)); automatic reset; psionic (spell) effect ([wall of the banshee](#), 17th-level [wizard](#), DC 23 [Fortitude save](#) negates); multiple targets (up to 17 creatures); [Search](#) DC 34; [Disable Device](#) DC 34. *This trap is actually a psionic effect but duplicates the mechanics of what is listed here.*

Once the trap wither goes off or is deactivated, the room can be entered and searched. If the PCs think to examine the trap, they will be able to discover its psionic nature by looking at the glowing shard at its core. Even PCs without ranks in skills appropriate to psionic devices will be seasoned enough as adventurers to recognize a psionic crystal when they see it.

Whisper's Chamber

Once the PCs are past the door, read or paraphrase the following to them:

The room beyond the heavy door is a meticulously kept bedroom with an oak dresser, night stand, brass hurricane lamp and a stuffed linen mattress with good quality heavy sheets. The dresser drawers are all pulled out and the footlocker near the bed is both open and empty. Whatever might have been here appears to be long gone.

Whisper had fled the scene, *teleporting* away and leaving behind very little to betray her identity. That said, the PCs can discover several things if they investigate thoroughly. The Investigate feat will prove very handy here, allowing all of the information below without the need for any skill checks with the single exception of the Psychic Trace. Otherwise, these skills will offer up some important clues.

Track (DC 20) will reveal enough signs of passage on the floor and in the bed to indicate a single female human occupant whose last presence in the room was less than an hour ago. No one else has been here in several weeks.

Knowledge (engineering) (DC 15) will show the PCs that this room has been reinforced after the pirate attack and would be capable of withstanding a serious assault if need be. Hardwood lines the walls, the door has recessed, heavy hinges and a thick deadbolt. There are no windows. If the skill check meets or exceeds DC 20, it will also be noted that the door could only have been locked from within; whoever locked it should still be in the room.

Search (DC 10) will find a few strands of long black hair in the bed and another near the dresser. It is also obvious that someone has gone to great effort to gather all such personal evidence from the room. If the skill check meets or exceeds DC 20, another object is found behind the dresser – a six sided coin. This item exactly matches the one described in the CVN-1 story object “A Six Sided Enigma”.

Any PC taking the time to search this room will also smell the same perfume from the corner of the old man’s room in Part Two. It is Whisper’s one true vice, a rare blend of scents only found in Sarlona. The concentration of smell here is strong enough and exotic enough that any PC with Craft (alchemy) or Profession (herbalist) will recognize this fact automatically.

The Psychic Trace

Psionic PCs (any PC with psionic abilities due to feats, class abilities or racial traits) will also glean a clue from this apartment. In one corner of the room, there is a 5’ by 5’ section of flooring that ‘feels’ strange. Any psionic PC who moves into this area gets the following thought and vision:

“I have failed. They will not be pleased.”

The corner of the room shimmers away, distances and obstacles becoming irrelevant to one trained in powers of the mind. Instead of drab, wood-plated walls, there is a dark sky line, a city surrounded by stone and a huge curve-sided monolith. It watches. It beckons. It inspires.

And the world dissolves as you answer its call.

The vision ends there with the PCs involved feeling a wrenching sense of vertigo. They are seeing Whisper’s last moments in this room, *teleporting* back to Sarlona to report to her superiors.

These clues are all the PCs are going to get here. The trail ends in this room; there is no present way to follow Whisper where she has gone. They can, however, take hope in the fact that their efforts have proven that the Nightmare Lord is not involved and that someone powerful but mortal is behind the plot. That done, Lady Savya can be easily convinced to start retracting her predictions. Proceed to the Adventure Conclusion when the PCs are ready.

Ending the Adventure

One way or another, the PCs should end up back at Radiant Hold with their information in tow and disaster averted at least for now. This ending assumes success on the part of the PCs, further assuming that they were not brash or heavy handed and comported themselves well while in Stormreach.

If any of these assumptions are in error, modify the ending accordingly.

Under Korvin’s watchful eye, you have recanted the particulars of your mission to Lord Corvalis. With each word, his expression has grown more severe. Even the revelation that the vile fiend responsible for his nightmares is not behind this plot does little to relieve him.

“It would seem you have all had a very full night, my friends,” he says quietly once you are through. “I would almost have rather the dark dreamer was involved. At least that is a villain we know. This,” he says as he gestures to the notes he was taking as you spoke, “all suggests we have a new foe, one we could not even recognize if we passed on the street.”

Folding his hands over the parchment, Lord Corvalis looks up at you from behind his massive desk. “Still, the dire fate Lady Savya was weaving for us seems to have come unraveled and for that? I am very grateful. The Covenant is again in your debt, a trend I am all too happy to continue seeing.”

He rises and extends his hand in gratitude. “We have much to do if we are to restore the Covenant’s good name. Thank you one and all for starting us down the path.”

And with that, here ends **Fate, Interrupted**.

Adventure Questions

- 1. Which best describes the apparent attitude of the PCs toward their mission during the scenario?**
 - a) The PCs were totally professional and seemed genuinely interested in upholding the faction's goals during the mission.
 - b) The PCs were motivated but seemed to be more interested in rewards than in serving the common good or their faction's needs.
 - c) Aside from the desire to earn experience and get another mission "over with", the PCs did not seem to have any motivation at all.
 - d) They were completely disinterested and had no desire to perform this task at all.
- 2. Did the PCs constantly monitor their surroundings during the mission for clues and leads?**
 - a) If there was a hidden coin under an alley rock, the PCs would have found it.
 - b) They maintained a strong vigilance but there were things they could have found and did not (such as the Wail of the Banshee trap or the six-sided coin).
 - c) The PCs only found things that snuck up and hit them in the face.
- 3. Did the PCs behave professionally and courteously with Lady Savya?**
 - a) They did. The PCs were every inch the paragons of Light they are expected to be.
 - b) There were a few harsh words or hostile moves but for the most part things were calm.
 - c) The PCs were rude and self-serving, alienating Savya as a contact for the Covenant while managing to get what they were after.
 - d) Either by choice or by poor behavior, the PCs were unable to get anything useful from Savya.
- 4. How did the PCs handle themselves regarding Dal?**
 - a) Constantly heroic, constantly maintaining their morals and good alignments, the PCs handled themselves admirably and defeated the dire wraith without serious losses.
 - b) Things got ugly in places but the PCs handled themselves well. (Use this option if the PCs managed to defeat the wraith or get their information from Dal but not both.)
 - c) The PCs were unable to get to or past this step; Dal either took her information to the grave or the PCs were unable to get her to divulge it to them *and* they lost to the wraith.
- 5. How did the PCs deal with Taelic'ador?**
 - a) As paragons of Light and virtue, the PCs showed restraint and everyone lived through the encounter without significant injury.
 - b) The ambush claimed at least one drow casualty but the fighting stopped and Taelic'ador was convinced to be cooperative.
 - c) The PCs killed or incapacitated everyone and showed no mercy even when they were being attack non-lethally. If they got anything from Taelic'ador it was through force or threat only.
 - d) Taelic'ador died, either by PC hands or from the actions of the invisible stalker afterwards (this result trumps the others. Even if the PCs succeeded at their mission here, Taelic's death requires that you answer "d" here.)
- 6. What was the outcome of the PCs' investigation?**
 - a) Lady Savya was convinced to retract her predictions, Dal was found and healed, Taelic'ador was rescued from his own paranoia and the stranger's room was successfully searched for clues.
 - b) As "a" but one element was incomplete.
 - c) As "a" but two elements are missing.
 - d) The investigation was a complete failure aside from the PCs meeting with Savya in the beginning.
- 7. How would you rate the group's roleplaying?**
 - a) Exemplary! Everyone was in character and having a grand time.
 - b) Good! Most of the Players were enjoying themselves and acting in character.
 - c) Decent. There was some in-character action but not a considerable amount.
 - d) None! The game was little more than tactical decisions and dice rolling.

Story Objects

"Fortune's Favor: For Every Light" (Story Code: EXCL29)

You have received a message of hope in the language of Light itself, a fortune that will only reveal itself when the time is right. Until then, you carry the blessing of all that is Good, a powerful boon for a hero such as you.

Until this story object is negated by a future event or object in the campaign, you gain +1 hit point of effect on any healing spell or item you use. This bonus is added to the total done and is not per die.

"Fortune's Favor: There is a Darkness" (Story Code: EXCL30)

You have received a message of tragedy in the language of violence itself, a bloody fortune that will only reveal itself when the time is right. Until then, you carry the knowledge of your own mortality, a powerful blessing for those wise enough to understand its terrible meaning.

Until this story object is negated by a future event or object in the campaign, you can act normally at 0 hit points and do not lose a hit point for doing so. You also automatically stabilize during any round where you are -5 or better. Conversely, you cannot stabilize if you are at -6 or worse without outside aid or healing magic.

Player Handout One:

Xandrin,

Since this analysis was a private matter and not for public record, I hope you'll allow me to dispense with the usual formalities of a full report. I am running low on bleached parchment anyway, so this will save us both a lot of time and needless paperwork.

I will still give you full disclosure though, adding everything I have found during my most interesting examination of the body. This one was not quite as much fun as the demon body I played with last month but it had its appeal. One thing though, before I start the report. Could you please stop sending me letters by celestial messengers? It is very bad for my reputation. People find out I am soft on you Lighters and I will lose a lot of my clientele. All right?

All right, back to business.

Kendrick ir'Kavnos, the subject was a human male, thirty six by the birth date on his identification papers, in relatively good physical health. Height, weight and muscle mass all within average range for his British nationality. Aside from the fact that he was extremely dead, the subject was in excellent condition.

The subject was found tangled in his own bed sheets at his place of residence. Evidence on the body suggests the tangling was done through nocturnal motion during sleep. Subject was unclothed and physically unharmed when he went to sleep and the scene supports the supposition that he was in no form of distress when he retired for the night.

Cause of death is a combination of factors. Foremost cause is heart attack and vascular rupture. The skin of the subject is livid and blotchy, centered mostly over the chest and at the temples. Facial expression and overall damage to the blood vessels of the subject are compliant with cardiac arrest brought on by an intense fear reaction.

A secondary cause of death, likely a contribution factor to the fatal heart attack, is the severe damage done to the life force energy of the subject by necromantic means. Specific source of the drain is impossible to determine at this time.

As requested, the subject was contacted post-mortem and asked for details about his demise. The questions asked and his responses are listed below.

Question: What is the last thing you remember?

Answer: I was tired. So tired. All I could think about was sleep. The bed was soft. My eyes were heavy.

Question: Who killed you?

Answer: The nightmare. The nightmare reached into me! So dark. So cold.

Question: Why did you withdraw your support from the Covenant of Light?

Answer: I was afraid. Afraid of what she told me. Afraid to die.

Question: Who is she?

Answer: The Lady of the Eye. She saw this coming.

Unfortunately, the connection was lost before I could clarify or ask anything else. This concludes my report. Your friend was frightened to death by something that literally fed off his life. Perhaps undead, though there is no way for me to be sure.

If this is related to the necromantic instabilities that have been plaguing this city for several months and I discover the link, I will be sure to send you an update or ask for your aid. I will probably send the letter by something all dark and evil looking. Maybe spewing blood or chanting unholy things.

That should work.

Grave

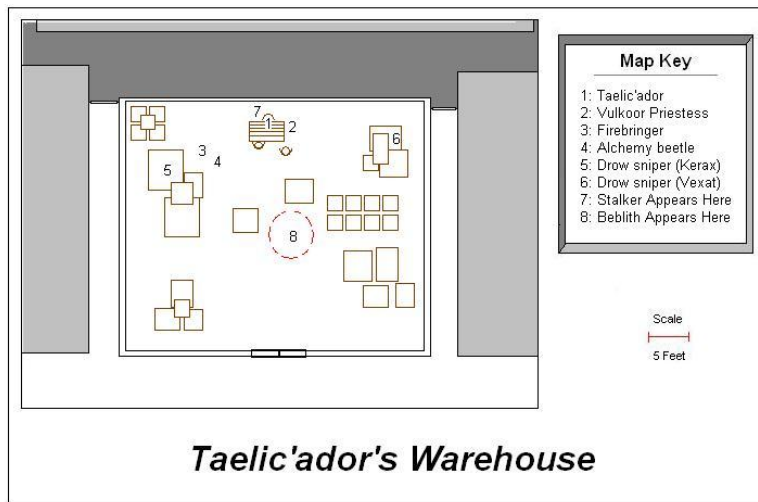
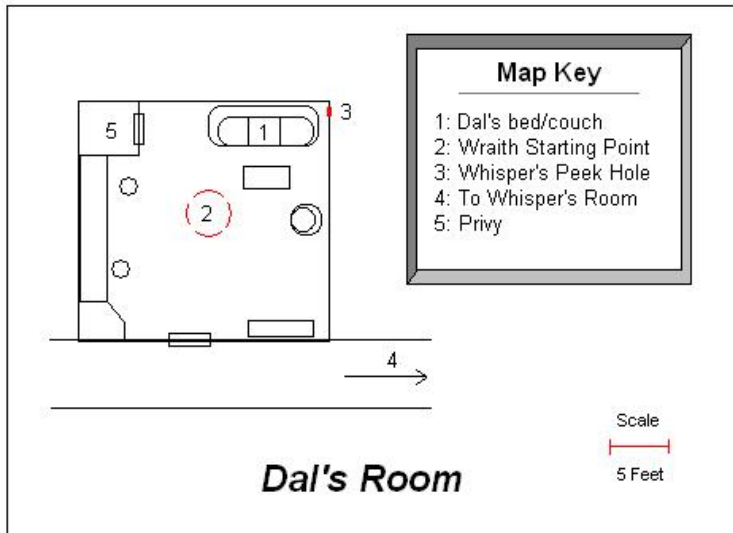
Player Handout Two:



Player Handout Three:



Appendix One: Maps



Appendix One: Combat Statistics

Combat Statistics

DROW FIREBRINGER

CR 8

Drow sorcerer 7
NE Medium humanoid (elf)
Init +3; Senses darkvision 120 ft.; Listen +4, Spot +5
Languages Common, Draconic, Drow, Drow Sign Language, Giant, empathic link
AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 16
(+3 Dex, +4 armor, +1 deflection, +1 natural)
hp 19 (7 HD)
Immune sleep
SR 18
Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +8 (+10 against spells and spell-like abilities)
Weakness light blindness
Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee mkw dagger +3 (1d4–1/19–20)
Ranged mkw dagger +7 (1d4–1/19–20)
Base Atk +3; Grp +2
Combat Gear 2 *potions of cure light wounds*, scroll of *wall of fire* (CL 7th, DC 16), *wand of scorching ray* (+6 ranged touch, CL 3rd, 20 charges)
Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 7th):
3rd (5/day)—*fireball* (DC 17), *haste*
2nd (7/day)—*bear's endurance*, *invisibility*, *scorching ray* (+6 ranged touch)
1st (7/day)—*burning hands* (DC 15), *expeditious retreat*, *mage armor*, *magic weapon*, *ray of enfeeblement* (+6 ranged touch)
0 (6/day)—*acid splash* (+6 ranged touch), *daze* (DC 14), *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 14), *mage hand*, *message*, *read magic*
† Already cast
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th):
1/day—*acid splash* (+6 ranged touch, CL 1st), *dancing lights*, *darkness*, *detect poison* (CL 1st), *faerie fire*, *pass without trace* (CL 1st)
Abilities Str 8, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 18
SQ able to notice secret or concealed doors, familiar, share spells
Feats Alertness* (if familiar within 5 ft.), Skill Focus (Profession (mining)), Combat Casting, Silent Spell
Skills Concentration +10, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Listen +4, Spellcraft +1, Profession (mining) +8, Search +3, Spot +5
Possessions combat gear plus 2 masterwork daggers, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *ring of protection* +1

Combat Statistics

DROW SHAMAN

CR 8

Drow cleric 7
CE Medium humanoid (elf)
Init +2; Senses darkvision 120 ft.; Listen +5, Spot +5
Languages Common, Drow, Drow Sign Language, Giant
AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15
(+2 Dex, +5 armor)
hp 42 (7 HD)
Immune sleep
SR 18
Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +9 (+11 against spells and spell-like abilities)
Weakness light blindness
Speed 20 ft. in scorpion breastplate (4 squares); base speed 30 ft.
Melee +1 *drow scorpion chain* +8 (1d6+2/19–20)
Ranged dart +8 (1d4+1)
Base Atk +5; Grp +6
Atk Options Drow Skirmisher, smite 1/day (+4 attack, +7 damage)
Special Actions rebuke undead 4/day (+3, 2d6+8, 7th)
Combat Gear scroll of *deeper darkness* (CL 5th), scroll of *poison* (CL 7th, DC 16), *wand of cure light wounds* (CL 1st, 50 charges)
Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 7th):
4th—*divine power*^D, *poison* (+6 melee touch, DC 17)
3rd—*cure serious wounds*, *dispel magic*, *magic vestment*^D, *prayer*
2nd—*bear's strength*, *cure moderate wounds*, *shatter*^D (DC 15), *sound burst* (DC 15), *spiritual weapon*
1st—*bless*, *cure light wounds* (2), *magic weapon*^D, *obscuring mist*, *shield of faith*
0—*create water*, *cure minor wounds* (2), *detect magic*, *purify food and drink*, *read magic*
D: Domain spell. Deity: Vulkoor. Domains: Destruction, War.
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th):
1/day—*dancing lights*, *darkness*, *faerie fire*
Abilities Str 13, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 12
Feats Combat Casting, Drow Skirmisher*, Weapon Focus (dart), Weapon Focus (drow scorpion chain)⁸
*New feat described in Chapter 5
Skills Concentration +11, Heal +8, Knowledge (religion) +5, Listen +5, Search +5, Spot +5
Possessions combat gear plus +1 *scorpion breastplate**, +1 *drow scorpion chain**, 8 darts, *cloak of resistance* +1, *pearl of power* (1st-level spell), silver holy symbol of Vulkoor

ALCHEMY BEETLE

What at first glance appeared to be an enormous insect is actually some sort of construct. A black iron exoskeleton holds a glass hemisphere churning with a molten green liquid. Smoke rises where the construct's mandibles drip this liquid to the ground.

ALCHEMY BEETLE

CR 2

Always N Small construct
Init +0; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +0, Spot +0
AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 15
(+1 size, +4 natural)
hp 21 (2 HD)
Immune construct immunities
Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +2
Speed 40 ft. (8 squares)
Melee bite +4 (1d3+1 plus 1d6 energy damage) and 2 claws—2 each (1d4)
Space 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.
Base Atk +1; Grp –2
Atk Options alchemical bite
Special Actions alchemical blast
Abilities Str 13, Dex 10, Con —, Int —, Wis 14, Cha 8
SQ construct traits
Feats Weapon Focus (bite)⁸
Skills Hide +4, Jump +5, Listen +0, Spot +0
Advancement 3–6 HD (Medium); 7–12 HD (Large)
Alchemical Bite (Ex) An alchemy beetle's bite deals an extra 1d6 points of damage of a type determined by the alchemical fluid it holds (acid, cold, electricity, or fire).
Alchemy beetles can deliver roughly 100 bites before running out of fluid. The giants knew the secret of refilling the beetles, but no record of the process currently exists.
Alchemical Blast (Ex) When an alchemy beetle is reduced to 0 hit points, it explodes in a 10-foot-radius burst. Any creature in the area must succeed on a DC 11 Reflex save or take 3d6 points of damage of a type determined by the fluid the beetle holds. A successful save results in half damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.
An alchemy beetle whose fluid supply has been exhausted deals no damage when it explodes.

Combat Statistics

DROW RAIDER

CR 5

Drow ranger 2/fighter 2
NE Medium humanoid (elf)
Init +4; Senses darkvision 120 ft.; Listen +8, Spot +8
Languages Common, Drow, Drow Sign Language, Giant
AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 13
(+4 Dex, +3 armor)
hp 27 (4 HD)
Immune sleep
SR 15
Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +1 (+3 against spells and spell-like abilities)
Weakness light blindness
Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee mkw drow long knife +10 (1d6+1/19–20) or
Melee mkw drow long knife +8 (1d6+1/19–20) and
mkw drow long knife +8 (1d6/19–20)
Ranged mkw Xen'drik boomerang +9 (1d6+1)
Base Atk +4; Grp +5
Atk Options Drow Skirmisher*, favored enemy giants +2
Combat Gear *potions of bull's strength*, 2 *potions of cure light wounds*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th):
1/day—*acid splash* (+8 ranged touch, CL 1st), *dancing lights*, *darkness*, *detect poison* (CL 1st), *faerie fire*, *pass without trace* (CL 1st)
Abilities Str 13, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 10
SQ wild empathy +2 (–2 magical beasts)
Feats Blessed of Vulkoor*, Drow Skirmisher*, Track*, Two-Weapon Fighting*, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (drow long knife)⁸
*New feat described in Chapter 5
Skills Climb +8, Hide +10, Knowledge (geography) +6, Listen +8, Move Silently +11, Search +3, Spot +8, Survival +7 (+9 to avoid getting lost, avoid hazards)
Possessions combat gear plus +1 *chitin armor**, 2 masterwork drow long knives*, 3 masterwork Xen'drik boomerangs
*New armor and weapons described in Chapter 5

Appendix Three: Rule Items

New Feats (From Secrets of Xen'drik)

BLESSED OF VULKOOR [RACIAL]

A scorpion-shaped birthmark denotes you as one of the chosen of Vulkoor.

Prerequisites: Drow, region of origin Xen'drik.

Benefits: You gain extra spell-like abilities and an affinity for scorpions, the deity's favored children. As a blessed of Vulkoor, you gain the following spell-like abilities as a 1st-level caster: 1/day—*acid splash*, *detect poison*, *pass without trace*.

If you have the ability to summon a familiar, you can choose to gain a Tiny monstrous scorpion in addition to the list of available options.

If you have an animal companion, you can add the following creatures to the list of available options: 1st level—Small or Medium monstrous scorpion; 4th level—Large monstrous scorpion; 10th level—Huge monstrous scorpion. If you have the wild empathy ability, you can treat scorpions as animals for the purpose of that ability.

Special: Unlike most feats, this feat must be taken at 1st level during character creation.

DROW SCORPION WARRIOR [RACIAL, TACTICAL]

Your study of the ways of the scorpion grants you special tactics.

Prerequisite: Drow, Drow Skirmisher, base attack bonus +4, region of origin Xen'drik.

Benefit: The Drow Scorpion Warrior feat enables the use of three tactical maneuvers.

Deadly Sting: To use this maneuver, you must score a critical hit with either a drow long knife or a drow scorpion chain (both on page 137) against a living creature. Your next attack against the same target with the same weapon (which must be made before the end of your next turn) gains a +2 bonus on the attack roll and deals 1d4 points of Constitution damage in addition to the normal damage dealt.

Lunging Sting: To use this maneuver, you must make a charge attack with a drow scorpion chain against a foe. If you hit, that opponent takes a –2 penalty on attack rolls against you until the start of your next turn.

Rending Sting: To use this maneuver, you must hit the same target with two different drow long knives in the same round. In the next round, you deal an additional 1d4 points of damage with your drow long knife attacks against that target.

DROW SKIRMISHER [RACIAL]

Your experience with the guerrilla-style combat of the deep jungle grants you mastery of the weapons of the drow.

Prerequisites: Drow, region of origin Xen'drik.

Benefit: You treat the Xen'drik boomerang (*ECS* 119), the drow scorpion chain, and the drow long knife (both on page 137) as martial weapons. You gain a +1 bonus on damage rolls when making an attack with a drow long knife or a drow scorpion chain as long as you have moved more than 5 feet under your own power during the round in which you make the attack. For example, being pushed 10 feet by a bull rush attack isn't sufficient to grant you the extra damage from this feat.

If you have any of the following feats for the dagger or short sword, you can apply the feats' effects to the drow long knife: Improved Critical, Weapon Focus, Weapon Specialization, Greater Weapon Focus, or Greater Weapon Specialization. If you have any of the same feats for the spiked chain, you can apply the feats' effects to the drow scorpion chain.

Additionally, when you spend 1 action point to influence an attack roll made with either a Xen'drik boomerang, drow scorpion chain, or drow long knife, you also add the result of the action point roll to your damage for that attack.

New Weapons and Armor (From Secrets of Xen'drik)

| Armor | Cost | Armor Bonus | Maximum Dex Bonus | Armor Check Penalty | Arcane Spell Failure Chance | —Speed— (30 ft.) (20 ft.) | Weight |
|----------------------|--------|-------------|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|--------|
| <i>Light Armor</i> | | | | | | | |
| Chitin armor | 20 gp | +2 | +7 | –1 | 5% | 30 ft. 20 ft. | 10 lb. |
| <i>Medium Armor</i> | | | | | | | |
| Scorpion breastplate | 300 gp | +4 | +4 | –3 | 20% | 20 ft. 15 ft. | 20 lb. |

| Exotic Weapons | Cost | Dmg (S) | Dmg (M) | Critical | Range Increment | Weight ¹ | Type |
|----------------------------------|-------|---------|---------|----------|-----------------|---------------------|----------|
| <i>Light Melee Weapons</i> | | | | | | | |
| Drow long knife | 15 gp | 1d4 | 1d6 | 19–20/×2 | 10 ft. | 2 lb. | Piercing |
| Scorpion claw gauntlet | 40 gp | 1d4 | 1d6 | ×2 | — | 6 lb. | Slashing |
| <i>Two-Handed Melee Weapons</i> | | | | | | | |
| Drow scorpion chain ² | 25 gp | 1d4 | 1d6 | 19–20/×2 | — | 3 lb. | Slashing |

¹ Weight figures are for Medium weapons. A Small weapon weighs half as much, and a Large weapon weighs twice as much.

² Reach weapon.

Chitin Armor: The drow of Xen'drik have perfected a method of harvesting chitin plates from monstrous scorpions, which are then finished with cloth and hide. Lightweight chitin armor consists of a few chitin plates protecting the shoulders, head, and abdomen, supplemented by bone at the forearm and shin.

Scorpion Breastplate: This armor resembles chitin armor, but adds a sturdy breastplate crafted from a monstrous scorpion's abdominal carapace, and a helmet assembled from chitin plates.

Chain, Drow Scorpion: A drow scorpion chain resembles a regular spiked chain in many respects, but it is slightly longer than a normal spiked chain and features a daggerlike blade at each end. The drow of Xen'drik have perfected the use of the weapon to harass larger enemies such as giants, or as a poison-delivery weapon against less hardy foes. The weapon takes its name from the technique of holding a length of chain behind the back and then flipping it over the head to strike a foe; drow warriors often open combat with this strike.

A drow scorpion chain has reach, so you can strike opponents 10 feet away with it. In addition, unlike most other weapons with reach, it can be used against an adjacent foe.

Because the chain can wrap around an enemy's leg or other limb, you can make trip attacks with it. If you are tripped during your own trip attempt, you can drop the chain to avoid being tripped.

When using a drow scorpion chain, you get a +2 bonus on opposed attack rolls made to disarm an opponent (including the roll to avoid being disarmed if such an attempt fails).

You can use the Weapon Finesse feat (PH 102) to apply your Dexterity modifier instead of your Strength modifier to attack rolls with a drow scorpion chain sized for you, even though it isn't a light weapon.

Most drow who wield the drow scorpion chain take the Drow Skirmisher feat (see page 134), but other characters who take Exotic Weapon Proficiency, Weapon Focus, or Weapon Specialization for either the spiked chain or drow scorpion chain can apply the effects of those feats to attacks with either weapon.

Gauntlets, Scorpion Claw: Made from the claws of Large monstrous scorpions, these gauntlets are usually sold in pairs. In combat, you can use scorpion claw gauntlets to slice opponents open with deadly efficiency. When wearing two scorpion claw gauntlets, you get a +2 bonus on grapple checks made to deal damage to your opponent. On a successful check, you deal the weapon's normal damage rather than nonlethal damage for an unarmed strike.

Knife, Drow Long: The drow long knife is a slender blade resembling a short sword in length and weight, but balanced for throwing like a dagger or smaller blade. Featuring a haft and guard often constructed of a dream serpent's fangs, the long knife's design makes the weapon more difficult to wield than a normal dagger, but makes it far more deadly in the hands of a skilled user.

Most drow who wield the drow long knife take the Drow Skirmisher feat (see page 134), but other characters who take Exotic Weapon Proficiency (drow long knife) can apply the benefit of Weapon Focus (dagger) or Weapon Specialization (dagger) to their attacks with a drow long knife.