



TALES OF A FALLEN CITY: THE DEMONS OF LUSKAN

An original D&D 5e adventure
For 6th-level characters
By Nick Glunt



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ABOUT THIS ADVENTURE

The lawless pirate city of Luskan has fallen under attack by swarms of demons and undead. It's up to the adventurers to find out what's causing the attack and put a stop to it. This adventure is heavy on exploration and combat. The player characters must traverse the city in search of clues to find out what happened in the city while combating the threats that populate its streets.

FEATURES

This adventure includes several exciting features for your players to confront.

FOCUS ON EXPLORATION

The biggest part of this adventure involves exploring the city of Luskan. There are nine sectors of the city, each with four or more distinct areas to encounter.

SOLVE A MYSTERY

The city of Luskan has fallen, but no one is quite sure why. Guide your players as they unravel the mystery — and fall victim to the red herrings along the way.

DAY-NIGHT CYCLE

Time plays an important factor in this adventure. Hour by hour, you'll track what your players do. When night comes, they'd better find shelter from the monsters that roam the city's streets.

DEMONS AND UNDEAD

The main foes in this adventure are both demons and undead creatures. They're allied together as servants of a demon lord.

CUSTOM, PERSONAL CHALLENGES

You'll create the ending challenge for the adventurers based on the questionable choices they've made in previous adventures. If your players are class gray-area adventurers, this is the adventure for you.

Author's Notes

- You'll find notes like this one throughout this book. These author's notes are meant to provide you with extra information about characters, places, and events.
- Read over these notes carefully and pay attention to them as your players advance through the adventure in this book.
- Occasionally, this book will reference the D&D 5e sourcebooks, rather than listing information easily obtained in those books. *PHB* refers to the *Player's Handbook*, *MM* refers to the *Monster Manual*, *DMG* refers to the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, *VGM* refers to *Volo's Guide to Monsters*, and *XGE* refers to *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*.

CALL TO ADVENTURE

The player characters can learn of the happenings in Luskan in several ways. Here are some suggestions:

- The PCs hear about the attack on the city from refugees who escaped. There's no call for adventurers, but the PCs learn that the city is ripe for looting.
- The PCs hear rumor that the Seven Sails Inn in the Luskan's East Sector has treasure hidden in the walls. When the city was populated, it was unlikely they could find it – but with the city in ruins, the treasure is no longer protected.
- The PCs are tasked by a shady contact of rescuing their friend, Arumn Gardpeck, who runs the Cutlass tavern in the city's Southwest Sector.
- The PCs have a friend in the Order of the Gauntlet who believes Commander Tarhuun is acting cowardly by not sending more of his soldiers into the city. The friend asks the PCs to solve the problem where Tarhuun cannot.

WHAT HAPPENED IN LUSKAN

A few months ago, a cult that worshipped Orcus, demon lord of the undead, discovered a forgotten relic from Orcus' long history as a mortal, demon lord, and god. The relic, known as the Orcusgate, had the power to summon demons that kill everyone who refused to follow the will of Orcus and animate their corpses as his servants.

While delivering the device from the north to Neverwinter, where the cult operated and intended to activate the device, the ship traveling with the device came under attack by pirates from Luskan. The pirates overpowered the cultists and took everything aboard – including the Orcusgate, though no one knew what it was. Ship Kurth, the most powerful pirate gang in the city, kept the relic and the rest of their plunder in the manor that was their base of operations.

Upon learning of the pirates' theft, the cult – in its entirety – migrated north to Luskan to take back what was theirs. This drew the

attention of the Order of the Gauntlet, which followed.

The cult laid waste to the city by raising minor undead creatures. Many residents fled before it got worse, but many also stayed behind in the belief that someone would rescue them. Eventually, the cult found the relic in Tower Kurth and activated it. What they didn't know was it would kill all of them, save for the cultmaster who turned it on. Though the device granted the lone survivor control of the demons and the undead they raised, it also placed her absolutely under Orcus' control.

Outside the manor, the demons called by the Orcusgate slaughtered the denizens of the city and raised them as ghouls and ghosts. Those creatures spread out from there, killing and devouring the dead. The demons, ghouls, and ghosts quickly took over the city. Few managed to get out alive. No one knew what was really happening in the city.

The Order of the Gauntlet, also unaware of what was really happening in the city, set up posts at all the city's exits to stop the demons and undead creatures from spreading. They tried to send soldiers into the city to rescue survivors, but few soldiers returned. Those that did reported they faced resistance from the city's denizens, most of whom were criminals and miscreants.

Instead, Commander Tarhuun ordered his soldiers to maintain a watchful vigil, refusing entry to any who attempted to visit the town either by road or sea. It's been that way ever since. Until the player characters arrive, that is.

MAJOR PLAYERS

Several groups of characters lay claim to Luskan. Some protect it, while others seek to exploit it or watch it burn. Most aren't powerful anymore – and are unlikely to regain footing now that the city has fallen.

THE CULT OF ORCUS

The main villains of the adventure, their actions caused the end of Luskan. They took up residence in Tower Kurth after they arrived, but only the **cultmaster** remains alive. The rest of the cult died with their corpses reanimated as servants on the tower's top level.

THE ORDER OF THE GAUNTLET

The Order of the Gauntlet followed the Cult of Orcus to the city and likely believes the cult is to blame – and they’re right. The Order is likely the first group the PCs will encounter. They’re led by **Commander Tarhuun**. They’ve sent several bands of soldiers into the city, but few or none have returned. As a result, they’re simply trying to stop the undead and demons from escaping the city — but they’re not actually venturing inside.

THE GANGS OF LUSKAN

Five gangs used to control the city of Luskan. Known as the “ships,” they each laid claim to a different criminal enterprise. **Ship Kurth** was most powerful, controlling the navy and therefore had sole raiding rights. **Ship Baram** was second, controlling the fishing industry and therefore the well-being of the city’s populace. **Ship Suljack** was third, operating as a guild of assassins and mercenaries. Fourth was **Ship Taerl**, which worked as cleaners and fixers for the more powerful ships. Fifth was **Ship Rethnor**, which controlled nothing; it did the odd jobs that Ship Taerl viewed as too menial even for them. Other gangs also existed, such as the **Coinspinners** and the **Dead Rats**, but they were not nearly as powerful as the rest.

THE ARCANE BROTHERHOOD

A secretive band of powerful wizards who controlled much of Luskan in secret. None of the Arcane Brotherhood remain in the city, but their influence is ever-present.

THE PEOPLE OF LUSKAN

Luskan was a diverse city before its fall. Most of the people are dead or have fled, but some still survive. Notably, there are refugees hiding in certain locations — many of whom tried to leave, but were forced back into the city by the Order of the Gauntlet because they were criminals and not to be trusted.

THE ADVENTURE

ARRIVING IN LUSKAN

If the PCs arrive by ship, they dock at Whitesails Harbor. If they arrive by horse from the south, they approach the South Gate. If they arrive by horse from the north, they approach the North Gate or the Cliffside Cranny.

Regardless of where they arrive, they find the entrances to the city under the control of the Order of the Gauntlet's, so it is safe. About a hundred soldiers of the order stand at each gate. The PCs meet Tarhuun, the order's commander, who is a proud dragonborn man and devotee to Bahamut. He explains the situation — the city's occupants somehow have become ghouls who are trying to escape the city, and the order has set up camps at all the city's gates to stop them. He then asks why the PCs are there.

Regardless of their answer, he explains that he cannot allow them to enter. He has no idea what has caused the people of Luskan to become ghouls, and his soldiers who have gone in to investigate the city have not returned. If the PCs offer to search, he forbids it. He can't have them putting themselves in danger. He tells them they can aid in the defense of the city's gates, if they want to help; otherwise, they should leave.

GETTING INTO LUSKAN

Allow the PCs to decide how to proceed. They can sneak their way in, fight their way in, bribe their way in. It's up to them. Do not guide them too much; answer their questions, but let them guide the story at this point.

EXPLORING LUSKAN

Once the PCs get into the city proper, they realize how big Luskan is. The City of Sails once housed 16,000 people — that's a pretty big city for the time — though recently, it's closer to 4,000 because of its shift to crime and general lawlessness. Combine the size of the city with the fact that much of it is in ruins, and they'll realize it takes a lot of time to travel through it. Play up the ruin left in the city in order to get this point across to them as soon as possible.



NINE SECTORS

I cannot provide a map of Luskan due to copyright constraints, but there are many available online for you to view. Go ahead and search the internet for a map of Luskan. You'll see **Whitesails Harbor** in the northwest, the **South Gate** near the center of the south wall, and the **North Gate** across the bridge east of the north wall. There's also **Cliffside Cranny**, which is not visible on maps but is located toward the center of the north wall.

Each of these gates is a "**place of interest**" in a "**sector**" of the city. I've divided the city into nine sectors with four places of interest each. It will take the PCs some time to travel between sectors, and it also takes time to search the places of interest for clues to what's happened in the city. I've detailed each of the sectors and places of interest later in this book.

TRACKING TIME

This adventure is uncommon among D&D stories because time plays a major factor in the game. The PCs might not realize it at first, but they're on a time constraint because the final boss gets stronger the longer it takes the PCs to confront them.

It takes **one hour** to travel from one sector to an adjacent sector. You can see a breakdown of which sectors are adjacent to each other in the sections that follow. It's a logical setup, except that the Northwest and West sectors aren't adjacent because there's no bridge connecting them on any of the maps of Luskan.

Use a sheet of scratch paper as you play to track time. Keep the PCs informed of what time it is as you move through the game.

DAYLIGHT HOURS

Time is also important in this adventure because it's not safe to travel at night. The PCs might not realize this on their first night in Luskan, but they'll catch on quickly.

The daylight hours vary based on the month. If you'd rather just use a season, look over the season listings to get an idea of when the sun rises and sets in Luskan. For reference, here's a breakdown of daylight hours in Luskan based on months and seasons. (It's based on the real-life daylight hours for Ohio.)

Month	Season	Daylight Hours
Hammer (January)	Winter	8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Alturiak (February)	Winter	7 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Ches (March)	Spring	7 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Tarsahk (April)	Spring	6 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Mirtul (May)	Spring	5 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Kythorn (June)	Summer	5 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Flamerule (July)	Summer	5 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Eleasis (August)	Summer	5 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Eleint (September)	Autumn	5 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Marpenoth (October)	Autumn	7 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Uktar (November)	Autumn	7 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Nightal (December)	Winter	8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

STORY EVENTS AT DUSK

To ease the storytelling in this adventure, story events only occur at dusk. In-game, this is because the Orcusgate, located in Tower Kurth and under the control of the necromancer,

activates when the sun sets each day. Each time it activates, its power spreads and begins to make Luskan a haven for the undead and demons in the city.

DUSK 1: PALPABLE FEAR

At dusk on the first day, the Orcusgate has finally absorbed enough souls to put the necromancer's plan into motion. As this happens, a deep feeling of dread spreads suddenly through the city and lasts only a few moments. **Every living being feels it.** Some people yelp or even scream, and others' teeth start chatter. Birds and small mammals scurry away from the city. Horses whinny and rear onto their hindlegs in fear.

Starting now, the PCs use a **d12 for dawn rolls** before each dawn.

DUSK 3: DARKENING SUN

At dusk on the third day, the sun seems to set faster than it usually does. When the PCs look to the horizon, they see the sun is still setting — but it's surrounded by a violet haze.

This haze is only visible in Luskan, and it makes it as if **the sun sets an hour earlier and rises an hour later every day.** This effect lasts indefinitely. On this day, the PCs spend one hour as if they were moving after sunset in order to get to safety. See the rules for traveling at night later in this section.

Starting now, the PCs use a **d10 for dawn rolls** before each dawn.

DUSK 6: DEMONIC CACKLING

At dusk on the sixth day, the haze around the sun grows even darker, making it so **the sun sets two hours earlier than normal and rises two hours later than normal.** This effect lasts indefinitely. Like with the first time this happened, the PCs spend an hour traveling at night to get to shelter.

In addition, as the sun grows darker, every person in the city hears deep, **demonic laughter** spread through the streets. Everyone who hears it can tell what direction it came from, but not the specific origin sector or place of interest. Since the laughter came from Tower Kurth in the West Sector, a character in the

Northwest Sector would know they heard the laughter come from the south, but that's all. The only exception is characters in the West Sector, who hear the sound come from nearby. They know the sound came from the West Sector, but they don't know which place of interest. The PCs can question NPCs they meet in the city about from what direction they heard the demonic laughter come. This should give them a strong clue about where to look.

Starting now, the PCs use a **d8 for dawn rolls** before each dawn.

DUSK 10: LIGHT OF DARKNESS

The final story event that occurs in the city happens at dusk on the tenth day. On this day, the sun darkens even more — making it so **dusk comes three hours earlier and dawn comes three hours later than normal**. Just like the previous two times this has happened, the PCs must spend an hour as if they

In addition, **demonic laughter** once again spreads through the city, this time as a **bright purple light bursts from the roof of Tower Kurth**. This alerts the PCs that the tower is the place they're looking for.

Starting now, the PCs use a **d6 for dawn rolls** before each dawn.

DAWN ROLLS

Starting after the first dusk event, the PCs must make a dawn roll shortly before dawn each morning. This roll determines the horror that happens that night. In story terms, the event might happen at any time over the course of the night.

The die the PCs use for dawn rolls depends on how much power the Orcusgate has gained. At first, the PCs will roll a d12, and the die will slowly drop to a d6 as dusks occur. PCs gain a **bonus to dawn rolls based on shelter** they take. The PCs earn a generic +2 bonus for taking shelter in a random house or business, but the bonus can get as high as +10 for taking shelter in the various places of interest.

TRAVELING AT NIGHT

The PCs will learn very quickly that it's not safe to travel at night with so much danger lurking about. If the PCs are caught outside

after dusk, roll on the danger table for each hour that passes.

Take each hour one at a time. It's very likely that the PCs will face combat, which will get the point across: The streets of Luskan weren't safe before the invasion, and they're even less safe now. The PCs should avoid traveling at night at all costs. This will make the dusk events that make dusk come sooner and dawn come later all the more dire.

THE DANGER TABLE

Some of the results on the danger table, which is below, are combat events. Others are more flavor-based and present a challenge the PCs must overcome for the day. Here's a list of the dawn roll results:

Dawn roll	Dawn Event
2 or less	Undead Horde
3-4	Ghast Patrol
5-6	Ghoul Troop
7	Ghoul Stragglers
8	Dogs of War
9	Quasit Sentries
10	Living Shadows
11	Hallucinations
12	Hearing Voices
13	Dark Omen
14	Trembling Anxiety
15	Silenced by Terror
16-19	Unsettling Safety
20 or more	Divine Intervention

UNDEAD HORDE

The PCs attract the notice of a massive horde of undead monsters — the reanimated and hungry corpses of the people who lived in Luskan before the invasion. The PCs face a combat encounter with ghouls and ghouls unless they can avoid it through clever role-playing.

This encounter is deadly difficulty, pitting the PCs against ghouls (*MM pg. 148*) equal to half the number of PCs (rounded down) and ghouls (also *MM pg. 148*) equal to twice the number of PCs. Play up the danger and horror of this encounter to prompt the PCs to flee and find shelter against the horde.

GHAST PATROL

The PCs stumble upon an elite band of undead. They face a combat encounter with ghosts unless they can avoid it through clever role-playing.

If they fight, they encounter ghosts (*MM pg. 148*) equal 1.5 times the number of PCs (rounded down). This fight is of hard difficulty.

GHOUL TROOP

A standard group of undead monsters tracks the PCs in search of their flesh. They face a combat encounter with the undead unless they can avoid it through clever role-playing.

The fight is against a single ghost (*MM pg. 148*) and ghouls (also *MM pg. 148*) equal to twice the number of PCs. This fight is of hard difficulty.

GHOUL STRAGGLERS

The PCs come upon a small group of ghouls that are an even match. The PCs face combat encounter with ghouls unless they can avoid it through clever role-playing.

If they fight, it's against ghouls (*MM pg. 148*) equal to 1.5 times the number of PCs (rounded down). This is a fight of medium difficulty.



DOGS OF WAR

The PCs hear howling and heavy footsteps, like drumbeats. The dogs that appear are not natural: They're demonic. The PCs face a combat encounter with hell hounds unless they can avoid it through clever role-playing.

The fight is against hell hounds (*MM pg. 182*) equal to one plus half the number of PCs (rounded down). It is of medium difficulty.

QUASIT SENTRIES

The PCs hear the beating and wings and look up above to see bat-like creatures with demonic appearances flying above them. The creatures swoop down when they notice the PCs. The PCs face a combat encounter with quasits unless they can avoid it through clever role-playing.

They face quasits (*MM pg. 63*) equal to 1.5 times the number of PCs (rounded down). This is a fight of medium difficulty.

LIVING SHADOWS

All around the PCs, the shadows begin to stir on their own. The PCs face a combat encounter with shadow demons unless they can avoid it through clever role-playing. It's possible the demons will get a surprise round. Try to make that happen.

The fight they face is against shadow demons (*MM pg. 64*) equal to half the number of PCs (rounded down).

HALLUCINATIONS

One (or more) of the PCs experiences vivid hallucinations. Each of the PCs makes an Intelligence saving throw; those immune to being charmed should not roll. The PC(s) with the lowest result starts to experience vivid, unsettling hallucinations that seem real and distract them from reality.

Starting at dawn and lasting until the next dawn, the PC has disadvantage on all ability checks. Whenever they fail a check while under this effect, ask them to describe what hallucination blocked their success.

HEARING VOICES

One (or more) of the PCs starts hearing voices, leading them to paranoia. Each of the PCs makes a Wisdom saving throw; those immune to being charmed should not roll. The

PC(s) with the lowest result hears a voice in their mind that sounds like their own but casts doubt and sows chaos wherever possible.

Starting at dawn and lasting until the next dawn, the PC has disadvantage on Wisdom and Charisma checks. Whenever they fail a Wisdom or Charisma check while under this effect, ask them to describe what the voice told them.

DARK OMEN

One (or more) of the PCs experiences a deep delusion. Each of the PCs makes a Wisdom saving throw; those immune to being charmed should not roll. The PC(s) with the lowest result is the “seer,” who sees an omen foretelling the death of the PC with the highest Wisdom score (on a tie, the DM picks one of them), who is “doomed.”

Starting at dawn and lasting until the next dawn, the seer has disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws when the doomed PC is more than 30 feet from them. Ask the seer to explain the omen they believe they witnessed.

TREMBLING ANXIETY

The reality of their situation begins to sink in for the PCs. Each of them makes a Wisdom saving throw; those immune to being charmed should not roll.

Starting at dawn and lasting until the next dawn, the PC(s) with the lowest result suffers from uncontrollable tics and tremors. They suffer disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws involving Strength or Dexterity. Ask them to explain what left them feeling so anxious.

SILENCED BY TERROR

The PCs have nightmares so terrible that they go mute. Each PCs makes a Wisdom saving throw; those immune to being frightened and those who don't sleep should not roll.

Starting at dawn and lasting until the next dawn, the PC(s) with the lowest result cannot speak. Ask them what they saw that scared them so much.

UNSETTLING SAFETY

The PCs can hear and maybe even see undead and demons in the city, but the PCs go unnoticed through the night.

DIVINE INTERVENTION

The PC(s) with the highest Wisdom score experience a vision of a shining angel who appears where they're resting. The angel offers to protect the PCs while they put a stop to the undead and demonic threat.

All the PCs get inspiration. In addition, starting at dawn and lasting until the next dawn, the one(s) who saw the vision have advantage on saving throws.

NORTHWEST SECTOR

The Northwest Sector is the harbor district. Aside from the harbor, the PCs will find taverns and a warehouse filled with trade goods.

The Northwest Sector is only adjacent to the North Sector. (Though logically it would also have adjacency to the West Sector, there is no bridge across the River Mirar connecting the Northwest and West sectors.)

Places of Interest: The Calling Conch, the Mirabar Warehouses, One-Eyed Jax, and Whitesails Harbor.

THE CALLING CONCH

Shelter Bonus: +4 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: One hour

A small tavern near the docks that served ale and chowder — and it still smells that way. It has been picked clean of supplies.

Searching the Calling Conch reveals a locked safe. The lock's difficulty is DC 12. The safe contains a velvet pouch filled with 2d6 gems (such as carnelian, chrysoprase, jasper, moonstone, onyx, and star rose quartz) worth 50 gp each. It also has 500 sp and 5,000 cp in coins, and a ledger revealing the tavern secretly doubled as the base of Ship Rethnor — one of the five most powerful gangs of the city.

Ship Rethnor was the weakest of the Ships and engaged in almost nothing worthwhile. The more powerful Ships assigned Rethnor to guard duty at the docks, which was a poor source of income. Rethnor thugs would take to the streets to mug passersby to make up for lost income.

THE MIRABAR WAREHOUSES

Shelter Bonus: +0 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: Three hours

The Mirabar District was an expansive lot of warehouses used by the merchants of Mirabar, a very wealthy mining city located about 120 miles inland, up the River Mirar. Companies that operated in Luskan included Anvilfist Banner, the Golden Hand, and Thalorin's Manymetals.

Searching the many warehouses uncovers a ghoulish nest, where the undead seek shelter from the sun. The PCs can try to avoid combat; if

they fail, they face a hard combat encounter (as if they encountered the Ghoul Troop dawn event).

Through searching, they also find 1d100 barrels of iron that was shipped to Luskan for transportation down the Sword Coast before the invasion. Each 70-pound barrel contains 1,800 pounds of iron, worth 180 gp if traded to an interested merchant or blacksmith. (For convenience, say they weigh one ton each.) Most merchants and blacksmiths won't buy more than a barrel at a time. The PCs can try to find a way to transport the barrels through the debris-strewn streets; it usually takes a group of five characters three hours to get a barrel to any of the protected entrances.

ONE-EYED JAX

Shelter Bonus: +4 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: Two hours

A medium-sized inn and tavern. It was owned and operated publicly by Ship Kurth, the most powerful gang in the city. It was a reliable inn for foreigners visiting the city and was also popular among the city's drow.

Searching the inn reveals nothing of substance — it's already been looted — but does turn up a journal on a woman's corpse that details the city's final days.

Penned by a barkeep named Serena, it details her disdain for Ship Kurth after it failed to respond to calls for help from the tavern's loyal workers. Their failure to act ultimately resulted in the tavern's demise. (DM's note: Ship Kurth didn't respond because its people were among the first people killed by the cult, since Ship Kurth looted the Orcusgate from a cult ship during a raid.)



WHITESAILS HARBOR

Shelter Bonus: +10 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: One hour

Luskan's only harbor still in operation, it was used almost exclusively by the Luskan navy — who were little more than pirates under Ship Kurth's control. Thugs from Ship Rethnor (the weakest of the Ships) guarded the docks. It was once a very dangerous place, but under the Order of the Gauntlet's control, it is one of the safest.

Searching reveals the harbor has been picked clean. Only fishing supplies (poles, bait, tackle, tridents, and nets) remain.

NORTH SECTOR

The North Sector was largely a district that people passed through but rarely stopped. It's a shame, too: The North Sector had one of the best views of the River Mirar.

The North Sector is adjacent to the Northwest, Northeast, and Central sectors.

Places of Interest: The Cliffside Cranny, Harbor Cross, Red Dragon Trading Post, and the Throat.

THE CLIFFSIDE CRANNY

Shelter Bonus: +10 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: One hour

A hole in Luskan's wall created by an earthquake decades ago. The cranny served as an unofficial city gate, albeit to the most desirable of Luskan's decidedly undesirable denizens. Like all the city's exits, it is heavily guarded by Order of the Gauntlet troops.

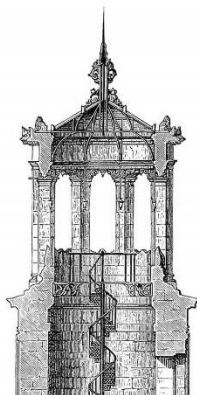
Searching this place turns up no useful items or valuables. It does, though, reveal evidence that lots of people escaped through this gap before the Order blocked it off.

HARBOR CROSS

Shelter Bonus: +0 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: Two hours to search

The city's western-most bridge over the River Mirar. It is actually two bridges connected in the center by a small landmass called Blood Island. Before the city's fall, it was Luskan's most-crossed bridge because it connected the northern bank near the docks with the market on the southern bank. Now it is desolate, save for bones picked clean by ghouls and broken merchant carriages.



Searching the bridge reveals 3d10 x 100 sp in loose change and a nest of ghouls and demons taking shelter under the bridge during the day. At the next dawn, the PCs have disadvantage on their dawn roll as the ghouls and demons hunt for them.

RED DRAGON TRADING POST

Shelter Bonus: +8 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: One hour

A successful caravan guard company that was known to hire mercenaries and fledgling adventurers. Everyone knew they paid in gold and potions of healing.

Searching this post reveals nothing of value except for a sturdy safe with a DC 15 lock. The safe contains 3d4 x 10 gp and 1d6 red potions that glimmer when agitated (which are potions of healing).

THE THROAT

Shelter Bonus: +0 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: One hour

Once the city's main water tower, it was heavily guarded so no one could tamper with the city's drinking water. It was situated in a grazing area for sheep. It was widely regarded as one of the most dangerous places in the city.

Searching this tower reveals an intricate spider painted recently on the water tower's backside with a message written in Elvish (by a drow). The message reads: "Behold! We are Lolth's chosen." Another Elvish message in a different script reads: "Then why do the dead still come for us?"

Also, the water tower is a tall structure. From the top, you have a clear view of the other tall structures and their locations (the four spires of the Host Tower of the Arcane, the Lighthouse, and the tall limestone Tower Kurth in the West Sector; the small Needle water tower and the white stone columns of the Winter Palace in the East Sector; and the Twin Teeth military watchtowers at the South Gate in the Southeast Sector).

NORTHEAST SECTOR

The Northeast Sector is marked by its position as one of the city's exits. As the only official exit to the north, it was widely walked — though not as much as the area surrounding the South Gate, since there's more civilization in that direction.

The Northeast Sector is adjacent to the North and East sectors.

Places of Interest: Baliver's House of Horses, Dalath's Span, Fort Taerl, and the North Gate.

BALIVER'S HOUSE OF HORSES

Shelter Bonus: +2 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: Two hours

A series of paddocks and sheds at the south end of the Upstream Span, this stable was the first place anyone saw when coming into the city from the north. It was the only rental stable in Luskan, and it was protected by the Arcane Brotherhood.

Searching this place reveals one of the sheds was actually a home, presumably where Baliver and his family lived. In the kitchen, beneath a rug, is a trapdoor locked from the inside. The PCs don't know it, but Baliver and his family are still alive, hunkered down under the trapdoor with food, water, and other supplies. They will not answer knocks at the



door, and they turn hostile if disturbed. Baliver, his wife, and their teenage son and daughter are all apprentice mages, and they fight to protect their hiding place.

Another of Baliver's children — a young girl named Meena — is hiding there too, but she doesn't fight. Depending on how the PCs approach her, she might agree to go with them or she might flee into the city on her own.

Regardless, the space under the trapdoor has no valuables. However, the PCs can hide under the trapdoor to get a +8 bonus to dawn rolls, instead of the +2 bonus this place usually provides.

DALATH'S SPAN

Shelter Bonus: +0 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: One hour

The city's central bridge across the River Mirar. It was the least-traveled bridge — meaning it was left mostly alone during the attempted mass evacuation that followed the undead attack. As a result, it's now the easiest bridge to cross, as there are no obstructions.

Searching the bridge reveals a symbol on the south side of the bridge. Harpers and those who know Thieves' Cant recognize the symbol as pointing toward a Harper cache. The cache, which is an underwater net with a waterproof chest inside, contains a blood red potion that shines when shook (a potion of greater healing); a dense, purple potion that lets off a cloud of pink vapor (a potion of mind reading); and a translucent potion with what appears to be a very large fingernail floating in it (a potion of hill giant's strength).

It also contains a note on parchment reading: "My Friend— The Arcane Brotherhood keeps too many secrets. I lifted these from one of their alchemists. It's only fitting we use them to learn their agenda. —A Friend"

FORT TAERL

Shelter Bonus: +6 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: Two hours

An old stone fort built during a battle long forgotten. A tattered banner hangs outside marking it as Ship Taerl's base of operations. Ship Taerl was the second-weakest of the five major gangs of Luskan. It had no specific

criminal operation, instead working as a jack-of-all-trades gang of cleaners and fixers that took menial jobs from the stronger Ships.

Searching the fort reveals nothing valuable — it's been picked clean by looters. However, call for each of them to attempt a Wisdom (Perception) check. On a 20 or better, the PCs find a secret and long-undisturbed chamber containing five beautifully painted, centuries-old portraits. The mahogany-framed portraits depict the five high captains (the founders of Luskan's five Ships, or strongest criminal gangs) with labels showing their names as Kurth, Baram, Suljack, Taerl, and Rethnor. Each portrait is an art object worth 100 gp.

Affixed to a plaque beneath Taerl's portrait, which depicts him with a crossbow, is a +1 magic hand crossbow — likely the same one.

NORTH GATE

Shelter Bonus: +10 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: Two hours

A long bridge over the River Mirar called the Upstream Span opens up onto the city's northern gate. For most of Luskan's history, this gate was guarded by up to 30 armed soldiers and an Arcane Brotherhood wizard.

Today, the bridge and gate are evidence of the people's attempted flight from there city. Carriages are crammed together, with the smell of rot clear on the air. It's likely the undead attacked people in their lined-up carriages as they tried to escape the city. Outside the gate on the north end stands an Order of the Gauntlet camp that marks the area as safe.

Searching the bridge and gate reveals loot among the carriages: 2d10 family heirlooms worth 10 gp, 3d6 art objects worth 25 gp, and coinpurses with a combined total of 1d100 gp, 1d100 sp, and 1d100 cp.

WEST SECTOR

The West Sector is easily the most influential district in the city. It holds the headquarters of both Ship Kurth and the Arcane Brotherhood. It's also the goal of the PCs because Orcusgate — which is causing all the problems in Luskan — is housed in Tower Kurth under the control of a necromancer.

The West Sector is adjacent to the Central and Southwest sectors. (Despite the logical assumption, there is no bridge across the River Mirar between the Northwest to West sectors.)

Places of Interest: The Host Tower of the Arcane, the Lighthouse, the Ruins of Illusk, and Tower Kurth.

HOST TOWER OF THE ARCANE

Shelter Bonus: +8 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: Three hours

A huge, four-spired tower that looms over the city's west side, near the sea. It's one of the first structures anyone sees upon approaching. It was home to the Arcane Brotherhood, a mercantile company and wizards' guild with significant influence over the city's politics.

The tower functioned as a combination of academy for magical training and a base for the Brotherhood's mysterious activities. The Brotherhood's goal was political and economic control of the north. The tower has always radiated an aura of magic that people found so unnerving that they avoided looking at it — let alone approaching it.

Searching the base of the tower reveals it is a dense building that will take much longer than originally thought to search; the PCs will have to search the four spires separately. There is nothing valuable, but it looks like the tower has gone without looting. There is evidence of magical activity that spellcasters will recognize as attempting to combat the demonic and undead presence in the city.

Also, the base of the tower and each of the four spires are tall structures. From the top, you have a clear view of the other tall structures and their locations (the massive Throat water tower in the North sector; the Lighthouse and the tall limestone Tower Kurth in the West Sector; the small Needle water

tower and the white stone columns of the Winter Palace in the East Sector; and the Twin Teeth military watchtowers at the South Gate in the Southeast Sector).

NORTH SPIRE

Shelter Bonus: +8 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: Three hours

This entire spire is decorated with the Brotherhood's symbol: a reddish—brown warship on dark waves beneath a purple—black land and a silhouette of the Host Tower. This spire was apparently used to house business records, hold meeting with important people about economic prospects, and provide private suites to the Brotherhood's archmages and other high-ranking officials.

Searching this spire reveals no people and few signs of violence. There are no valuables. However, there are records that indicate the Brotherhood was using divination magic to spy on shipments coming to and from the city. Shortly before the undead and demon invasion, Ship Kurth brought in a huge score of loot after raiding a passing cargo ship, which was flying an unfamiliar flag — one depicting a mace with a human skull at its tip. The Brotherhood's high-ranking officials seemed understandably disturbed by this and ordered its scholars to research the symbol.

EAST SPIRE

Shelter Bonus: +8 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: Three hours

This tower was a place of rest. It has dozens of dormitories and meditation chambers.

Searching this area reveals no people or valuables, but there's evidence that people were in a rush to leave the tower as quickly as possible. They grabbed their things and fled, seemingly weeks ago considering the light dust that covers many of the surfaces here.

SOUTH SPIRE

Shelter Bonus: +8 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: Three hours

This tower appeared to be the academic tower, where apprentices would attend lectures and consult the Brotherhood's vast

libraries. There were also several private chambers for high-ranking scholars and instructors.

Searching this tower reveals no treasure or people, but does reveal some of the recent research performed by the Brotherhood scholars. They had been researching a demon lord called Orcus, who presided over the undead. Orcus was once mortal and, like many wicked people, became a weak larva. Unlike many, he rose the ranks over an ungodly amount of time until he was a demon lord. Over his long existences, Orcus has fathered many mortal children, killed a few gods, and been killed several times – but he always returns, sometimes even stronger than before. Many cults are known to worship him. His symbol is a mace topped with a human skull.

WEST SPIRE

Shelter Bonus: +8 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: Three hours

This tower is filled with personal laboratories and group ritual chambers.

Searching the spire reveals no people. However, there are some potions in a few of the alchemy labs – a number of black—and—silver potions (potions of necrotic resistance) equal to half the number of PCs, a clear potion with a bead of red that continuously expands to color the whole potion before contracting (a potion of growth), and a blue potion that bubbles and steams as if it is boiling (a potion of heroism).

In addition, the PCs find a message scrawled on a wall in one of the ritual chambers reading, simply, “This place is lost. Find us in Baldur’s Gate at the Arklem Fraternity.”

THE LIGHTHOUSE

Shelter Bonus: +6 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: Two hours

A tall sandstone lighthouse that juts out of the rock near the shore. It is distant from the rest of the city, so it is likely more safe than other places.

Searching the lighthouse reveals a group of 3d10 petty thieves — refugees from unfair treatment by the law in other settlements — have taken up residence in the lighthouse’s

basement to stay safe and watch each other’s back. They welcome the PCs with open arms and offer firsthand accounts of the destruction that ensued.

They are all human, and they believe the drow followers of Lolth in the city’s South Sector are to blame for Luskan’s destruction. They offer the PCs a sum of 300 gp if they eliminate the priestess of Lolth at the temple.

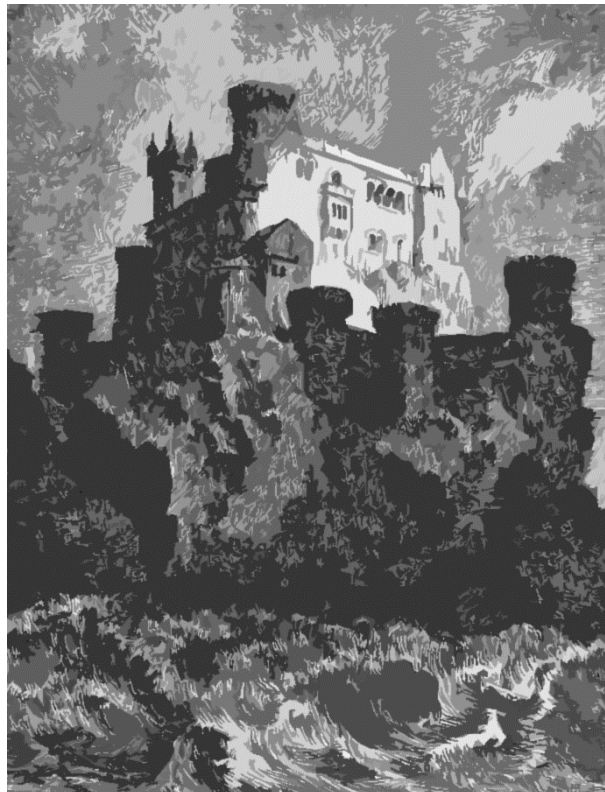
Also, this is a tall structure. From the top, you have a clear view of the other tall structures and their locations (the massive Throat water tower in the North sector; the four spires of the Host Tower of the Arcane and the tall limestone Tower Kurth in the West Sector; the small Needle water tower and the white stone columns of the Winter Palace in the East Sector; and the Twin Teeth military watchtowers at the South Gate in the Southeast Sector).

RUINS OF ILLUSK

Shelter Bonus: +0 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: Two hours

A haunted space that few visit, these crumbled walls and moss-grown statues are the only evidence that Luskan blossomed from



another city's destruction. Most people stayed away from the ruins because wandering undead — the restless spirits from the city of Illusk — were rumored to attack passersby long before ghouls infested the city's streets. Underground passageways in the ruins once held the secret headquarters of Bregan D'aerthe, a powerful mercenary company.

Searching the ruins reveals the underground passageways are now the daytime resting place for hell hounds, which start a combat encounter with the PCs. This is the same as Dogs of War dawn roll encounter.

TOWER KURTH

Shelter Bonus: +8 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: N/A (see below)

Situated on Closeguard Island, which is connected to the rest of Luskan by a small bridge, the Tower Kurth is a tall limestone building. For story reasons, it is a number of floors tall equal to 2 + the number of PCs.

When searched, see the "Climbing the Tower Kurth" later in this book. Also, this is a tall structure.

From the top of Tower Kurth, you have a clear view of the other tall structures and their locations (the massive Throat water tower in the North sector; the four spires of the Host Tower of the Arcane and the Lighthouse in the West Sector; the small Needle water tower and the white stone columns of the Winter Palace in the East Sector; and the Twin Teeth military watchtowers at the South Gate in the Southeast Sector).

CENTRAL SECTOR

The Central Sector is the merchant district. It's home to a market, a temple, and a tavern. Because so many sectors can get to it easily, it's become very dangerous after the invasion.

The Central Sector is the most accessible of the sectors. It is adjacent to the North, West, East, and South sectors.

Places of Interest: The Clearlight, the Drowned Rat, the Market, and the Prisoner's Carnival.

THE CLEARLIGHT

Shelter Bonus: +4 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: Two hours

A run-down temple to Tymora, goddess of luck. It was named for a large stained glass window in the roof, which has since been shattered. In its prime, the temple was used by the Coin Spinners gang as its base of operations because they liked the coin motif – the symbol of Tymora. The Coin Spinners' main work was organizing fights to the death in the Prisoners' Carnival Arena.

When the PCs search the temple, they find the backrooms booby-trapped. Each of them must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to spot the traps; those who fail must attempt a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw. Those who fail the save take 1d6 bludgeoning damage as they fall 10 feet, plus 2d10 piercing damage as they land on spikes at the bottom.

Afterward, the PCs find a small stockpile of silvered weapons. The silver-plated weapons include a longsword, a warhammer, a battleaxe, a rapier, and a quiver of 10 arrows. The PCs might not know it, but the Coin Spinners and the Dead Rats — who used to be allies — were at war when the undead and demonic invasion began.

THE DROWNED RAT

Shelter Bonus: +2 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: One hour

A decrepit tavern that served as the base of operations for the notorious Dead Rats gang. They were an active thieves' guild in Luskan and Neverwinter. The Dead Rats were most known for having wererats in their ranks.

Searching the tavern reveals some of the wererats and their non-wererat leader have taken shelter there, and they fight to protect their base. The fight is against a master thief (*XGE pg. 216*) and wererats (*MM pg. 209*) equal to half the number of PCs (rounded down).

Even in human form, wererats have rat-like features and smell of the sewer. Wererats are the only lycanthropic race that actively seeks to increase their numbers, so they will try to infect the PCs with their lycanthropy.

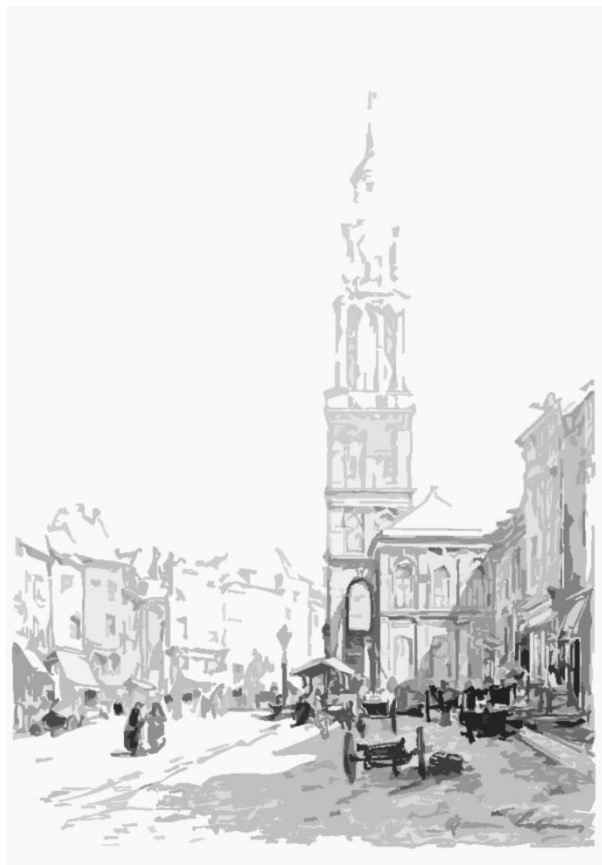
After the fight, the PCs find loot from the activities of the thieves' guild. The loot includes chests filled with 2,000 cp, 1,000 sp, and 100 gp, and 3d6 gemstones (such as carnelian, chalcedony, chryoprase, jasper, onyx, quartz, sardonyx, and zircon) — each worth 50 gp.

THE MARKET

Shelter Bonus: +4 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: Three hours

Luskan's market is the most open space in the city. It used to be the busiest place in the city too, but the open and thus unprotected space has made the few survivors wary of



visiting it — even though it has so many supplies the looters couldn't get to.

Searching the market draws the attention of a vrock and its minions that have made this open space this territory. Start a combat encounter with a vrock (*MM pg.64*) and quasits (*MM pg. 63*) equal to the number of PCs.

Afterward, the PCs find money left behind by merchants (totaling 2,500 cp, 1,500 sp, and 500 gp). They can also spend an hour searching the disheveled market to find a specific object commonly found at markets, such as a day's worth of food and clean water, a crafting tool, a common weapon, or an arcane implement.

PRISONERS' CARNIVAL

Shelter Bonus: +2 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: One hour to search

A mostly outdoor "court of justice" near the market that was really just a place for cruel people to watch cruel acts of violence. Those accused of crimes in this anarchistic city were executed publicly or made to battle one another to the death in the Arena, which was run by the Coin Spinners gang. Today, it's been looted and left uninhabited.

Searching the carnival reveals piles of Coin Spinner bodies drained of blood in the halls under the Arena, where combatants were kept in cells until their fights. As the PCs near the bodies, grub-like insects burst from inside and begin to crawl toward them as a fly-like demon appears.

The PCs enter a combat encounter with the monster and its larvae. The battle is against a chasme (*MM pg. 57*) and a number of swarms of its larvae equal to the number of PCs. (Use the swarm of rot grubs stat block on *XGE pg. 208* to represent the larvae; simply change them to chaotic evil fiends (demons) instead.) Note that the fight is close quarters, so the larvae are likely to reach the PCs despite their low speed.

After the fight, the PCs can search the bodies of the dead Coin Spinners to obtain 1d100 gp.

EAST SECTOR

The East Sector was a district where few lived, but many visited. It had one of the city's two water towers, two temples, and the city's most popular inn.

The East Sector is adjacent to the Northeast, Central, and Southeast sectors.

Places of Interest: The Needle, Seven Sails Inn, a Temple to Selûne, and the Winter Palace.

THE NEEDLE

Shelter Bonus: +0 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: One hour

Luskan's secondary water tower was used for weekly flushes of the sewer system and as a source of water when fires broke out. It was more of a landmark than anything else.

Searching this tower reveals an intricate spider painted recently on the water tower's backside with a message in Elvish (by a drow). The message reads: "Lolth did not raise the dead, but she keeps the drow safe from them." Another Elvish message in a different script reads: "You call it safety, I call it captivity."

Also, this is a tall structure. From the top, you have a clear view of the other tall structures and their locations (the massive Throat water tower in the North sector; the four spires of the Host Tower of the Arcane, the Lighthouse, and the tall limestone Tower Kurth in the West Sector; the white stone columns of the Winter Palace in the East Sector; and the Twin Teeth military watchtowers at the South Gate in the Southeast Sector).

SEVEN SAILS INN

Shelter Bonus: +6 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: Two hours to search

An inn with an architecture that resembled a giant shark's fin, the Seven Sails was the only inn of Luskan that was more inn than tavern. In its prime, the Arcane Brotherhood kept a close eye on this inn. Its interior was luxurious, offering fine furniture, hot baths, and plentiful food and alcohol. Legend said a pirate named Shargul hid a hoard of gems in the walls, guarded by skeletal hands – but the place was always too packed to search discreetly.

Searching the inn reveals the place was heavily looted during the invasion. Have the PCs attempt a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check; if they succeed, they find a loose panel in the wall of the high-ceilinged lobby. The wall reveals a small stone chest decorated on its flat top with a pair of skeletal hands holding a plaque that reads: "With more of me, the more you'd weigh; when seas rise and fall, praise me and Selûne. To win my contents, my name you should say — but know when you do, the ground does betray." The answer is "gravity."

When the PCs say the word, the chest unlocks and swings open — but it also casts reverse gravity with one side of the cylinder of effect centered on it and the other side directly above it. This causes the PCs and furniture — including the chest and its contents — to fall upward 40 feet to the ceiling, causing them all 4d6 bludgeoning damage when they collide. The spell ends after a minute, causing everything to fall back down to the ground for another 4d6 damage, unless the PCs come up with a way to mitigate the harm.

The chest contains a total of 13 black pearls worth 500 gp each, but a number of them shatter (equal to half the damage the PCs suffered, rounded down) when they hit the gravity-altered ceiling. A number of them shatter again (using the same calculation) when they hit the true ground after the spell reverses (unless the PCs gather the ones that aren't broken while they're still on the ceiling).

TEMPLE TO SELÛNE

Shelter Bonus: +2 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: One hour to search

A modest temple with a statue of Selûne at its center. A temple to a good goddess like Selûne might seem to some to be an odd addition to Luskan, but her presence in the city was palpable. Also known as Our Lady of Silver, the Moonmaiden, and the Night White Lady, Selûne was the goddess of the moon – but also much more.

Revered especially by human women, she was also the patron of a diverse group including sailors, diviners, lost people, adventurers, night laborers, astrologers, wanderers, lycanthropes, thieves, trailblazers,

and empowered women. In Luskan, many people looked to her for guidance and blessings, but few heeded her teachings of compassion.

Searching the temple reveals a priestess of Selûne and a small group of wererats who have sought protection from the Moonmaiden against the destruction outside. The wererats are former members of the Dead Rats thieves' guild, and are decidedly evil as a result. Despite this, the priestess refuses to let the PCs harm them. If the PCs insist, she fights to protect them, and the wererats fight to protect themselves. This is a combat encounter against a priest (*MM pg. 348*) and wererats (*MM pg. 209*) equal to the number of PCs. Remember that wererats actively seek to increase their numbers, so they will try to infect the PCs with lycanthropy; the priestess will not approve of this and will back out of the fight or even switch sides if her wards infect any of the PCs.

After the fight, the PCs find the priestess had on her person 1d4 clear red potions that



bubble with tiny bubbles of light (elixirs of healing). The priestess seemingly planned to give the wererats in her protection the potions in order to cure their lycanthropy. She could have cast lesser restoration to cure the disease, so it's likely she wanted them to choose the cure of their own volition.

WINTER PALACE

Shelter Bonus: +0 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: One hour to search

This outdoor temple to Auril, goddess of winter, was a perfect dedication to such a cold deity. Most people venerated Auril out of fear. Sacrifices to Auril were common, with people hoping to appease her so they could avoid crippling winters. Her priests intimidated commonfolk with dire warnings of Auril's wrath, and many pocketed the tithes they took from those they scared.

The Winter Palace was a great courtyard decorated with towering white stone spires and arches. The priests would hold cruel spectacles called "wet parades," in which those who wished to gain Auril's favor would stuff their clothes with ice and climb the pillars to kiss the iron plates at their tips. Frostbite, injury, and sometimes death were common results, but people never failed to partake because winners received free food and drink from Luskan's people all winter long.

Searching this temple reveals nothing of value, but the PCs' presence disturbs a water elemental and its minions — which begin a combat encounter with the PCs. The battle is against a water elemental (*MM pg. 125*) and a number of ice mephits (*MM pg. 215*) equal to the number of PCs.

Also, the tops of the columns act as tall structures. From the top, you have a clear view of the other tall structures and their locations (the massive Throat water tower in the North sector; the four spires of the Host Tower of the Arcane, the Lighthouse, and the tall limestone Tower Kurth in the West Sector; the small Needle water tower in the East Sector; and the Twin Teeth military watchtowers at the South Gate in the Southeast Sector).

SOUTHWEST SECTOR

Easily one of the most dangerous districts in the city even before the invasion, most people have always avoided the Southwest Sector.

The Southwest Sector is adjacent to the West and South sectors.

Places of Interest: The Cutlass, the Fried Rat, the Piers, and the Temple of Red Sails.

THE CUTLASS

Shelter Bonus: +6 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: One hour to search

A raucous tavern and brothel, haven to the crews of pirate ships. It was a dangerous place where fatal brawls were so common that the High Captains issued one of their few laws: no weapons at the Cutlass. The law was frequently broken. A scholar noted that the Cutlass was essentially one continuous, violent party. Today, the tavern is empty and looted.

Searching the tavern reveals a passage to the cellar, which is protected from intruders by an iron golem (*MM pg. 170*) called Captain Reaver. Several corpses of ghouls and demons lie on the ground around it. The PCs will likely lose this combat encounter.

If they do lose, they are stabilized and placed in a holding cell further in the cellar by the owner, Arumn Gardpeck, and several of his employees, who have been staying safe in the cellar under the protection of the golem. The PCs wake 1d4 hours later, and Arumn questions them about how they got in. He will offer to set them free if they will convince the Order of the Gauntlet to let them (and the golem) board a ship in Whitesails Harbor. He reveals the Order has refused to let them leave because they are known criminals.

Arumn and his employees have 3d6 x 100 gp in their possession, but they will not pay the PCs for their help. If a fight breaks out, Arumn and his men are a combat encounter against swashbucklers (*XGE pg. 217*) equal to one fewer than the number of PCs. The PCs will also have to contend with the golem to escape.

If the PCs defeat the iron golem in the initial encounter, Arumn knows he can't best them and tries to pay off the PCs with half his gold in exchange for his life. Combat might still occur.

THE FRIED RAT

Shelter Bonus: +2 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: One hour to search

A restaurant that burned down long ago. A pair of retired shiphands started the Fried Rat after developing a taste for rat meat due to long periods at sea. They built it next to Rat Alley, which was crowded with trash, storehouses, and rat colonies. When it burned down, two theories existed: Flaming grease started the fire, or wererats started it out of discontent. Today, it stands as a husk of its former self – though it was one with a roof over its head, charred though it may be.

Searching the burned building uncovers a ghoulish nest, where the undead seek shelter from the sun. The PCs can try to avoid combat; if they fail, they face a combat encounter with a ghast and several ghouls (identical to the Ghoul Troop dawn roll encounter). There is nothing of value in the restaurant.

THE PIERS

Shelter Bonus: +0 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: One hour to search

One of the most dangerous places in Luskan before the invasion. The piers extend from Dragon Beach, which was the city's original harbor. It was often crammed with small boats and pirate ships — all of them visiting ships that docked against the wishes of the High Captains. Today, there are no ships here. It is dead quiet.

Searching the piers reveals a group of apelike demons that attack, prompting a combat encounter. There are a number of barlguras (*MM pg. 56*) to fight equal to one-third the number of PCs (rounded to nearest number). There is nothing valuable here.

TEMPLE OF RED SAILS

Shelter Bonus: +4 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: One hour to search

A temple to Umberlee, the Bitch Queen, who is an evil sea goddess. The Temple of Red Sails is a remarkable sight if only because there are so few temples dedicated to her. This temple is a dimly lit place even during the day, with just a statue dedicated to Umberlee in its sanctum



and a place for the local priest to sleep at its back. The priest is nowhere to be seen here.

Searching this temple reveals nothing dangerous. The PCs find 1d100 small gems, which the clerics would commonly drop into the sea as part of a ritual to appease Umberlee. The gems include ones like azurite, blue quartz, hematite, lapis lazuli, moss agate, and tiger eye. Each one is worth 10 gp.

If they take the gems, Umberlee sends a massive storm as retribution that arrives shortly before the next dawn and dissipates shortly before dawn 2d4 days later.

The storm slows travel for the duration, causing the group to spend an hour traveling between places of interest in the same sector (normally this takes no time), and causing travel between sectors to take two hours (instead of one). The storm also halves shelter bonuses to dawn rolls for the duration.

SOUTH SECTOR

The South Sector of Luskan was once a sort of government hub — before the government became obsolete, that is. When the invasion started, it still was a place of civic significance.

The South Sector is adjacent to the Central, Southwest, and Southeast sectors.

Places of Interest: The High Captains' Court, Suljack's Lodge, the Temple of Lolth, and Ten Oaks.

HIGH CAPTAINS' COURT

Shelter Bonus: +8 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: Two hours

The central meeting point and safe zone for the five High Captains of Luskan to discuss matters important to the city and plot their move on the regional or global scale.

Ship Kurth led the Court and controlled the navy — making them the most pirate-rife of the city's gangs. Ship Baram was second-in-command and controlled the fish trade. Ship Suljack was the middle power and we're essentially assassins for hire, though they preferred to call themselves mercenaries. Ship Taerl was fourth in line and took menial jobs from the higher-ups. Ship Rethnor held up the rear, working guard duty and the most menial of jobs, but it was still more powerful than the gangs that didn't hold a High Captain's seat.

When the PCs search the Court, they find five criminals who claim to be the High Captains. They, however, have no men under their control. Still, they threaten to place the PCs under arrest if they don't leave them alone.

These people are actually lowly criminals who assumed the positions of the High Captains after the real High Captains died during the invasion. If prompted into combat, they are bandit captains.

The Court has been looted of valuables, but each captain has a gold pin on their coat depicting the symbol of their respective Ship. Each pin is worth 25 gp.

SULJACK'S LODGE

Shelter Bonus: +6 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: Two hours

A comfortable place with exotic food, fine wine, and pleasures of the flesh. Ship Suljack, an assassins' guild, invited its clients to the lodge to hear about their quarries. Today, it's a looted mess reminiscent of its last but with none of the amenities.

When the PCs search the lodge, they find 2d6 bottles of fine wine in the larder. Each is worth 10 gp. However, they also disturb a pack of quasits that make their home there. They attack instantly, prompting a medium combat encounter with quasits.



When just one foe remains, it tries to bargain with the PCs. It offers to become a familiar to the PC with the lowest Wisdom score in exchange for its safety. If the PC agrees, it serves its partner faithfully until it no longer feels threatened by the Order of the Gauntlet, at which point it will cease its service and flee. It might return in a later adventure as a stronger type of demon, elevated quickly instead of slowly due to its cunning.

TEMPLE OF LOLTH

Shelter Bonus: +2 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: One hour

Lolth, Queen of Spiders, is the drow race's most influential deity. Her priestesses sought Lolth's favor with all their being, often forcing drow in their communities into subservience to win her attention. Some even sacrificed non-drow people for her favor. The temple in Luskan was a haven for the city's drow and remained so after the invasion. The drow in Luskan believe the undead are a test from Lolth to discover who is worthy of survival.

Searching the temple reveals the city's drow survivors. Led by a powerful priestess of Lolth, they refuse to allow non-drow PCs into their temple without combat. They don't want combat, though — they've already lost too many people to the undead — so they try to convince the PCs to leave without violence.

If the PCs refuse to leave, combat starts. It's a very hard combat encounter against a drow priestess, who summons giant spiders and possibly a yochlol to aid her. The other drow don't fight. The temple has nothing of value, except for a silver circlet with obsidian spider motifs, worn by the priestess, worth 250 gp.

TEN OAKS

Shelter Bonus: +2 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: One hour

The residence space of High Captain Rethnor, it is a tall stone house that sits atop a hill with 10 oak trees. It has been abandoned.

If searched, the PCs discover it is now a place where ghouls seem shelter during the daylight hours. Unless they can avoid the fight, they face a combat encounter identical to the Ghoul Troop dawn event.

SOUTHEAST SECTOR

The Southeast Sector is one of the safest sectors in the city — both before and after the invasion. Its proximity to the South Gate, which is the busiest entrance to Luskan, makes it formidable and highly defended. It's no surprise that many people took to this sector as a haven after the invasion.

The Southeast Sector is adjacent to the East and South sectors.

Places of Interest: Baram's Palace, Captains' Court, Dragonblood Fort, South Gate.

BARAM'S PALACE

Shelter Bonus: +6 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: Two hours

This is the home base of Ship Baram, which operated Luskan's fishing industry. The food it controlled granted it so much power that it stood at second in command among the five Ships. Its palace was a lordly estate, though much of what made it so exquisite became fodder for looters after the invasion.

When searched, the PCs encounter the only tenant remaining in the palace: a glabrezu demon that calls itself Mammu. Despite its intimidating appearance, the demon does not jump into a fight. Instead, it greets the PCs as friends and offers them food and wine — insisting that none of it will cause them harm and telling them it can help them. It's telling the truth. As it speaks, it reveals it knows details about the PCs and their travels as if it's been watching them for a long time.

The demon eventually offers to aid them: It can provide them power, wealth, and respect in exchange for the small price of taking their souls after they die. It promises not to harm them beforehand, and it even explains what it can offer in detail.

Power. Only PCs with at least 13 Charisma can pick to receive power from the demon. If a PC chooses power, they instantly level up — but they must take the warlock class with the fiend patron, as the demon offers some of its own power to them. Treat this as multiclassing.

Wealth. If a PC chooses wealth, the demon produces a gold cup set with emeralds worth 7,500 gp.

Respect. If a PC chooses respect, the demon grants them a boon — they receive a permanent +2 bonus to an ability score of their choice, and the maximum value that ability score can reach increases to 22 (instead of 20).

If a PC takes the deal, the demon lets the entire group leave unharmed — but the PC's soul is doomed to the demonic realms when they die. When this happens, demons turn the PC's soul into a manes, meaning the PC cannot be resurrected. They're doomed to suffer for eternity or submit to their fate as a demon.

If the PCs decline to make a deal, the demon tries to convince them. If the PCs try to leave without at least one of them taking a bargain, the demon's minions appear from nowhere to block the way out. If they still refuse to accept a bargain, combat breaks out.

The fight is a very hard one against a glabrezu and a number of its dretch minions equal to half the number of PCs (rounded up).

Regardless of how this fight turns out, there's nothing else for the PCs to find here.

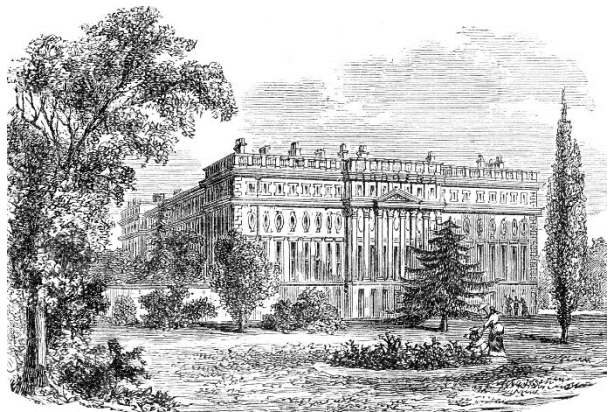
CAPTAINS' COURT

Shelter Bonus: +4 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: One hour

Before the city fell to anarchy decades ago, the Captains' Court was the seat of government power. After it fell, the court became a sort of elite gathering place for ship captains to meet and share gossip and news. After the invasion, it was left vacant and empty.

If searched, the PCs find a small group of people that have formed a doomsday cult. The PCs may mistake them for the culprits at first, but they are not the same. The cult believes the entire world is overrun by demons and undead



like Luskan is. They worship the undead, as they believe that's what keeps them from harm – and indeed, Orcus has spared them harm as a result. The cult is peaceful, but they grow agitated if the PCs challenge their beliefs or threaten them. They refuse to leave.

If they fight, the combatants are a number of cult fanatics equal to half the PCs (rounded up) and a number of cultists equal to the number of PCs. This is an easy fight. Each of them carries a cord necklace with an obsidian charm, each worth 10 gp.

DRAGONBLOOD FORT

Shelter Bonus: +8 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: Two hours

A fort long abandoned on the edge of the city. It was used before the invasion as a stockpile to house thieves' stolen goods, but now no thieves can be found here.

Searching the fort reveals 1d100 + 1d20 townspeople hiding in the fortified tunnels beneath the fort. They are mostly nonviolent criminals who fled to Luskan to avoid persecution and injustice. Now they seek safety in the fort and amongst each other.

They only fight if the PCs threaten them. If they fight, they are commoners — but their numbers will prove devastating to the PCs.

Normally, they seek the PCs' aid, asking for safe passage out of the city. If the PCs agree, they'll need to convince the Order of the Gauntlet to let the people free. The Order will seek to protect them but will also place them on trial for their crimes, so many of them are likely to move from the figurative prison of the fallen Luskan to real prisons upon their flight from the city.

If the PCs help them, each of the refugees contributes 1d4 gp — all they can afford — as thanks to the PCs.

SOUTH GATE

Shelter Bonus: +10 to dawn rolls

Time to Search: One hour

Luskan's South Gate was the only entrance to the city from the more populated south. On either side of the gate were two military towers called the Twin Teeth. They were but two among a dozen along the southern wall that,

for a time, were often decorated with the mutilated body parts of Luskan's enemies to serve as a warning. They were even illuminated by torches at night. Today, no body parts remain. The gate is occupied by the Order of the Gauntlet.

When searched, the PCs find the gate has been looted clean of any useful or valuable items. However, the Twin Teeth watchtowers are tall structures. From the top, you have a clear view of the other tall structures and their locations (the massive Throat water tower in the North sector; the four spires of the Host Tower of the Arcane, the Lighthouse, and the tall limestone Tower Kurth in the West Sector; and the small Needle water tower and the white stone columns of the Winter Palace in the East Sector).

CLIMBING TOWER KURTH

Tower Kurth is a formidable limestone structure that once housed the most powerful gang in Luskan, Ship Kurth, which controlled the city's navy and therefore the seas. The tower was a dormitory of sorts, a meeting place, and an audience space. All members of Ship Kurth, from High Captain Kurth to the lowest of raiders, had access to the tower – but only the highest-ranking members had access to the highest floors.

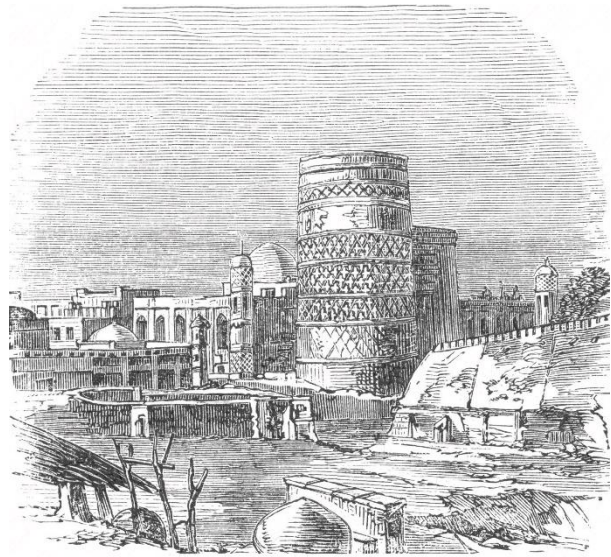
For storytelling purposes, the tower is a number of floors tall equal to 2 + the number of PCs. The bottom floor holds the audience chamber and foyer, and the top floor holds the treasure and trophy room. The middle floors depend on the PCs. Each floor along the middle holds a challenge that the PCs must face — a challenge including undead doppelgangers of important dead people who have shaped or otherwise impacted the lives of the PCs. These challenges depend entirely on the PCs in your group. You'll have to spend some time customizing the challenges. See below for examples and suggestions.

About the Orcusgate

In tradition D&D lore, Orcus has two artifacts of immense power: the Orcuswand and the Orcusword. This adventure features an original third artifact: the Orcusgate. This artifact allows its user great control over the undead and demons, but at a cost: the souls of everyone who dies in its radius. For this reason, any PC who dies cannot be resurrected until the Orcusgate is destroyed. The Orcusgate protects itself, though: It reads the minds of those who threaten it and creates undead minions that take on the appearance of dead people with whom the PCs have troubled pasts. It uses these people's appearance to trick the PCs into "atoning" for their sins — by sacrificing something important.

THE GUIDE SPIRIT

While most of the undead simulacrum of people conjured by the Orcusgate are immeasurably evil, some spirits are simply too pure to taint. Choose a character from one of the PCs' pasts to act as a guide. In the playtest for this adventure, I had this spirit be the



recently deceased mother of one of the PCs. It's someone they trust, and the fact that the mother died of illness made her death non-violent, so she bore no grudges against anyone.

Regardless of which you pick, the guide spirit meets them on the first floor of Tower Kurth, in the audience chamber and foyer, and explains the context of the tower. They tell the PCs that there are spirits throughout the tower that have no true form until the PCs interact with them. The guide might express concern that the PCs will awaken them. The guide spirit also explains that a device controlled by the Cult of Orcus is to blame – and that just one cultist on the top floor remains.

THE DUNGEON

The basement is a dungeon containing 4d6 emaciated prisoners. They are all enemies of Ship Kurth. The PCs can save them or release them if they wish. They have nothing to offer them but thanks. If anything, this is a test of the PCs' good will and heroism.

THE CHALLENGES

Each floor of Tower Kurth has a challenge issued by the Orcusgate. Each of the challenges should be tailored to the specific PCs in your group and designed to force them to do something they don't want to do. Under the guise of "atoning" — but really just a demonic form of torture — make them reveal a terrible secret, admit fault for a past wrong, give up something valuable like an heirloom or an

important memory, sacrifice a limb or an eye, or even suggest sacrificing their life. Whatever the challenge, remember it must be a choice. If they refuse the deal, combat begins. If they accept, the undead slip away — with Orcus happy that the PCs showed such weakness.

In the playtest, I had the following setup:

- **Foyer (L1):** A PC's mother appears to warn them of the tower's secrets.
- **Ballroom (L2):** Two massive skeletons of people whose deaths were caused by a PC. The PC, though, has kept this secret. As atonement, the skeletons demand that she admit fault and apologize — sincerely — for what happened to them. If she refuses, the group must fight the giant skeletons.
- **Guest Chambers (L3):** A dozen soldiers bearing the crest of enemy soldiers, which the group recently fought and defeated, appear in the room as spirits. The captain spirit decrees that a criminal PC in the group acts only for profit. As atonement, he must pay them 1,000 gp. If he doesn't have 1,000 gp, the money will be deducted from his future earnings until his debt is paid. If he does not agree, the group must fight the phantom warriors.
- **Servant Area (L4):** Three wraiths appear, their spectral heads still smashed in. One of the PCs recognizes these wraiths as the three men she killed out of mercy when they were injured. As atonement for their deaths, which they say were unjust, they demand that the PC give up memories that are important to her: her choice of the memories of her mother or the memories of her best friend. If she refuses to give up any of her memories, the group must fight the wraiths.
- **Sleeping Chambers (L5):** The ghosts of five familiar villains appear in the room. They explain that the group killed them as punishment for searching for power, but they hypocritically allow a warlock PC to amass untold power from her patron. As atonement, they demand that the warlock give up some of her power (the equivalent of a level of experience). If she refuses, the group fights the ghosts.

- **Dining Hall & Library (L6):** Three well-preserved greater zombies appear, all of them familiar: three of the PCs' friends who have died. They accuse the PCs of failing to watch over them. To atone, they demand one of the PCs' eyes. If he refuses, the group fights the greater zombies.
- **High Captain's Chambers (L7):** Six people from one of the PCs' past appear before them as wights: his dead family and a man he let die. They blame the PC, claiming he killed them. As atonement, they demand that the PC give them his life. If he refuses, the group fights the wights.

Generally, the goal is build up the tension. Start with the simpler demands and build up from there. The PCs might be tempted to accept the spirits' demands if only because they don't want to fight spirits that look like their friends and family. Other times, the sacrifice might just be too great. It's very important, though, that you leave it up to the PC. It is their choice.

The only thing PCs get from taking the deals offered to them on each floor is that they can avoid combat. They get nothing else, and nothing else changes about the adventure.

THE TREASURE VAULT

The top floor is a treasure vault. It is filled with all the loot that Ship Kurth obtained over the years — including the Orcusgate. It is a looming, arch-like structure that now ripples with energy. Demonic runes glow along the edge of its length.

The Cult Master

The cult master is a necromancer. He surrounds himself with 10 zombies, which are made from the undead bodies of his fellow cultists — all of whom died when he activated the Orcusgate. To keep control over them, he must cast *raise undead* as a fifth-level spell every day. In addition, as the PCs entered the tower, the spirits alerted him of their presence and cast *false life* as fifth-level spell on himself. As a result, he has no fifth-level spell slots left when the battle begins. The cult master wears a *cloak of protection* and has +10 hit points for each dawn that's passed since the PCs arrived. This represents the Orcusgate granting him power.

When the PCs arrive, the necromancer does not try to talk to them. He knows why they're here, and he is not having any of it. He unleashes an onslaught, sending his zombies in as fodder while he attacks and protects himself from afar.

The PCs might not realize it, but he's also protecting the Orcusgate itself. See below for details on the Orcusgate's abilities.

The Orcusgate

In this battle, the Orcusgate does not get a spot in the initiative, but it does react to the actions of combatants. The PCs can try to destroy the Orcusgate on their turns. It is an object with 15 AC, exactly twice as many hit points as the necromancer, immunity to psychic damage and all conditions, weakness to radiant damage, and resistance to all other non-magical damage. Whenever the Orcusgate takes damage, the necromancer takes half as much damage (rounded down). This damage bypasses the necromancer's temporary hit points. If the Orcusgate is destroyed, the necromancer dies.

When the Orcusgate is destroyed, the sun returns to normal over Luskan and the demons infesting the city disappear. The undead remain but without direction. Once the Order of the Gauntlet realize this, they'll send their soldiers in to eradicate the ghouls and ghosts that remain inside the city walls.

TREASURE

Tower Kurth's treasure room has more than just a necromancer, undead beings, and a demonic hell artifact. If the PCs search the place, they find a treasure hoard. Go ahead and randomly generate one or make it up yourself. I'd give you ideas, but I think it's better to leave it up to you to decide what's best for your PCs.

Keep in mind that the necromancer's cloak of protection is a magic item that the PCs can take with them too.

ESCAPING LUSKAN

Wrap up loose ends. Once the Orcusgate is destroyed, the demons disappear and the sun returns to normal; dawn rolls no longer cause fights with demons or torturous nightmares and terrors. The undead remain, but no longer try to leave the city. It is now an undead paradise. The PCs can stick around and explore the rest of the city, or they can leave. It's up to them. However, you should encourage them to move on so they're not exploring the city with no end goal.

When they try to leave the city, they'll have to negotiate with the Order of the Gauntlet. Allow them to resolve this any way they wish.

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Nick Glunt is a communications professional and lifelong geek. He's an equal opportunist for games, dogs, and tacos. He avoids social media, but you can compliment his work by leaving a nice review. And please consider downloading his other adventures, all of which he has listed to let you pay what you want.