



HILLSFAR RECLAIMED

The time has come to fight back against Hillsfar. Elanil Elassidil tasks you with uncovering valuable information to be used in a strike against the leader of Hillsfar, First Lord Torin Nomerthal himself. The only problem is that what you need is protected within the walls of the city. Part One of Six Knives for Torin Nomerthal. A two-hour adventure for 1st-4th level characters.

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Introduction

Welcome to *Hillsfar Reclaimed*, a D&D ExpeditionsTM adventure, part of the official D&D Adventurers LeagueTM organized play system and the Rage of DemonsTM storyline season.

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 1st-4th level characters**, and is optimized for **five 3rd-level characters**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure. A player with an ineligible character can create a new 1st-level character or use a pregenerated character.

The adventure is set in the Moonsea region of the Forgotten Realms, in and around the city of Hillsfar.

The D&D Adventurers League

This adventure is official for D&D Adventurers League play. The D&D Adventurers League is the official organized play system for DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®. Players can create characters and participate in any adventure allowed as a part of the D&D Adventurers League. As they adventure, players track their characters' experience, treasure, and other rewards, and can take those characters through other adventures that will continue their story.

D&D Adventurers League play is broken up into storyline seasons. When players create characters, they attach those characters to a storyline season, which determines what rules they're allowed to use to create and advance their characters. Players can continue to play their characters after the storyline season has finished, possibly participating in a second or third storyline with those same characters. A character's level is the only limitation for adventure play. A player cannot use a character of a level higher or lower than the level range of a D&D Adventurers League adventure.

If you're running this adventure as a part of a store event or at certain conventions, you'll need a <u>DCI number</u>. This number is your official Wizards of the Coast organized play identifier. If you don't have a number, you can obtain one at a store event. Check with your organizer for details.

For more information on playing, running games as a Dungeon Master, and organizing games for the D&D Adventurers League, please visit the <u>D&D Adventurers</u> <u>League home</u>.

Preparing the Adventure

Before you show up to Dungeon Master this adventure for a group of players, you should do the following to prepare.

- Make sure to have a copy of the most current version of the <u>D&D basic rules</u> or the *Player's HandbookTM*.
- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you'd like to highlight or remind yourself while running the adventure, such as a way you'd like to portray an NPC or a tactic you'd like to use in a combat.
- Get familiar with the monster statistics in the Appendix.
- Gather together any resources you'd like to use to aid you in Dungeon Mastering, such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, battlemaps, etc.
- If you know the composition of the group beforehand, you can make adjustments as noted throughout the adventure.

BEFORE PLAY AT THE TABLE

Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information. This includes:

- Character name and level
- · Character race and class
- Passive Wisdom (Perception)—the most common passive ability check
- Anything notable as specified by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, and so on)

Players that have characters outside the adventure's level range **cannot participate in the adventure with those characters**. Players can play an adventure they previously played or ran as a Dungeon Master, but not with the same character (if applicable).

Ensure that each player has an <u>official adventure</u> <u>logsheet</u> for his or her character (if not, get one from the organizer). The player will fill out the adventure name, session number, date, and your name and DCI number. In addition, the player also fills in the starting values for XP, gold, downtime, renown, and number of permanent magic items. He or she will fill in the other values and write notes at the conclusion of the session. Each player is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet.

If you have time, you can do a quick scan of a player's character sheet to ensure that nothing looks out of order. If you see magic items of very high rarities or strange

arrays of ability scores, you can ask players to provide documentation for the irregularities. If they cannot, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array. Point players to the D&D Adventurers League Player's Guide for reference.

If players wish to spend downtime days and it's the beginning of an adventure or episode, they can declare their activity and spend the days now, or they can do so at the end of the adventure or episode.

Players should select their characters' spells and other daily options prior to the start of the adventure, unless the adventure specifies otherwise. Feel free to reread the adventure description to help give players hints about what they might face.

ADJUSTING THE ADVENTURE

Throughout this adventure, you may see sidebars to help you make adjustments to this adventure for smaller/larger groups and characters, of higher/lower levels that the optimized group size. Most of the time, this is used for combat encounters.

You may adjust the adventure beyond the guidelines given in the adventure, or for other reasons. For example, if you're playing with a group of inexperienced players, you might want to make the adventure a little easier; for very experienced players, you might want to make it a little harder. Therefore, five categories of party strength have been created for you to use as a guide. Use these as a guide, and feel free to use a different adjustment during the adventure if the recommended party strength feels off for the group.

This adventure is **optimized for a party of five 1st-level characters.** To figure out whether you need to adjust the adventure, do the following:

- Add up the total levels of all the characters
- Divide the total by the number of characters
- Round fractions of .5 or greater up; round frations of less than .5 down

You've now determined the **average party level (APL)** for the adventure. To figure out the **party strength** for the adventure, consult the following table.

DETERMINING PARTY STRENGTH

Party Composition	Party Strength
3-4 characters, APL less than	Very weak
3-4 characters, APL equivalent	Weak
3-4 characters, APL greater than	Average
5 characters, APL less than	Weak
5 characters, APL equivalent	Average
5 characters, APL greater than	Strong
6-7 characters, APL less than	Average
6-7 characters, APL equivalent	Strong
6-7 characters, APL greater than	Very strong

Average party strength indicates no recommended adjustments to the adventure. Each sidebar may or may not offer suggestions for certain party strengths. If a particular recommendation is not offered for your group, you don't have to make adjustments.

Dungeon Mastering the Adventure

As the DM of the session, you have the most important role in facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You help guide the narrative and bring the words on these pages to life. The outcome of a fun game session often creates stories that live well beyond the play at the table. Always follow this golden rule when you DM for a group:

Make decisions and adjudications that enhance the fun of the adventure when possible.

To reinforce this golden rule, keep in mind the following:

- You are empowered to make adjustments to the adventure and make decisions about how the group interacts with the world of this adventure. This is especially important and applicable outside of combat, but feel free to adjust the adventure for groups that are having too easy or too hard of a time.
- Don't make the adventure too easy or too difficult for a group. Never being challenged makes for a boring game, and being overwhelmed makes for a frustrating game. Gauge the experience of the players (not the characters) with the game, try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to give each of them the experience they're after when they play D&D. Give everyone a chance to shine.

- Be mindful of pacing, and keep the game session moving along appropriately. Watch for stalling, since play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish too early; provide them with a full play experience.
 Try to be aware of running long or short. Adjust the pacing accordingly.
- Read-aloud text is just a suggestion; feel free to modify the text as you see fit, especially when dialogue is present.
- Give the players appropriate hints so they can make informed choices about how to proceed. Players should be given clues and hints when appropriate so they can tackle puzzles, combat, and interactions without getting frustrated over lack of information. This helps to encourage immersion in the adventure and gives players "little victories" for figuring out good choices from clues.

In short, being the DM isn't about following the adventure's text word-for-word; it's about facilitating a fun, challenging game environment for the players. The *Dungeon Master's Guide* TM has more information on the art of running a D&D game.

DOWNTIME AND LIFESTYLE

At the beginning of each play session, players must declare whether or not they are spending any days of downtime. The player records the downtime spent on the adventure logsheet. The following options are available to players during downtime (see the <u>D&D basic rules</u> or the <u>D&D Adventurers League Player's Guide</u> for more information):

- Catching up
- Crafting (exception: multiple characters cannot commit to crafting a single item)
- Practicing a profession
- Recuperating
- Spellcasting services (end of the adventure only)
- Training

Other downtime options might be available during adventures or unlocked through play, including faction-specific activities.

In addition, whenever a character spends downtime days, that character also spends the requisite expense for his or her lifestyle. Costs are per day, so a character that spends ten days of downtime also spends ten days of expenses maintaining his or her lifestyle. Some downtime activities help with lifestyle expenses or add lifestyle expenses.

SPELLCASTING SERVICES

Any settlement the size of a town or larger can provide some spellcasting services. characters need to be able to travel to the settlement to obtain these services.

Alternatively, if the party finishes an adventure, they can be assumed to return to the settlement closest to the adventure location.

Spell services generally available include healing and recovery spells, as well as information-gathering spells. Other spell services might be available as specified in the adventure. The number of spells available to be cast as a service is limited to a **maximum of three per day total**, unless otherwise noted.

SPELLCASTING SERVICES

Spell	Cost
Cure wounds (1st level)	10 gp
Identify	20 gp
Lesser restoration	40 gp
Prayer of healing (2nd level)	40 gp
Remove curse	90 gp
Speak with dead	90 gp
Divination	210 gp
Greater restoration	450 gp
Raise dead	1,250 gp

ACOLYTE BACKGROUND

A character possessing the acolyte background requesting spellcasting services at a temple of his or her faith may request **one spell per day** from the Spellcasting Services table for free. The only cost paid for the spell is the base price for the consumed material component, if any.

Faiths that can call upon spellcasting services in and around Hillsfar include the following: Chauntea, Lliira, Mielikki, and Tempus.

CHARACTER DISEASE, DEATH, AND RECOVERY

Sometimes bad things happen, and characters get poisoned, diseased, or die. Since you might not have the same characters return from session to session, here are the rules when bad things happen to characters.

DISEASE, POISON, AND OTHER DEBILITATING EFFECTS

A character still affected by diseases, poisons, and other similar effects at the conclusion of an adventure can spend downtime days recuperating until such time as he or she resolves the effect to its conclusion (see the recuperating activity in the D&D basic rules). If a character doesn't resolve the effect between sessions, that character begins the next session still affected by the debilitating effect.

DEATH

A character who dies during the course of the adventure has a few options at the end of the session (or whenever arriving back in civilization) if no one in the adventuring party has immediate access to a *raise dead* or *revivify* spell, or similar magic. A character subject to a *raise dead* spell is affected negatively until all long rests have been completed during an adventure. Alternatively, each downtime day spent after *raise dead* reduces the penalty to attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks by 1, in addition to any other benefits the downtime activity might provide.

Create a New 1st-Level Character. If the dead character is unwilling or unable to exercise any of the other options, the player creates a new character. The new character does not have any items or rewards possessed by the dead character.

Dead Character Pays for Raise Dead. If the character's body is recoverable (it's not missing any vital organs and is mostly whole) and the player would like the character to be returned to life, the party can take the body back to civilization and use the dead character's funds to pay for a *raise dead* spell. A *raise dead* spell cast in this manner costs the character 1,250 gp.

Character's Party Pays for Raise Dead. As above, except that some or all of the 1,250 gp for the raise dead spell is paid for by the party at the end of the session. Other characters are under no obligation to spend their funds to bring back a dead party member.

Faction Charity. If the character is of level 1 to 4 and a member of a faction, the dead character's body can be returned to civilization and a patron from the faction ensures that he or she receives a raise dead spell. However, any character invoking this charity forfeits all XP and rewards from that session (even those earned prior to death during that session), and cannot replay that episode or adventure with that character again. Once a character reaches 5th level, this option is not available.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The city of Hillsfar and its Two Great Laws have caused many to seek refuge in and around the nearby village of Elventree. Elanil Elassidil—the Moonsilver Herald of Elventree and Harper agent—has been in communication with those sympathetic to the plight of the non-humans recently evicted from the city. This inside information and that from the spirit of Meira Faerenduil (DDEX 3-7 Herald of the Moon) has led Elanil to the conclusion that the time has come to strike out against the leadership of Hillsfar and force changes to their xenophobic policies.

The Demon Lord Graz'zt has escaped the Abyss and has taken residence near the Underdark city of Maerimydra, infecting the Underdark with his madness. However, the denizens of the Underdark are not the only ones feeling the effects of his presence; surface dwellers are succumbing to the Demon Lord's pull as well.

The former drow city of Maerimydra is now the home of a band of fire giants led by the half-fiend Hledh Hellspawn–granddaughter of Graz'zt. Using the city as a base of operations, Graz'zt's demonic agents have been sent to the surface, intent on influencing the decisions of Hillsfar's ruler, First Lord Torin Nomerthal.

Graz'zt has sent a pair of succubi to Hillsfar with the sole purpose of driving the First Lord mad. One of them has replaced Davon Maelida, the First Lord's most trusted advisor. The other has created a new persona—Davon's twin sister Thessaly. With Davon's help, Thessaly has wormed her way into the heart of Torin; who plans to wed his new-found love.

The succubus has so far been successful in her seduction of First Lord Nomerthal while the incubus has convinced him that it is in his best interest to ask for her hand in marriage. To that end, Torin has set his household to planning the most elaborate and expensive party Hillsfar has ever seen.

The ball is being billed as The First Lord's Midsummer Masquerade. The wealthiest, human citizens of Hillsfar and the surrounding settlements have been invited to attend in their most elaborate costumes for the celebration. The First Lord is the only guest who does not disguise his identity; all others are expected to remain in masque and not disclose their identity. Finally, each guest has been given a unique invitation they are to bring with them in order to gain entry to the party.

The factions see this as the perfect opportunity to gain further intelligence concerning the spies that they believe have embedded themselves in the First Lord's court. They have called for a group of adventurers to gain access to the city and meet with an agent of the Rogue's Guild.

OVERVIEW

This adventure is divided into three parts.

Part 1. The adventurers are instructed by their faction leaders to travel to the outskirts of Hillsfar to an old dead tree about a half mile from the city. The tree is hollow and has a secret door that leads to a subterranean passage which when traveled leads to the sewers of the city. This is where they meet the Harper contact, Isthana Ro, inside the city.

Once there, the characters are informed that Harper spies have discovered what they believe to be a demonic operative from the city of Maerimydra nestled within the court of the First Lord of Hillsfar, Torin Nomerthal. This agent has worked its way into the Lord's inner circle and has come to be a great influence in Torin's decisions regarding the city. The adventurers are given the task of sneaking into the city and meeting up with the Harper agents therein. Once they have infiltrated the city they are to identify the demon agent. In addition, they are also instructed to learn what they are able to about the First Lord's schedule for the next few months. This needs to be done without alerting of anyone on the Lord's staff; should the investigation be discovered, the First Lord's plans will no doubt be changed.

Part 2. Isthana believes entering a Masquerade hosted by the First Lord is the best way to gain access to the First Lord's tower. The contact suggests that the characters get jobs as servers for the party thereby securing access to the tower.

Part 3. Now at the party, the adventurers can mingle among the guests and should be able to pick up tidbits of conversations. They might learn that the First Lord has been seen with a young maiden in town and he seems to be very smitten. They can also overhear that the First Lord is about to take a rare trip out of the city. The characters might also come across a beautiful woman who is hiding in the wings of the party sending a message to someone outside the city.

At some point during the evening the First Lord asks Thessaly to marry him and then chaos ensues when Thessaly is "killed" and the First Lord is teleported away. If the characters follow Davon, who carries the body of his sister to the gardens, they discover that both Thessaly and Davon are just fine and are actually a pair of fiends.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following adventure hooks can be used to draw the characters into the story.

Stopping at the Stop. The Stop, particularly The Plodding Plow, is the next best place to find adventure work in the Hillsfar area other than Elventree. The character is inside the inn when others, perhaps also looking for work, sit down at the table you have chosen. Eventually, you are directed to meet with Elanil Elassidil. At this meeting, the Moonsilver Herald instructs that you rendezvous with Isthana Ro; the Guildmaster of Hillsfar's Rogue's Guild. Elanil describes a hollow tree as a means of entering the city, and once within, Isthana will provide a means of disguise to pass through it without notice.

The Harpers (Faction). Characters that are members of The Harpers are approached by a messenger that tells them to meet with Elanil Elassidil at The Stop. She needs to speak to them about a clandestine mission inside the city of Hillsfar. She awaits the characters at the Plodding Plow Inn. Eventually, you are directed to meet with Elanil Elassidil. At this meeting, the Moonsilver Herald instructs that you rendezvous with Isthana Ro; the Guildmaster of Hillsfar's Rogue's Guild. Elanil describes a hollow tree as a means of entering the city, and once within, Isthana will provide a means of disguise to pass through it without notice.

Hillsfar Smuggler (Background). Those with the Hillsfar Smuggler background learn that a group of adventurers are gathering at The Stop to organize an infiltration into the city to obtain information on the activities of the First Lord. The group is to meet with Elanil Elassidil at the Plodding Plow Inn. At this meeting, the Moonsilver Herald instructs that you rendezvous with Isthana Ro; the Guildmaster of Hillsfar's Rogue's Guild. Elanil describes a hollow tree as a means of entering the city, and once within, Isthana will provide a means of disguise to pass through it without notice.

PART 1: LOOKING FOR WORK

The adventure begins when the characters arrive at the hollow tree described by Elanil as a secret means of entrance into Hillsfar.

THE HOLLOW TREE

Elanil's guidance leads the adventurers to a secret entrance that leads to the sewers beneath Hillsfar.

The directions given to you by Elanil have proven to be very accurate. As you follow the deer run, the trees give way to a small clearing. In front of you is a tree that has been overturned, most likely due to weather. Its enormous roots form a tangle where the tree lifted the ground underneath it when it fell. The tree's bark has been stripped in patches, indicating that the deer travel here to wear down the velvet on their antlers.

With a successful DC10 Intelligence (Investigation) check a character notices that the tree roots conceal a set of stairs made of packed earth that lead into the ground.

The stairs go down about 15 feet below the surface and then stop at a passage that leads north toward the city of Hillsfar. If the characters travel this passage for about two miles the passage opens up into a room within a basement in the city.

THE SEWERS

Whether they get there using their own method or that which was provided by Elanil, the characters eventually arrive in a series of dark, wet tunnels of packed earth. They do not appear to be the sewers.

GENERAL FEATURES

The tunnels have the following general features:

The rain. The tunnel descends slowly into the darkness. The walls and floors are of packed earth. Patches of mud and other, unmentionable disgustingness sometimes make for unsteady footing. The tunnels here vary between 10 to 20 feet wide and the ceilings are high, ranging in height from 20 feet in some places to 40 feet in others. Climbing a wall requires a successful DC 25 Strength (Athletics) check. The walls are slimy with moisture and muck causing any check made to climb them to be made with disadvantage.

Light. The sewers are completely dark. The characters must provide their own light source. There are sconces for torches intermittently placed along the tunnels.

Smell. The foul smells of the sewers leave no doubt as to where you are. Those weak of stomach may have trouble traveling through this area.

Sounds. The sound of running water and dripping is constant here. The slightest sound created by the characters echoes throughout the chamber. All characters have disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to move silently while in the sewers and advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing.

Water. In some areas, stinking, muck-filled water flows in 3-foot-deep channels. Characters that enter the water must succeed at a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 10 minutes.

Read or paraphrase:

The dank passage opens up ahead into a room; dimly lit by a single torch. Most of the irregular-shaped walls are made of the same packed earth as the walls of the tunnel behind you, however, a wide patch of wall across from the entrance is reinforced with well-fitting stone blocks. You can hear the faint sound of running water from the other side of the stone wall. There are no other exits from this room.

Beside the wall, and seated on a rock with a silk handkerchief draped over it is a well-dressed, immaculately-groomed, human female wearing filthy, tall leather boots. Seeing the characters, she smiles.

Isthana happily shakes every person's hand in turn and surveys the party make up; her gaze lingering a moment or two longer on those that are obviously not human.

If asked why she the boots she is wearing are so much different than the rest of her fine clothes, Isthana chuckles and says "because I don't want to get crap on my nice shoes."

ROLEPLAYING ISTHANA RO

Isthana Ro is the leader of the thieves' guild in Hillsfar. She is wickedly smart and doesn't give much of a damn about anything other than her guild. This sense of self-preservation is tempered with an amazingly acute business sense and the ability to think ahead. Considering this, she has decided working with the factions to be the best thing for her guild at the moment. She sees the First Lord as the biggest problem in Hillsfar.

Quote: "Walk slower, these clothes are new and you're splashing."

When the characters are ready to head into the city she nods and walks to the stone wall.

Isthana approaches the stone brick wall and runs her hands gently over a few of the bricks. She appears to catch something with the tip of a finger, and almost immediately, the outline of a door appears on the wall. The woman grips the edge and pulls it aside, revealing the dark tunnels beyond. The dark sewers beneath Hillsfar, and unfortunately the stench that fills them, await.

"Follow me close. You can get lost quite easily in the underbelly of the Great City of Hillsfar."

Isthana leads the characters hurriedly through the tunnels of the Hillsfar sewers. It becomes readily apparent to the characters that she is amazingly familiar with the maze of intersecting passages.

As the group approaches a tunnel crossing, a ruckus is heard down the adjoining tunnel just out of sight.

Your group has traveled through many tunnels under the city. As you approach another crossing, you hear the thrashing water. Above the splashing, you hear the squeaking of what must be dozens of rats.

Rounding the corner, you see a hoard of rats swarming over a large object floating in the water.

If the characters approach, four **swarms of rats** attack. The intersection is approximately 40-feet-square.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter. These are cumulative.

- Very weak party: Remove 2 swarms of rats
- Weak party: Remove 1 swarm of rats
- Strong party: Add 1 swarm of rats
- Very strong party: Add 2 swarms of rats

Once the swarms are destroyed the characters may investigate the object in the water. The water is only a foot deep here, so retrieving the object poses no problem.

The object of the rats's fascination is a body. It floats face down in the shallow water, which has bloated, contorted, and rendered its face unrecognizable.

Nearly every inch of exposed skin is covered in scores bites. Some portions have even been stripped completely of flesh; the bone beneath stark white in contrast to the black, rotting flesh. If the smell is any indicator, it has been here for quite a while. If the characters inspect the body, they may make a number of DC 10 ability checks, revealing the following:

Wisdom (Medicine). If successful, the character determines that the body has been here for weeks. If turned over the body can easily be identified as that of a human male and, judging by his clothing and impeccable grooming, someone of means. The character also notes that most of the man's bones have been broken; as if it was violently crushed and all of its limbs have been dislocated.

Intelligence (History). The clothes it is wearing are moldering and falling apart, but are of fine quality. The tunic also bears a heraldic patch. A successful check identifies the patch as being a symbol of the First Lord's court.

Intelligence (Investigation). It is plain to see that the body bears a number of wounds from what appear to be large claws. If this check is successful, however, the character notices a large number of broken bones; wounds symptomatic from a high fall.

Wisdom (Perception). If a character specifically looks up, and succeeds at this check, they notice a hole set into the center of the ceiling–30 feet above the floor of the sewers. This is a privy within the Tower of the First Lord. Davon's body was crammed down the privy-hole by Thessaly after the stole was murdered. The character is able to surmise that the hole is either indoors or covered, as daylight can't be seen through it.

Getting to the grate is difficult, as it impossible to climb to without magical means. If the characters are, in fact, somehow able to reach the hole, they find that it is approximately 1-foot-wide and proceeds for 15 feet before ending in a hatch that is locked from the other side.

Unlocking it is not possible from this side, but it can be forced open–assuming that someone is able to pass through the relatively small passage. Forcing the privy lid open requires a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. Consider this check being made with disadvantage if the character doesn't have sufficient room to make the check normally.

DEVELOPMENT

Isthana suggests that they do not linger much longer here. The rats will take care of the body, and it is probably not the only dead body down here, but adds that "it's the moving corpses that you have to worry about!"

As the characters travel, Isthana provides some updates:

- Harper spies within Hillsfar have reason to believe that agents from Maerimydra have infiltrated the court of the First Lord. Isthana believes that these concerns have merit.
- Identifying the agent, or agents, is important to changing the First Lord's stance on non-humans in the city of Hillsfar. The faction leaders are hopeful that the First Lord can be persuaded to change his mind.
- There are rumors that Nomerthal is planning a rare trip outside of the city walls for a trade meeting with Damaran leaders within the city of Yûlash. If this is true, he will likely be bringing the more important members of his court.
- Once inside the Hillsfar the characters have two primary missions: first, they must covertly obtain the Lord's schedule for the next few weeks. If Lord Nomerthal knows his schedule is compromised he will likely change his plans. Second, the characters must identify the agent(s) from Maerimydra. If the agent or agents are traveling with the First Lord when he departs for Yûlash, they may be able to be taken care of at that time.
- There are five members of his court that he is closest to: Chancellor Garos the Just, Malkyn Grenefeld, Torgrave Needlebaum, Davon Malaeda, and Davon's sister-and rumor has it, Nomerthal's Thessaly Malaeda.
- A great opportunity has developed to get the characters into the Lord's tower to investigate. The First Lord has a great Midsummer Masquerade planed. All the nobles and guild leaders of the city have been invited. All are to wear masks and not reveal their identity throughout the entire celebration.
- Torgrave Needlebaum is conducting interviews today to hire on more servers for the party. This is likely to be our only way to gain access to the Tower.
- Otherwise, only those with an invitation may gain access to the party. The invitations are unique itemsno two of which are alike-that even the members of the Rogue's Guild have had problems forging. It is a single raven's feather delicately painted with the First Lord's personal heraldry. They are handdelivered by Red Plumes.

- Isthana stresses the need for discretion. Get in quietly, and get out of there as soon as you get what is needed. We need that information quickly and without the First Lord, or his court knowing it was retrieved.
- Isthana has been informed to offer a payment of 50 gp to the characters if they are successful. However, due to the covert nature of the mission, she does not provide an advance on the reward; a botched job accomplished nothing and she has no intention on rewarding failure.

FIRST LORD TORIN NOMERTHAL'S COURT

Chancellor Garos Daunger (the Just). Chancellor, Government Liaison. Daunger did not receive his moniker for being fair and caring. He is a shrewd politician and does anything to further the Lord's position at the top of the noble houses of Hillsfar. He speaks with a condescending tone and is well spoken, using his huge vocabulary to show his superiority over commoners and nobles alike.

Torgrave Needlebaum. Seneschal, Head of Household. A very friendly, and outgoing sort, Torgrave is living his dream. He keeps the cleanest house of all Hillsfar and takes great pride in it. He never disparages a guest about their untidiness. He simply takes care of the mess. He loves rumors and gossip. Because of this he is a fountain of information for the court and is called upon for this knowledge quite often.

Malkyn Grenefeld. Chamberlain, controls access to the Lord. Mage of the court and former member of the Cloaks of Mulmaster, Malkyn was invited to join the First Lord's court before Mulmaster's fall. She is a talented and powerful mage who uses her power to protect the Lord at all costs. She would throw a fireball and destroy the room and all in it if the Lord was able to escape because of it. She sticks to protocol and the law when it comes to visitors and makes it difficult for even foreign dignitaries to receive audience with the First Lord.

Davon Malaeda. Stole, Lord's closest advisor, and confidant. Davon is the brother of Thessaly Malaeda, the Lady that the First Lord has been courting. However, he has been replaces by an incubus who is a spy from Maerimydra sent to infiltrate the Lord's court and influence his decisions.

Thessaly Malaeda. First Lord's betrothed and twin sister to Davon Malaeda. Like Davon, Thessaly is a succubus in human guise. She is a relative new-comer to the Hillfarian social scene. As such, little is known about her.

Treasure

If searched, the characters find that the body is wearing an onyx ring worth 50 gp. Additionally, a pair of *eyes of minute* seeing hang around the body's neck. Removing the treasure is easy, but quite disgusting.

XP Award

Award each character 50 XP if they learn everything from the dead body in the sewers.

THE HALL OF FACES

After about a half hour of moving through the underground maze of tunnels, Isthana stops at a rather nondescript stone wall. She again runs her hands along the wall; her fingers dancing along a series of hidden catches that eventually causes a large section of the wall to slide away.

The room beyond the door is brightly lit with several torches. Isthana enters the room and sits down on a nearby bench. She kicks off her boots with a disgusted grimace and dons a pair of soft leather shoes.

A knotted rope hangs from a hook secured to the ceiling, next to a trap door. Isthana pulls on the rope making sure it is secure and climbs up. Once at the top she opens the trap door and climbs through. She looks down at you and asks nonchalantly, "Are you coming?"

The characters are able to climb the rope without making a check. Once they are all through the trapdoor paraphrase the following as they taken in their new surroundings.

- The room is fairly large, well lit, and devoid of any decoration, except for half-dozen large mirrors.
 There is a single exit from the room.
- A single shelf has nothing but rolled up scrolls on them. Characters using detect magic identify these scrolls as being magical and they radiate an aura of illusory magic. Isthana informs the characters that each scroll is inscribed with a disguise self spell that has been modified to last for 10 hours.
- Isthana allows the characters use the scrolls, but does not allow them to keep any (Perception +8, Insight +8).
- There are several small braziers in the room as well.
- There are three large basins of clean water.

Once the characters have an understanding of their surroundings, read or paraphrase:

Isthana lights one of the braziers and the smell of sweet, smoky incense fills the room. She beams at you and spreads out her arms, "Welcome to The Rogue's Guild. Let's get you out of those unsuitable faces."

Allow the players a moment to figure what new persona they plan to use. The disguise self spell allows the characters to don whatever disguise they choose without also needing to worry about disguising their equipment. The characters are also encouraged to wash away the filth from the sewers in the large basins.

When the characters are ready to proceed:

Isthana says to you, "Well it's time to put these disguises to the test, then?" She extinguishes the brazier, and opens the door slightly; poking her head out into the hallway beyond.

"Looks like it's safe to leave the room" she says, "Come now, quickly."

Shockingly, the characters step through the door into a well-used privy. Looking back, they see that the door they exited from is cleverly disguised to blend with the walls of the privy. From there, the privy opens up into a hallway decorated with the portraits of very sly looking individuals, complete with name plates—former prominent members of the guild, no doubt.

She leads the group out of the building and into the bright sunlight and the streets of Hillsfar. The Rogue's Guild is part of the Hillsfar Castle complex. To the west is the Tower of the First Lord; the tallest structure in the city that can be seen no matter where in the city you are.

With a flourish and a bow, she announces that this is as far as she will take them as the characters would likely not get jobs if they are seen by Torgrave in the presence of such a prominent member of the Rogue's Guild (she winks coyly at this revelation). She informs the characters that Needlebaum is set up in a tent outside of the Tower. He is the key to getting into the tower.

NAVIGATING THE CITY OF TRADE

For some of your characters, Hillsfar may be a unique, hitherto foreign experience. As such, its current state of excess and debasement should be highlighted as the characters travel within the city.

If time permits, consider using the following to paint a picture of Hillsfar that represents its current state.

Use caution and discretion, however, when describing some of the things that the characters might see—taking into consideration the make-up and comfort level of your players.

THE CITY

The city itself is undergoing a rush of new construction as it falls further and further into the grasp of Graz'zt's influence.

Extra rooms are being added to already cramped houses—likely to make room for all of the new children being born. Similarly, new festhalls and taverns are hanging out their shingle constantly as the people of the city clamor for entertainment.

The once conservative and respectable colors of the buildings of the city have widely been replaced with garish, contrasting—and typically wildly unattractive—colors such as blue, green, purple and pink.

All of that aside, the rash of improvements has been amazingly good for trade. Imports of building materials, food, and drink are at an all-time high and the merchants of the city have been turning quite a profit.

THE RESIDENTS

If time is not a concern, consider adding one or more of the following encounters (or another similar as you see fit), to emphasize the toll that the demon lord's madness is having on the residents of the city.

Fighting in the Festhall. A line of men and women wraps around a well-decorated festhall. As they clamor to get in, a small fight breaks out among a few of the more impatient patrons. Three off-duty **Red Plume patrol** quarrel with six **commoners**. If the characters get involved, the drunken soldiers might threaten them with arrest or worse.

Street Racing. A pair of merchant's sons race their horses through the crowded streets. As they careen past, the characters must each succeed at a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw or be run over, in which case the horse makes a hoof attack against the failing character, as follows:

Hooves. Melee Weapon Attack: +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (2d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

The Drunken Troupe. A group of performers plies their trade on small, makeshift stage in the center of a large square. They're quite drunk, as their performance shows. The crowd that surrounds them is wholly unimpressed and begins peppering the sodden singers with insults and thrown fruit and vegetables. Unless the characters intervene, the assault becomes much more violent and may end up with the troupers being beaten unconscious by the bystanders with sticks, stones, and other make-shift weapons.

Paranoid Patrol. The characters happen across a cohort of three **Red Plume patrol** who have cornered a woman in an alley. With weapons drawn, they accuse her of having "elf blood". If left alone, the Red Plumes

eventually arrest the woman. If the characters intervene, any character that succeeds at a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check realizes that the woman is indeed a half-elf wearing a less-than-convincing disguise.

She is thankful for the characters's assistance, but is unable to provide a reward. She runs off into the city at the earliest opportunity.

Once the characters are ready, proceed to Part 2, below.

PART 2: THE INTERVIEW

THE TOWER OF THE FIRST LORD

The Tower of the First Lord is a tall, impressive structure that stands over 200-feet-tall.

GENERAL FEATURES

The tower has the following general features:

Terrain. The tower is immaculate and of fine construction. A number of tapestries hang on the walls and a number of busts and other statues are placed on pedestals throughout. The hallways are usually 15-feetwide with 20-foot-high ceilings.

Light. Fist-sized, rune-engraved iron orbs enchanted with *continual flame* hang from delicate silver chains. As a result, the interior of the tower is well lit.

Smells. Fresh flowers, perfume, fine food.

Sounds. Parlor music, muted conversation, footfalls on stone.

Patrols. A number of **Red Plume patrol** meander around the hallways. At any given point, a squad of three soldiers can respond to a threat within 5 rounds. A total of 30 soldiers are housed in the Tower.

THE SENESCHAL

The Tower of the First Lord is bustling with activity. Deliveries are being checked by the Red Plumes, groundskeepers are sprucing up the gardens, and a tent has been erected a short distance from the tower.

A line of people leads inside the tent where a man surrounded by Red Plumes sits at a table speaking to each person in turn.

The people in line are residents of the city who are looking for work as staff for the masquerade. Behind the man at the table, a small group of people mingle in the back of the tent closely watched by the Red Plumes. These are the lucky few who have done well enough with their interviews to have been selected.

If the characters get in line they overhear a few conversations between possible employees. Characters that succeed at a DC 11 Wisdom (Perception) check are able to discern that those who offer tidbits of gossip are asked less questions and asked to stand with the others in the back of the tent. The characters eventually make it to the table where the man greets them and introduces himself.

In front of you sits a rather gaunt man with a goatee and balding head. He looks up at you and with a bored smile and pleasant voice says, "Welcome to The Tower of the First Lord! Are you here to offer your services? If so I would like to ask you a few questions."

Torgrave is looking to hire those with experience if possible, but even those that are only able to provide a bit of gossip are able to at least get a job as a sweeper. Because Torgrave looks down on those not of noble birth, he doesn't look any of the interviewees in the eye and thus the characters do not run the risk of their disguises being noticed. Torgrave asks the characters these questions:

- "What is your name and where are you from?"
- "What experience do you have serving large numbers of people?"
- "How long have you been in Hillsfar?"
- "What skills do you bring to this position that you feel will help to make the Masquerade a success?"

Provided the characters don't cause trouble they are hired as servers. Otherwise, a squad of five **Red Plume patrol** converge and escort the characters outside of the Tower's complex. They must then resort to the hard way of getting into the party–sneaking in.

GETTING CAUGHT

In the event that a character's disguise is seen through or they blow their own cover, the response is immediate and violent. At any point within the Tower of the First Lord, a patrol of three Red Plume patrol can respond within 5 rounds.

If the characters are caught acting conspicuous they must succeed at a DC 11 Charisma (Deception) check in order to avoid excessive suspicion. If they are caught again, they must make a second check, this time with disadvantage. Beyond this, checks made to avoid suspicion automatically fail and that character's cover is blown.

Characters that intentionally remove or dispel their disguise may have fewer opportunities (or none at all) to conceal their actions.

Once a character's cover has been blown, proceed to Tower Flight, below. Note that the pursuit from the Tower only occurs if the characters's true identities and motives are detected.

Once Torgrave has selected a couple dozen people—the characters included—he picks his papers up and heads toward the group in the back of the tent.

"There is much to be done in anticipation of tonight's festivities; I trust you are ready to put in an honest day's work." Torgrave turns on his heel and beckons the group of new hires to follow him. The **Red Plume patrol**s follow after that. Torgrave leads you down a path that seems to lead to the back of the tower.

Rounding the tower, the characters can see that most of the delivery wagons have been led here and, already, a dozen laborers are unloading the cargo and taking it inside the tower. Occasionally, Torgrave stops at one of the wagons, peeks in and nods to the driver. Eventually, Torgrave leads the characters and the other laborers into the Tower.

THE CHAMBERLAIN

The character leave the quiet serenity of the tower's grounds behind as they enter. The large room they find themselves in is full of yelling people, porters carrying (and occasionally dropping) heavy loads, and the usual cacophony that typically precedes any well-planned event. As always, however, Torgrave is an island of calm collectiveness in this sea of chaos. He leads the characters to an office in which a middle-aged woman sits flanked by a pair of **Red Plume patrol**.

This woman is Malkyn Grenefeld—the First Lord's Chamberlain and she needs to approve all new hires. Her job is to control access to the First Lord. Anything that looks like it may cause him harm is treated with much scrutiny. Malkyn does not let anyone who is flippant or disrespectful work in the Tower. They are escorted out and have to find another way into the party.

Malkyn draws a sheaf of paper from her desk and indicates that all of new hires must sign their name (or put an "X" for those who cannot read). They must also swear an oath not to divulge anything that they may see or hear during the course of their employment. Those that refuse to sign are escorted from the Tower by the pair of **Red Plume patrol** that stand guard outside her door.

Malkyn keeps the First Lord's schedule on her desk. In her rush to complete the hiring process, she did not clear her desk beforehand. As a result, any character that signs the document may attempt a DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check. If successful, the character is able to glance around the numerous official-looking documents and note that the First Lord is scheduled to meet with representatives from Damara in a week's time in Yûlash. A character wearing the *eyes of minute seeing* makes this check with advantage.

Once the paperwork is in order, Malkyn instructs Torgrave to get the characters to work.

TREASURE

Torgrave provides each of the laborers with their first day's pay; a single, plain-looking gold coin.

XP Award

The characters gain 50 XP once they successfully complete the hiring process.

If the characters successfully discern the place of the First Lord's meeting with Damara without being caught, award each character 150 XP.

Tower Flight (Optional)

The characters's only need worry about fleeing the Tower (and subsequently, the Red Plumes) if their deception is unveiled. If their ruse is detected, the characters should quickly come to the conclusion that staying in the Tower is likely to result in their capture and eventual execution—even for human characters. Once their cover has been blown, depending on where they are at, a patrol of **Red Plume patrol** may already be present and at the most, arrives in 5 rounds. If the characters make themselves scarce, the Red Plumes in the area begin to search them out.

THE PATROLS

The first patrol that the characters may encounter is a Red Plume street patrol consisting of two **Red Plume** patrol.

The second is a larger patrol consisting of four **Red Plume patrol** and a **guild wizard**.

TRACKING THE PARTY

The Red Plumes are well-organized, and begin searching for the characters within the Tower as well as sending out additional patrols to search the city itself. However, both areas are fairly large, and this limits how quickly the Red Plumes are able to catch the characters.

Pursuit Level

The closeness of a **Red Plume patrol** is measured by a pursuit level. It begins at 3, with the Red Plumes not far behind the characters. If the pursuit level reaches 5, a patrol of two **Red Plume patrol** catches up to the characters, and a larger cohort of four **Red Plume patrol** and a **guild wizard** arrives shortly thereafter (see "Catching Up"). If the pursuit level drops to 0, the characters have escaped the Red Plumes until circumstances present a risk of capture to the characters once more.

Characters can increase or decrease the pursuit level in the following ways:

- Decrease the pursuit level by 1 for each round where more than half of the characters involved in the chase use the Dash action.
- Decrease the pursuit level by 1 if a character spends a round hiding in a nearby building or amongst a large crowd. Doing so requires a successful DC 13 Dexterity or Charisma (Stealth) check.
- Decrease the pursuit level by 1 if the party splits into two or more groups. Each group becomes a separate party for the purpose of encountering a **Red Plume** patrol.
- Increase the pursuit level by 1 if the characters encounter a **Red Plume patrol** and do anything other than flee from them.
- Increase the pursuit level by 1 for every area of the Tower that the characters visit before fleeing.

The players might come up with additional ways of evading pursuit. Adjudicate these as you see fit. For example, if the characters convince a randomly encountered Hillfarian to hide them, you might reduce the pursuit level by 1 as the Red Plumes search in the wrong area before they resume tracking the party. Similarly, the adventurers could lay traps to slow down their pursuers, or they might convince a friendly creature to lie to residents of the city about which way the party went.

CATCHING UP

When the pursuit level reaches 5, the characters encounter a Red Plume Street Patrol (see below). At this point, the pursuit might become an encounter as the Red Plumes spot the characters and engage them. The characters might try to run, at which point a chase ensues (see "Chases" in chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*), or they might stand and fight. They might even try to set up an ambush, since the front ranks of the party are out of sight of the Red Plumes when they first catch up.

If the adventurers flee successfully, they lower the pursuit level to 4 and begin avoiding their pursuers again. If they fight the patrol, run the encounter. The Red Plumes focus on maintaining close pursuit and blowing their whistles. After 1d8 + 5 rounds, another, larger patrol of four soldiers and a guild wizard arrives and joins the battle. Every 1d8 + 5 rounds thereafter, another patrol arrives until the characters are either captured or flee.

ELUDING PURSUIT

If the adventurers lower the pursuit level to 0, they may have left the city. Otherwise, the Red Plumes lose the characters unless circumstances allow them to locate the characters again. This might include the characters leaving their hiding spot and entering a high-populated area, or talking openly about their escape from the patrol. If the characters pass through an area watched over by the Red Plumes, increase the pursuit level to 1 and begin tracking it again as they pick up the trail once more.

CAPTURE

The Red Plumes try to capture the characters if at all possible, since the Arena always has a need of fresh blood. If the Red Plumes reduce any characters to 0 hit points, those characters are knocked out rather than dying (see "Knocking a Creature Out" in chapter 9 of the *Player's Handbook*).

Captured characters are disarmed, their hands bound with rope, and gagged. They are held in a cell within a Red Plume guard station for a tenday (costing 10 downtime days) before their factions eventually manage to secure their release. Those characters that do not belong to a faction may join elect to join a faction whose representative arrives to free one of the other characters. If none of the characters in the party belong to a faction or if an imprisoned character chooses not to join one in order to secure their release, the character remains in the cell for a second tenday (costing an additional 10 downtime days) before Isthana sends guild agents to assist in their escape.

MISSION FAILURE

Due to the evening's chaos, the party is cancelled; the characters have failed in their mission. The characters earn whatever rewards accumulated up to this point, however. If the characters elude capture and, for some reason, return to the tower, they find it locked up securely with no less than two dozen **Red Plume patrol** and a half dozen Guild Wizards patrolling its perimeter.

Bystanders (disappointed nobles among them) inform the characters that the party has been cancelled due to some filthy mongrels that hopefully got run through with a blade or two.

PART 3: TO SERVE

THE PARTY

The evening arrives and the party is about to begin.

There is a buzz of excitement in the air as the time for the party draws nearer. The decorations have been hung and the food prepared as the guests begin making their way up the winding road to the Tower of the First Lord.

Torgrave Needlebaum gathers you all to give his final instructions. He is accompanied by two soldiers carrying a number of wrapped packages. "Thank you all for the help in preparing this joyous occasion. As you know this is a masquerade. So we have provided costumes and masks for you to wear. It is only fitting that those that serve the First Lord and his illustrious guests not be dressed as beautifully as them. So the First Lord has thought it fitting that the servers at

So the First Lord has thought it fitting that the servers at tonight's party be dressed as the rabble that no longer plague our city--thanks to his Great Law. You will find appropriate costumes in these packages. You may of course trade among yourselves if you prefer to be a specific lower race." With that, Torgrave dons a fine porcelain mask and leaves the room.

The characters have little choice but to wear the costumes. Inspecting the costumes, the characters note that the racial features of each costume are exaggerated and grotesque:

- Elven and half-elven ears are long, drooping and tipped with tufts of coarse hair.
- Dwarven masks have large, bulbous vein-shot noses.
- Halflings have tiny, beady eyes and their mouths are turned up in unbecoming, mischievous sneers.
- Gnomes are ugly, bulbous-eyed creatures.
- Dragonborn and half-orcs appear to be little more than slavering monsters.
- Tieflings resemble demons with cruel eyes.

The **Red Plume patrol** wait outside the room to ensure that all who leave the room are in costume. Characters under the effect of *disguise self* may simply choose to dismiss the spell, however, doing so are likely to raise suspicion due to their amazingly like-like costumes.

The other laborers are excited about dressing as the non-human "monsters". They are also very impressed with the quality of the costumes that the non-human characters have (if they choose to remove their disguise).

As the characters leave the room they are given the choice of where to work. It matters little, but suggested

roles follow. The characters may choose from other duties as deemed suitable for the event.

- Server
- Kitchen Laborer
- Porter
- Cleaning Staff
- Messenger

MINGLING

After receiving their duties they should be encouraged to mingle with the guests. This is when the characters are able to move around the tower and try and find the information that they have been sent to obtain. The following sections can happen in any order and culminate in the Finale section.

The characters that chose to serve food and drink at the party are able to mingle in the crowd and hear rumors as they serve the guests.

During the course of the party, the characters might get the itch to explore the interior of the Tower of the First Lord.

1. The Ballroom

Upon entering the main ballroom read or paraphrase:

The ballroom where the party is being held is enormous and even that is not enough to hold the hundreds of people that have come to the celebration. The patio doors have been left open and the gardens offer a nice respite from the loud and rather warm ballroom.

First Lord Torin Nomerthal and his Court are on a long, elevated dais that sits five feet above the ballroom floor of the ballroom. They are the only ones in the room that are not wearing masks.

A string quartet plays music in the corner; however, there is no room for dancing. Long oak tables are full of food and servers are feverishly carving meat off of the bones of various cooked animals as hungry guests shout what they want. Servers with trays full of hors d'oeuvres and glasses of champagne walk among the guests.

The characters can learn several things while walking among the guests.

- I can't believe the servers are dressed as such vile monsters, this is so disgusting.
- I hear that the members of the Guilds were not invited. That likely doesn't help their opinion of Torin.
- Thessaly is certainly a beautiful girl, it is about time Nomerthal made an honest woman out of her.
- Malkyn Grenefeld must be just a mess now that the First Lord is courting. It's no secret that she has always had feelings for him. She came all the way from Mulmaster to take the position in his court.
- I always wondered why Torin was always so close to Davon.
- I have noticed that there has been an increase in Red Plume patrolling lately. Someone very important must be coming to the area soon.

2. The Kitchens

The kitchens are very busy. And, with all the cooking, very, very warm. Many of the workers here have stripped down to undershirts and most of the men are barechested.

The characters can learn several things while working in the kitchens.

- Have you heard about Mulmaster? Half of it has burnt to the ground and the other half is underwater.
- I hear that Torin and his closest advisors are traveling out of the city for the first time ever. I hope Torgrave goes too.
- That Thessaly Malaeda is such a lovely girl. She is good for Lord Nomerthal.
- I think it is creepy that Thessaly looks so much like her brother.

Any characters working within the kitchens can easily sneak out without being noticed.

3. The Stairways

However, moving around the Tower is a little more difficult. The upper levels (anything above the ground floor) of the Tower are blocked off by iron gates that blocks the stairs going up. Two **Red Plume patrol** stand guard at each gate. The gates are arcane locked and require a set of thieves tools and a successful DC 35 Dexterity check to unlock. In addition, there is a 1-in-4 chance that the lock of a given gate is also trapped with a **poisoned needle**. Detecting the trap requires a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check and a set of thieves' tools and a successful DC 15 Dexterity check to disarm. If the trap is not disarmed, it is trigged when the door is unlocked without a key (+7 to hit, 1 piercing damage and 11 (2d10) poison damage).

Wandering the corridors is likely to attract the attention of a patrol of four **Red Plume patrols** who are very curious about where the characters might be going. If the characters are not quick with an excuse, they may blow their cover (see Getting Caught sidebar, above). If the characters manage to bypass the gates, the patrols here are largely increased; there is a 1-in-4 change of running into a cohort of four **Red Plume patrol** and a **guild mage** every 10 minutes. If caught, they are escorted back downstairs. The upstairs is a winding maze of bedchambers, storage closets and administrative offices.

4. THE CHAMBERLAIN'S OFFICE

If a character wishes to sneak into the office of Malkyn Grenefeld they must make a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) check in order to avoiding alerting a patrol of Red Plumes. If caught the character is brought back to their station to continue working.

If successful they find the office.

You are able to find your way to the Office of Chamberlain Malkyn Grenefeld. A patrol of two **Red Plume patrol**s are just turning down another corridor as you find the door. The door is locked.

A successful DC 15 Dexterity check and a set of thieves' tools is required to unlock the door. Once inside, a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check allows the character to find an official letter from the leaders of Damara confirming the meeting between them and the First Lord a week from now in Yûlash.

5. The Hallways

At some point, a character may head down one of the many hallways to deliver a message or a drink, or just out of a need to be nosey. If so, they see a beautiful woman dressed in colors matching the First Lord's colors moving quickly (and sneakily, from the looks of it) down the hall away from the party. Unbeknownst to the character, this woman is Thessaly Malaeda. She looks behind her to see if anyone is watching her as she ducks around the corner. If no one ventures out into the hallways, a character working or mingling in the Ballroom notices her leaving the ballroom in what appears to be a hurry.

Following the woman is relatively simple. Doing so without being noticed, however, requires a successful DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth) check. If noticed, the woman alerts a nearby Red Plumes soldier who quickly helps the character find their way back to their assigned station. If the character resists or makes a scene, they risk being discovered (see Getting Caught sidebar, above).

If the character is successful, however, they are able to follow the woman into a remote part of this floor of the Tower. The character finds her speaking into what appears to be a highly-polished stone. Read or paraphrase:

"We are nearly done. This man will bring terror onto the nonhumans once I am killed. His true nature will be revealed and he will be yours."

With that, the woman crushes the stone in her hand (with surprising ease) and rushes down another hallway back toward the party.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT

About two hours into the party, the heralds call the guest inside the ballroom for First Lord Torin Nomerthal's speech.

Trumpets sound and the roar of the crowd settles as First Lord Torin Nomerthal stands, removes his mask and moves forward to address his guests. Removing their masks beside him are Garos the Just, Torgrave Needlebaum, Malkyn Grenefeld, and two people that look alarmingly similar to one another. One is a man, and the other a woman. Both are handsome with strong, sharp features and striking, violet eyes. The woman is wearing clothes in colors that match those worn by the First Lord and her hand is twined lovingly around his arm.

All characters are present at this announcement. If they like they are able to find each other and trade things they have learned.

If any of the characters witnessed Thessaly in the hallway sending the message (see The Hallways, above) they immediately recognize her. Similarly, if the characters investigated the dead body in the sewers, they recognize Davon Malaeda as looking strikingly familiar to the man who they found dead in the sewers.

The First Lord starts to speak, "Thank you everyone for joining me in celebrating Midsummer. Your support throughout the year has remade Hillsfar into the great city it once was. Free from the vermin that were allowed to live among us, our city grows its trading power by the day. Hail, to a prosperous Hillsfar!" He raises his glass as does the rest of the room as they respond, "Hail Hillsfar!"

Without warning, a guest tears off their mask revealing a slender male elf. With astonishing speed, the elf draws a dagger from within its sleeve and whips it towards the First Lord.

There is a flurry of activity, and a heartbeat later, the First Lord is on his knees cradling the still body of Thessaly; the hilt of a pearl-handled dagger protruding from her chest. Malkyn--her eyes set firmly on the First Lord--quickly presses her way through the crowd and leaps upon Torin Nomerthal's back. She shouts a single, frantic word and both she and the First Lord disappear from sight.

Then the screaming begins.

The room erupts in chaos. Red Plumes rush the First Lord. The guests rush the door. The laborers rush the tables and begin pocketing the silver. However, in the din, both Davon and Thessaly have vanished. When the crowd clears, the assassin is dead; having been run through by a pair of Red Plume guards.

If the characters do not notice or seem to care, the First Lord's disembodied voice can be heard over the cacophony: "Lieutenant! Find my beloved! He took her! He took her!" The First Lord and Malkyn are invisible, and she is dragging him away to safety. Locating the First Lord is nigh impossible; doing so requires a successful DC 25 Wisdom (Perception) check due to the sheer number of people in the room. The abundance of noise forces the check be made with disadvantage. If located, Malkyn uses her first turn to teleport away with the First Lord.

FLIGHT OF THE INCUBUS

Finding Davon requires a series of ability checks. Let the characters be creative here. Aside from a simple Wisdom (Perception) check, a character may attempt a Charisma (Intimidate) check to force everyone to drop to the ground revealing a closing door. Another character might perform an Intelligence (Investigation) check and notice small drops of blood leading towards a curtained-off section of the Tower. Assign DCs as you see fit and reward creativity.

However the characters manage to accomplish it, they end up in the garden in the rear of the Tower. If the characters were forced into combat with the Red Plumes after the attack on the First Lord's life, both Davon and Thessaly are gone; having made their escape via the sewers.

Otherwise, read or paraphrase:

The corridor you were following empties into a placid garden in the rear of the Tower of the First Lord. At the other side of a modest clearing, Davon tugs at something on the ground while the body of Thessaly lies still beside him.

Davon has carried Thessaly's "body" to the garden where they arranged to escape via the sewers. In an attempt to avoid arousing suspicion, Thessaly is feigning death.

If you feel the characters role-played exceptionally well and found the pair quickly, consider granting the characters surprise.

Either way, read or paraphrase:

The man turns and sees your approach. He hisses a word in a strange tongue and the woman lying beside him jerks to her feet in alarm.

The man and woman embrace and share a passionate kiss. They part and Davon touches the wound on Thessaly's torso. "I will be fine," she says, wincing.

Thessaly and **Davon** are here, trying to make good their escape.

Davon tears at his flesh and clothing; rending them both away in bloody, tattered scraps until a fiendish creature stands before you-complete with leathery wings, horns, and a tail.

On his turn, Davon shapechanges back into his natural form. The sight of watching Davon shapechange is disturbing enough to require the character to make a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or gain a level of madness. On his next turn, Davon uses *etherealness* and flees the combat.

ETHEREALNESS

While on the Ethereal Plane, the fiend can only affect and be affected by other creatures on that plane. Creatures that aren't on the Ethereal Plane can't perceive it and can't interact with it, unless a special ability or magic has given them the ability to do so.

The fiend ignores all objects and effects that aren't on the Ethereal Plane, allowing it to move through objects it perceives on the plane it originated from.

Shortly after he disappears, four **guards** enter the garden from the corridor that the characters just exited. Seeing Thessaly-her chest covered with blood-they order the characters to surrender, and ready their action to attack with a ranged attack in case the characters refuse. Each guard carries two spears.

In combat, Thessaly fights with a slender, pearl-handled dagger–heavily stained with her own blood (add the following attack entry to the succubus's stat block). She does not assume her natural form unless she is reduced to 0 hit points. If Thessaly successfully uses *draining kiss*, the Red Plume guards cry out in shock and alarm and become hostile to the succubus.

Dagger. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter. These are not cumulative.

- Very weak party: Remove the guards; replace Thessaly with 1 fiendish doppelganger.
- Weak party: Remove the guards.
- Strong party: Replace guards with Red Plume patrol.
- Very strong party: Replace 2 guards with 3 Red Plume patrol and 1 Guild Mage

DEVELOPMENT

A cohort of four **Red Plume patrol** arrives in the garden 1d6 + 5 rounds after combat begins. If the characters are still here and the Red Plume guards are hostile to Thessaly (having seen her perform her *draining kiss*), they engage in combat with the fiend. Otherwise, if the characters have slain the fiend, the soldiers are aghast at the sight of its corpse.

They demand that the characters stay put while they

fetch the Seneschal and leave one soldier to mind that they do so.

Escaping. The characters can make their escape (via the sewer grate that the fiends were plotting to use to do likewise, if they so desire). They should be reminded that discretion is important here, and their mission is to avoid rousing suspicion; escape is probably the best option.

If they attempt escape, the soldier shouts in alarm, but does not give chase into the sewers. The characters are able to escape the city.

Waiting. If they stay behind, the Seneschal arrives a few minutes later, sweaty-of-brow and out of breath. If all of the characters are still disguised, he awards them with a purse containing 10 gp and thanks them for their service. He also asks that they remain silent on the events that occurred. If any of the charaters are nonhumans and no longer disguised, he blows a whistle and an additional group of four Red Plume patrol arrive whom he orders to escort the characters to the city's gates—providing no reward.

Treasure

Thessaly wears 98 gp worth of jewelry. The dagger she wielded is a silver dagger, and is worth 150 gp. The dagger can be kept as treasure or sold by the characters.

Conclusion

The characters can easily escape into the sewers through the grate. Isthana meets them down there and helps lead them out of the city. The characters take the information they gathered to Isthana and she thanks and pays them. She asks them to stay close. Their services may be needed in the plan they have planned for the First Lord and his entourage.

MADNESS

At the best of times, the Underdark is a bizarre, alien, and inhospitable world, but the influence of the demon lords has transformed it into a domain of madness and chaos. *Faerzress* acts as a catalyst, spreading the demon lords' madness throughout the Underdark.

A creature's madness level starts at 0. When the creature fails a madness saving throw, its madness level increases by 1, and the creature immediately suffers the level's effect (as determined by rolling on the Short-Term Madness, Long-Term Madness, or Indefinite Madness table in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, as appropriate). When the effect ends, the creature's madness level doesn't change. Any time the creature's madness level increases, it suffers the effect of the new level.

If a creature with level 3 madness fails a madness saving throw, its madness level becomes 1. In this way, characters can potentially accumulate multiple forms of madness. If a character accumulates a form madness that they are already suffering from, reroll until a new result is reached.

Bouts of short- and long-term madness can be cured as described in the *Dungeon Master's* Guide. Given the demonic source of the madness, *remove curse* and *dispel evil* are also effective as cures. A *greater restoration* spell or more powerful magic is needed to cure indefinite madness and also resets a creature's madness level to 0.

In adventures set during Rage of Demons, madness is measured in three levels:

MADNESS LEVEL

Level Effect

- 1 Short-term madness (lasts 1d10 minutes)
- 2 Long-term madness (lasts 1d10 x 10 minutes)
- 3 Indefinite madness (lasts until cured)

INDEFINITE MADNESSES OF GRAZ'ZT

Graz'zt influence on the region has manifested itself in the different forms of madness that characters may develop. Upon reaching madness level 3, instead of rolling on the Indefinite Madness table on page 260 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, roll on the following table and the character gains the madness listed below. Have the player note it on his or her character sheet.

If the roll results in a madness already possessed by the character, reroll until a new result is reached.

- **01-20 Narcissism:** "There is nothing in existence that is more important than me."
- **21-40 Megalomania:** "Anyone who doesn't do exactly what I say does not deserve to live."
- **41-60 Infatuation:** "I will not rest until I have made someone else mine, and doing so is more important to me than my own life or the lives of others."
- **61-80 Hedonism**: "My own pleasure is of paramount importance. Everything else, including social graces, is a triviality."
- **81-100** Abomination: "The mores of society are a lie, meant to shackle free thinking people. I will revel in that which others find shocking or disgusting to demonstrate my rebellion."

REWARDS

Make sure the players note their character's rewards on the adventure log sheets. Give your name and DCI number (if applicable) so players can record who ran the session.

EXPERIENCE

Total up all **combat experience** earned for defeated foes, and divide by the number of characters present in the combat. For **non-combat experience**, the rewards are listed per character. Give all characters in the party non-combat experience rewards unless otherwise noted.

COMBAT AWARDS

Name of Foe	XP per Foe
Swarm of rats	50
Red Plume patrol	200
Guard	25
Guild mage	200
Fiendish doppelganger	700
Succubus/Incubus	1,100

NON-COMBAT AWARDS

Task or Accomplishment

Investigate body in sewers	50
Get hired by Torgrave	50
Find the First Lord's schedule 150	

The **minimum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **450 experience points.**

The **maximum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **600 experience points.**

Treasure

The characters receive the following treasure, divided up amongst the party. Characters should attempt to divide treasure evenly whenever possible. Gold piece values listed for sellable gear are calculated at their selling price, not their purchase price.

Consumable magic items should be divided up however the group sees fit. If more than one character is interested in a specific consumable magic item, the DM can determine who gets it randomly should the group be unable to decide.

Permanent magic items are divided according to a system. See the sidebar if the adventure awards permanent magic items.

TREASURE AWARDS

Item Name	GP Value
Onyx Ring from body in sewers	50
First day's pay	5
Thessaly's jewelry	98
Thessaly's silver dagger	102
The Seneschal's reward	10
Reward from Isthana	50

EYES OF MINUTE SEEING

Wondrous Item. Uncommon

These smoky lenses are set in a brass frame and allow the wearer to read Abyssal. A description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

SCROLL OF DISGUISE SELF

Scroll, Uncommon

A description of this spell can be found in the *Player's Handbook*.

PERMANENT MAGIC ITEM DISTRIBUTION

D&D Adventurers League has a system in place to determine who is awarded permanent magic items at the end of a session. Each character's logsheet contains a column to record permanent magic items for ease of reference.

- If all the players at the table agree on one character taking possession of a permanent magic item, that character gets the item.
- In the event that one or more characters indicate an interest in possessing a permanent magic item, the character that possesses the fewest permanent magic items gets the item. If there is a tie in the total number of permanent magic items owned by contesting characters, the item's owner is determined randomly by the DM.

RENOWN

All factions members earn **one renown** point for participating in this adventure

DOWNTIME

Each character receives **five downtime days** at the conclusion of this adventure.

DM REWARDS

You receive **100 XP**, **50gp**, and **5 downtime days** for running this session.

APPENDIX: MONSTER/NPC STATISTICS

SWARM OF RATS

Medium swarm of Tiny beasts, unaligned

Armor Class 10 Hit Points 24 (7d8 - 7) Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	11 (+0)	9 (-1)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 10 Languages -

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Keen Smell. The swarm has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny rat. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

ACTIONS

Bites. Melee Weapon Attack: +2 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. Hit: 7 (2d6) piercing damage, or 3 (1d6) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.

COMMONER

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 10 Hit Points 4 (1d8) Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Senses passive Perception 10 Languages any one language (usually Common) Challenge 0 (10 XP)

ACTIONS

Club. Melee Weapon Attack: +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

RED PLUME PATROL

Medium humanoid (human), lawful neutral

Armor Class 16 (chain mail) **Hit Points** 27 (5d8 + 5)Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +3, Con +3 Skills Perception +2 Senses passive Perception 12 Languages Common Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The Red Plume patrol makes two melee attacks.

Longsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d8 + 1) slashing damage.

Heavy Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +2 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

Net. Ranged weapon attack: +3 to hit, range 5/15 ft., one creature. Hit: A large or smaller creature hit by a net is restrained until it is freed. A creature can use its action to make a DC 10 Strength check, freeing itself or another creature within its reach on a success. Dealing 5 slashing damage to the net also frees the creature.

REACTIONS

Parry. The **Red Plume patrol** adds 2 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the **Red Plume patrol** must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

GUARD

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 16 (chain shirt, shield) Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2) Speed 30 ft.

STR DEX CON INT WIS CHA 13 (+1)12 (+1) 12 (+1)10 (+0)11 (+0) 10 (+0)

Skills Perception +2 Senses passive Perception 12 Languages any one language (usually Common) Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Actions

Spear. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage.

GUILD MAGE

Medium humanoid (any race), lawful neutral

Armor Class 11 (14 with mage armor) Hit Points 22 (5d8) Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +5, Wis +3 Skills Arcana +5, History +5 Senses passive Perception 11 Languages Common, Draconic, Dwarvish, Elvish Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Spellcasting. The guild mage is a 4th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The guild mage has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): fire bolt, mage hand, shocking grasp 1st level (4 slots): mage armor, magic missile, shield 2nd level (3 slots): misty step, scorching ray

Actions

Dagger. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

FIENDISH DOPPELGANGER

Medium monstrosity (shapechanger), neutral evil

Armor Class 14 Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16) Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Skills Deception +6, Insight +3 Condition Immunities charmed Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11 Languages Common Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Shapechanger. The doppelganger can use its action to polymorph into a Small or Medium humanoid it has seen, or back into its true form. Its statistics, other than its size, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

Ambusher. The doppelganger has advantage on attack rolls against any creature it has surprised.

Surprise Attack. If the doppelganger surprises a creature and hits it with an attack during the first round of combat, the target takes an extra 10 (3d6) damage from the attack.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The doppelganger makes two melee attacks.

Slam. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Read Thoughts. The doppelganger magically reads the surface thoughts of one creature within 60 feet of it. The effect can penetrate barriers, but 3 feet of wood or dirt, 2 feet of stone, 2 inches of metal, or a thin sheet of lead blocks it. While the target is in range, the doppelganger can continue reading its thoughts, as long as the doppelganger's concentration isn't broken (as if concentrating on a spell). While reading the target's mind, the doppelganger has advantage on Wisdom (Insight) and Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, and Persuasion) checks against the target.

Succubus/Incubus

Medium fiend (shapechanger), neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor) Hit Points 66 (12d8 + 12) Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)

Skills Deception +9, Insight +5, Perception +5, Persuasion +9, Stealth +7

Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
 Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
 Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal, telepathy 60 ft.
 Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Telepathic Bond. The fiend ignores the range restriction on its telepathy when communicating with a creature it has charmed. The two don't even need to be on the same plane of existence.

Shapechanger. The fiend can use its action to polymorph into a Small or Medium humanoid, or back into its true form. Without wings, the fiend loses its flying speed. Other than its size and speed, its statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

Actions

Claw (Fiend Form Only). Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Charm. One humanoid the fiend can see within 30 feet of it must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be magically charmed for 1 day. The charmed target obeys the fiend's verbal or telepathic commands. If the target suffers any harm or receives a suicidal command, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on a success. If the target successfully saves against the effect, or if the effect on it ends, the target is immune to this fiend's Charm for the next 24 hours.

The fiend can have only one target charmed at a time. If it charms another, the effect on the previous target ends.

Draining Kiss. The fiend kisses a creature charmed by it or a willing creature. The target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw against this magic, taking 32 (5d10 + 5) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Etherealness. The fiend magically enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa.

DM APPENDIX: NPC SUMMARY

This section provided to the Dungeon Master to help keep track of the various NPCs present in the adventure.

Elanil Elassidil (EL-uh-kneel uh-LASS-ih-deel). Female elf. Bard extraordinaire and member of the Harpers.

Isthana. Female Human. Head of the Rogue's Guild in Hillsfar. Currently working with the Harpers. Helps characters get into the city.

Torgrave Needlebaum. (TORE-grave). Male Human. Seneschal, Head of Household for First Lord Torin Nomerthal. Hires characters as servers for the party.

Malkyn Grenefeld (MALL-kinn GRENN-feld). Female Human. Chamberlain for First Lord Torin Nomerthal. Controls access to the First Lord. Member of the Cloaks of Mulmaster.

Guard Commandant Vuhm Yestral (VOOM YES-strill).

Male Human officer with the Red Plumes, the military group charged with the security of Hillsfar. Member of the Lord's Alliance.

First Lord Torin Nomerthal. Male human. The supreme ruler of Hillsfar. Outwardly friendly. Secretly shrewd and cunning.

Thessaly Malaeda (THES-uh-lee may-LIE-duh).

Succubus in disguise of a female human. Lord Torin is courting her. Twin sister to Davon Malaeda.

Davon Malaeda (DAY-vonn may-LIE-duh). Incubus in disguise of male human. Stole of First Lord Torin. Twin brother to Thessaly Malaeda.

RESULTS CODE: JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2016

If you are DMing this adventure during the months of January or February 2016, please show your players this page. The QR code below can be scanned, and will allow them to give feedback and results on the adventure to influence the storyline in the future!

If a player does not have a mobile device, please tell them to head to <u>dndadventurersleague.org/results</u> to enter their results.

