



a DOZEN GUILD LEADERS

BY PHILIP REED

Regardless of the size of the campaign world, your setting should have a handful of guilds operating as power brokers and controlling everything from the local laws to trade between nations. After all, what fantasy city would be complete without – at the very least – a guild of thieves working to steal everything that isn't nailed down?

What follows are twelve guild leaders, individuals who have climbed to places of power either through force, betrayal, wealth . . . or a combination of all three. In one instance, guild leadership is shared, in which case I've presented both halves of the leadership as two separate pages.

*"Guilds have two kinds of regulations. One has to do with external affairs, with what might be called the commercial side of the guild; the other deals with internal matters, such as wages, duration and conditions of apprenticeship, welfare, and obligations to the guild."
– Life in a Medieval City,
Frances Gies and Joseph Gies*

As with other titles in this series, the characters are without game statistics. Instead, I have focused on story elements, as well as (at times) connections to the other guilds, characters, and situations detailed in my writings. These guild leaders seek to maintain control over their respective guilds, and they are unlikely to blindly trust any of the PCs.

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anatomy of a Leader

1. A title, to help set the mood.
2. Name of the guild.
3. Each of the twelve guild leaders include an illustration that you may show to the players.
4. Every entry also includes information on both the leader as well as the guild. Much of this is left loose and open for the game-master to expand on and adapt to suit the specifics of the campaign, but some entries also includes story hooks that could be expanded into encounters or – at times – complete adventures. Additionally, some of the guilds connect to others, often in a way that sets the stage for conflict.



1 **Walpurga Scheidel** 2 GUILD OF WARLOCKS

In some of the smaller villages of the lands, the warlock is a misunderstood master of the arcane arts who is often considered to be an evil, terrible agent of the demons of the hellish realms. The guild of warlocks works against that stereotype.

As leader of the warlocks' guild, Walpurga Scheidel has devoted herself to changing the misconception that warlocks are evil servants of demons and devils. She uses a percentage of the guild's funding to assist the poor of the city, feeding and clothing them in the summer months and housing some of them in the guildhall in the winter months. Not all members of the guild agree with her community outreach efforts, and a faction within the guild is taking action to oust Scheidel from her position as leader of the guild.

Scheidel is well aware of some within the guild feeling that he is wasting their coin by helping others, but the women is unwavering in her insistence that the guild do what it can to change the minds of those who do not understand that the guild can be a force for good in the city.

She has forged an alliance with the bruisers and is using some of their members as muscle, guards who work with her and her allies in an attempt to continue helping the poor as she seeks to defeat those who oppose her from within the halls of the very guild that she leads.

The adventurers could find themselves wrapped up in the conflict within the guild in a number of ways. Perhaps one of the PCs is a bruiser who gets the party hired on to assist Scheidel's efforts, or maybe a player character warlock is called back to the guild to participate in a vote of no confidence as the guild turns against itself.

Regardless of how they get involved, so long as they are on the winning side in the conflict, the party will find the guild of warlocks to be a powerful resource in future adventures.

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USING THE LEADERS

As with many of the **A Dozen...** entries that detail characters, all of the guild leaders that follow are presented as loose collections of ideas that are meant to inspire encounters and adventures of your own design.

There are no game statistics, and I think these characters will work best in your campaign if they are never brought into a combat situation. They should operate outside of and above the common daily activities of the city and instead be used as background characters who the PCs may hear of, but are unlikely to meet.

When interacting with any of the described guilds, the players' characters should deal with lower-level members of the guilds, men and women who answer to the leaders who appear on the following pages.

Before allowing a member of the party to join one of these guilds, please take time to think through how their membership in the guild could play into the overall campaign. Perhaps the guild becomes the party's patron of a sort, assigning them missions and providing support in the form of a place to stay, meals, and the occasional bit of gear. Or, just maybe, the guild plays an even heavier role in the campaign and all of the members of the party – regardless of class – become guild members who must both pay their annual dues and follow the instructions of the guild's leader.

Of course, you may also find that the guilds and the leaders fit your campaign best when they're used as background flavor. This means that any of the hooks described are little more than rumors to share during play.

BORIS maneV

GUILD OF CLERICs



Leader of the clerics' guild, Boris Manev does all that he can to uphold the guilds' most important rule: all good and neutral-aligned clerics, regardless of their chosen deity, are welcome to join the guild.

Manev is a trustworthy follower of the God of Suns, devoting his life to spreading the word of his chosen deity. Within the guildhall itself, Manev does not preach the word of the Suns; the man is dedicated to his position as guild leader and sets an example he wishes other members to follow: no preaching within the hall.

Once outside of the guildhall, when not on guild assignment, Manev can be found at the Temple of Suns in the city where he is the highest ranking cleric. The man works constantly, dividing his time between his faith and his duty to the guild. He is honest, trustworthy, and will do everything within his power to assist fellow guild members regardless of their chosen faith.

The guild welcomes new members who pay a 100 gold annual membership fee. There are guildhalls in some of the largest cities of the land where members may stay at no charge for up to 30 days without question. The guildhalls offer meals, give clerics a place to trade knowledge with their peers, and each guildhall is a safe haven for members. Those who are not members of the guild are not permitted to enter the guildhall except in the most dire of times.

"Cities, towns, and sometimes even large villages provide the setting for highly interesting, informative, and often hazardous affairs and incident."

*– Gary Gygax,
Advanced Dungeons & Dragons Players
Handbook (First Edition)*

IDOIA BATESTA

GUILD OF ASSASSINS

As the leader of a secretive, illegal guild that is constantly at risk of being discovered and disbanded, Idoia Batesta is always ready to flee the city and abandon her place as the head of the assassins' guild. The woman keeps a safehouse deep within the city's slums where she has hidden supplies, gold, and weapons so that she will have resources if she is ever forced to run.

The assassins' guild operates out of the basement of The Glowing Star, one of the city's many taverns along the waterfront. The owner of the tavern is a former assassin who has maintained a close relationship with the guild; those in the know will visit the tavern if they find themselves in need of the services that only an assassin can provide.

The guild is much smaller than it once was, with fewer than two dozen members in good standing. A crackdown by the city watch as well as the king's guard led to the capture and execution of many assassins over the last decade, and Batesta has chosen to keep the guild in the shadows rather than try to refill its ranks with new assassins. The guild leader thinks that it is better that those in command of the city and the surrounding lands think that the guild was destroyed and no longer operates in the city.

For that reason, one of Batesta's most important rules for members is that no assassinations may be carried out within two days' ride of the city. If any member – or non-member, for that matter – breaks this rule, Batesta will personally murder the one who chose to ignore her ruling.

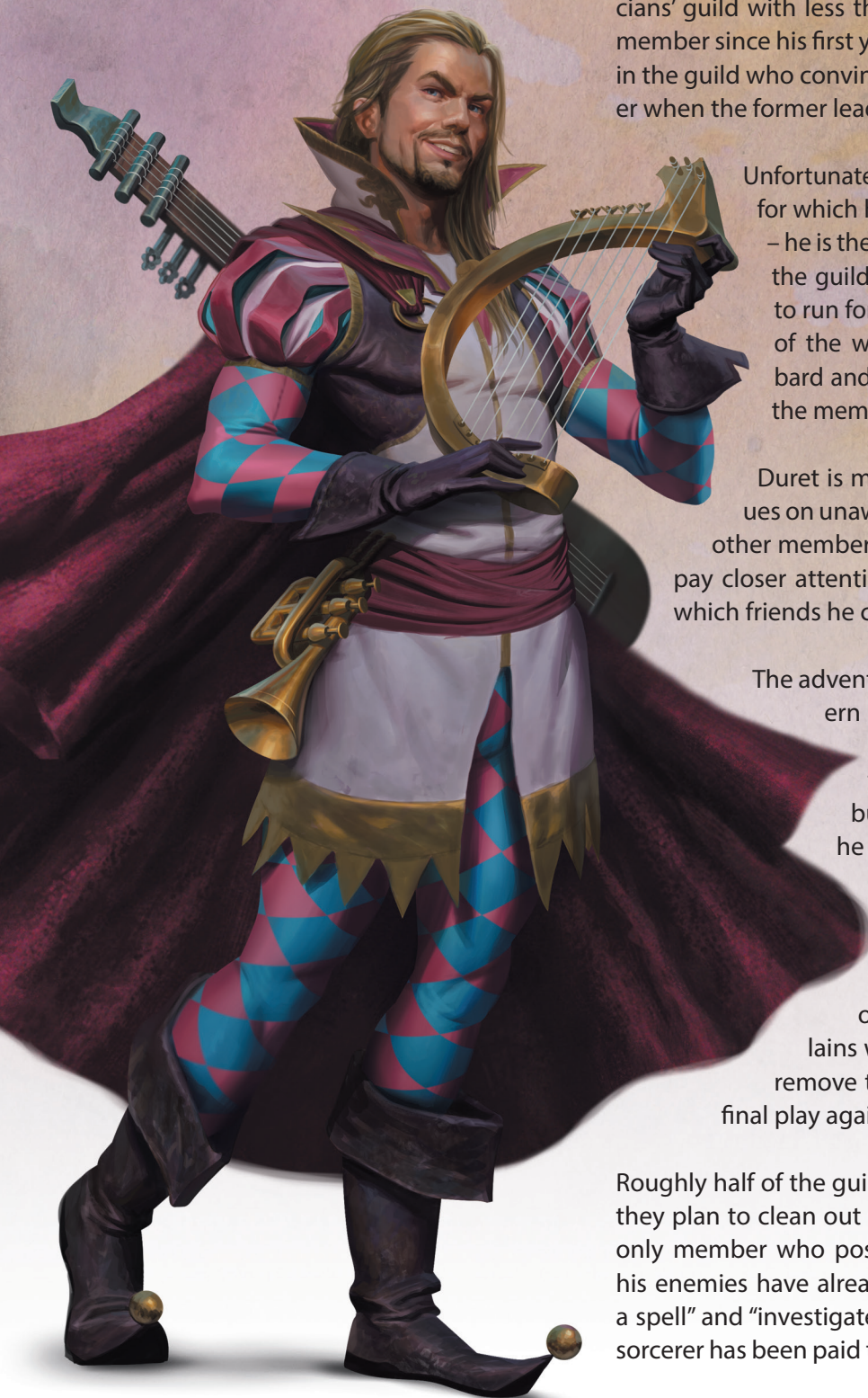
The remaining members are rarely all in the city at once, with most of them returning to the guildhall only once each year to pay the 1,000 gold membership fee and to collect whatever jobs may be waiting to be fulfilled. The only member who is always in the city is Batesta; she is also the only one who may break the "no assassinations" rule whenever she wishes. She has not broken the rule, though, and has instead spent her days plotting revenge against the city watch.



FLORIAN DURET

GUILD OF MUSICIANS

A talented, experienced musician skilled at playing several different instruments, Florian Duret is the newly-elected leader of the musicians' guild with less than two weeks in the job. Duret has been a member since his first years as a traveling bard, and it was his friends in the guild who convinced him to run for the position of guild leader when the former leader died of old age.



Unfortunately for Duret, he has been backed into a role for which he is not qualified and – even worse than that – he is the unwitting pawn of forces intent on siphoning the guild of its treasures. Those who convinced Duret to run for leadership are not his friends; they're rogues of the worst sort who have manipulated the young bard and they plan to set him up to take the fall once the members realize that the guild's treasury is empty.

Duret is more musician than politician, and he continues on unaware of the danger that he is in. It is only when other members of the guild warn the man that he starts to pay closer attention and realizes that he is no longer sure of which friends he can trust . . . which "friends" mean him harm.

The adventurers are approached by Duret at a local tavern or inn where he outlines all that he knows and asks for their help. He has no valuables to give them in exchange for their services, but he promises that if they help him – and if he survives whatever plot is clearly in motion – then he will do what he can to aid them in their future exploits.

If those in the guild who oppose him find out that Duret has met with the PCs, the villains will take action against the party and seek to remove them from the stage before they make their final play against Duret and the guild.

Roughly half of the guild's 40 members are involved in the plot and they plan to clean out the treasury one day very soon. Duret is the only member who possesses the key to the locked chamber and his enemies have already hired a dishonest sorcerer who will "cast a spell" and "investigate" the theft once it has been uncovered. The sorcerer has been paid to finger Duret as the criminal when it is time.

CLAUDETTE JACCOUD

GUILD OF INQUISITORS

The inquisitors' guild is feared by many, including those who have nothing to fear from the vigilant and – at times – overzealous inquisitors. Tasked with seeking out and destroying corruption in its many forms (both arcane as well as mundane), the inquisitors' guild operates in all of the largest cities of the land. Members of this guild are given a wide berth and each possesses – perhaps not legally, but definitely in the eyes of many citizens – broad and expansive jurisdiction regardless of where they may operate.

Claudette Jaccoud, leader of the inquisitors' guild, is first and foremost a warrior who will not allow for any corruption to go unpunished. Unfortunately for many, Jaccoud sees the influence of corruption everywhere that she looks; even the smallest of crimes (such as a starving child stealing bread) is considered a vile act that must be brutally punished. Jaccoud, as well as many members of the guild, believe that allowing one to go unpunished leaves the gate open for even more terrible sins in the future.

Jaccoud and the guild are extreme in their punishments to the point of excess. Steal? Lose the hand that steals. Lie? Lose the tongue that lies. The inquisitors' guild is not to be crossed and they will not be stopped in their mission to root out and destroy corruption in all its forms.

At times, the guild members come up against the proper and legal authorities of a city. The guild has learned to stand aside when the town watch or the city guard step in to handle a situation, but those members witnessing the event will shake their heads in disapproval and make it clear to the watch that they do not approve of the guards' leniency.

The guild does not take on new members lightly, and any member who is proven to have committed an act of corruption – no matter how small – is sentenced to death by the guild.

The guild is aging out of existence, with the youngest member forty years of age. The guild is likely to fade away and be forever lost if they do not start taking on new members at more than the rate of one every year or two. This is unlikely so long as they remain extreme in their beliefs.



samuel kirchner

GUILD OF BRUISERS



Taking his place as one of the guild's leaders after the death of his father, Samuel Kirchner works alongside his sister, Gretel Kirchner, to protect the guild's members and to defend his father's legacy.

Formed five decades ago by Bruticus Kirchner, the bruisers' guild is a recognized guild that is respected by many in the city and has been known to assist the town watch in times of great need. While the bruisers are not aligned with the town watch or officially part of the city authority, it is not uncommon for guild members who find themselves in a tough spot to get immediate support from watchmen.

Samuel and his sister gained the loyalty of the guild members long before the death of their father, and none within the guild would dare question the honesty and goals of Samuel or his sister. In fact, the two have worked with the guild for their entire lives and most members of the guild would give their souls to save the children of Bruticus Kirchner.

The bruisers' guild works with many different guilds throughout the city, with members being hired as bodyguards and enforcers from time to time. The guild also trades member time for support; they have been known to guard the clerics' guildhall in exchange for healing magics, protect the warlocks' leadership, and even assist the inquisitors in chasing down known criminals. The bruisers are not trusted by the thieves or the assassins, though, and bruiser members will not work willingly with known members of those two guilds.

The bruisers' guild operates out of an older town watch barracks that was given to Bruticus Kirchner and his men twenty years ago after the guild helped the watch to stop an orc raiding party from destroying the city. The barracks complex had been left behind and was vacant – the watch had moved into a newer barracks and no longer needed the old one – so the gift, while generous, was also a way for the city to put empty buildings to good use.

In addition to working as guards, the members of the guild also manage a gladiator arena where the members engage in battle and earn gold from those who pay to watch the event. None of the combats are to the death, and most use only blunt weapons and/or hand-to-hand combat. The arena is for training and entertainment only; the guild has no desire to see their members kill each other for sport or to make the wealthy of the city happy.

GRETEL KIRCHNER

GUILD OF BRUISERS

While her brother, Samuel, is often considered to be the face of the bruise-ers' guild, it is Gretel Kirchner who is most like her father and the one planning the guild's future. Gretel is every bit the trained warrior that her brother is, capable of defeating many in one-on-one battle, and she is not one to be underestimated in a fight. The woman rarely enters the guild's arenas these days (unlike her brother, who chooses to fight in the arena at least a few times each month), but when she does it is an event that generates even more revenue than most nightly battles.

In her late teens, after being trained by her father and other members of the guild, Gretel set off on her own and lived the life of an adventurer while her brother remained behind and fought as a gladiator. The three years that Gretel spent on the road, exploring forgotten dungeons and fighting monsters of all shapes and sizes, were when she learned more about the world and gained a respect for her father's guild. She learned that might doesn't always equal right, and she now does what she can to train the bruise-ers' guild members to be honest, just, and to understand that they must use their skills and strength to protect those weaker than themselves.

It takes something major to draw Gretel from her city these days; she prefers to remain near the guild headquarters and lets her brother handle any work that requires traveling outside of the city gates. At all times, despite her insistence that it isn't necessary, Gretel is accompanied by two guards who would do anything to protect her if she were attacked by enemies.

Gretel has recently befriended members of the guild of warlocks and is trading guardsmen for magic rings and healing potions that the bruise-ers need. She can most often be found at the guild headquarters and she insists on personally interviewing any who wish to become members of the bruise-ers' guild.

*"Besides being potential opponents,
NPCs can be an exciting source of
support, information, and intrigue
during an adventure."*

*– Pathfinder (First Edition)
GameMastery Guide*



TALAAL AKENO

GUILD OF ARCANISTS



Members of the arcanists' guild come from the wizard, mage, sorcerer, and other arcane spellcasting professions that are common throughout the lands. The guildhall is a trio of towers, the tallest of which rises thirteen stories above the city and is reinforced by arcane bonds that hold the stones together. Known as Three Towers, the buildings are connected by passages that crisscross beneath the surface streets of the city, allowing members to move from tower to tower without being seen by those on the streets.

Guildmaster Talaal Akeno has led the members of the guild for close to a decade, having been elected years ago after he uncovered the truth behind the previous leader, Zoltan Gaal. It turned out that Gaal was working with another member, Mar Caskjumper, to steal the spellbooks of other members. The two were attempting to catalog every spell ever discovered and had plans to sell the knowledge to younger, inexperienced spellcasters. When Gaal's scheme was revealed, he was captured and sentenced to death. Caskjumper, though, escaped and his current whereabouts are unknown*.

Akeno has been a reliable, honest leader and takes his role as protector of the arcanists' guild seriously. He is accompanied by two bodyguards at all times – skilled warriors who have also been trained as mages, though their magic is not as powerful as that of a dedicated spellcaster – and will fight with any in the city government to secure the necessary rights and privileges the guild needs to continue operating.

The guild has been in a sort of “cold war” with the guild of thieves for seven months now, ever since a band of thieves robbed a guild caravan and made off with a chest of potions, several scrolls, and a valuable spellbook. The two guilds have not yet taken their fight to the streets; for now the engagements have been kept in the shadows, but war is coming.

* See *A Dozen Sinister Rumors*.

menena sahimi

GUILD OF RANGERS

The rangers' guild headquarters was once a watch tower on the outskirts of the city, long before it grew into the sprawling metropolis that it is today. As the city expanded in size, and the citizens felled trees and cleared the land to make room for construction, what was once the outermost point of the city became a near-central location. Over the decades of expansion, the rangers who manned the watch tower kept it as a base of operations and continued to improve on the building. It is now a five-story structure and many of the city have no idea that it was once a vital part of the city's defenses.

Elected to the position last month, Menena Sahimi has been a member of the guild for seven years and has spent most of her time in the forests outside of the city. She took part in the Battle of Goblinridge, where she slaughtered over a dozen goblins and cut off a force that was intent on skirting their way around the woods to attack the defenders from behind. She is respected by many within the guild and has a reputation as a fair warrior and trustworthy friend of many in the guild.

Sahimi is no politician, and her closest friends worry that guild leadership will require more subtlety and diplomacy than she is able to stomach. Sahimi prefers to be direct with everyone; already, her confrontational nature has angered the fishers and some in the guild are working behind the scenes to appease the fishers and salvage the friendly relationship the guilds have shared for the past year.

Sahimi and the rangers' guild are taking action to combat the growing evil outside of the city. Over the last few months, something has led to an increase in monster attacks on the roads that pass through the woods, and Sahimi has now signed a bounty offering rewards to those who bring in proof of killing the most vile and evil of the monsters of the wood. The rewards range from a few gold for the head of a goblin to 500 gold for a minotaur head; the GM should use judgment when setting the values for various beasts.



DIWAN, KEEPER OF SKULLS

GUILD OF CORPSEHANDLERS

Before moving into the city six years ago, Diwan lived in the village of Woodfall* where he was a member of the village's guild of necromancers.

While living in the village, Diwan learned much about handling the remains of the dead and gained a respect for necromancy unlike that shared by many who practice the art. Members of the Woodfall necromancers' guild only animate the corpses of those who have agreed – before death – to return as a skeleton.



The corpsehandlers' guild is relatively new, formed just a few weeks after Diwan moved into the city and as soon as he realized that there was not a guild of necromancers in the city. Because of the negative opinion that many have for the evil art of necromancy, Diwan registered his guild with the city as the "guild of corpsehandlers" and the public image of the guild is that they deal with burying the dead.

In truth, the guild is a collection of member necromancers and grave robbers who work together to find fuel to power the necromantic studies of the guild's many members. Diwan insists that any necromancy practiced in the city use only those bodies that, before death, signed a permission letter . . . but he has no problem with members taking bodies outside of the city limits to animate the dead.

The guild has been slipping in the recent months, with members getting sloppy when dealing with corpses and it will only take one mistake for their secret to come out. Diwan has executed two members in the last few weeks who were careless and were almost caught by the town watch; he and his closest advisors are now considering removing several members who continue to make mistakes. It is better to have fewer members – and bring in less in dues – and keep the guild safe than to have members who will reveal the guild's secrets.

Some in the guild of clerics already suspect that the corpsehandlers are something more than simple burialfolk, and the clerics have offered a 200 gold reward to any who can discover the truth about the corpsehandlers. Additionally, the thieves suspect that the corpsehandlers are robbing graves and are about to act against the guild.

* To learn more about the village of Woodfall, please see the "Dark Fantasy Mini Setting" described in the **Woodfall** sourcebook by Lazy Litch.

ALEXANDRE BECHTOLD

GUILD OF THIEVES

Guild leader Alexandre Bechtold has commanded the thieves' guild of the city for four years, setting the guild laws and delivering punishment to members – as well as those who would cross the guild – as duty required. Bechtold is a ruthless, violent man who prefers to kill his opponents and any who go against him and his guild. Rumors claim that he has executed citizens of the city for daring to steal a loaf of bread without being members of the guild; whether or not this is true or simply a story to scare would-be rogues who dare to operate in the city without permission is unknown.

At the moment, Bechtold's most important responsibility is to prepare the guild for war with the arcanists' guild. Seven months ago, a band of rogues – unaffiliated with the thieves' guild – robbed an arcanists' guild caravan and made off with a chest of potions, several scrolls, and what the arcanists have identified only as a *valuable* spellbook. Bechtold has managed to keep the guild's response to the arcanists outside of the light of day, but the anger of the competing spellcasters grows stronger each day and their demands for the spellbook – which Bechtold does not possess – grows louder. It will take only one unfortunate event to lead to total war between the two guilds.

The guild has a loose agreement with the assassins and the two have, at times in the past, worked together when it suits their needs. If war does happen between the thieves and the arcanists, it is likely that Bechtold will offer the assassins' guild a bounty for each slain member of the arcanists' guild. This would be a risky act for the assassins and it is unlikely that the leader of the assassins, Idoia Batesta, will lift her ban on assassinations in the city.

The guildhall is a network of tunnels beneath the city that connect two taverns together, both of which are owned by guild members. The two taverns are six city blocks apart and the guild often uses the tunnels to move supplies – especially blackmarket goods and stolen treasures – from one tavern to the other. The town watch suspects that the guild of thieves is working somewhere in the city, but they have yet to identify who commands the guild or where the thieves may be hiding. The reward for information on the secret location of the guild is now at 200 gold coins; one day soon, a guild member will turn on his companions and sell out the details on the guild's two taverns and the tunnels. On that day, expect the thieves to murder any they suspect . . . and for the guild to move to a nearby safehouse that only the most senior members are even aware of.



WALPURGA SCHEIDEL

GUILD OF WARLOCKS

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NOLAN KAMMACHER

GUILD OF FISHERS

The guild of fishers is a collection of men and women who are most comfortable on the seas, lakes, and rivers of the land, skilled sailors and fishermen and women who choose a peaceful life over one of violence and murder. This isn't to say that the members of the guild are unaware or unprepared for war; far from it, members must deal with aquatic beasts of all sorts and many of their number are skilled warriors who have chosen to leave land behind and enjoy a life of the sea.

Nolan Kammacher is the captain of a sailing ship as well as leader of the guild of fishers, and he is a towering, powerful warrior who is kind, jolly, and will do all that he can to protect others from the evils of the world. Kammacher returns to the city every few weeks to sell his catch, give his crew some time on shore, and to deal with any guild business that may have come up while he was away. The guild employs wizards who can get a message to Kammacher – as well as captains of the others member ships – if there is an emergency.

The guild does what it can to keep out of the politics of the city, focusing guild member efforts on the sea and bringing in fish to feed those willing to pay for the fishers' hard work.

It takes a lot to anger the kind Kammacher, which is why it is so surprising that the rangers have come on the bad side of the guild leader. Mene-na Sahimi, the new leader of the rangers, made the mistake of telling Kammacher that he and his crew were weak and would be incapable of surviving on land. The woman was wrong, clearly, and her inexperience and gruff nature was enough to drive Kammacher to order that members of the fishers' guild stop all business with the rangers. Even now, members of both guilds are working to find a way to mend the relationship and are searching for a way to convince Sahimi to apologize for her words.

If the party find themselves in need of a sailing ship for an adventure, Kammacher is open to working with others so long as they pay for him, his crew, and the time that the ship is needed. I leave the exact rates in the hands of the gamemaster; Kammacher will charge a fair rate (which only the GM can decide as every campaign is different). The fishers can be powerful allies to those who treat them well.

