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XEN'DRIK EXPEDITIONS

The Good Die Young **Covenant of Light Faction Scenario #3** **An Adventure for 3rd Level Characters** **(Scaled for 2nd to 5th Levels of Play)**

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Sources: *Arms and Equipment Guide*, *Secrets of Xen'drik*, *Sharn – City of Towers*

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Adventure Background

It is a dark time for the Church of the Silver Flame in Stormreach. Not only has one of their own been lost to possession and madness, but before the fallen Father's death, his actions unleashed an unknown evil of vast power into the trackless jungles of Xen'drik. In addition, many of their most treasured items of lore have been destroyed, a valuable tome in their care has been stolen, and misfortune seems to hang over the church like a funeral shroud.

In the wake of these tragedies, the deaths of two young wards of the Silver Flame pale in comparison, relegated to a pair of footnotes in the church's history. However, where there are children there are parents, and where there are parents there are concerns more pressing than what dusty libram the Silver Flame may have lost or what ancient spirit may have possessed some half-mad priest. All grieving parents want to know is what happened to their son, and when those parents are nobles from the great city of Sharn, those questions will be answered no matter where they must go or whose life they have to make difficult.

Regrettably, the Church of the Silver Flame had to inform the parents of Flame Father Garris' two young wards about their untimely demises. This was easy in the case of young Mychal; he was an orphan in the care of the Silver Flame. Pyrrin was another matter altogether, as the boy was given over to the Church for education by his landed noble parents.

Lord Alergayn and Lady Revarra d'Vadalis did not take the news of their youngest son's death well. The messenger was sent back by the fastest available means, a trifling matter for the wealthy couple, with a message for the Church in Stormreach: the Lord and Lady would be arriving shortly to conduct their own investigation into the matter. If all was not to their satisfaction, their continued support of the Silver Flame would stop immediately.

Alergayn and Revarra are indeed upset about their son's death, not only because of what happened but also for reasons the Church could not imagine. The elder d'Vadalis have been under siege for months, their progeny and their families disappearing under the most dire circumstances. A mysterious assassin, one that does not seem content with their deaths alone, is stalking Alergayn and his wife. The faceless, utterly silent killer's ultimate goal seems to be the total eradication of their entire branch of the Vadalis family tree.

The assassin may be silent, but its reason for the bloody hunt is not entirely unknown. Lord d'Vadalis knows why a nameless killer stalks his family line; he's known about it his entire life. Alergayn never believed the story his father used to tell about the family curse. It stretched back a hundred years and involved a magical dagger, a daring theft and a far off land: all the elements of a good bedtime fantasy. He did not believe the tale until his first grandson was born and then died, all in the same night.

With the grandson's birth, his line of the family had reached its eighth generation since the time of the story. According to what his father had told him when he was a child, the curse was set to occur when seven generations had passed since the night when his ancestor and three companions stole a quartet of enchanted blades from an ancient vault. The tale went on to say that if seven generations failed to return what was taken, "the thief's blood would die, drop by drop, until none remained". Alergayn believes in the curse now that he, his wife, and his daughter are the only ones left. All their other children are dead; their line of the d'Vadalis house is nearly extinguished.

Though Alergayn suspects that his son's death in Stormreach was tragic but unrelated, he has come to the distant city on a matter of hope. Grieving that he did not believe in the curse sooner, he is here now to save the last three lives in his family – his own included. From Pyrrin's personal effects brought by the Church's courier, Lord Alergayn has discovered a reference to something that might be the original tomb from his father's bedtime fable.

He had originally come here with the intent of going to the vault himself and setting things right, but the reality of Xen'drik is far harsher than a pampered Sharn noble could have imagined. Arriving here and experiencing the oppressive heat, the dense jungle clime, and the comparatively brutal conditions of life in Stormreach has changed Alergayn's mind. He's wise enough to know he'd never survive a trek through the dense emerald land outside the city walls, but he's desperate to save his family.

That's where the PCs come into the story...

Adventure Synopsis

The scenario opens with the PCs sitting in the office of Silver Flame Abbot Krovald, a stout, amiable man with a well-worn, long-suffering expression borne of many years dealing with the outside relations of his church. The PCs have been called here to discuss the nature of a crystal shard discovered with Flame Father Garris at the time of his death. As promised to the shard's finders, the Church was willing to inform the PCs of anything uncovered during its investigation. That disclosure is Krovald's job.

Unfortunately, circumstances are not going to allow the Abbot to do his job very easily this night. Just as he starts to discuss the shard, the door to his office bursts open and two expensively dressed humans barge

in, interrupting Krovald. The Abbot's aide apologizes profusely for the intrusion before being rudely dismissed by the two nobles in question.

These two are Lord and Lady d'Vadalis, the parents of young ward Pyrrin, a boy killed during the same incident that led to the loss of Flame Father Garris. Apparently furious over the loss of their child, they begin railing at the Abbot, making accusations of misconduct, incompetence, and outright corruption in the handling of their son's tragic loss. Abbot Krovald, while a normally controlled man of fifty distinguished years, is taken aback by this behavior and nearly loses his temper at the raging parents.

If the PCs can diffuse the situation through diplomacy or other actions, more of the circumstances behind the parents' appearance can be learned. If not, the PCs are summarily dismissed from the chamber by a very irate Lord d'Vadalis and politely asked to wait outside by the affronted Abbot. A heated discussion occurs in the room either way, but the PCs' actions determine whether they are a part of it or have to hear about it second-hand.

Eventually, the angry Lord d'Vadalis demands to talk with the Abbot alone. In the interests of peace, the Abbot agrees and, even if the PCs have been helpful so far, they are asked to step out into the temple's antechamber along with Lady Revarra d'Vadalis. While still upset, the Lady is far more sedate when not around her reactionary husband. The PCs can get more information from Revarra if they approach her carefully, including a few details about the family's current distress (the loss of virtually every member of their line of the house). Outside, they can also meet Damilla, the Lady's sole remaining child.

Damilla is everything her parents aren't: compassionate, quiet, well mannered, and kind. She happily talks with the PCs even while under her mother's wrathful eye, assuming she is approached appropriately. She abhors rude behavior but has gotten used to it from her father; very little frightens or offends her. If actually befriended, she even admits to being terribly frightened but is acting brave "for her parents' sake".

In one way or another, the PCs are recalled by the Abbot after a short time and asked to indulge him in yet another request by the Church of the Silver Flame. He explains the family's distress and that Lord d'Vadalis seems to believe there is a way to undo the death curse that is killing off his bloodline. If the PCs are willing to act as the Church's representatives, they could save the Stormreach branch of the Silver Flame faith the loss of a very wealthy, if acerbic, benefactor.

Once the PCs accept the mission (and what heroes of the Covenant of Light *wouldn't?*), they are sent to meet with Lord d'Vadalis at their temporary abode in the wealthy district of the city. "Wealthy district" is a slightly misleading term considering the condition of Stormreach, but the house they arrive at is at least clean and well guarded. They are taken to a private room by Lord Alergayn and asked to bear with him while he explains things to them in the detail they deserve.

Lord d'Vadalis's change in tone may suggest to the PCs just how serious this situation is; Alergayn is literally looking at the end of his own life and the lives of those he loves most. Even as arrogant and unpleasant as the man can be, he understands impending mortality all too well and the PCs may be his only hope. As such, he intends to treat them well and reward them handsomely should they succeed.

He tells them the bedtime story his father used to recite during stormy nights back in Sharn, making careful note of all the details that seem to indicate the jungles of Xen'drik. After the tale, he produces a leather-bound book and a dagger wrapped in gray linen. Giving these to the PCs, he explains that the journal belonged to his son Pyrrin and the dagger is the "stolen treasure" from the story. In the journal, there is mention of a place that sounds exactly like the vault where the dagger was stolen. If the dagger is put back, the curse should be lifted and his family should be safe.

Eager for the PCs to leave as quickly as possible, he assigns one of his hired bodyguards to them for protection on their journey and genuinely wishes them a safe journey. He also gives them use of a rented carriage that can see them most of the way to their destination safely. Equipped and prepared, the PCs can begin their mission, going once more outside the gates of Stormreach.

The rest of the scenario is spent traveling to an old ruin in the jungle south of Stormreach. While the passage on foot is slow, there are few incidents aside from an unfortunate approach too close to a nest full of giant serpents. The ruins themselves have an infestation of a different sort: spider-men known as ettercaps. Their lair is built into three trees that surround the entrance to the ancient vault.

A pair of cyclopean pillars, each covered in the webs of a massive spider, bears the verdigris-covered levers needed to open the vault's main door. Once these are cleared and pulled, the PCs can delve into the timeless depths of the caves below Xen'drik. Those with the appropriate knowledge can determine that while the ruins above were made by the giants, these catacombs were worked and constructed by the freedom-fighting elves that overthrew them. As such, there are several traps and pitfalls to contend with before the PCs can reach the end of their journey.

The vault is a round chamber at the heart of the cavernous complex, supported by a large pillar of dark, seemingly corrupted dragonshard. The handles of daggers are found protruding from three of its four main facets. The fourth bears an empty slot just wide enough for the blade of the dagger the PCs are carrying. Though they will almost certainly look for them, the PCs find no traps or wards in the room. Nothing is stopping them from replacing the dagger and ending the d'Vadalis family curse.

Once the dagger is put back, the real danger become apparent. The enchantments on the dagger and the pillar are so old, they fail as soon as the blade is replaced. The crystal and weapons all crumble to dust instantly, their terrible magic ended at last. The chamber, long settled and supported by the column that has just vanished, begins to collapse. The PCs have to flee as quickly as they can, possibly back through traps if they did not disarm them all, or be crushed by the ancient tomb's demise.

The destruction of the catacomb's sets the stage for the bodyguard's heroic sacrifice, saving one of the PCs should they lag behind. The crypt collapses into a deep crater, sparing only the PCs if they stand under the vault's open gate. Nothing remains in the area to threaten them, and the PCs can return home to Stormreach without further incident.

Lord and Lady d'Vadalis and their daughter are grateful for the PCs' aid, and they make their goodwill known to the church. The matter of Pyrrin's death is allowed to pass without dire consequence. The PCs have earned the patronage of a wealthy benefactor in Sharn and the continued appreciation of the Church of the Silver Flame. The Covenant of Light is pleased by their efforts as well, rewarding each one with a special jewel for their *everburning torch* that will make the item's radiance act like real fire whenever the bearer wishes it.

In Stormreach, The Good Die Young, but at least they don't die unremembered...

Troubleshooting

Tone and Mood:

This is a fairly straightforward scenario with a very simple mood: desperation. The story is about a nobleman watching his family die around him over a curse he spent his entire life assuming was just a story. While he is an arrogant and quarrelsome man, be sure to impart through his later words and actions that he has a human side and his true concern is for the lives of himself and his loved ones.

In effect, the Covenant of Light PCs have the chance to show Lord d'Vadalis something he's never seen before – that good people can exist and prosper without the need for wealth, power, or authority. If the PCs behave in a manner befitting heroes, they will have saved more than Alergayn's life. They will have saved his faith and his soul.

Conversation:

There only game mastering issue with this adventure that should be addressed is the amount of dialogue in the first section. If you read it as verbatim, the scenario is certainly going to feel "scripted," since that is how you will be presenting it (i.e. a scripted play). While this is a viable way to run the scenes in question, your players may not appreciate have the adventure read *at* them. It is recommended that you take a few minutes to read through the areas of dialogue, get a feel for the flow of the conversations, and then paraphrase sections to make them feel more natural.

There are parts of the conversations that are presented in **bold text**. These are important points that must be gotten across the players in some way for plot reasons. When paraphrasing, do not skip these sections unless the PCs have done something to keep them from being spoken at all. The **bold text** sections are vital for the completion of *The Good Die Young*; without them, the PCs may not be able to succeed in the mission's objectives or even know what they are in the first place.

Keep in mind that NPC conversation should never be treated as "uninterruptible" unless it is in the scene's explanatory text presented in *italics*. Even then, if the PCs do something that would keep the explanatory items from occurring or finishing, always adjudicate what the PCs have done first. Never allow the module's text to override the importance of the PCs or their decisions; they are the actors for this particular play, not its audience.

NPC Survival:

None of the NPCs in this adventure need to survive. The PCs' actions should be the sole deciding factor of how the story unfolds. Damilla is the only NPC who has to survive to the end of the adventure for the mission to be considered a "success" by the Covenant of Light and the Church of the Silver Flame (though this end denies the PCs one of their story objects: A Grateful Father).

This should not be an issue, however, as there is not any "timed" aspect to the scenario regardless of how convinced Alergayn d'Vadalis believes otherwise. As long as the PCs accomplish their goal of replacing the Talon of Fury back in the Deathstone Pillar, they save the d'Vadalis family entirely.

Surveillance:

Whisper is mentioned in the Introduction in passing but makes no appearance in this adventure. She is currently in Riedra turning over the *Libri Mordahve* and other stolen psychic treasures to her Inspired

masters. While the PCs may have reason to suspect her of the theft, they do not have any opportunity to avenge the Church's losses in this scenario. No one is watching the PCs this time out.

Adventure Start

The PCs begin this adventure gathered in the office of Abbot Krovald, an older man nearing his fiftieth year with a stout build and thinning grey hair. He's a staunch supporter of the Covenant of Light and his church's relationship with that faction, which makes him happy to take over the role of Silver Flame liaison to the Covenant following the death of his predecessor, Flame Father Garris. He liked the Flame Father very much, and while his loss is troubling on many levels, the good work Garris performed deserves to be continued.

That goal has prompted him to move quickly on a promise given to the Covenant of Light a short time ago, even in the midst of the Church's recent tragedies. Some of these the PCs likely know about the death Garris and his wards, the destruction of several valuable tomes and treasures in the Flame Father's home, and the release of some unnamed evil into the wilds of Xen'drik.

Other troubles have occurred that the PCs are not aware of, though they will be soon enough. When the PCs are gathered and ready to begin the scenario, read or paraphrase the following text:

The chairs in the office of Abbot Krovald are remarkably uncomfortable; blocky hardwood construction and thin, stiff padding combine to remind those sitting that many in the Church of the Silver Flame lead an austere lifestyle. The accommodations of the Abbot's office serve to reinforce that opinion. There is nothing in this room that does not have to be here. No extravagance exists, nothing is out of place, and the air of the chamber is one of reflection and study only.

Then again, you are not here for relaxation or a social call. The Abbot has asked for you to attend him in his office on a matter of some serious import. A crystal recovered from the site of Flame Father Garris' tragic demise has finally been analyzed and its secrets deciphered. In keeping with the Church's promise to your faction, you've been gathered to learn what mysteries the crystal contained.

Finally joining you in his office, the Abbot apologizes for his tardiness and thanks you for making this late-night meeting. In one hand, he bears the spherical crystal shard in question. In the other, he clutches a sheaf of silver-edged parchments bound in white ribbon.

"We have a great deal to discuss, Covenant friends. Shall we get down to it?"

The Abbot is friendly enough, though a bit short and to the point. He is obviously troubled and should be role-played as such. If the PCs ask him what's bothering him during his discussion, it requires a Diplomacy (DC 15) check to get him to the The Secret below. Otherwise, he insists on forging ahead with the PCs' briefing.

Don't force the PCs to go straight to the Briefing if they want to role-play or talk with the Abbot first. This event does not tend to run long and as such, there is time for character interaction. The Abbot is a busy man, but he enjoys socializing as well; a few minutes spent off-topic is not offensive to him as long as he knows he will be able to dispense with business afterwards. (Of course, he is *not* going to be able to finish the Briefing, but he doesn't know that yet.)

If PCs try to get to know Abbot Krovald personally, he has a wife and daughter (Maia and Teliri, ages 36 and 12 respectively) here in Stormreach, he enjoys fishing off the city piers though he is horrible at actually catching anything, and he enjoys listening to choral music, preferably without any form of musical accompaniment.

As a further note, he cannot sing *at all* but believes he can. If he is cajoled into singing for the PCs and they in any way react badly to his horrific voice, the DC to get him to tell them The Secret increase to DC 25.

The Briefing

Abbot Krovald sits down, steepling his fingers and leaning his chin against them as he clears his throat. "As I am sure you recall, the crystal discovered at the site of Flame Father Garris' untimely demise was brought here for safe keeping and study. You were promised an audience when its contents were revealed. The expert we sent for arrived a few days ago and proved most skilled in uncovering the psychic mysteries surrounding that whole horrid affair."

"Without going into too many details, the crystal is what his people call a psionic shard. Think of it like a book without pages, where information can be stored for later access. In the case of a psionic shard, more than just words and pictures can be recorded. Feelings, smells, indeed, anything that can be sensed can be placed within one. It is a most fascinating kind of device, really."

He sighs, obviously realizing that he has strayed from the point. "Be that as it may, this particular shard contained a number of interesting images but few that make any real sense to us of the Silver Flame. The shard is apparently very old and has been through many different hands before finding its way to our vaults."

One set of hands in particular caught the expert's attention, however. Apparently the shard once belonged to a scholar of antiquities and lore, someone who has studied the draconic Prophecies."

He pauses for a sip of water before continuing. "The shard contains a small portion of the Caldyn Fragments, a quatrain involving something here in Xen'drik. The passage our expert uncovered is..."

At this point, have the PCs make a Listen check (DC 14). Success indicates that they hear raised voices and figures approaching the door to the Abbot's office. Krovald automatically makes this check, having been long trained in hearing people before they barge in and interrupt his studies. A few moments later (long enough for any forewarned PC to act as if in a surprise round), the study door flies open and a pair of figures stride in without announcing themselves. Turn immediately to **Part One: Unexpected Guests**.

The Secret

If the PCs convince Abbot Krovald to reveal what's troubling him, his voice takes on a hushed, almost conspiratorial tone and he leans closer to them across his desk. He looks troubled at what he is about to reveal but, in truth, he believes the Covenant of Light needs to know what has happened.

Keep in mind that the Secret should be told *before* Krovald proceeds with the Briefing. There will be no time for the Secret afterwards because the scene moves directly into **Part One: Unexpected Guests**, and once the d'Vadalis nobles arrive, Krovald is in no mood or position to tell the PCs much of anything outside of what he must.

"The Church is trying to keep what I am about to tell you an internal secret. Please do not reveal this information to anyone outside this room, even to your superiors in the Covenant. Last night, the temple was broken into and robbed. Several precious items were stolen and though no one was harmed, this is a terrible blow to the Church in Xen'drik.

"Among the lost items, the ones you should be most concerned with are the remains of the diadem that drove Father Garris mad, a few other psychic items recovered from his home, and the Libri Mordahve. It was here for safekeeping while a new scholar was located for its translation. The loss of the Libri is a humiliating mark against the honor of the temple, one I am sure you can understand us wishing to keep hidden while we try to recover the tome."

DM's Information: Whisper has been a busy woman. Between the events of the second Covenant of Light module and the beginning of this one, she has struck in several locations across Stormreach and acquired a number of items for her Inspired masters. In the course of this module, there is nothing the PCs can do about her thefts as she is safely in Riedra for the time being. Be sure to get this across to the PCs if they try to spend too much time investigating the robberies; there are others working on this case and the PCs have other problems to keep them occupied during this scenario.

Once Krovald is finished speaking, he leans back, sips at his water mug, and proceeds to the Briefing as explained above. This leads directly to Part One below.

Part One: Unexpected Guests

The arrival of Lord and Lady d'Vadalis should have the PCs on edge, especially if none of them made the Listen check to hear them coming. Lord d'Vadalis is not subtle when he opens the door, despite the clerical assistant literally hanging off his arm.

The door to the abbot's office flies open with a SLAM as it hits the wall. Standing in the doorway are three figures, two of whom are dressed in expensive fashion and bearing irate expressions. The third is a smaller man in cleric's robes, trying in vain to stop the pair from interrupting Abbot Krovald. He stammers a quick, "My apologies, Abbot! They would not wait!"

The assistant is quite right; Alergayn and Revarra d'Vadalis have no intention of waiting any longer to speak with Krovald. This is evident from their expressions and the fact that regardless of the PCs' reactions, they are ignored completely. The nobles are here to speak with the Abbot, and nothing short of physical attack deters them.

If the PCs do attack the nobles, they are committing assault on unarmed humans without real provocation. Abbot Krovald shouts for the PCs to hold their actions. If the PCs immediately stop their combat, things can be smoothed over by the flustered Abbot (though all further Diplomacy checks with the d'Vadalis will be at a -5 circumstance penalty). If either of the d'Vadalis are actually killed by the PCs, the adventure is over and the PCs involved in the death are removed from play permanently as criminals and murderers. This counts as a PC death and should be recorded as such.

Assuming such unpleasantness does not occur, continue with the text below:

"We have waited far long enough, Abbot, and we will speak with you now!" The words come from the male of the pair, an austere-looking older man in a finely patterned outfit of gray silk and silver accents. The symbol of House Vadalis rests on his finger, quite prominent as he points at Krovald. "We are here regarding the matter of our son and our utter lack of faith in your so-called... investigation!"

The PCs have a chance here to talk first; the Abbot is stunned for a moment by the Lord's words. He had not expected Pyrrin's parents to come all the way from Sharn to Stormreach over the matter of their son's death, and he needs a few moments to collect his thoughts.

Lord Alergayn does not speak to the PCs much, though he quickly and curtly answers questions related to Pyrrin and why they are here. Alternately, his wife (dressed similarly in a dress of expensive storm gray silk) answers these questions if asked, though she prefers to defer conversation to her husband. She is just as upset as Alergayn but not quite as confrontational. The Diplomacy check to get either of them to answer any questions at all at this point is a DC 20 (15 for Revarra). This check only needs to be made once; it remains in effect for the rest of the scene. Any PC bearing a visible dragonmark gets a +5 circumstance bonus, and a PC with a Vadalis dragonmark succeeds at the check automatically.

Even if the PCs do get either of the nobles to speak, they have time for only two questions before the Abbot recovers enough to interject.

"Ah... Lord and Lady d'Vadalis. It is a pleasure to have you both here, though I expect the passage from Sharn was rough for you on such short notice. Please come in and sit down. I'll be happy to discuss the tragic loss of your son Pyrrin with you. My guests can wait outside for now, yes?"

The Abbot obviously wishes to speak to the nobles alone, but the PCs do not have to leave. Krovald does not force them to vacate his office, though he insists the d'Vadalis be given the two comfortable chairs in front of his desk. If (some or all of) the PCs want to stay in his office, the rest of the scene is run below in **Unpleasant Tidings**.

If PCs do step out, the poor, frantic assistant shows them to a waiting cell where they can meet young Lady Damilla. They also accompany Lady Revarra, as she comes with them to ensure that her daughter isn't left alone with such "rabble." This scene, if it occurs, is noted below in **Meanwhile**.

Unpleasant Tidings

Lord d'Vadalis sits down with an obvious look of disapproval at the sparse furnishings. "I can see our money must be getting put to good works in this barbaric land. Expense certainly isn't being spared to the accommodations, is it?"

Abbot Krovald does not respond to the rhetorical question, instead trying to remain as polite as he can. The following scene is scripted below, but do not feel bound to it. The PCs can and should be allowed to alter things by interjecting and asking questions. The Diplomacy check to get Alergayn to acknowledge the PCs in any way here is DC 15; as before, the check only has to be made once. The same conditions regarding dragonmarked PCs as noted above are in effect.

Keep in mind that Lord Alergayn is a nobleman and truly considers anyone not of the dragonmarked houses to be a lower status of creature. Even if he does deign to speak with such a lesser life form, his arrogance should show through with every word.

Krovald: *"How can I be of assistance, m'lord?"*

Alergayn: *"Well, your church could have been of assistance by keeping my son alive, but that was a complete failure, wasn't it?"*

Krovald: *"You have our deepest condolences on your loss, as my letter..."*

Alergayn: *"Feh! Your condolences do not concern me nor do they erase Pyrrin's loss. My wife and I aren't here to listen to more of the Church's platitudes."*

Krovald: *"I see..." (tries to calm himself before saying something unfortunate) "Then may I ask why you are here, sir?"*

Alergayn: *"The way was spelled out in my return letter to you, Abbot Krovald. I intend to investigate the matter my youngest son's demise personally."*

Krovald: *"You, of course, have that right, sir, but I fail to see where..."*

Alergayn: *"Your failures are well documented, Abbot. That's why I am here."*

Krovald: *"I see..." (tries harder to keep his temper) "Can we be of any assistance to you while you are here? Accommodations perhaps, or the use of our inquisitors?"*

Alergayn: *"We have already acquired a small villa, Abbot, for our stay here. Quite frankly, it doesn't seem like this compound is a very safe place to live."*

Krovald: *"Well...."* (nearly loses his composure)

At this point, allow PCs watching or participating to make a Sense Motive check (DC 15). Success shows that Lord Alergayn is being purposefully abrasive and that Abbot Krovald is about to suffer a serious failure of diplomacy. Any PC that wishes to, whether they made the Sense Motive check or not, can interject now to save face for the Abbot. Something he is very grateful for later in the scene.

If no one stops the Abbot from committing his breach of etiquette, he stands up, slams his hands down on his desk, and shouts, *"Now see here! We loved those boys! Far more, I wager, than the parents that sent them across the ocean and ignored them for years!"*

Almost instantly, the Abbot regrets his outburst and sits down, beet red from both rage and humiliation. Surprisingly, Lord Alergayn does not lose his temper in turn. Another Sense Motive (DC 18) reveals that he is having emotional issues of his own and is too inwardly conflicted to take offense at what Krovald just said. Alergayn just moves on to the next thing he was going to say:

Alergayn: *"As for the Silver Flame's inquisitors, we have already secured the services of your best. Investigator Vendict will be joining my retinue until this matter is concluded to my satisfaction."*

Krovald: *"He... he should be a valuable addition to your investigation. I wish you luck with it and please, if you turn up anything we did not, please inform us."*

Alergayn: *"You'll be given a report along with my family's decision."*

Krovald: *"Decision?"* (obvious confusion)

Alergayn: *"Regarding my further support of this temple. Without my son as a reason to continue tithing to the Silver Flame, I may find there is no good reason to do so."*

Krovald: *"Of course, my lord. As you see fit."* (obvious worry)

Alergayn: *"I think this concludes our meeting. You'll be hearing from me very shortly."*

And with that, Alergayn (and possibly his wife) turn to leave. The Abbot looks more than a little crestfallen, and if the PCs move to depart as well, he gestures for them to stay so he can beg their assistance. If the PCs opt to remain after Alergayn leaves, he gestures for them to approach his desk for the same reasons. Krovald's request to them is covered in the **Abbot's Plea** below.

Meanwhile

Seiffen, the middle aged assistant to the Abbot, shows the Lady d'Vadalis and the PCs to a small waiting room near Krovald's office. The simply furnished room has several places to sit, a table with a bowl of hastily thrown together fruits and finger foods, and a pair of occupants.

The first is a lovely girl with black hair like her mother's and the same intense gaze that Lord Alergayn possesses. This is Damilla, the nobles' daughter and far more pleasant company than either of her parents. She has a winsome smile and no compunctions about inviting the PCs to join her in the waiting cell. While she is slightly less talkative and friendly under the watchful eye of her mother, she is still warm and forthcoming, a welcome change from the icy demeanors of before.

The other occupant is a massive warforged with adamantine plating, a visor faceplate that conceals what few features a warforged normally possesses, a huge shield of similar construction, and a long blade built into the armor of his right forearm. Called "Tower" by those who know him, this warforged is a bodyguard for hire in Stormreach and comes highly recommended. PCs know him by reputation if they can make a Bardic Knowledge or Knowledge (local) (DC 12). Tower is well known for his neutrality and his absolute devotion to a subject once hired to guard them.

In this scene, the PCs can learn several things, but only if they ask questions. Otherwise, an uncomfortable half hour elapses before the Abbot sends them for and the d'Vadalis family departs for their private villa in the Phiarlan house compound. Aside from light conversation, mostly prompted by Lady Damilla, little else occurs.

If the PCs are conversational, however, they can discover the following. Revarra does not speak to the PCs until they accomplish a Diplomacy check (DC 15). All the conditions surrounding these skill checks noted in the scene above still apply, including an automatic success by any other member of her house.

- *While the Lord and Lady are here regarding Pyrrin's death, that isn't the only reason. They are also on the run from something tragic and hope to be safe in Stormreach.* This information is something either Damilla or Revarra can reveal, though neither of them know much more about the danger they face.
- *Pyrrin is not the first child the d'Vadalis have lost. They have had three other children die, all within the last year.* Two sons and one daughter have been killed, each by strangulation, in different parts of Khorvaire. Investigation into the deaths proved fruitless, as the killer(s) has left nothing behind

but the corpses of their victims. Damilla has to provide this information; the Lady Revarra is too emotional about the subject to discuss it.

- *Tower was hired to protect Damilla and her mother.* This could come from anyone in the room. Tower does not talk much but is not adverse to revealing the nature of his employment. His orders are to safeguard the lives of the two female d'Vadalis. PCs may find it strange that Tower's mandate does not cover Lord d'Vadalis himself. (This is because Alergayn now believes in the curse and knows that he'll be the last to die because he bears the stolen dagger. Because of this, there's no point in having Tower guard him too.)
- *The family has been funding the Church of the Silver Flame in Xen'drik for the past two years and is a major source of its income.* Lady Revarra is proud to admit this and may do so even if not prompted should the conversation allow for her interjection. Since Pyrrin was sent here for education and training, part of his fostering agreement was a large monthly stipend given to the church. This money may stop now if Alergayn isn't satisfied with his investigation, and if it does continue, it will only be because Damilla will be staying here in her brother's stead.
- *Damilla is a devout believer in the Silver Flame.* The most religious member of her family, Damilla shares her brother's faith in the Silver Flame and is actually looking forward to staying here and studying at the church. Her parents may not allow it, of course, but if they do she is excited by the prospect. Damilla hopes to become a full priestess and perhaps one day actually commune with the Flame itself.

When this scene has run its course, either because the PCs did not try to gain any information or because they have gained all there is to learn, the assistant comes to the door of the cell and announces that Lord d'Vadalis is ready to depart and wishes his family to accompany him. The nobles and their warforged protector move out of the room, bidding the PCs goodbye if they've gained any sort of friendly rapport. If any of the PCs have been especially charming or friendly regarding Damilla, they get a gentle touch on the shoulder and a whispered, *"Don't tell mother, but I am really frightened... for me and for her."*

Before she can say any more, her mother clears her throat and Damilla quickly leaves the cell in tow.

Once the nobles are gone, Seiffen holds up one hand and shakes his head at the PCs.

"You all sit tight here, please. The Abbot will want to talk with you as soon as he is finished with the Bishop."

From here, move to **The Abbot's Plea**.

The Abbot's Plea

This scene may take place either in the Abbot's office or in the nearby waiting room, depending on where the PCs went during the first part of this encounter. If the PCs split up, Krovald asked those in his office to go to their companions and wait while he speaks with the Bishop on an urgent matter. If the PCs all remained in his office (i.e. skipped the **Meanwhile** scene completely), paraphrase the section below to make the Abbot return to his office instead of the waiting cell.

You do not have to wait long before the door to the cell opens and a very distraught looking Abbot Krovald steps quickly into the room. His hair is a bit disheveled and his expression is one of worry and concern. He looks over each of you and sighs deeply.

"Please forgive me, friends, but I am afraid I must ask a favor of you this night. I'd called you here to do you a service and now I have to beg one instead." He looks like he deeply regrets what he is about to say but, with a slow, calming breath, he continues.

"I have just spoken with the Bishop and he agrees that something needs to be done about Lord Alergayn d'Vadalis. His threat to pull his family's funding is no small one; without his support the church will have to discontinue several public works. We have already tried to entreat his better nature to no avail. He seems to resent anything associated openly with the Silver Flame and at the moment, considering his loss, we can hardly blame him.

"I hate to ask this, but the request comes from the highest levels of our church. Would you agree to go to his compound and offer aid in his investigation? Perhaps you of the Covenant can show him that there is more good to be done here in Stormreach and good reasons to keep supporting us."

Abbot Krovald knows he is asking a lot and it shows. He is pulling at his beard nervously and drumming his fingers on his desk in an absentminded tick. He is earnest in his desire to have the PCs help but knows there is little reason for them to do so other than a sense of civic duty. He is trusting to their feelings of heroism and faith in the Light, an assumption that has left him disappointed in the past.

If the PCs agree, he is overjoyed at their acceptance and assures them that the gratitude of the Church of the Silver Flame will not be meager upon their return. *“Good luck and Flame’s light be with you!”*

Of course, if the PCs don’t agree, he understands and quietly dismisses them from his office after giving them the information they came here for in the first place. He is obviously disappointed in them but he cannot really blame them for not wanting to help. Once they get the Words of the Prophecy, their adventure ends here.

Assuming the PCs agree to help the Abbot and the Church of the Silver Flame, they are dismissed and given directions to the Phiarlan villa rented by Lord d’Vadalis along with a church pass that should get them through the gates of the house compound. The dragonmarked houses keep their compounds under high security; without the church pass, it would very difficult for the PCs to get inside.

Words of the Prophecy

The crystal shard contains, among many other things, a passage from the Caldyn Fragments. This verse is as cryptic as any other quatrain from the elder sage but in its interpretation, a way to manipulate the future might be gained for the Covenant of Light:

“In a place where mists kiss shadows, the lady of twilight laments. Her tears are pearls of envy; her sigh is a breath of hate. Mend the soul shattered, bring pure water to the mere, and herald the divided regent when the moons are bright, blue, and light.”

Abbot Krovald assures the PCs that the church will work on deciphering the prophecy and when some meaning to it is found, their faction will be informed immediately.

One Last Matter: If any PC helped the Abbot save face during his discussion with Alergayn and stepped when the church elder was about to lose his temper, her or she is pulled aside and thanked directly for their actions. The Abbot also hands the PC a *flask of holy water* with his blessing. Up to three flasks can be given in this manner, one to each PC deserving of the reward.

Proceed to the next part of the scenario, **Revelations of Revenge**.

Part Two: Revelations of Revenge

This scene has two sections, a battle the PCs must face trying to get to their meeting with Lord Alergayn and then their discussion with the nobleman himself.

Getting to the Phiarlan compound is not difficult, though getting inside may prove considerably harder. The PCs have no trouble doing so if they received a church pass from Abbot Krovald. Otherwise, it takes a Diplomacy or Bluff check to convince the guards to open the gates and let the PCs inside. Diplomacy requires a good cover story or a dragonmarked PC and has a DC of 20 to be successful. Bluff can be anything plausible but must beat the guard’s Sense Motive check of 18.

Getting in should not be too serious a barrier to the PCs; the purpose of this part of the scene to is show the level of security the dragonmarked houses go to in Stormreach. As long as the PCs encounter the gate checkpoint and have to show their pass or bluff their way inside, the scene has accomplished that task. Don’t make getting inside too much of a trial; if the PCs honestly try to make it into the compound, eventually let them (even if they have to scale the rough-hewn walls and sneak to the villa).

Once inside, the streets are well lighted and very well maintained. A guard patrol of two men every few blocks ensures at least a visible level of security, though they are conspicuously absent when the PCs face their next challenge just outside the rented villa of Lord and Lady d’Vadalis. (This is not a coincidence, of course. There are lots of agendas in Stormreach, including those that don’t take kindly to a new noble suddenly inserting himself in the city’s politics. It is hoped a brutal late-night robbery and vandalism scares the d’Vadalis nobles back to Sharn.)

Greed in the Shadows

The PCs have several ways of encountering this combat, including just literally walking into the middle of it if they decide to approach the villa from behind. If not, a Listen check (DC 18) hears the clink of something small and metallic (this would be Dexter, subconsciously tapping his lock picks together like he does before every job). A Spot check (DC 20) sees shadows from the right corner of the house and may prompt the PCs to investigate. Lastly, animal companions or pets with the Scent ability can, on a successful Track check (DC 18), smell Sinister’s signature cologne in the air and try to wiggle free to investigate.

If the PCs do not detect the rogues by any means before entering the villa, delay this combat until after their meeting with Lord Alergayn. The rogues have no desire to assault the house with city heroes present,

and so they wait for the PCs to leave. On their way out of the villa, have the PC with the highest Spot check see a small shape dart around the far corner of the porch and retreat back into the shadows behind the house. This should be all the lead-in the PCs need to encounter the Night Vipers.

Foes: The Night Vipers are a gang of rogues that prowl anywhere in Stormreach for the right price. While not adverse to killing, they prefer jobs that let them display their other skills. Burglary and espionage interest them just as much as late-night assassinations. Their mission tonight is to break into the villa of Lord and Lady d'Vadalis, steal any valuables they find, and make a terrible mess of the place. The nobles have to be left alive, but any guards in the way are fair game.

The PCs come across the Vipers in the side alcove behind the house. Sinister and Dexter are discussing the plan for the evening with their "troops" and, as long as the PCs are not overtly loud or announce themselves, the gang is taken by surprise. (If they aren't surprised, their positions are the same but they are ready to act instead.) See the Night Assault map in the Appendix for further encounter details.

Shank, Sheer, and Cutty: mixed male and female goblins; hp 5, 5, 5; *Monster Manual* 133

Meerog and Vaashla: mated male and female gnolls; hp 14, 12; *Monster Manual* 130

Dexter: male human rogue 2; hp 12; Combat Statistics

Sinister: male human rogue 2; hp 10; Combat Statistics

Tactics: The Night Vipers practice a combat policy of overwhelming numbers whenever possible. None of them are cowards; even the goblins are remarkably brave. They assault the PCs as quickly as possible and ensure their leaders get flanking bonuses for as long as they can. None of the Night Vipers flee or surrender while either Dexter or Sinister are standing. Once those two go down, the survivors immediately rout and attempt to run away. If they cannot run, they surrender.

Development: If Dexter and/or Sinister are captured, they prove very resistant to questioning and only answer that they were hired for this job. Even the threat of death won't get either of them to talk as they fear the repercussions of betraying their Coin Lord patron more than they do the PCs. (Remember that actually executing a helpless prisoner is typically an evil action, something no Covenant of Light PC should even be contemplating in the first place.)

The rest of their gang have no idea who they were working for. The humans make the deals; they just break things, hurt people, and get paid. It is a simple system that worked for them for months now and none of the Night Vipers are looking to change things now. Even the gnolls, the most ambitious of the Vipers, are content with the way the gang is run... for now.

Treasure: Dexter carries a masterwork short sword taken from one of the gang's first heists. Sinister has a matching blade, though he prefers to use his scythe for its intimidation value. Aside from pocket change, there is little else of value on the gang members.

The leaders of the Night Vipers are Dexter and Sinister, twin brothers with a penchant for violence and robbery. They have been a force to be reckoned with on the streets of Stormreach for some time, due in no small part to their powerful and mysterious Coin Lord benefactor. Handsome and black haired, both sport neatly trimmed beards and moustaches while dressing in dark garb to accentuate their well-tailored black leather armor.

Dexter is a rogue mostly because of his mechanical aptitudes and because his impoverished childhood gave him no opportunity to explore the artificer profession. He loves machines and locks and comes on missions mostly to pit his skills against the physical challenges of each new heist. He is utterly devoted to his brother and fights to the death to defend him.

Sinister, sadly enough, does not entirely share his brother's loyalty. While he would never senselessly throw Dexter away, as the lockpicker is far too valuable for such a sacrifice, Sinister would happily leave him behind to die if it meant his own survival. A consummate con-artist and ladies' man, Sinister is as slick as they come and as deadly as the forked-tongued serpent he chose for the gang's mascot.

Once the combat is done and the survivors (if any) are dealt with, the PCs can proceed into the house itself. Turning the rogues and their gang over to the city authorities is the logical thing to do, though the Night Viper's mysterious benefactor sees to it they are healed, reequipped, and released before sunrise. This has no further effect on the current scenario.

Scaling the Encounter: This encounter does not scale except that the rogues begin the scene hidden.

Combat Statistics

DEXTER, GANG LEADER CR 2
Human rogue 2
N Medium humanoid (human)
Init +7; Senses Listen +6, Search +5, Spot +6

Languages Common, Goblin

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (Dodge)

hp 12 (2 HD)

Fort +1, Ref +6, Will +1 (evasion)

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee mwk short sword +3 (1d6+1/19-20)

Base Atk +1; Grp +2,

Atk Options sneak attack +1d6

Abilities Str 12, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 12

SQ Trapfinding, Evasion, Sneak Attack +1d6

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative

Skills Bluff +6, Climb +6, Disable Device +5, Jump +6, Listen +6, Open Lock +8, Search +5, Spot +6, Tumble +8

Possessions leather armor, masterwork short sword, belt pouch.

Sinister, Gang Leader CR 2

Human rogue 2

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; Senses Listen +6, Search +5, Spot +6

Languages Common, Goblin

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (Dodge)

hp 10 (2 HD)

Fort +0, Ref +6, Will +1 (evasion)

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee scythe +3 (2d4+3/x4)

Base Atk +1; Grp +3

Atk Options sneak attack +1d6

Abilities Str 14, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 14

SQ Trapfinding, Evasion, Sneak Attack +1d6

Feats Dodge, Martial Weapon Proficiency (scythe)

Skills Bluff +6, Climb +6, Hide +5, Intimidate +7, Jump +6, Listen +6, Move Silently +6, Search +5, Spot +6, Tumble +8

Possessions leather armor, masterwork short sword, scythe, belt pouch.

A Meeting of the Minds

The PCs are shown inside by a quiet, demure butler who asks them to wait in the parlor while he fetches the master of the house. Assuming they comply, the PCs have a short wait before Lord Alergayn arrives. While this might all seem a little too cordial and easy, considering Alergayn's earlier behavior and the lateness of the hour, Lord d'Vadalis was hoping the PCs would be coming and has waited up for them just in case.

He has a grave favor to ask them and knows that being effusive avails him or family nothing. As such, he is on his best behavior, something that may well have the PCs on edge. This is certainly a change in personality from the boorish, forceful man they met in the Abbot's office.

"Ah, good heroes. Thank you for coming to my home on what I assume must have been very short notice. May I offer you a drink or something to eat? It is a long walk from the church to my doorstep."

Alergayn is being nice to the point of almost fatherly. He orders his butler to bring healing tonics (*potions of cure light wounds*, up to one per PC) for anyone who appears injured, and if informed of the rogues outside appears very grateful for their interference on his behalf.

"My thanks, heroes. It would seem the Abbot's words of praise on your behalf were not exaggerations. I am pleased that my family has such protectors, especially on a night like this. Tea?"

Eventually, this kind of behavior likely prompts a PC to say something or ask what is going on with Lord Alergayn. A Sense Motive check (DC 15) reveals that the lord is under a great deal of hidden stress and is worried about something he isn't talking about. Any direct questioning stops his overt friendliness and prompts him to sit down, the expression on his face changing completely.

"Please forgive me if that seemed forced. In truth, I am not at all used to asking anyone for help. Normally, I would just hire retainers for any task I might need done... but my current troubles are a little more complicated than that. Will you indulge me for a short while and let me tell you a tale? It is the source of my woe and the nature of my request to you this night?"

The PCs are here on behalf of the Abbot to try and get Alergayn to continue his patronage of the church. As such, it is probably for the best that they let the man tell them anything he wishes. If they bring up his financial support of the church, he nods and asks again for their indulgence in his storytelling. It should be made clear to the PCs that if they want anything from Lord d'Vadalis, they must hear him out before they can make any requests of their own.

When he is free to do so, Alergayn tells the story below. He tells it exactly like it is written, just as if he is reciting it from memory (because he is). Once he is done, he gives the PCs a few moments to consider the tale before continuing with **The Lord's Favor**.

Alergayn's Fable – The Price of Avarice

"Long ago, in a distant, green land, three friends came upon an ancient ruin while exploring. They worked for days to clear the rubble away from its grand main entrance and fought their way through terrible beasts that were old when the Five Kingdoms were yet unborn.

"After the last of these battles, only the three friends survived. All of their servants and guards were lost to the hordes they faced on their way to the heart of the ruins. Bloodied but unbroken, they bravely made their way into the trapped hall of the ancients, a vault that supposedly held the treasures of a lost empire. For days they worked to thwart the cunning safeguards around the vault, but try as they might, the last lock vexed them and would not open.

"Each friend blamed the other two for their failure and an argument quickly came to blows over the ageless locked portal at their feet. One friend was so badly beaten that he fell to his knees over the lock, blood raining down from his face. When his crimson tears touched the metal below, the lock opened instantly and the vault revealed itself.

"Their quarrel forgotten, the friends entered the chamber and were amazed at the wealth that lay before them. Gathering all they could carry, they were about to leave the vault when they spied a mysterious treasure at its very center. The pillar at the heart of the vault was carved of black crystal and on each of its four great facets, the handle of an intricate dagger could be seen.

*"For all the wealth they were already carrying, the friends became obsessed with freeing the daggers and claiming them. An old script they could barely decipher above the blades spoke a warning to them. **'One man, one blade. Leave here with naught else or see all you have wrought crumble unto the seventh age.'***

"The friends agreed that this warning meant the fourth dagger should be left behind and each in turn claimed and drew forth one of the blades. They packed up their riches and their new knives and made to set out for their homeland wealthy beyond their greatest dreams. But one of the friends was unable to contain his greed and went back while the other two slept. He took the fourth dagger from the pillar and called down a most terrible curse.

"The blade possessed him in the dark of that ancient tomb and before he could regain his senses, he had slain his friends while they slept and returned their daggers to the pillar along with the one he had first claimed. Now bound to this fourth blade, a dagger of treachery and murder, he knew that he was forever cursed by his avarice. He fled the tomb with his ill-gotten gains and vowed never to return.

"For the rest of his days, rich as he was, he was never happy. Each dark of the moon, he relived what befell him in that distant land and each morning, he awoke with the dagger by his bedside and fresh blood on his hands.

"Far too late, he learned that some wealth comes at too great a price."

Once the tale is finished, Lord d'Vadalis takes a moment to pour himself (and any PC that wishes some) a new cup of warm tea. Then, after a long drink to soothe his throat and calm his nerves, he addresses the PCs once more:

"That tale was told to me by my father at least once a month at bedtime for most of my childhood. I always considered it to be a strange bedtime fable, nothing more. But this past year has led me to think otherwise. I am a prideful man, I admit that freely, but I must ask you to hear me out and, if you will, aid me and my family before we too pass beyond this world."

It doesn't take a Sense Motive check to realize Lord Alergayn is speaking very earnestly. He is taking his pride into his hands and revealing a dire family secret to the PCs, something he would never do lightly. How he responds from this moment on depends entirely on the PCs. He has entered this conversation assuming

the PCs will want some massive reward for what he wants them to do. If they react like heroes and scions of Light instead, he does not know how to react. Their generosity and kindness leaves him utterly mystified. After all, he is used to greed; truly good individuals are unknowns in his manipulative, political world.

Of course, if the PCs act like mercenaries and are either rude or demanding, this is exactly the kind of behavior he expected. He knows how to handle people like that, and while he certainly pays for their services, their one chance at redeeming him for the Light is lost. He is at a vulnerable stage, one that kindness could help him through. If he doesn't receive it now, it may never have another chance to affect him so profoundly.

Regardless, when the PCs are ready to hear him out, continue with the text below:

The Lord's Favor

"The villain of that piece was my ancestor, and it is likely the wealth he pulled out of this jungle is what provided the seat of power I hold today. Dragonmark aside, it takes wealth and influence to survive in Sharn. My ancestor's actions, however evil they might have been, set the foundation of those things for generations to come.

"Seven generations, in fact, and if that sounds ominous, you've been paying attention. With the birth of my niece, a gentle babe who did not deserve the death that came for her in her crib, my family has been dying one by one in accordance with the ancient curse. It does not seem to matter where they are or how well protected they keep themselves, this curse comes for them in the dark of the night and chokes the life from them while others stand helpless to aid them.

"Now, only my wife, my daughter and I remain of our once proud house. Wealth and power I may still possess, but all of that is meaningless in the face of seeing my family die before me. And I feel that is what will happen in a few nights when the moons are at their darkest again. You see, I hold the key to our fate."

And with this, he unfolds a bundle of red silk at his side and reveals the *talon of murder*. This item is described below, and though he shows it to the PCs, he is not yet ready to hand it over.

The Talon of Murder

An adamantine dagger with a slightly curved blade and a hilt wrought of carved black dragonshard, this weapon bears a runic inscription in the ancient language of the Giants of Xen'drik. Crafted by the drow to help them overthrow their oppressors, the *talon* and its three deadly kin were sealed away in the Vault of the Ancients to keep their terrible hatred from possessing their wielders any longer.

The weapon is a +4 *keen, giantbane adamantine dagger of wounding*. The enchantment of the Black Pillar has bound the *talon of murder* to Alergayn's bloodline; it only functions as a masterwork adamantine dagger in anyone else's hands (including those of the PCs).

"I believe this weapon came from the Xen'drik jungles and what's more, I think I have found the location of the vault. My family keeps records that go back to the founding of our house and among them, I came upon an old map that could lead to nothing else. I would do what I am about to ask you myself, but I am no adventurer. I would not likely survive the trek to the Vault, much less be able to deal with whatever might still lurk there.

"Thus, I beg of you, for the good of my family and for whatever reward I can pay you, will you take this cursed blade and return it to the black pillar from whence it came? I am not sure why, but I am certain that will end the curse and free what few of us remain."

This is where the PCs get to haggle the details of their mission. Lord Alergayn provides the dagger, which he wraps back up and beseeches the PCs not to open again, and the map along with a special offer, the use of his recently hired bodyguard: Tower the warforged.

Once the PCs accept his mission, Alergayn thanks them profusely and bids them farewell. He begs them to make haste; they have only three nights before the moons darken and doom befalls his family again. If the PCs suggest any precautions, he is happy to consider them up to and including moving back to the Church of the Silver Flame and placing himself and his family in their protective custody. The PCs have a lot of influence over Alergayn at the moment; they are literally his only hope.

When all is said is done and the PCs are ready to undertake their mission into the jungle, move to **Part Three: Revenge's Rest**. Tower accompanies the PCs wherever they go from this point on, assigned to the group as a whole and willing to take his orders from whomever the party has chosen as their leader.

Complications

The PCs are faced with an interesting challenge here: the d'Vadalis are clearly up against an ancient curse that was brought down on their heads by the actions of their ancestor (though some PCs might suspect something a little less esoteric such as inter-house treachery or a mortal assassin). Certain PCs, especially

Valenar elves, might be inclined to not interfere with something that is the culmination of an ancestor's actions and could be consider a form of "justice."

Point out to the PCs if they need to be convinced to help that while it might have been justice for the original thief of the dagger to be killed or tormented, this curse is now killing innocents with no more connection to the crime than a tie of blood. In addition, Lord Alergayn d'Vadalis is trying to make amends for his ancestor's act by returning the *talon of murder* to its rightful resting place. This act of contrition should be enough to balance the scales, even for the most stalwart of lawful PCs.

If all else fails and a PC simply refuses to help, the scenario ends for them here and their player is free to leave the table. No PC should ever be forced to comply with any scenario.

Part Three: Revenge's Rest

Travel from the city to the jungles nearby is not difficult; working for a dragonmarked house does have its benefits. All gate fees, travel arrangements, and even transportation have been handled. The PCs are escorted out of the city by a guard detail from the Phiarlan compound and given the use of a strong cart and two well-bred horses to pull it. While the cart cannot take the PCs all the way to the Vault site, it certainly shortens their travel time.

Allow the PCs a little time if they wish to equip themselves for a jungle adventure. Lord Alergayn makes sure the shops in the Phiarlan compound are opened for them regardless of the time of night and any purchase that would be legal for a starting Xen'drik Expedition character can be made at this time. Once the PCs are ready to travel, they are escorted as noted above and sent on their way.

The Trek to the Vault

This part of the adventure can be paraphrased and skimmed over as you wish. There is a piece of explanatory text given below, but feel free to use your own words instead. Every outing into the Xen'drik jungles should not result in a battle from the moment the PCs set foot past the lights of Stormreach. After all, part of the fear of the unknown comes from the unpredictable nature of that unknown. If every journey outside the safe perimeter of Stormreach resulted instantly in a life or death battle, the jungle would lose some of its mystique.

The logger's trail beneath your carriage is a rough one. Furrows from the hooves of heavily burdened pack beasts and dense foliage make for an uneven and difficult journey all the way from Stormreach. While this mode of travel is unquestionable faster than trekking through the jungle on foot, it has been far from pleasant. Bruises, jostling, and the closed-in paranoia of the sheer jungle canopy on either side of your narrow path have been constant traveling companions.

The sun is nearly past the trees to the west when your cart comes to a lurching stop at the point indicated on your map. "This is as far as I can take you," says Ravon, your drover. "I'm hired to stick it out here for another two days and then head back with or without you. If you don't want a brutal long walk home, I suggest it be with you."

With that, your journey into the jungle enters its most dangerous phase. Somewhere within the wall of green before you lies an ancient vault, its age-old traps and unknown guardians lying in wait to make this your final expedition.

"Good luck, Lighters!" Inevitably, Ravon adds under his breath, "You'll be needing it."

Before the PCs reach the Vault, a nine-hour hike from the path, run the following brief encounter as a form of foreshadowing of what they encounter once they arrive. It does not matter where during their trek this encounter takes place as long as it occurs before they reach the Vault's location and see the ettercap's hive for themselves.

Regarding Tower

At first, Tower is completely silent. He accepts his transfer of responsibility to the PCs and simply acts to defend them whenever he can. Throughout the **Crawling Company** encounter below, he shields spellcasters and other 'soft' PCs without needing to be asked and does not speak much beforehand. After the battle, his conversation (if any) greatly depends on how the PCs acted with Lord Alergayn during the noble's admission of his family's shame.

If the PCs took on the task of freeing Alergayn's bloodline from its curse without discussion of reward (as good members of the Covenant should), Tower is rather confused. His entire existence since the Last War has been a matter of service for compensation's sake; he truly does not understand the idea of generosity or compassion. He converses with any PC willing to talk with him on the nature of the Light.

Of course, if the PCs acted more mercenary with Alergayn, Tower understands that behavior completely and is content to be among similar company. Very little conversation occurs in this instance. He is an employee just like they are—a situation he is comfortable with.

Crawling Company

The late-evening light and the motion of the trees above you make for a constant play of shadows on the ground. This plays havoc with your ability to spot real motion. A shift in the foliage nearby might be a predator or it might just be the shadows of the undergrowth moving because the canopy above has been caught by an evening breeze.

Let the PCs declare how they are keeping watch and their marching order if they wish. Give them Spot checks at a DC 22 (this DC takes into account the circumstance penalty for their surroundings). Any success prevents the spider about to attack them from gaining a surprise round. If none of the PCs spot the silent hunter, it gains a surprise round on the rearmost PC, dropping out of the trees for a single bite attack before trying to seize its prey and retreat.

Foe: The PCs have been attacked by a hunting spider, a large monstrous spider defending its territory against what it sees as both intruders and dinner. Because this particular spider does not have an egg sac to guard in its webbed lair, it retreats and tries to flee if taken to 5 hit points or less.

Monstrous Spider, Large: hp 24; *Monster Manual* 289

Tactics: The spider would prefer to grab a quick meal and retreat up to its lair rather than fight a grand melee with multiple enemies. If it can down one of the PCs with its surprise round bite, it spends its first round picking up the fallen foe and taking a move action to go up the nearest tree. If the PC and her equipment weigh more than 200 pounds, the spider's speed is reduced to 20 and climb speed to 15. If the spider can climb 40 feet, it enters its lair hidden in the branches above, a 20-foot-wide mass of webs. Fighting the spider is difficult there to say the least, which is exactly why the spider chooses this battleground if it can.

Keep in mind that the spider also flees to its lair if taken to 5 or fewer hit points. It abandons any victim it might be carrying if this occurs; escape becomes its only concern.

Once the battle is done, the PCs are free to continue on or climb the tree to investigate the spider's lair. There are enough traces of former travelers in its many dried web bundles to account for a fair bit of treasure if the PCs choose this route, making the effort well worth the trouble.

The spider itself has one item of value attached to its body, a nearly broken wand with a single charge of *magic missile* (CL 7th) remaining. The wand cannot long survive removal from the spider's abdomen. If the charge is not used during this adventure, the wand becomes useless anyway. It does not count as treasure and cannot be kept after the scenario. The wand is literally a 'use it or lose it' item.

The Vault of the Ancients

Clearing your way through the dark jungle overgrowth, you come upon the edge of a vast clearing. Where once this ground was certainly as verdant as the rest of Xen'drik, it appears the area was cleared a long time ago as the site of a titanic structure. Little of that edifice remains now; only broken stone and the foliage-covered remnants of aging walls bear witness to what was once a building more than two hundred feet in every direction.

All that lingers now are its ruins and three huge jungle trees growing at its center. The trees are joined by bridges of grayish-white fibers, swaying slightly in the jungle's night wind. At this distance, shapes can be made out on the bridges and in the trees themselves. They appear humanoid but are too distant and too concealed to make out.

The other feature of note in the clearing is the presence of massive spiders. At the edges of the clearing lie three web nests, each one the home of a vast spider and its pulsating egg sacs. The vermin's eyes glitter in the darkness, deadly jewels in the hearts of their lairs.

For clarification, show the players Handout 1: The Clearing Map. If possible, use the map from Dragondown Grotto, a special scenario in the *Fantastic Locations* line, to visualize the scene for the players. Drawing out three 8 square (40 feet) wide trees on separate paper will allow you to place the Hive in the middle of the map.

Handout #2 has DM notes and should be kept hidden from the PCs; they learn its secrets soon enough. The PCs may quickly realize that they are drastically outnumbered; if they have any hope of reaching the vault under the **Ettercap's Hive**, they need a plan. A frontal assault would likely be suicide.

This is where PC ingenuity makes or breaks the adventure. Let the players discuss the situation as long as they wish. As long as no PC takes actions that attract attention, they are safe from detection by the

ettercaps for now. The spidery humanoids are preparing for a festival to commemorate the birth of the next generation of 'gods' (the infant spiders about to hatch) and are thus rather preoccupied. Only the patrollers have any chance of spotting the PCs right now and only if the PCs are foolish enough to make loud noises or visibly enter the clearing.

Another option for PCs that are not tactically apt could be Tower, the warforged sent with them by Lord Alergayn. He has a lot of experience at defender situations and can easily see that the ettercaps are not properly guarding their territory. If the PCs do not think to whittle down the ettercaps individually, you may have him make the suggestion.

The Ettercap Hive

There are a total of 18 ettercaps and three huge monstrous spiders in the clearing. Two ettercaps are patrolling, two ettercaps are on each of the web bridges, and the remaining ten are divided among the three hive trees. There is no *de facto* leader among the ettercaps right now; the hive's 'chief' gave himself and his retinue to the gods a few days ago and are currently nourishing the three massive spiders; this is a tribal custom among the ettercaps of Xen'drik, and while it does leave the hive in a chaotic state until after the birth of the spiders and the choosing of a new chief, so much the better for the PCs.

The lack of organization the hive suffers right now means the PCs can strike at the ettercaps surgically without a massed resistance meeting their efforts. The ettercaps are effectively singular creatures right now, and while they work together to defend themselves if attacked in the hive, they do not leave it in numbers greater than three. The PCs may discover this if they take out a patroller; after a few minutes, 1d3 ettercaps leave the hive to investigate the missing guard. If these are also dealt with, a group of 3 comes in ten minutes. No further ettercaps investigate these losses; their ritual is simply too important to interrupt further.

Dealing with the spiders is more difficult, especially considering the massive vermin do not leave their nests for any reason while they are guarding eggs. Attacking the spiders in their lairs is difficult; these hunting spiders can easily maneuver in their webs—a freedom the PCs are likely unable to emulate. The size and potency of the spiders are another challenge. These creatures are CR 5 monsters, making them at best equal to the PCs and likely more powerful by at least a hit die or two.

The best way to defeat these spiders? **Don't fight them at all.** The spider 'gods' do not leave their nests even to defend the ettercaps, and their eggs are not going to hatch for several more days. As such, they are not actually combats the PCs need to engage in at all. The PCs may not like the idea of letting these huge predators loose in Xen'drik but knowing when and where to pick one's battles is an important part of surviving to fight another day.

Allow PCs to make a Knowledge (nature) skill check at a DC 16 to realize that nesting spiders are not likely to leave their lairs for any reason. Druids may be allowed to make this check automatically. This gives the PCs a chance to know the fight is a needless one before they risk themselves.

Setting fire to the nests is another possibility; this will immediately force the spider to flee and summons all the ettercaps from the Hive to attempt to put out the flames. The ettercaps will take 3d4 rounds to extinguish the fire and will then divide themselves equally among the surviving lairs to guard them. This could prove to be an effective method of distracting the ettercaps and accessing the Hive.

Foes: The ettercaps are the primary challenge here; the spiders are listed below, but as noted in the preceding section they do not have to be fought to be considered 'defeated'. The PCs get as much experience for wisely avoiding the spiders as they do for fighting them.

Ettercaps (18): hp 22 each; *Monster Manual* 106

Monstrous Spiders, Huge (3): hp 50 each; *Monster Manual* 289

Eighteen Ettercaps?!?

At first glance, this combat might seem a little insane. Each ettercaps is a CR 3 creature, the technical equal to a PC in most respects. To even consider throwing the party at 18 of the beasts would be a sadistic exercise in DM overkill. The relative outnumbering and outclassing of the PCs is not in question; this is an unfair encounter on the surface.

However, there are some factors in the PCs' favor. They have the element of surprise, the ettercaps are disorganized following the self-sacrifice of their chieftain, and they only come at the PCs a few at a time. By taking out both patrollers and the two waves that follow, the PCs can whittle down the ettercaps in the hive itself to as few as four: a much more manageable number. This makes the battle a great deal more likely to come out as a victory for the Covenant.

In addition, the PCs have the benefit of the ettercaps' ritual. They have been milking their venom for days, feeding it to the trees as part of their bizarre god-birth ceremony. The ettercaps believe that the spiders are the incarnation of the land's power; they have been offering their poison to make the land (and consequently their gods) stronger. This means that none of the ettercaps have the *Poison* special quality. They can still bite but aside from melee damage, their attacks are unremarkable.

Scaling the Encounter: At 2nd level, cut the number of ettercaps to 10 and make the investigation waves one ettercap each. Reduce the spiders in size to large.

At 4th level, the patrols are 2 ettercaps strong and the second investigation waves are always three in number. The patrollers also still have their venom but none of the others do.

At 5th level, make the 4th level changes, and all of the other ettercaps retain a single use of their venom. In addition, the last ettercaps the PCs fight is the next chief; it has 40 hit points and full use of its venom.

The Verdigris Seal

As described on the map supplied by Lord Alergayn, a nearly ten-foot-wide metal disc blocks the entrance to the Vault of the Ancients. This seal, covered in centuries of verdigris, is inlaid with magical patterns that once prevented any creature from so much as touching its surface, much less opening it to reveal the catacombs beneath.

That was before Alergayn's ancestor and his companions discovered it and used potent magic to circumvent its protections. While the Verdigris Seal is no longer dangerous, it is still virtually impervious to harm and locked shut. Originally, Alergayn's ancestor used a summoned elemental to force the seal open; that process is not likely something the PCs can duplicate. Fortunately for them, they are holding something that can act as the Seal's key.

In the center of the Seal's design, noticeable to a Search check (DC 15) or automatically to anyone with the Investigate feat, a narrow slit is bored into the metal. This slit perfectly fits the blade of the *talon of murder*. Inserting the weapon into the slit allows the wielder to turn the dagger like a key and unlock the portal. Unfortunately for the PCs, one trap remains on the Seal.

Verdigris Seal Trap: CR 3; Search DC 15; location trigger; reset automatic; DC 15 Reflex half; 2d6 electrical; Disable Device n/a (Successful detection reveals the proper direction (right) to turn the key and avoid the trap.

Both directions unlock the Seal, but if the dagger is turned to the left, the Seal flashes with electricity and anyone in contact with it is instantly shocked for 2d6 damage. A Reflex save (DC 15) halves this damage. The dagger wielder, because of positioning and his or her direct contact with the "key," suffers a minimum of 2 points of electrical damage regardless of the saving throw or evasion. (This assumes the wielder is turning the dagger directly; clever precautions could prevent anyone from suffering damage.) There is no indication anywhere on the Seal which direction is safe.

Once the seal is opened, it slides into the ground and reveals a flight of stone steps leading into the earth. This is the Vault of the Ancients, a long plundered tomb with only one real treasure left- hope for Lord Alergayn and his family.

Into the Vault of the Ancients

1. The Verdigris Seal (EL -)

The seal slides open with a clicking of ancient stone, disappearing into the edifice at your feet. Beneath it, a carved stairwell leads down into the darkness of the unknown Vault. Each step is decorated with strange, almost violent, motifs of abstract design.

Despite the alarming appearance of the stairs, they are safe to travel except where noted below in other areas. The designs on the steps were made by the Drow elves that claimed this place from their Giant overlords. While the motifs do not mean anything and are not a language *per se*, they are intended as a warning to those who disturb the Vault; this place was sealed for a reason, after all.

2. The Shattered Stair (EL 2)

The steps are stable enough to support even a warforged's weight, allowing you to make fairly good time down each one. They descend into the depths of the earth beneath the jungles of Xen'drik, the air becoming cooler the farther down you travel.

The stairs may be stable, but this Vault was never meant to be reopened. As such, the Drow purposefully left a weak section of the floor intact as a way of catching tomb robbers. Over the centuries, the weak stone gave way completely, leaving a roughly ten foot wide gap in the stairwell that plummets 100 feet straight down onto broken rock.

The pit is really only a threat to PCs moving through the area without illumination or the ability to see in the darkness. The falloff is not concealed in any other way.

Pit Trap: CR 2; obvious; location trigger; reset n/a; DC 15 Reflex avoids (only if unseen); 100 ft. deep (10d6, fall); Search n/a; Disable Device n/a.

The other challenge in this area is how to get across the pit to continue down the stairs. As a ten foot gap, it is not impossible to jump across but failure to span the gap could be lethal. PCs should be encouraged to use their ingenuity again in dealing with this trouble. If any idea sounds plausible, allow it to work (perhaps with the requisite skill checks at DC 15, such as Use Rope, Balance, Tumble, or others as applicable).

As an alternative, Tower is willing to throw PCs over the gap and then allow them to use ropes to pull him across. He is automatically successful at tossing any Medium or smaller PC over the pit and is not heavy enough to truly be a burden if they all work together towing him over. Having Tower perform this action is also good foreshadowing for his sacrifice at the end of the scenario (if it occurs).

Again Regarding Tower

The descent into the Vault is a good opportunity to develop Tower's character. Stay alert for any PC conversation or actions that would get his attention, especially any displays of overt good or compassionate behavior. If any of the PCs have been generous or kind to him, he gravitates to them and converses when he can, asking them why they act the way they do "when there is clearly little profit in doing so." He should be portrayed as openly curious, if guarded.

Allow the PCs to "convert" him if they try, though he does not make it obvious that they have done so. He is interested in why anyone would act the way people in the Covenant of Light do when there does not seem to be any material reason for being so charitable. If any PC can give him a convincing argument for doing so, he begins to 'see the Light', so to speak.

3. A View of the Abyss (EL 2)

The stairs end abruptly here in a chasm that does not seem to have a visible bottom. The rift in the ground is very uneven, as is the footing around its edges. The earth at your feet is slightly shifting; any weight at all makes the ground crack and shudder. The ledge you are standing on is beginning to give way!

The rift is essentially another pit trap like the one above. This time, there is no time to discuss or plan; as soon as the PCs encounter the pit, they have to get across or plummet into the darkness!

Pit Trap: CR 2; obvious; location trigger; reset n/a; DC 15 Reflex avoids (only if unseen); 100 ft. deep (10d6, fall); Search n/a; Disable Device n/a.

The same idea(s) that got PCs across the pit in Area 2 might work here as long as they did not require much setup time. If not, Jump checks may be the order of the day. PCs without a hope in Khyber of making such a check may only have one other option – backing up.

The rift's edge is only unstable for ten feet; if a PC heads back up the stairs, he or she is safe (though the rift is now 20 feet wide and harder to cross). The secret to this trap is to not panic; even PCs with no ability to avoid the pit can survive simply by stepping backward and waiting. It may be harder for them to get across afterwards but they are in no danger if they keep calm. Tower starts moving backward immediately; PCs in danger may make Spot checks (DC 12) to see him doing this. Following his example saves them without the need for further rolls.

4. The Gallery (EL 1)

This large chamber is covered along every surface - walls, floor, and even the ceiling – in bas-relief style carvings depicting humanoid figures engaged in vicious combat. Some of the shapes are quite small by comparison with the others, towering humanoids wielding gigantic weapons and deadly magic. The battle seems to be a stalemate, with neither side at any clear advantage.

This entire chamber is both a historic monument and a trap. The battle depicted in the gallery actually took place and ended in a very pyrrhic Drow victory. The terrible losses of this engagement are what led the dark elves to create the horrific weapons sealed away in this vault. Thus, the images stand as a memorial to their losses and a warning that one tragedy can sometimes lead to an even greater darkness.

The trap in this chamber is evident as soon as anyone sets foot into the room. Every 5-foot section of stone floor is a pressure plate that releases a tiny spinning blade from one of the myriad Drow warriors on the walls. These blades are incredibly accurate and while the ages have robbed them of their poison, they can still be quite deadly. Disabling this trap *only* disables the 5 ft. section of floor in question, an entire path will have to be disabled for safe passage. Each 5-foot section can trigger a blade each time it is stepped on.

Spinning Blade Trap: CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; Atk +10 ranged (1d2+1, shuriken); Search DC 18; Disable Device DC 15 (per 5 ft.).

Spinning blades that miss disappear into the walls through tiny, cunningly wrought passages. If a blade hits, it can be removed and saved if the PCs desire. The blades are in the shape of Xen'drik boomerangs and count as masterwork shuriken. No matter how many of these are removed from the Vault, only six (6) are serviceable; the rest are too old and shatter if used. The special materials and quality of these shuriken allow them to be saved and continuously reused; this is an exception to the normal "ammunition" rule regarding other shuriken.

5. Blocked Way (EL -)

The passage ahead is blocked completely by a heavy cave-in. Tons of rock and soil choke the hallway, providing no easy access to whatever might lie beyond.

While the PCs might actually have the skills and/or tools to burrow through the earth and reach the other side of this huge cave-in, doing so would take many hours, perhaps even days. This is time Alergayn and his family do not have, a fact Tower is quick to remind the PCs of if necessary. Curiosity is not a luxury the PCs can currently afford (nor do they have the ability to indulge it once the scenario is over, since this entire complex comes down once the *talon* is replaced in the Black Pillar).

It is highly unlikely the PCs ever learn this, but the cave-in was caused by the last group of tomb robbers to find this place, a band of tunneling dark dwarves who hit upon the Vault by accident while exploring a nearby series of caverns. After looting all they could find, the overburdened duergar disrupted their own bracing and caused the passage to collapse.

6. Treacherous Footing (EL 2)

The stone of this hallway gleams with an almost gem-like radiance. Faceted and smooth, the floor appears more like rock-colored glass or crystal than the granite footing in the rest of the Vault.

This entire passage is under the effects of a natural occurrence that duplicates a *grease* spell. As the effect is non-magical, it cannot be dispelled or negated in any normal way. The slick nature of the hallway is a testament to the skill and treacherousness of the drow builders who fashioned this part of the Vault; it exists as a mere annoyance now but when the Vault begins to collapse, this hallway could become lethal if a fast way to cross it is not discovered by the fleeing PCs.

The initial Reflex save to avoid falling must be made by every PC when they first enter the hallway. The DC for this and any further saves required by the effect is 15. The stones of the floor are also carved to tilt slightly underfoot, making the Balance check to move safely at half speed a DC 12 (instead of 10). The facets of the floor stones are edged, inflicting 1d3 slashing damage on any PC who falls because of the *grease* effect. (These facet edges do not otherwise harm PCs; they can be walked over without injury.) All combined, this can be a deadly corridor to cross even when the PCs *aren't* in a hurry.

Clever precautions by the PCs should be rewarded here as well; if the PCs try to circumvent the hallway with good ideas (or even just creative ones with a change of working), allow them to bypass the danger with nothing more than a scare and a skill check or two. Tower gets past the hall by using his shield as a body sled; the tower shield's surface gets a few nicks but he is otherwise unharmed and gets across the hall at a remarkably quick rate (30 feet/round).

7. The Sundered Gate (EL 1)

There is a landing of granite stone past the slick tiles of the previous hallway. Beside the landing, a broken portcullis of blades once barred entry to the rest of the Vault. The deadly edges are now bent and mangled, providing a narrow gap through which passage might be gained... carefully.

This portcullis was the last trap Alergayn's ancestor bypassed using his summoned elemental. The elemental was destroyed by the gateway but not before it did enough damage to allow Alergayn's group relatively safe passage. The portcullis is still a dangerous edifice, a doorway of sharp enchanted edges and tortured metal that snags and cuts anyone clumsy enough to brush it while squirming through.

Like the Treacherous Passage, this 'trap' is far more of a danger on the way out as the PCs do not have time to move carefully through the portcullis. All PCs suffer a -2 circumstance penalty to the Reflex save to avoid damage from the Gate when they are fleeing the Vault's collapse.

This assumes the Gate is not smashed or physically dismantled by PCs on their way through. The Break DC for the gate is 25; a successful Disable Device (DC 20) made with the intention of removing blades and making the passage safe for travel can effectively remove this trap and allow unhindered motion through the Gate thereafter.

Sundered Gate Trap: CR 1; obvious; location trigger; reset n/a; DC 14 Reflex avoids (Small PCs gain +4 bonus to the Reflex save, Large PCs suffer -4 penalty); 1d4 slashing, magical attack; Search n/a; Disable Device n/a.

8. Watery Passage (EL -)

The passage ends here in a crumbled cavern with roughly shorn walls. Possibly the result of another cave-in, the only feature of any consequence is a deep pool of murky water covering most of the chamber's floor. The water ripples every few moments, as if something alive rests just beneath the surface.

The danger here isn't beneath the water; it *is* the water. The pool contains a medium water elemental, long dormant from its isolation and the distance of its home plane. The approach of the PCs has stirred it, but it is not quite awake yet. As such, if the PCs do anything to disrupt the surface of the water, they effectively get a surprise round on it before it awakens and acts.

Foe: The water elemental is nearly insane from having been imprisoned here countless centuries. It attacks the nearest PC with a single-minded rage and does not stop or change targets until its chosen foe has dropped. Furious and inconsolable, this creature exists only to kill or be killed.

Water Elemental, Medium: hp 30; *Monster Manual 100.*

Tactics: As noted above, the elemental is single minded. It does not retreat from its pool, but it also has no intention of letting its prey escape. If the PC it has focused on tries to run, it grapples and attempts to pull the unfortunate into the pool with it. Otherwise, it simply uses slam attacks until it is destroyed. The elemental does not fight intelligently and does not finish off downed opponents; like a feral beast, it simply wants to attack anything that seems like a threat.

Once the elemental is dealt with, the pool is considerably clearer: clear enough that a Spot check (DC 15) reveals a passage about 5 feet below the surface that leads away to the south. PCs wishing to follow this passage must swim to do so, a daunting task for some (including Tower). The warforged regrettably refuses to proceed, noting that his lack of maneuverability underwater would make him a detriment to the party. He gladly guards anyone who wishes to remain behind, and he posts himself as a guard for anything that might arrive while the PCs are deeper in the Vault.

Tower does not adamantly insist upon this course of action; the PCs can order him to follow and he does, though he obviously dislikes doing so. He is not useful underwater (in his opinion), and he feels like a liability while he is submerged.

9. Pitfalls (EL 3)

This hallway looks something like the massive gallery at the front of the Vault; carvings on the wall resemble the battle in that chamber, but most of the combatants lie dead or dying. Only a handful of figures remain, all small ones, with somewhat elven features and dour expressions. The figures have been carved in the act of digging graves, hundreds of their fellows lying still and lifeless nearby as they wait to be interred.

The figures are foreshadowing for the traps in this hallway: shallow grave pit traps with an execution blade in each one. Though deadly in theory, the ages have not been kind to this hallway. Geologic shifting and moisture on their metal parts have left these traps somewhat less than they used to be. Even so, they can certainly kill the unwary. Each of the pits on the Vault map is as described below; their condition makes them one-shot traps now; if one springs or is disabled, it never resets unless someone does so manually.

The traps work as follows: each pressure plate is roughly three feet wide and six feet long. When a person moves to its center, the plate flips over from back to front. This takes the figure setting off the trap with it, slamming him or her into the five-foot-deep pit below the plate and onto the six-inch-tall sharp blade that takes up the length of the trap. Survivors are effectively pinned (as per an automatic grapple check of 24) successfully escaping this hold results in the lid of the pit opening to free the imprisoned PC.

Grave Pit Trap: CR 3; Search DC 18; location trigger; manual reset; DC 15 Reflex avoids; Attack +8 melee (2d6 slashing) plus pinned without additional damage (Break DC 25, successful escape from DC 24 grapple, or successful disable from outside the pit); Search 18; Disable Device 16.

The two darkened-in pits on the map do not function because they already hold victims: a pair of hapless duergar left by their companions for falling behind. Searching these two pits reveals a small amount of coin (figured into the adventure treasure), a pair of *potions of cure light wounds*, and a badly damaged *mithril chain shirt*. The shirt needs 500gp worth of materials to repair it before it can be worn; the Covenant of Light provides the labor for free. The condition of the shirt prevents it from being saleable; it has no value unless it is repaired.

10. The Black Pillar (EL -)

In the center of this chamber, a massive pillar of cut black crystal stretches from the cut tiles of the granite floor to the rough-hewn ceiling twenty feet overhead. The pillar has four primary facets, three of which have the handles of intricately wrought daggers extending from their centers. The fourth facet bears an empty slot two inches wide and pulses with a red light from within. The entire chamber is remarkably warm, the stone beneath your feet trembling almost rhythmically.

The PC holding the *talon of murder* can feel it pulsing as well; the blade is reacting to its proximity to its intended prison. The pulsations are at the same rate as the chamber itself; both weapon and vault are having a strong effect on each other. While the PCs may be concerned that there are traps in this chamber, their fears are unfounded. The builders of this place do not bother with such devices in this room; the Black Pillar is enough of a trap on its own.

The Black Pillar radiates *antipathy* (CL 17th) out to a 15-foot radius; only the holder of the *talon of murder* is immune to its effect. The other three weapons are locked in place and cannot be drawn while the fourth blade is free. Once the *talon of murder* is replaced, looting the Pillar of its other treasures is the least of the PC's concerns.

The blade slides into the pillar with a whisper and a click, the metal of its hilt rasping against the crystal quietly. The moment it is sheathed completely, the room gives a final pulse...

...and then falls silent. Everything around you goes completely quiet, completely still.

If the PCs start running now, they get a full movement's head start on what is to come. If they try to take any other action (or one round after they begin fleeing), read this:

But not for long. After a handful of heartbeats, the room starts shuddering again. The pillar, the daggers, and the dais upon which they rest all flare with a burning blood-red light and hiss away into black vapor. Their ancient evil finally expunged, the purpose of this Vault has ended and with it, the Vault itself seems determined to do so as well. Chunks of rock directly above where the pillar rested plummet to the ground, smashing into shards when they hit the hard granite below!

The PCs should begin running now; it would be an extremely good idea. Any PC determined to remain in the chamber for any reason falls victim to the trap listed below. This 'trap' represents the Vault collapsing in an ever-expanding radius until the entire structure becomes a mass grave of the past.

Keep in mind that this 'trap' is really here for cinematic purposes. While there are obstacles in the PCs way, allow them to navigate them with minor scrapes and bruises as long as they keep moving. This scene is intended to terrify the PCs, not annihilate them. As long as none of them take foolish chances or dawdle for no good reason, they should be able to make it all the way to Area 3. A view of the Abyss without significant injury, if you will.

The View Revisited

With the entire vault coming down around you, the stairs ahead seem like an infinite stretch of stone leading out towards salvation. Barring your path are the two crevasses that broke up the stairwell earlier; both seem nearly impassable now.

Even as you near the bottom rift, a huge chunk of stone breaks free from the ceiling over the stairs, slamming down into the distant pit between the steps. A rain of stone shards falls all around, obscuring the path for a moment. When it clears, you can see that the dark hole has been spanned by a massive spar of stone!

If you can somehow get across the abyss in front of you, the way out lies just ahead!

The final challenge of the adventure is before the PCs now; the rift is a daunting one, especially from this side. If the PCs left climbing gear, ropes, a temporary bridge, or anything else spanning the abyss, such items are now gone, lost to the shifting earth and the bottomless depths of the crevasse itself. The PCs have to come up with another way to span the 15-foot-wide pit in a hurry; they should truly feel like they have only a few rounds left before they are all crushed to death.

You can enforce this suspicion by describing the Vault coming down around them. Spare a few moments as they are running to mention the shattering bas-relief carvings, the floor splitting and cracking beneath their feet, and other signs of eminent collapse. Keep in mind that the scene is suppose to scare them, *not kill them*.

If the PCs have a clever way to get across the rift, allow them to make use of it and pass the abyss as quickly as they can. If Tower has not been 'converted' by conversation with the PCs, the scene can end

with them all making it across just in time and running out of the stairwell past the Verdigris seal just as it tumbles into the earth and is swallowed up by the depths of Xen'drik!

If, however, Tower has come to understand the idea of the Light and heroic actions for the sake good alone, run the following scene as a way of finishing the Vault encounter. Though a tragedy, it is also a triumph for the Light and a telling sacrifice for the good of the Covenant (and the saved PC).

Death of a Hero

Tower insists on being the last across whatever contrivance the PCs have created to get over the rift, perhaps acting as a heavy anchor for ropes or in any other capacity he can best serve. When there is just one PC and Tower left on the Vault side of the rift, have a huge piece of stone plummet past them, severing ropes, breaking their bridge, or otherwise ruining the PCs' escape route.

Knowing there is no time to waste, Tower does the only thing he can. (To make this scene even more poignant, have the PC who Tower rescues be the one that has been the greatest moral influence on him if at all possible.) Read or paraphrase the following to the last PC:

With only seconds before the Vault collapses completely and the only way out impassable, hope seems lost. Without hesitation, Tower grabs you around the waist and runs to the edge of the Abyss. "You have opened my eyes, friend! I would not have yours shut forever while I had strength enough to save you!"

The warforged's powerful limbs surge with the strength of desperation, hurling you up and over the rift to the far side. Landing safely, you have just enough time to look back and see Tower, bowed and peaceful, before a sheer wall of falling stone completely engulfs the Vault. Cracks race across the ceiling of the stairwell above you, threatening to do the same over all of you any moment unless you flee for your lives!

Getting out of the Vault is an easy matter now; the PCs emerge into the sunlight of a burning Xen'drik morning, surrounded by the tumbled ruins of the Ettercap Hive and the abandoned (assuming the spiders were not killed) nests of the twisted humanoids' 'gods.' The long trek back to the logger's trail proves uneventful, likely a welcome relief after everything the PCs have been through. Their wagon is waiting just as the drover said it would be, ready to take them all to Stormreach, the end of their journey, and some much needed rest.

Ending the Adventure

Precisely how the adventure ends is up to the actions of the PCs prior to their departure. The 'best' ending involves Lord Alergayn being genuinely touched by the PCs and their generosity on behalf of his family, especially considering his admittedly boorish behavior. Like Tower, he has learned a valuable lesson in heroism and compassion. Not only does the Church of the Silver Flame host his daughter and continue to receive its tithe from his coffers, the now-wiser Lord serves as a staunch new ally for the Covenant of Light.

If the PC were more mercenary than merciful, Alergayn is still very grateful and shows his approval by continuing his tithe to the Silver Flame in Stormreach on the condition that they educate his daughter according to her wishes. The PCs have done him a good turn, albeit at a price, and while he won't be acting as a patron or ally, he pays his debt in good faith.

If the PCs fail to destroy the *talon of murder* by the end of the third night, they will know they have failed when the blade dissolves into powder. Returning to Stormreach find the family murdered to the last, the Church of the Silver Flame considerably poorer, and the Covenant of Light highly disappointed in its 'heroes.' While not every mission is expected to end in success, this failure costs three innocent lives and makes things harder for the Church, an important ally of the faction.

If the PCs achieved the 'best' ending, all surviving PCs receive the story object "A Grateful Father." In addition, if the scenario was a success at any level (at least Damilla was saved and the *talon* was destroyed), all surviving PCs gain the story object "Friends in Bright Places."

The DM's Mark Adventure for The Good Die Young

Hook: The destruction of the Ettercap Hive has caused both a predatory vacuum in the jungle near Stormreach and an upheaval of giant vermin. Dealing with the repercussions of these events can set the stage for any number of Xen'drik "bug hunts," including rescuing lost caravans, dealing with insect attacks, or exploring newly discovered locations now crawling with venomous creatures. While the details of this DM's Mark adventure is entirely under the control of the Dungeon Master, the scenario's ultimate goal should involve fighting massive vermin or other dangerous Xen'drik predators.

The Story Object attached to this DM's Mark adventure is "Safeguarding the City".

Adventure Questions

Questions:

1. Did any of the PCs help the Abbot talk with Alergayn d'Vadalis and save face in Part One?
 - a) Yes, all of them did. (150 xp / 0 gp)
 - b) Yes, some of them did. (100 xp / 0 gp)
 - c) No, none of them offered any help at all. (50 xp / 0 gp)
2. Which best describes the apparent attitude of the PCs toward Alergayn d'Vadalis during their conversations in the scenario?
 - a) Very professional and diplomatic. (150 xp / 0 gp)
 - b) Mixed reactions; some PCs were friendly and controlled while others were less patient. (100 xp / 0 gp)
 - c) Poor reactions; there were few allowances made and the PCs were mostly rude and acerbic. (50 xp / 0 gp)
 - d) Appalling. If Alergayn hadn't needed the PCs, he could have had them arrested in Sharn for the way they dared to treat him. (0 xp / 0 gp)
3. Did the PCs agree to help Alergayn's family without desiring a personal reward?
 - a) Yes, they asked only that he continue sponsoring the Church and wished nothing for themselves. (200 xp / 0 gp)
 - b) Yes, they discussed a personal reward but ultimately refused it. (100 xp / 0 gp)
 - c) No, they asked for some small reward or money to cover their personal expenses only. (50 xp / 50 gp)
 - d) No, they were mercenaries to the end, milking Alergayn for all they could get. (0 xp / 150 gp)
4. Did the PCs defeat the Night Vipers?
 - a) Completely, every member of the gang was put down in some way. (200 xp / 200 gp)
 - b) Partially, one or more of them got away. (100 xp / 100 gp)
 - c) The PCs were defeated or had to flee from the Viper's combined forces. (0 xp / 0 gp)
5. How did the PCs handle the Ettercap Hive?
 - a) They approached the problem tactically and dealt with each threat appropriately. (200 xp / 250 gp)
 - b) Only luck and sheer force of arms saved them; there were no tactics. (100 xp / 200 gp)
 - c) The spider men did unfortunate things to the PCs; they were all defeated. (0 xp / 0 gp)
6. Did the PCs handle themselves well in the Vault?
 - a) Yes, they were clever, cautious, and made their way through the trapped edifice successfully. (200 xp / 400 gp)
 - b) Yes, they managed to reach the end but took several risky chances or considerable damage in the process due to lack of caution. (150 xp / 250 gp)
 - c) No, the Vault of the Ancients is the final resting place for at least one PC. (100 xp / 150 gp)
 - d) No, none of the PCs will ever be leaving the terrible darkness of that evil place. (0 xp / 0 gp)
7. How would you rate the group's roleplaying?
 - a) Fantastic. Everyone had interesting and engaging characters that interacted with the adventure in very fun ways. (200 xp / 0 gp)
 - b) Good. Most everyone had interesting and engaging characters that interacted with the adventure in very fun ways. (150 xp / 0 gp)
 - c) Okay. There was some roleplaying. (100 xp / 0 gp)
 - d) None. They treated the adventure as a set of objectives. There was no roleplaying. (50 xp / 0 gp)

Story Object Request:

"A Grateful Father"

You have done a great thing for a noble of House Vadalis. As such, his gratitude will make itself apparent in the future. For now, when purchasing animals of any legal sort, use of his contacts will allow you to pay only ½ price for your first mount and only x4 cost for additional legal animals.

Paladins and other Covenant of Light PCs with the ability to gain a special mount have the ability to use Lord Alergayn's patronage to replace the normal animal associated with that class feature and receive a standard griffon

instead. The griffon is gained with maximum hit points but does not gain any special template (i.e. celestial) and cannot be summoned in the normal manner of a Paladin's mount. All other rules involving the PCs special mount apply.

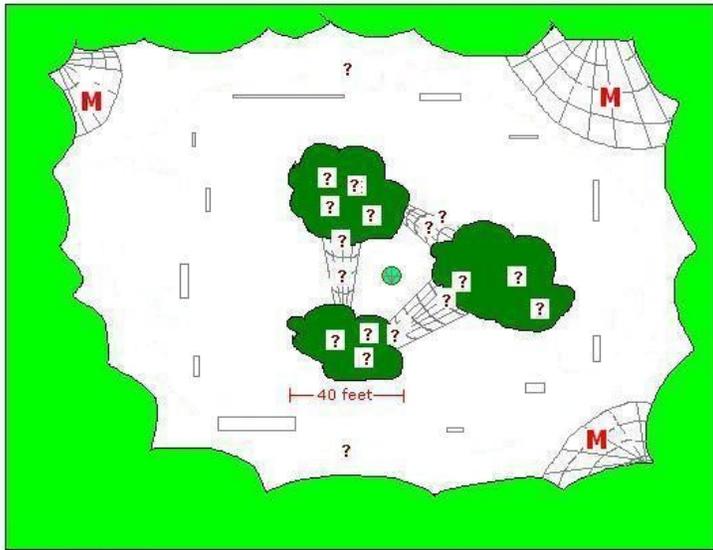
"Friends in Bright Places"

The Church of the Silver Flame in Stormreach is very grateful for your aid in their recent time of need. Your nobility and good character have shown you to be a trusted ally and as such you may be trusted with greater responsibilities and rewards in the future.

In addition, if you need to purchase clerical spellcasting in Stormreach and have the ability to do so from the Church of the Silver Flame, you will only have to pay 90% of the listed campaign cost. Any other costs, including rare components or special conditions, are unchanged and must be provided as normal.

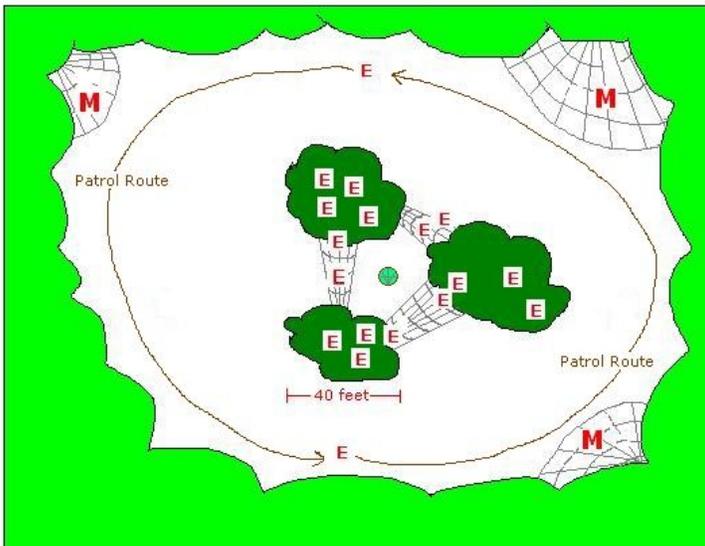
Appendix – Maps

Handout 1 – For PCs



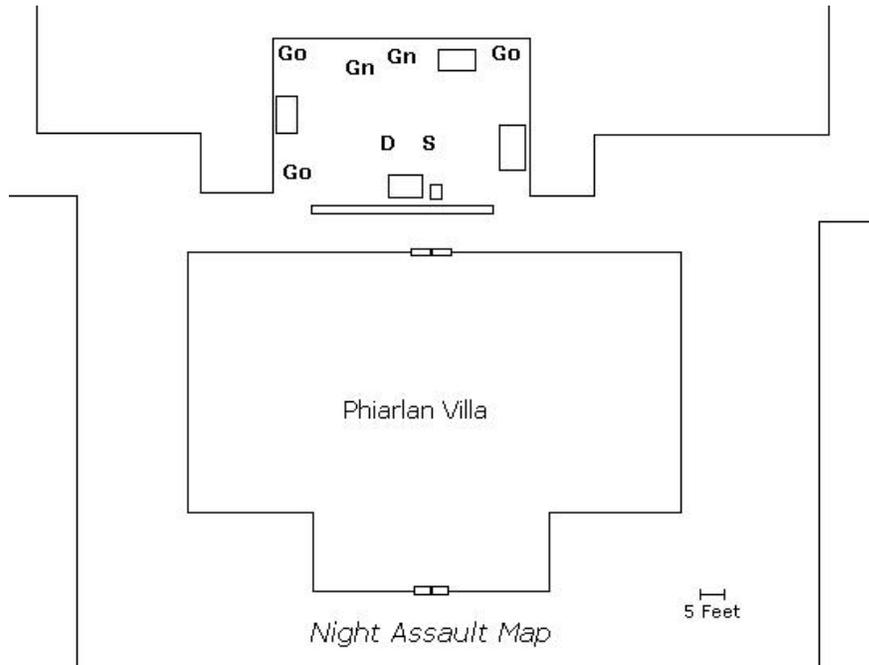
- Green Metal Disc
- ? Strange Humanoid
- M** Monstrous Spider

Handout 2– For the DM



- The Verdigris Seal
- E Ettercap
- M** Monstrous Spider

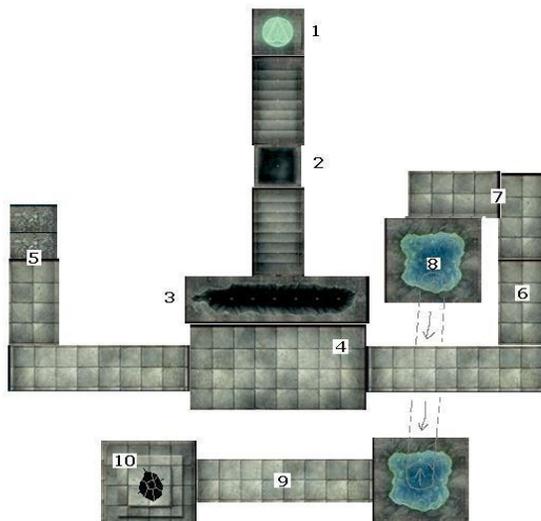
Night Assault – The Attack on the Vadalis Villa



- Go:** Goblin
GN: Gnoll
D: Dexter (rogue)
S: Sinister (rogue)

The Vault of the Ancients Map

Vault of the Ancients



- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1: The Verdigris Seal | 6: Treacherous Footing |
| 2: Shattered Stair | 7: The Sundered Gate |
| 3: A View of the Abyss | 8: Watery Passage |
| 4: The Gallery | 9: Pitfalls |
| 5: Blocked Way | 10: The Black Pillar |

Appendix – Notable NPCs

Combat Statistics

LORD ALERGAYN D'VADALIS CR 5
Human aristocrat 4 / dragonmark heir 3
N Medium humanoid (human)
Init +1; Senses Listen +8, Search +3, Spot +1
Languages Common, Gnoll, Goblin
[rule]
AC 11, touch 10, flat-footed 10
hp 39 (7 HD)
Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +8
[rule]
Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee mwk rapier +5 (1d6/18-20)
Base Atk +5; Grp +5,
Atk Options none
Special Actions Dragonmark powers (*calm animals, charm animal, dominate animal, greater magic fang*, each 1/day)
Combat Gear two trained magebred war dogs (Snarl and Snap)
[rule]
Abilities Str 10, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 14
SQ House Status, Improved Least Dragonmark, Improved Lesser Dragonmark
Feats Favored in House, Least Dragonmark (Vadalis), Skill Focus (Profession (finance)), Alertness
Skills Bluff +9, Diplomacy +9, Gather Information +9, Handle Animal +9, Knowledge (nobility) +10, Knowledge (nature) +10, Listen +8, Profession (finance) +9, Ride +9, Sense Motive +9
Possessions noble's outfit, masterwork rapier, belt pouch, war dogs.

Lord Alergayn is a made man in Sharn, one of the few members of his house to understand the intricacies of finance and trade enough to reap a continuing profit off the products of Vadalis breeders. While many members of the Vadalis House are wealthy, Lord Alergayn puts most of them to shame in terms of pure fiscal cunning.

Unfortunately for Lord Alergayn d'Vadalis, money and status have proven ineffective at defending him against the depredations of his family's darkest secret – a curse that has lain dormant for seven generations and is now swiftly killing off every member of his bloodline. Unwilling to believe in the truth of the ancient legacy until far too late, Alergayn has seen most of his family tree viciously cut back until only he, his wife, and his young daughter Damilla remain.

Alergayn can be a grating boor of a man, especially if he feels superior to present company. Unfortunately for most, he feels this way around virtually everyone except other aristocrats of the Dragonmarked Houses. His rude exterior can be set aside in favor of a very genuine, earnest personality when it suits him to do so; his diplomatic abilities might surprise those who do not know him very well and assume the arrogant, grey haired older man he appears to be is all that exists of Lord Alergayn d'Vadalis.

LADY RAVENNA D'VADALIS CR 3
 Human aristocrat 4 / dragonmark heir 1
 N Medium humanoid (human)
 Init +1; Senses Listen +1, Search +3, Spot +1
 Languages Common, Gnoll, Halfling
 [rule]
 AC 11, touch 10, flat-footed 10
 hp 25 (5 HD)
 Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +6
 [rule]
 Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
 Melee mwk dagger +3 (1d4/19-20)
 Base Atk +3; Grp +3,
 Atk Options none
 Special Actions Dragonmark powers (*calm animals, dominate animal*, each
 1/day)
 Combat Gear trained magebred war dog (Savage)
 [rule]
 Abilities Str 10, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 14
 SQ House Status
 Feats Favored in House, Least Dragonmark (Vadalis), Skill Focus
 (Knowledge (religion))
 Skills Bluff +7, Diplomacy +7, Gather Information +6, Handle Animal
 +8, Knowledge (nobility) +10, Knowledge (religion) +8, Ride +7
 Possessions noble's outfit, masterwork dagger, belt pouch, war dog.

Lord Alergayn's better half in virtually every respect, Lady Ravenna seems like such a perfect match for him that many in his House joke (outside his earshot, of course) that he had her specially magebred. Ravenna is a shrewd, coolly beautiful older woman with long, black hair, a hawk's gaze, and a closely kept temper that, if allowed to get out of control, can reach near-hurricane intensity. Many coins have been spent out of the d'Vadalis coffers to replace crockery, furniture, and windows lost to this normally-calm noblewoman's infrequent rages.

Lady Ravenna's pride and joy is her family; she has gone to greater lengths than even Alergayn knows to keep her children happy, safe, and well educated. As such, she is nearly an emotional wreck by the time the events of *The Good Die Young*. Not only has her youngest son been brutally murdered but all of her family except for Damilla has been lost to some unknown killer. Alergayn has not explained the details of his ancestor's shame to her, but she is beginning to suspect he knows more than he has told her. As such, if anyone comes to her with information on the tragedy befalling her children, she will seize upon the opportunity immediately.

LADY DAMILLA D'VADALIS CR 1
 Human aristocrat 2
 NG Medium humanoid (human)
 Init +1; Senses Listen +3, Search +1, Spot +3
 Languages Common, Gnoll
 [rule]
 AC 11, touch 10, flat-footed 10
 hp 14 (2 HD)
 Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +6
 [rule]
 Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
 Melee mwk dagger+1 (1d4/19-20)
 Base Atk +1; Grp +1,
 Atk Options none
 Special Actions Dragonmark power (*calm animals* 1/day)
 Combat Gear trained magebred war dog (Snuggles "Snuggie")
 [rule]
 Abilities Str 10, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 14
 SQ House Status
 Feats Favored in House, Least Dragonmark (Vadalis)
 Skills Diplomacy +7, Gather Information +7, Handle Animal +7,
 Knowledge (nobility) +6, Perform (sing) +6, Ride +6
 Possessions noble's outfit, masterwork dagger, belt pouch, war dog.

Lord Alergayn's sole surviving daughter is a lovely girl with long black hair like her mother and the charismatic charm her family line possesses. The difference between Damilla and her parents is that she isn't afraid to show her personable side and actively enjoys making new friends and contacts anywhere she goes. Since her mother has been keeping her imprisoned in their house in Sharn since her relatives started being slain all over Khorvaire, she has had no real companionship except Snuggles, her guardian war dog.

This makes her all the more willing to reach out to the people of Stromreach for company when her family brings her here looking for help out of their current predicament. Like Ravenna, she has no idea what is really going on as far as the curse is concerned but she is sure that if there is a way to save them, her father will find it. She has truly boundless faith, both in her parents and in the hope that somehow, in some way, everything will work out for the best.

If she survives, Damilla is perfectly suited to the priesthood. Assuming her father allows it, she intends to take to her clerical studies with the same drive that has kept her going in these last few dark months. Grateful to the Silver Flame for seeing her family through its travails, she will happily dedicate her life to the pursuit of good works. When the time comes, she might even be willing to join the Covenant of Light as a full member, though that depends greatly on how the faction is represented to her during the course of Thje Good Die Young.

TOWER, WARFORGED BODYGUARD CR 4
Warforged fighter 4
N Medium humanoid (living construct)
Init +0; Senses
Languages Common, Gnoll, Halfling
[rule]
AC 22, touch 10, flat-footed 22 (DR 3/adamantine)
hp 42 (4 HD)
Fort +7, Ref +1, Will +0
[rule]
Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)
Melee mwk long sword +9 (1d8+4/19-20)
Base Atk +4; Grp +8,
Atk Options Power Attack, Cleave
Special Actions none
Combat Gear none
[rule]
Abilities Str 19, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12
SQ Living construct traits, DR 3/adamantine
Feats Adamantine body, Improved Damage Reduction, Improved Shield Bash,
Power Attack, Cleave
Skills Climb +6, Intimidate +9, Handle Animal +4, Jump +6
Possessions masterwork long sword, locking gauntlet, tower shield

An imposing figure known for the massive tower shield he carries at all times, Tower is a well-known mercenary in the city of Stromreach. Powerfully built and extremely strong even for a warforged, Tower has developed a reputation for expertly guarding both valuables and valuable personnel. His specialty is acting as a bodyguard for others, though he is not adverse to work of other kinds. He refuses missions that would involve assassination not from a moral standpoint but because accepting such work might reduce his desirability as a guardian.

Tower is, like most of his kind, outwardly ambivalent about spiritual matters. The Threshold Treaty may have spelled out his people's sentience and rights as living beings but the greater question of whether warforged have souls is a mystery he does not feel qualified to contemplate. If asked, he professes neither knowledge nor concern about the matter; the truth is an entirely different story.

Tower is deeply worried about what will happen to him once he "ceases to function". He has seen too many people, both warforged and organic, die and heard too many statements about the afterlife to not wonder whether or not a similar fate awaits him. He would of course like to believe that there is an afterlife for his kind but he lacks the strength of faith to truly believe in it... yet.

ABBOT OF THE FLAME KROVALD, CHURCH OF THE SILVER FLAME CR 7

Human cleric 7

LG Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; Senses Listen +4, Spot +4

Languages Common, Celestial, Draconic

[rule]

AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10

hp 28 (7 HD)

Resist none

Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +9

[rule]

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +5 unarmed (1d3 nonlethal)

Base Atk +5; Grp +5

Special Actions turn undead (9/day; +5; 2d6+9), spontaneous healing

Spells Prepared (CL 7th) none (Normally, Krovald simply says his morning prayers and does not request spells unless he has a good reason to suspect he may need them during the day.)

[rule]

Abilities Str 10, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 18, Cha 16

SQ aura (lawful, good)

Feats Ecclesiarch, Endurance, Extra Turning, Skill Focus (Profession [bureaucracy])

Skills Concentration +8, Craft (bookbinding) +4, Diplomacy +10, Gather Information +7, Heal +9, Knowledge (arcane) +7, Knowledge (religion) +11, Profession (bureaucracy) +10, Profession (scribe) +6, Spellcraft +8.

Possessions holy symbol, clerical robes, mantle of office (grey silk tunic emblazoned with the symbol of the Silver Flame)

A fixture of the Stormreach Church of the Silver Flame, Abbot Krovald has been serving his faith for more than twenty years. A staunch adherent to the aims of the Silver Flame, he truly believes in the divinity of his church's patron and the goodness inherent in all living things. He is not as zealous as some in the Church; he does not advocate any further crusades and does not believe the followers of the Silver Flame need to spend their energies looking for outside evils to fight when the world around them is in such disarray.

This attitude has carried him in good stead all the way to Xen'drik and the ramshackle city of Stormreach. A place very much in need of maintenance and constructive leadership, Krovald has been happy to be a part of the Silver Flame's guidance of the port's easily-wayward community. While he does wish more of the people of Stormreach followed his faith, he is content to let them come to the church in their own time. He knows of the conversion methods some of his less-scrupulous brethren use, such as withholding healing and community services from the 'unclean'; these tactics infuriate him when he can prove they occur.

In the past, Krovald was happy enough allowing Flame Father Garris to serve as the Church's liaison to the Covenant of Light. With Garris' demise, he knows someone else will have to step into that role. He would rather appoint someone else to the task but since he can think of no one else suitable to do so, he has shouldered the burden personally. While he does not have the freedom of time to be as open and accessible as Garris was, his office will never be closed to the Scions of Light.