



ONE NIGHT IN THE CITY

By Michael Martin

**Wild, weird, and unique urban encounters
for the world's greatest roleplaying game**

ONE NIGHT IN THE CITY: URBAN ENCOUNTERS OF THE WILD KIND

Tired of generic random encounter results? Want to give your players a trip to the city they'll never forget? Ready to throw your book/tablet/dice at the wall if you roll "farmers arguing over a spilled cart" one more time?

You're in the right place.

This supplement should help inject humor, horror, and style into your players' time in any city. The document is divided into three main sections:

- **Notes on Use and Intent:** brief explanatory notes on the encounters
- **The Encounters:** detailed listings for rolled encounter results
- **Referenced Creatures and Sources:** all official creatures used, along with their sourcebook(s)

NOTES ON USE AND INTENT

These encounters are meant to lend flavor, mystery, and danger to times when your game takes place in an urban location. They're also meant to help create side quests, story texture, and inspire unplanned adventures and actions. Ostensibly created to be used in Waterdeep, Baldur's Gate, or any Sword Coast city (or any Forgotten Realms [FR] city, really), the encounters can be easily adapted to any homebrew or customized version of FR with minimal fuss and time.

Keen readers will note creatures, locations, and objects referenced that aren't canon (i.e., not established as official things in FR, not present in any official pubs); this is entirely intentional to evoke interest and mystery on the part of the players and to give you, the DM, inspiration and room to give the encounter (and any subsequent actions and storylines) your own style and flourishes.

I follow the official publication convention of **boldfacing** creature names/types for easy skimming/spotting.

I've made these encounters because, while useful, most of the random encounters tables in the official books and even online tend to be very basic and/or generic; I like to weird things up, and give the players pause and reasons to go down side alleys and stories. You have my full encouragement to adapt and customize these as you see fit – even to the point of inspiring you to make your own list and chucking these.

My specific inspirations for the tone and style of these encounters are Logan Knight's amazing work at Last Gasp Grimoire (<https://www.lastgaspgrimoire.com>) and the writing/homebrew gaming content of Handy Haversack (<https://surprisingly-capacious.blogspot.com/>). I strongly recommend everyone looking to give their game a shot of the weird, the unique, and the evocative to go to their sites and start reading.

THE ENCOUNTERS

To get started, roll a d20:

1-14 This Could Be Interesting

15-18 You Don't See *That* Every Day

19-20 What the *What?*

Each category has 20 encounters, so you can either keep your initial roll or roll again. Or just pick whichever encounter you want to use.

THIS COULD BE INTERESTING

- 1 A town crier, working for the city's leader(s), announces a curfew in light of unexplained magical events in the neighborhood over the past few nights:
 1. Ghostlike figures have been seen dancing on rooftops
 2. "Wolves made of shadow" have been reported
 3. Babies suddenly spoke in adult voices in languages no one understood
 4. "Frozen" spots in which all movement ceased for up to a minute
- 2 Gizelda Trutch and Niles Brixbrite, two dandies of inherited wealth, members of the Waverider Trade Guild, sit in a nearby outdoor café and laugh at a random PC's attire.
- 3 An older firbolg, wearing faded and stained leathers, carries a strange skull and vials of nearly black blood. He has an unkempt, grey-flecked beard and offers to tell you tales of the wilderlands that will curl your toes....for a few beers.
- 4 A Daughter of Cold Quiet walks down the street, and she steals every sound within 30 feet of her.
- 5 A halfling in a patchwork skirt proclaiming herself to be the originator of Maiden's Might sells bottles from a cart on the street corner. The bottles are full of:
 1. Fermented peaches and squirrel droppings.
 2. Re-used coffee grounds.
 3. Goat's milk and pig's tails.
 4. River water and silt.
 5. Crushed beetles and larvae.
 6. "Just add water!"
- 6 Broken Tusk mercenaries jostle the PC with the highest Strength as they pass. If offense is taken they invite you to settle the matter at Mr. Dead's Kitchen, a fight den, tonight, they've been in need of an opponent anyway.
- 7 Seven **kobolds** – five regular, one **dragonshield** and one **scale sorcerer**, run into the party from an alley, being pursued by two clerics of Helm (Forgotten Realms, god of protection). The kobolds are all servants of Fel Excoriata, a black dragon with a hunger for flesh and treasure, and are here to scout the city out.
- 8 A goliath barbarian covered in fresh wounds stumbles down the street, having just been beaten by a mob of teens/20s from House Stroud. If aided, he will tell tales about a tower made of bone on the far side of the Storm Horns Mountains, and offer to buy them a round of drinks.
- 9 A craggy-faced dragonborn, scales dirty and worn, stands atop a box and shouts at passers-by: "Gird yourselves! The Chained One strains at his bonds! He comes for YOU! He will crush the thrones of the angels and burn down your temples! There is no hiding! Pray for quick annihilation!"
- 10 A party member is invited to an illegal **axe beak** race as a rider/jockey by a gnome with a pink Mohawk.
- 11 An edict from the city leader(s) proclaims that in two days' time, a 24 hour curfew is mandatory because of an impending but unexpected eclipse.
- 12 Caustic Thrasp, a noble and secret devotee of Bhaal, passes the party with a retinue of deadly looking bodyguards. Thrasp tells the party to watch their step; his head guard, Vaska Zome, challenges the meanest looking party member to an after-dark duel to settle the score.
- 13 A very pretty half-elven woman runs at the party, shouting "No, no, come back!" and "Look out!" Everyone make a DC 15 Dexterity save or fall prone as a gaggle of talking, mobile office supplies try to outrun the nice lady, who's actually Wella Arrin, Deputy Assistant Curator at DeBrann's Relics.

THIS COULD BE INTERESTING, *CONT'D*

- 14 Werner Brobe, a mad devotee of Chauntea (Forgotten Realms, goddess of agriculture), rails at everyone who uses magic, crying apostate and heretic as passerby. Hidden in his wide, multicolored fabric belt are two magic items, the awful hypocrite: a dark red gem that causes people to engage with his arguments until they pass out (DC 15 wisdom save, every other minute, disadvantage after one failed roll), and a brooch that charms people into agreeing with him and joining in the shouting (same).
- 15 Korgen Smelt, an older dwarf in clothing that was once fine but now ragged, approaches the party with a clipboard, hoping to register them to vote in an election to unseat the city's mayor/governor. Signing would be a Very Bad Idea.
- 16 A tiefling merchant, Radinka Weevil, is selling an assortment of common magic items on a gilded table in the street, watched over by his muscle, Kloris Choke. There is a 1 in 12 chance the item is actually a rare or relic-level item and Weevil does not know it....but someone else does, and *they want it back*.
- 17 Two dwarves, each with a wagon full of ore, block the street, arguing about who has precedence to set prices. Ferrous Gite claims it due to being older while Arkose Tam claims it because he's better looking (he's not). Ferrous employs a **spectator** as a guard for his ore, while Arkose has a young **ettin** (half hit points).
- 18 The Transient Scroll: you pass a bookshop that you're sure (DC 12 Perception) you've passed before—and you're right. It floats from location to location, run by Bartelby Scrivener, an amiable half-elf who loves to search for esoteric books and topics.
- 19 When you return home, a random PC will find something important missing and a yellow feather on their bed. Hagatha Gloom of the Golden Harpies has taken a liking to them.
- 20 An elven ranger in tattered leathers and covered in fresh wounds carries a smilodon cub, wounded from a battle in the city's woods. If aided, he will gift two arrows: one that drops a rope of up to 30' once fired and one that spreads a carpet of moss 5' x 10', giving advantage for stealth checks.

YOU DON'T SEE *THAT* EVERY DAY

- 1 Farizad Khag, a **rakshasa**, is disguised as Lady Dominique Thrawl, an elvish noble, with her five disguised retainers (**weretigers** of the **saber-toothed tiger** variety), approaches you asking where someone might find *real* excitement in the city, everyone's a farmer, it's so boring here, would you like to come back to my rented villa for some fun we make ourselves? Khag's real motive is that he's very hungry and thinks the party would be perfect for eating.
- 2 A tabaxi, dressed in tattered leather armor and worn adventurer's gear, limps past you, half muttering and half growling to herself. She doesn't notice a small, heavy bag drop from her backpack. Inside, wrapped in old, stained map, is small hand carved from grey-black marble, a hand shaped to clutch or hold...*something*. The map shows mountains and ruins with no easily identified location, and is covered in scrawling handwriting in an unknown language.
- 3 A gnome, adorned in exotic feathers and wooden armor, beseeches passersby for help in finding the lost Eye of Travinsk before others with fell intent find it and put it to foul use. The gnome is actually Teoxihuitl, a **couatl** who knows he only has 21 days left to live, and he is desperate to find someone willing to help him.
- 4 A shadowy figure opens a doorway as you pass and beckons you inside with a voice barely above a whisper. Your new friend is:
 1. A heavily scarred warlock of the Hexblade. She tells you that a group of city watch are stationed across the street, waiting for a Daughter of Cold Quiet to come and capture the warlock for crimes not her own. She wants your help.
 2. A reclusive scholar, he offers you 100 gp now and 300 gp later if you deliver a wrapped and belted book to the Hall of Hidden Shadows, he sternly warns you not to peer beneath the wrapping. If he isn't here when you return the place will be in quite a state.
 3. The proprietor of a fight house set up in the lower levels. He's just had a fighter drop dead from some kind of blooming cauliflower-skin infection and is looking for a replacement.
- 5 A young woman wielding a knife that glows with blue fire stabs an old man in the street and flees, shrieking. The blood trailing from the body transforms into a **swarm of poisonous snakes**; the body disintegrates and reforms as a **bulezau**; it is angry and murderous and attacks whatever it sees in front of it.
- 6 Chant Reverence, a tiefling adventurer with a silver mechanical hand, has a poem and a proposition. The poem is song whose lyrics depict a tunnel entrance in the Thunder Peaks. Chant proposes you accompany her there, wherein she claims you shall find the lost fane of gods who made the gods you know, the Ancient Artificers. Hidden knowledge, sacred magics, and singing idols await you but only Chant can take you there.
- 7 A scarred human fighter (**veteran**) mistakes you for an old comrade from a previous war. His face twitches and his eyes fight to stay in the same direction as he passionately tells you he knows where the Glaive of the Fiery Soul can be found, and soon he will be invincible.
- 8 As the group walks down the road, a deranged dwarf chooses to take his angst against life out on the PCs. He release 25 lbs. of marbles in the general area and then begins shooting poison bolts at the group and other bystanders. He claims the elves are poisoning the dwarves in the city (they haven't) and that they've encouraged a subtle prejudice against dwarves (they have).
- 9 You're mistaken for envoys of the Glister Crows, an important and feared underworld faction. You receive a stream of mysterious (and incomprehensible to the PCs) messages, bribes and trouble. Eventually, they are invited to the biggest underworld rendezvous in a century.
- 10 A small child selling flowers is stung by a bee....and transforms into a horrific bee-demon, with a cross of **giant bee** and **chasme** demon abilities. The bee-thing is an escaped experiment from a druid gone mad.

YOU DON'T SEE *THAT* EVERY DAY, *CONT'D*

- 11 You pass a storyteller who seems to be describing your current adventure. The names have been changed, and the storyteller claims it is just a story, but is it? Does the story contain a clue that the party needs, but perhaps overlooked, or is the clue a red herring?
- 12 A **swarm of rats**, especially bred by an impressively ugly alchemist, attacks the party member with the most charisma. They are enchanted to squeak "Not so beautiful now, are ya!" as they attack.
- 13 An unmarked, black carriage races by, and the carcass of a displacer beast falls to the ground with a splat. D6 x 10 seconds later, **black tentacles** (as per the spell; DC 15) erupt from the carcass. Footman in livery lurks nearby during the encounter, pays everyone involved 50 gp to remain silent about the incident then makes his way back to his employer's home.
- 14 Two groups of half-orcs face off, all wielding various drums. Anyone within 30 feet for more than a minute must make a DC 13 CON save or be **deafened** for 5 minutes; anyone deafened must make another save, at disadvantage, or be **stunned** for one minute. Roll again to see who comes along to deal with the effected PCs.
- 15 The crowd parts with shrieks and faints and you see a Daughter of Cold Quiet betraying her oath by screaming as she dies, joyfully dismembered by a blood-drenched old grandmother. This is an **annis hag**, settling on old vendetta.
- 16 Hadarai Yeldrin, an elven **swashbuckler**, comes crashing through a storefront window with a helmed horror in hot pursuit. Hadarai was in the midst of ~~stealing~~ investigating the shop, which is a front for a **necromancer**, and would really appreciate if maybe you could help her out.
- 17 Three ancient tiefling spellcasters, improbably named Scorn, Swayze, and Gilnert, (**evoker**, **necromancer**, and **transmuter**) yell at passersby to buy them a tankard or three for the real story of what's beyond the Trackless Sea, but they get drunk pretty quick and confused even quicker.
- 18 Cedric de Qetser, an amateur engineer from the Unclaimed Quarter, asks the party if they'd like to learn how to fly without spellcasting; he seeks test subjects for magical metals wings he has designed (currently in their 47th version), he's certain of their integrity and has the perfect tower for a trial flight. This version does not work any better than the previous 46.
- 19 1 d6 **half-ogres** are looking to start some trouble and they've decided you're just as good a target as any. They all wear a red vest with a laughing blue face emblazoned on it; these are Rotting Jane the Oni's boys and if you kill them, she'll make plans to eat soup out of your skulls.
- 20 Djeti, a female tabaxi, attempts to pick the pocket of one of the party members and fails spectacularly....only to sob and ask for a few gold to prevent her hand from being cut for failing the initiation rite....all while her companion, a gnome named Nyx Silversight, attempts to pick another character's pockets. Both are wanted fugitives, hunted by the city watch and the thieves guild.

WHAT THE *WHAT?*

- 1 The remnants of the Iron Stars band of adventurers trudges past, returning from a job to reach fell ruins deep in the Tortured Lands. Juriss Vrasque, their goliath leader (**champion**), wails that something hunts them, something that has murdered everyone at every village and town they've passed through, and that it eats the screaming of the dying. They carry with them the Grail of Whispering Death, plundered from the ruins, and they themselves are safe but no one they talk to is.
- 2 The sounds of the crowded street are drowned out as something shrieks from the sky, punching through canopies, balconies and walkways, crashing into the middle of the street. A craggy ball of rock with red-hot fissures smolders in the impact crater. 2d4 pedestrians were killed and will rise in 1d4 rounds as **specters**...but in the meantime, the molten meteor unfolds like a laval flower and d10 **magmin** emerge, looking to kill and destroy. This is a message from Sarikov, the Lord of Rot, the Dead Man Who Lives, to stop interfering with his research.
- 3 Gretchen Hargren, a daughter of a local farmer, pleads with Wolfgang Shrike, a member of the city nobility. Gretchen claims that she's been to Highmelt Lake, to the isle of Sharihad's Tower. She saw terrible beings, wings and jointed legs and grinning, fanged faces, doing terrible rituals and incantations. They used blood and branch and bone to conjure and call their unrelenting deity. The Mantis Queen comes.
- 4 A hurried woman, dressed in layers of ruined black silks, bumps into you, dropping a human hand from the bundle she is carrying. She shouts "Death is his slave!" and continues to run. The hand, in the meantime, swiftly transforms from fresh to rotted remains, flexes, and begins to crawl....while it begins to grow back its entire decayed body.
- 5 Flavia Binter, an elven **apprentice wizard** in training, has lost control of her new purchase from the Arcanum et Lumen bookstore and is running right for the party to stop it oh too late look out for that huge book that's sprouted teeth and is leaping at your throat.
- 6 Darkness falls like a three ton boulder but only for three blocks around you; thick strands of mist curl out from alleys and up from the cobblestones and soul-scraping weeping echoes and a **nightwalker** suddenly strolls through the cube of darkness and maybe you should just let it pass.
- 7 A phantasmal tentacle of absolute starry silence writhes past and touches a random party member; they go mute and deaf but are filled with the vision of an eldritch, soundless monstrosity growing in the Garden of Silence.
- 8 A round portal made of blue and green lightning opens 20 feet above the ground; bloody chunks of a humanoid body splat through to the ground, followed by a very angry **death kiss** who's ready to put the hurt on a few more upstart mortals.
- 9 Three aasimar **acolytes** of the Temple of Ash and Bone, dressed in drab layers of castoff clothing, stand and intone about the vanity of all things, their heads are shaved bald and their faces smeared with ashes and filth, making dreadful dirty masks. They call out to all passers-by, asking them to reflect on the uselessness of daily life, asking them to join them in mourning the void at the heart of life. Anyone engaging with them must make a DC 13 CHA save or else suddenly they sound so wise, so real, maybe just a few minutes more?
- 10 Krevor Spite, a half orc **warlock of the fiend**, has just messily slain an employee of the Midnight Archives for refusing to haggle over some very rare tomes and as the crowd parts. Spite sees you and smiles and tosses the books at you and these books have teeth and are really, really hungry.
- 11 A trio of six foot tall fungi amble down the street, mauve and pink and just really disgusting. They're singing but don't you dare sing along; if anyone tries, the fungi shriek and you better hope you don't pass out from the sound (DC 15 Con save).

WHAT THE *WHAT?*, CONT'D

- 12 A towering purple and blue flower grows from the cobblestones, a circle of eye-wrenching runes surround its thick, swaying base. Anyone coming within 5 feet of the gargantuan bloom must make a DC 16 save against either *confusion* or *feeblemind*. Any attack on the flower immediately transforms it into a **neothelid** and it will seek to devour the attacker(s) and then escape to bloom elsewhere.
- 13 Half of an entire noble family is assassinated overnight; stabbed, poisoned, thrown from the roof, drowned, you name it. The surviving half have all been transformed into humanoid bears and they're getting more ursine by the day.
- 14 A pair of gnome urchins come up to you, mister, mister, these are magic bean plants, they'll fix your ills, money back guaranteed. The potted plant indeed produces magic beans that have one of the following effects, if the plant is watered and cared for: 1) heals d6 hp 2) severe stomach cramps (all rolls disadvantage for 5 minutes) 3) give the ingester advantage on discerning weal/woe for all plant life nearby 4) no effect for 24 hours then forced vomiting, you spew d10 seeds and unless save vs wisdom DC 15 you are compelled to go to the nearest wood area and dig a hole with your hands to plant them.
- 15 The city watch gathers around a body washed out from the sewers, the lower half gone, chewed off, dangling entrails and bone and viscera trailing along the ground. One fist is clenched around an enormous ruby that pulses and throbs, and green smoke drifts empty eye sockets.
- 16 Verdi Klorfill, owner of the Blooming Riot, has a huge talking plant in his basement and doesn't know what to do with it. The plant keeps asking to be set free but has a very bad habit of telling secrets.
- 17 You are secretly approached by an old, scarred firbolg, claiming to be an unofficial ambassador from the Lurkwood, and he has terrible news for the future of the Sword Coast and the rest of the land. He gasps and coughs, turning green, and mutters about the Grandmother of Witches moving to wipe the land clean. He then becomes covered in poison ivy, dies, and withers to dust and dried leaves.
- 18 An armored **saber-toothed tiger** careens down the street, dragging a shrieking high elf. He is Mazlowe Griever, **conjurer** and inveterate liar. If saved/rescued, he claims to know where a secret store for magic items is, and he can give you the password but isn't allowed to go there himself.
- 19 A wide courtyard between buildings displays a strange tree with green bark and arched branches, from which hang fruit as you've never seen before, red and orange and splashes of magical violet. Anyone taking a fruit (surprisingly bland and not very nutritional) is subject to the effects from a roll on the wand of wonder tables.
- 20 Warbly Jack, a **green slaad** shapechanged to look like a tabaxi, leads a multicoloured procession of masked, costumed fools dances through the street, they gibber and drool and hoot and wave vibrant streamers in the faces of those they pass. Anyone that joins their procession will be led to a basement feasting hall, wherein Jack will attempt to capture and eat the party.

REFERENCED CREATURES AND SOURCES

The table below lists, in alphabetical order, all creatures referenced in the encounters and their source book.

Creature	Source
acolyte (NPC)	Basic Rules/Monster Manual
apprentice wizard	Volo's Guide to Monsters
axe beak	Basic Rules/Monster Manual
bulezau (demon)	Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes
champion (NPC)	Volo's Guide to Monsters
chasme (demon)	Monster Manual
conjuror	Volo's Guide to Monsters
couatl	Basic Rules/Monster Manual
death kiss (beholder)	Volo's Guide to Monsters
ettin	Basic Rules/Monster Manual
evoker (NPC)	Volo's Guide to Monsters
giant bee	Basic Rules/Monster Manual
green slaad	Monster Manual
hag, annis	Volo's Guide to Monsters
half ogre	Monster Manual
kobold (standard)	Basic Rules/Monster Manual
kobold, dragonshield	Volo's Guide to Monsters
kobold, scale sorcerer	Volo's Guide to Monsters
magmin	Basic Rules/Monster Manual
necromancer (NPC)	Volo's Guide to Monsters
neothelid	Volo's Guide to Monsters
nightwalker	Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes
rakshasa	Basic Rules/Monster Manual
saber-toothed tiger	Basic Rules/Monster Manual
spectator (beholder)	Basic Rules/Monster Manual
specter	Basic Rules/Monster Manual
swarm of poisonous snakes	Basic Rules/Monster Manual
swarm of rats	Basic Rules/Monster Manual
swashbuckler (NPC)	Volo's Guide to Monsters
transmuter (NPC)	Volo's Guide to Monsters
veteran (NPC)	Basic Rules/Monster Manual
warlock of the fiend	Volo's Guide to Monsters
weretiger (lycanthrope)	Basic Rules/Monster Manual

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