

Waterdeep Faction Adventures: It Got Under His Skin

A 4 hour adventure investigating evil in Undercliff

*Expanding on the first Emerald Enclave faction mission
in chapter 2 of Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*

*Adaptable to any faction in Waterdeep, or as a
haunting investigation in any rural setting*

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It Got Under His Skin

Adventure Background

The demon lord Graz'zt is concerned by the archdevil Asmodeus's rapidly growing power in Waterdeep. Unable to gain a foothold inside the city proper, Graz'zt set his sights on the adjacent rural area of Undercliff.

A young human named Basil Mureal worked as a guard at the labor-prison Amendsfarm, the perfect occupation for a cruel man who never exhibited the constitution or work ethic for farming. When the charismatic Graz'zt approached Mureal with an offer of making those around him his lessors who would bow in respect, Mureal immediately set his heart to serving Graz'zt without even giving a second thought.

Graz'zt instructed Mureal in a dark ritual turning a simple hammer used in construction into a powerful magic weapon. At the dark lord's command, Mureal used the hammer to murder three prisoners, trapping their spirits inside the weapon. He then set the tool yet again to construction: three scarecrows, each animated by a spirit captured from Mureal's victims.

With the scarecrows set to their immortal task of terrorizing those in Undercliff who would openly support Waterdeep's power, Graz'zt turned to constructing his next tool: a relic from the Blood War representing a victory against the archdevil army. Intoxicated with the power already bestowed on him and hungry for more, Mureal naively agreed to become a vessel for the demon, completely destroying all semblance of the man in the process.

His babau demon now summoned to the material plane, Graz'zt turned it to the task of finding long forgotten tunnels in the cliff which led into the city of Waterdeep. If he can establish a presence in the city, he will take the opportunity to sow chaos and undermine Asmodeus in any way he can.

Waterdeep: Dragon Heist

This adventure is based on the first Emerald Enclave mission (for 2nd level characters) on page 35 of the hardcover campaign *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*.

While the Emerald Enclave is a great fit for the mission explored in this adventure, it could also be issued by any of the factions. A hook for each faction is included in the first section of the adventure.

If your campaign takes place in summer with the Asmodeus worshipping Cassalanter as the villains, fear not. Nothing the demon lord Graz'zt accomplishes will interfere with chapter 6 in the campaign book.

Look for more expanded chapter 2 faction adventures from [Paul Metzger on dmsguild.com](https://dmsguild.com)

Although this adventure takes place in the farmlands east of Waterdeep, it could easily be adapted to any rural setting in your campaign.

Overview

The adventure consists of these sections:

Faction Hooks. A faction of your choosing asks the adventurers to investigate the rumors of a trio of scarecrows which have come to life and are terrorizing Undercliff.

Under the Cliff. On the way to Undercliff Village, the party encounters a lynch mob.

Blow to the Head. The characters investigate a triple homicide at the labor-prison farm, just as inmate tension boils over.

Out of His Skin. The home of Basil Mureal reveals dark secrets left behind.

A Few Bad Apples. Mureal's disappearance doesn't stop his cult from meeting. Which side of the ambush will the characters find themselves on?

Digging In. The adventurers confront a demon in a cavern hidden in Waterdeep cliff.

Faction Hooks

Every Waterdeep faction has reason to send the party on this adventure, and each has some sort of aid to offer.

If your campaign is outside of Waterdeep, use the examples below to create your own unique hook.

Emerald Enclave

The Emerald Enclave abhors the evil and unnatural. When rumors that a trio of scarecrows are terrorizing Undercliff emerge, the Emerald Enclave taps their newest recruits to investigate.

A familiar white cat with a small roll of paper tucked into its collar waits for the adventurers. It speaks: "Rumor from the farms to the east is of three field scarecrows come alive. If there's truth to it, Anselm Griggons, the proprietor of *The Harvest Home* inn in Undercliff Village will know as much as any man. If things are as we fear, you may well need this scroll to help protect you."

The scroll is a *shillelagh* (PHB 275) *spell scroll* that is written in druidic with a phonetic translation underneath, allowing any character who can read common to cast it.

Bregan D'aerthe

Jarlaxle Baenre knows that devil worship has been spreading among the nobility in Waterdeep. He's curious to find out if there is any connection to the rumor of supernatural evil in the outlying farmland.

He visits the characters in disguise as their benefactor "J.B. Nevercott", and asks the party to look into the matter out of concern for the smattering of his customers who reside in Undercliff Village, which he describes as a "delightfully quaint" place. Of its residents he advises "the Underfolk are a backward people, but mostly harmless." He warns any characters not human or halfling to brace themselves for some soft bigotry, and further recommends that any dragonborn, half-orc, tiefling, or monstrous race characters may prefer to stay home; or at the very least wear a cloak with a hood.

Force Grey (Gray Hands)

Ever vigilant Vajra Safahr is frustrated that the City Guard never seems to take threats from outside the walls of Waterdeep seriously. Since she knows the Underfolk to stir up fantastic stories, she's not inclined to put Force Grey's

resources to the task of investigating until she can verify the veracity of the tales. She summons the party via *sending* to Blackstaff tower to assign the mission.

Safahr warns the party that they may find their weapons less than fully adequate if they do encounter possessed constructs. She has a *magic weapon* (PHB 257) *spell scroll* ready for the party, and cautions they only use it in the face of a dire situation.

Harpers

Mirt sends the adventurers a *paper bird* inviting them to join him at the Yawning Portal. When the characters arrive, Mirt buys a round of drinks and shares the rumor of three scarecrows animated and terrorizing nearby farms. He expresses some skepticism, noting that "Underfolk are prone to spreading such tall tales." Mirt asks that the party travel to *The Harvest Home* in Undercliff Village and investigate. The inn's owner, Anselm Griggons, is loosely affiliated with the Harpers.

Lord's Alliance

The ongoing gang war between the Zhentarim and the Xanathar's Guild is stretching Jalester Silvermane's resources to the breaking point. Working late into the night, he hastily delegates the alleged animated scarecrows to the adventurers, scribbling on a piece of paper "Trio of scarecrows alive and terrorizing Undercliff? Go. Report Back. -Silvermane". The note is delivered the next morning by a young courier girl.

Order of the Gauntlet

Savra Belabranta arrives at Trollskull Manor at the crack of dawn. "An opportunity to vacate evil!" She shares the rumor that three scarecrows have been animated and terrorizing Undercliff, and gives the characters a vial of *alchemist's fire* (PHB 148). "You burn their wretched bodies, Tyr shall forever burn their wicked spirits!"

Zhentarim

When the Doom Raiders heard rumors of three scarecrows animated and terrorizing Undercliff their suspicions immediately turned to Manshoon. A flying snake arrives delivering a scroll reading, "Trio of scarecrows come alive in Undercliff. Determine if work of Manshoon. If help needed, reliable Zhents known to water at *Tankard Times* in Undercliff Village."

Under the Cliff

Dozens of farms are dispersed along Undercliff Way, the long road winding through the open rolling prairie east of Waterdeep, connected to the High Road at both the north and south where it leaves the city.

Describe the environment based on the season your campaign takes place in. Spring sees workers plowing and sowing the fields, cattle graze under the hot summer sun, tall rows of corn and barley stand ready for autumn harvest, and the harsh winter cold reveals a barren wasteland covered in snow.

The Many Scarecrows of Undercliff

Scarecrows are a common sight in Undercliff. Nearly every field the party comes across has one or more standing watch. Point at least one cluster of three out as the characters pass by a farm on the way to Undercliff Village. These remain completely motionless and upon inspection seem harmless.

Make scarecrow sightings mundane. Perhaps have one in the distance move, only to have been knocked over by the wind. Consider making your players paranoid at every sighting, or lull them into complacency.

The three scarecrows animated by Basil Mureal sense that the characters are dangerous allies of Waterdeep and have set their sights upon the party.

The adventure provides suggestions as to when the animated scarecrows might attack (use Encounter S - Scarecrows Come to Life!) , but ultimately it's up to you to when they make their appearance.

Happy haunting!

Encounter A - The Lynch Mob

As Undercliff Village is coming into the view in the distance, the party notices a large group of people gathered near a lone oak tree just off the side of the road.

A terrified looking tiefling man sits sideways on an unsaddled horse. The noose tied around his neck is attached, with little slack, to a large branch of the tree overhead.

Vance Liffen sits in the saddle of a horse next to the condemned tiefling, flanked by three **thugs** (MM350). All four men are human. The **angry mob** before them is a 70/30 mix of humans and halflings, all males.

The Political Climate in Undercliff

The city of Waterdeep has made a spectacular recovery in the short time since the Sundering. Under Laerel Silverhand's leadership, most noble families have regained their wealth, and the standard of living for all but the poorest of Waterdeep's residents has been steadily on the rise.

Most Undercliffens, as they refer to themselves, feel left out of this prosperity. They feed the city, yet live hard agrarian lives filled with manual labor and few amenities. They hear the citizens of Waterdeep refer to them as "Underfolk" and mock their slow nasal accent. They return contempt in kind, deriding even laborers in the city as "elites" up on a mountain of riches who have no understanding of what it means to live as a "real" citizen of the north.

Graz't found it easy to tap into this resentment and form a small cult serving his goal of undermining Asmodeus. Although the number dedicated to outright demon-worship is few and secretive, their political ideology based around the racial superiority of humans and halflings (the vast majority of Undercliff's population) and extracting economic and cultural revenge against the city is quickly becoming widespread.

Liffen is the leader of the Graz't worshipping cult, *The Merciless Order of the Six Fingered Hand*, but no one present is aware of this fact. Although he possess dark magic, he won't risk betraying the secret by casting spells.

Liffen is currently whipping the mob into a frenzy. When the party approaches, they hear the tail end of his speech:

"...and monsters make more monsters! Y'all seen what's been going on lately. The elites up top in the city encourage this wickedness to flourish, but not down here in the heart of our land!"

The speech is followed by a few shouts from the crowd, e.g. "death to the monster!"

Liffen sees the characters approaching as his speech wraps up and nods to his henchmen, who move in opposite directions to flank the party. He notices that a character is dragonborn, drow, half-orc, tiefling, or any monstrous race unless they have are wearing a hood and make a successful DC12 Charisma (Deception) check; or have employed magic or a *disguise kit* to hide their true race (no check required).

If he spotted a character of one of those races, Liffen shouts out, "Well lookit here. It's our lucky day! Seems we gonna have us some double (or triple etc as warranted) justice!" His henchmen charge towards the party with the goal of capturing any characters of those races. The angry mob engages in combat at mentality level 3.

A party seen to be comprised of only socially acceptable races won't be attacked unless they physically interfere with the lynching.

The characters might try persuading the lynch mob not to hang the tiefling. They won't convince Liffen, but they may turn the sentiment of the crowd. When a character makes an argument in favor of sparing the tiefling's life, have them make a Charisma (Persuasion) check. The check is made at advantage by a cleric or paladin invoking the name of a god, but at disadvantage by any character who is not a human or halfling. This check is contested by one of the same from Liffen (+2), who presents these arguments, in order:

- "This *thing* is a demon, not a man!"
- "Who knows what other nightmares it will create with its dark magic? The scarecrows are surely just the beginning!"
- "How could Chauntea rightly bless the harvests of those who tolerate this evil?" *This check is made at advantage.*

The mob mentality level starts at 3, which is its maximum. When the characters win a contest, reduce the level by one. If Liffen wins, increase it by one.

After three rounds of argument, Liffen tires of the debate and smacks the rump of the adjacent horse, sending it running and the tiefling dangling.

If the party attempts to save the tiefling's life, combat ensues. Note the current mob mentality at the beginning of combat. If the tiefling isn't freed from his noose, he dies from suffocation at the end of the fifth round of combat.

When rescued, the tiefling identifies himself as Falados. Emigrating to Waterdeep with just the clothes on his back, he was jumped by the man on horseback and his thugs. Falados expresses utter dismay at what just occurred - his decision to see out a new life in Waterdeep was driven by an understanding that his kind were accepted there.

Falados won't come right out and say it, but hints more than once that he wishes the party to escort him to Waterdeep. If they refuse, he takes off running towards the River Gate.

If the characters don't intervene, they watch the innocent man choke out his last breath. The crowd peacefully disperses and the tiefling's corpse is left to dangle from the tree.

Angry Mob

Armor Class: 9 (unarmored)

Hit Points: 4 (1d8), damage threshold 4 (same)

Speed: 30 Reach: 5

The mob occupies a 40 foot diameter circle. Any creature size medium or smaller can occupy a space inside this circle, but it is considered difficult terrain.

Mob Mentality Levels

Level 0. *Placated.* The mob gawks as combat proceeds, but takes no actions or reactions.

At levels higher than 0: any hostile creature that ends its turn in the mob's reach must make a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. The mob will take any number of reactions during a round of combat to make a single opportunity attack against any creature that leaves its reach.

Level 1. *Riled.* The mob makes a single shove attack (+5) against each enemy in reach, attempting to knock prone. If the target is already prone, it is also grappled (escape DC 14).

Level 2. *Angry.* Same as level 1, but the mob also makes an additional kick attack against any grappled creature, +5 to hit, damage 1.

Level 3. *Frenzied.* The mob moves towards the nearest enemy and makes a single stab attack, +0 to hit, damage 2 (1d4) against each enemy in reach.

The mob taking 4 or more damage from a single attack indicates that one of the commoners (MM 345) comprising it has been killed. The remaining commoners immediately take their reactions to flee.

Harvest Home Inn

The heart of Undercliff Village is the Harvest Home Inn. It's the largest building for miles, built at an angle following a curve in Main Street at the center of the village. The expansive tap room and dining hall on the main level serves as the social center of Undercliff, and the second story is split between six spacious guest rooms and a private residence.

The owner, Anselm Griggons, is middle aged human with fiery red hair and a beard to match. Born and educated in Waterdeep, he spent about a decade adventuring before "retiring" to settle down in the country. Much of the inn's success can be attributed to Anselm's wealth from his previous career allowing it to operate without making a profit.

When the characters arrive, Anselm is standing behind the bar reading a broadsheet. A character who examines it will notice that it is an edition of the *Waterdeep Wazoo* dated more than a tenday ago.

When the characters inquire about the scarecrows, a teenage halfling boy sitting at the bar, eating a delicious smelling bowl of stew, interrupts before Anselm can get a word in. "I seen it myself, sirs, Taller than any of ye, with a great big rotting punkin' for a head! Chased me along the main road for a quarter mile before I got far enough ahead and it turned to go after a heifer instead. I just kept runnin' all the way home!"

Anselm verifies that he has heard a number of similar stories and believes them to be true. "I started hearing these tales five or six days ago with three distinct variations. The pumpkin headed one young Wessel was chased by, one with a burlap sack over its head, and another clad in bright red rags. The stories started about the same as those murders up at Amendsfarm. Seems like hell of a coincidence."

All Anselm knows about the murders is that three inmates are said to have bashed each others ("...or their own? Could have been a suicide pact I suppose") heads in with rocks.

If a character associated with the Harpers reveals they were sent by Mirt and shows Anselm their harp pin, Anselm gives them a *scroll of heroism* (PHB 250). He cautions that a few stories of scarecrow encounters included feeling paralyzed by fear upon looking at one.

Anselm has rooms for rent if the characters wish to stay. At only 10 sp including meals it's an exceptional value for the level of comfort.

If the characters spend the night out of doors at some point during the adventure, that could be a good opportunity to run Encounter S - Scarecrows Come to Life!

Tankard Times Tavern

Directly across the street from the Harvest Home is a filthy drinking establishment that owes its continued existence merely to the fact that Anselm Griggons doesn't tolerate the behavior of its patrons in his own establishment. No matter the time of day, the customers in Tankard Times are foul mouthed, rude, prone to fighting, and very drunk.

The proprietor, Bartholomew Ender, embodies the place. He serves elves and dwarves only grudgingly, all the while making antagonizing remarks about "pointy ears" and "beard ladies". Other races are outright banned from the premises.

Two Zhents, Morlan Frost and Dirk Starnag (human male **thugs** MM 350) practically live here. They don't have any direct association to the Doom Raiders or Manshoun, but sell their services as mercenaries to anyone willing to pay them 3 sp a day each. They only work as a pair and if either of them has any loyalty at all, it's only to the other. If things take a turn for the worse, they are quick to abandon their charge.

Blow to the Head

The prison-labor farm *Amendsfarm* sits just north of the cliff, near Waterdeep's North Gate. Criminals sentenced to hard labor (see *The Code Legal W:DH 222*) work off their debt to society in its fields and orchards. Most of the prison is very low security, as the population are primarily serving short sentences for theft of various severity. Although many easily escape, for most it is not worth permanent exile from Waterdeep.

A small subset of the prisoners are serving longer sentences for serious crimes such as murder or participating in the slave trade. These inmates are more heavily guarded, and reside in barracks in a walled off section of the northwest end of the prison.

This higher security area is where Basil Mureal worked as a guard and found his three victims. Six days ago he had the opportunity alone with them in one of the bunkhouses, each in restraints after a hard days work in the orchard. Mureal bashed in the skull of each prisoner with the rounded end of his hammer, then fled home to stash the weapon. He returned with three large rocks, dabbed them in blood and brain, released the corpses from their manacles, and ran to his superior to report that the prisoners had killed one another in some sort of altercation.

Entering the Prison

The party is greeted at the main entrance to the prison by a halfling guard named Dandel Fatrabbit. They inform the characters that yesterday was visiting day, and the party will have to come back next tenday.

When told that the characters are there to investigate the recent murders, Dandel immediately escorts a party affiliated with the Lord's Alliance or Force Grey to the warden's office. Otherwise a successful DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) check or a bribe of at least 5gp is required lest the party is turned away. If the check fails, Dandel not-so-subtly asks for the bribe by making a pointed cough while jingling the coin purse on their belt.

Investigating the Murders

Amendsfarm's warden, Emmeline Crater, is in her office when the party arrives and is happy to accept them. She secretly has serious doubts about Mureal's story and suspects that he murdered the prisoners. Crater hopes she can

pass off responsibility for the outcome of an investigation onto the adventurers. The *Fraternal Order of Peacekeepers* demands loyalty to fellow officers above all else, even if a crime has been committed. In a case involving a prisoner, not siding with a guild member would be especially unthinkable. If the characters somehow manage to search her desk, they find a letter to the warden of *Repenttoil* labor-mining prison along the Triboar Trail in the Sword Mountains to the north. It commends Mureal's service and recommends him for a transfer and promotion - the guild's go-to approach for dealing with this sort of situation.

Crater calls the high security supervising officer, Villhelm Price, into her office to answer the party's questions. Price, along with Mureal, is a ranking member of the Graz'zt worshipping cult, but he has no direct knowledge of the murders or Mureal's recent actions. He has a very low opinion of the prisoners he guards and has taken Mureal's explanation at face value. If the adventures cast suspicion on Mureal during their investigation he becomes increasingly testy and defensive of his friend.

Speaking to Mureal. Basil Mureal has been put on paid leave for a tenday following the incident, which is standard procedure. Price hasn't seen him since the incident, but suspects that Mureal is home at his cottage, recovering from the trauma of coming upon the grisly scene. Price is happy to give the party directions to Mureal's home, which is covered in the section below, *Out of His Skin*.

Amateur Coroners. If the characters wish to inspect a body, they are in luck. Two of the victims were from Waterdeep and are presently interred among family in the City of the Dead, but one man hails from Baulder's Gate, and his body awaits transport. Price shows the characters to a storage shed containing a pine box containing the corpse, liberally packed in salt.

- A successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that the the single deep puncturing blow that bashed in the man's skull and brain was made by a blunt, rounded instrument probably no more than 3 inches in diameter.

Speak with dead or other magic requiring the deceased spirit have no effect, as the man's spirit is now animating a scarecrow.

The Crime Scene. The 20 by 30 foot bunkhouse where the murders took place has sat vacant and untouched since the bodies were removed. Aging and due for replacement the following year anyway, it is slated to be demolished. A character succeeding on a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check notices that bloody footprints appear both out towards and in from the building's entrance, which Price supposes is from the bodies being removed. A successful check also reveals that blood splatters appear only on the eastern wall of the building.

Encounter B - What a Riot!

Tension has been mounting in the high security area since the murders. Most prisoners have known one another for a long time and formed a tribal relationship, if not friendships. The prisoners are convinced that Mureal, who constantly mistreats them in minor but unnecessary fashion, is responsible for the murders.

The situation turned ugly while the party was investigating. Called lazy and prodded along by the tip of a guard's spear, one prisoner snapped and snatched the weapon.

The characters hear shouting from the unfolding standoff. The **guard** is grappled by a prisoner, hands restrained behind his back. The guard's spear is pointed menacingly at his midsection, wielded by the man who hand taken it from him, and three more **hardened prisoners** stand in solidarity behind them. Four guards stand in a cluster fifteen feet away, spears drawn.

The characters catch the tail end of the spear wielding prisoner shouting "...sentenced to labor, not death!". The guard held hostage takes the appearance of Price and the party as an opportunity to break free. He brings a foot up into the groin of his captor, who falls prone. The guard is rewarded with a spear to the midsection, and then all hell breaks loose.

Realizing that their participation in the insurrection will be punished by death, the prisoners fight until all the guards are dispatched, then attempt to flee the prison. They fight through the adventurers as well, but aren't concerned with killing the party unless the adventurers stand in the way of escape.

Out of His Skin

The past tendar was the most eventful of Basil Mureal's sad life. Of the all the members of the Graz'zt worshiping cult he and his friends christened *The Merciless Glove of the Six Fingered Hand*, the demon lord had chosen him. As instructed, Mureal enchanted his ball-peen hammer and used it to kill the three prisoners. Using the same hammer, he constructed three scarecrows animated by the prisoners' spirits.

The day after unleashing his scarecrows on Undercliff, Basil Mureal received another edict from the Dark Lord. Graz'zt offered Mureal the opportunity to become an immortal being in exchange for his mortal body. Mureal jumped at the opportunity and performed the ritual Graz'zt prescribed. At high moon, Mureal's muscles, bones, and viscera scrambled, transforming into the babau demon. The babau's horn and tail sliced through Mureal's human skin, which sloughed off into a heap on the floor as the demon emerged. The babau climbed the wall to the lone window above and disappeared into the night in search of the lost tunnels in the cliff connecting Waterdeep to Undercliff.

Basil Mureal's Cottage

Mureal's cottage is about a mile south along the same road as Amendsfarm. It is small, consisting of a single 20x20ft room containing an iron stove, dining table, and writing desk. A ladder leads up to a loft in the peak of the building, which contains Mureal's bed, a small dresser, and the home's only window. Across the dirt road stand three scarecrows. The adventurers easily locate the cottage from Villhelm Price's directions and description.

Trapped Door. The door to Mureal's cottage is locked. It can be opened with a successful DC 10 Dexterity check with thieves tools or forced open with a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.

Before undertaking his transformative ritual, Mureal placed two vials of *alchemist's fire* (PHB 148) on a shelf above the door, looped with twine tacked to the inside of the door. When the door is opened, the vials are pulled from the shelf and break open on the floor, splashing the sticky substance over a 10 foot radius circle centered in the middle of the doorway. Any character in the

area must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or be splashed by the fluid and set on fire.

A character on fire this way takes 1d4 at the start of each of its turns until it can make a successful DC 10 Dexterity check to extinguish the flames.

The trap also sets the cottage ablaze. The characters can easily extinguish the fire, but if they don't the structure will burn to the point that no useful clues can be found after 5 minutes. Consider this opportunity to run Encounter S - Scarecrows Come To Life!

Any character who looks through the window at the peak of the building can spot the trap, no check required. The trap can be disarmed from inside the cottage with the door still closed with a successful DC 5 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. On a failure, the vials drop to the ground as though the trap had been triggered.

Ritual Leftovers. Any character who looks inside the cottage immediately notices a pile of pink skin matted with blood lying in the middle of chalk drawn circle. Written around the circle in Abyssal are the words *“As Glasya spilled His blood shall I too become”*. A character who can read those words or has them translated can make an Intelligence (History) check. A result of 15 or higher reveals that this is a reference to the story of the babau demon on VGtM 136. The character is also aware of the babau's damage resistances, its ability to create magical darkness, its *weakening gaze*.

Investigating the shed skin reveals that it was sliced from the inside as though with two serrated blades; one originating at the top of the skull and the other at the tailbone. Moving the skin reveals a chalk drawing of a six-fingered hand.

Laying just to the side of the circle is a ball-peen hammer (*see sidebar, Mureal's Ball-peen*) caked in dried blood and encrusted with bits of wood and straw. Any character proficient in arcana immediately gets an uneasy feeling when they look at it.

Search for a Few Minutes. A search of Mureal's cottage reveals exactly the mundane items one would expect, and nothing of value. The pocket of Mureal's jacket, which is draped over a chair, contains two six-fingered leather gloves with a small carrot placed in the sixth finger, next to the pinky finger.

On the writing desk is a leather bound journal with minutes chronicling the meetings of *The Merciless Glove of the Six Fingered Hand*. The meetings have convened an hour after sundown on the same day each of the last ten days. The last entry is dated a ten day ago tomorrow, and is included as handout for your players on the last page on this adventure. If the players ask about the other pages of the journal, it's mostly the same sort of stuff. Meeting #9 marks the last time the cultists heard “THE VOICE”, which instructed them to focus their efforts on finding a tunnel lost in the walls of the cliff. Prior references to “THE VOICE” are missives on the superiority of humans and halflings, and the dangers of the other races and the city above that tolerates them.

In reading the meeting minutes for meeting #14, the characters should learn that the location of the meetings is a derelict barn at the Snobeedle Orchard and Meadery. If the players don't glean this fact, their characters can with a successful DC 10 Intelligence (History) check.

The characters might also note that Basil Mureal is cult's secretary, and the initials of the vice president, V.P. matches Villhelm Price of Amendsfarm. They may not have found out his name when the character encountered the lynching, but president V.L. was the ringleader, Vance Liffen.

Mureal's Ball-peen

Weapon (light hammer)

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

When Mureal's Ball-peen is used to kill an evil-aligned humanoid, its spirit immediately manifests itself on the material plane as a **dretch** (MM 57), which appears to burst from the corpse of the victim. The dretch is hostile to all creatures except the wielder of Mureal's Ball-peen. Roll initiative for the dretch, which has its own turns. The dretch pursues and attacks the nearest non-demon to the best of its ability.

Construct of Evil (Requires attunement by an evil-aligned character)

When a character attuned to Mureal's Ball-peen kills an evil-aligned humanoid with the weapon, they may choose to capture the spirit rather than having it manifest as a dretch. If they do so, they may later spend 1 hour using the hammer to construct a **scarecrow** (MM 268), binding it with the spirit captured.

A Few Bad Apples

The Snobeedle Orchard and Meadery is located off to the east side of Undercliff Way, just shy of a mile north of Undercliff Village. The orchard, planted with various varieties of apples, plums, cherries, peaches, and apricots, is synergistic with the large bee colony which provides the meadery's honey.

The season your campaign takes place can add some flavor to the location. For example: spring buds and bees, summer workers pruning, fall's abundant harvest, a taproom packed full of bored wintering farmers.

The Drinking Hall

The Snobeedle cousins are attentive hosts to guests in their expansive drinking hall, which is sized to accommodate human-size guests. In addition to the famous mead, the drink menu contains no less than seven varieties of cider. Wine and ale are noticeably absent from the list as they are not produced on site. The selection of food is limited, but quite delicious. The Snobeedles bake large quantities of soft white bread in house, which is served with honey and wide array of jams, all of which can also be purchased by the jar in a small gift shop.

Humans and halflings are warmly welcomed by all, elves and dwarves less so but still treated politely, and "undesirable" races noted earlier in the adventure are tolerated but given a passive-aggressive cold shoulder. Characters of those races make Charisma checks at disadvantage inside the drinking hall.

The hall is usually quite busy, and if the adventurers take the time to visit or simply eavesdrop, they hear two popular topics of conversation (no check required):

- **The scarecrows.** The adventurers don't hear an actual first hand account, but many second or third hand stories with increasing levels of embellishment. The common thread seems to be that there are three animated scarecrows. One dressed in tattered rags, another with a burlap sack with slashed eye holes over its head, and one whose head is a giant pumpkin

- **Murders at Amendsfarm labor-prison.** The consensus seems to be that three dangerous convicts got in a quarrel and murdered each other, though at least one halfling posits that it could have been a guard responsible ("and I don't blame him if it was! Imagine the stress of having to control those wretched men!") There is also a general sentiment that the prison shouldn't exist where it is. It competes with the local farms who don't have free labor, and why should the lives of their families be threatened by the criminal element produced by the city?

Invitation from a Cultist

If the characters didn't find out about the cult meetings from the journal in Basil Mureal's cottage, they are instead approached by a male halfling named Quentin Snobeedle. A member of the cult, Q.S. has identified the party as a threat and attempts to lure them into an ambush at the derelict barn.

Blond of hair and beard, both sparse and poorly groomed, Q.S. is one of the many halfling cousins who run the meadery. He doesn't have a proper ownership role, however, and never really fit in with the cheerful demeanor of the rest of the family. As a bit of an outsider even among his own kin, Q.S. found a subculture with defined enemies and promises of power very appealing.

If the characters tried to rescue the tiefling being lynched, Q.S. was in the crowd. He approaches the party congratulating them on their bravery. If the characters left the tiefling to hang, Q.S. was in the Harvest Home and overheard the party inquiring about the scarecrows. In this case, he approaches the characters with a suspicion of the source.

In either case, Q.S. invites the party to visit the meadery on the evening of the cult meeting. He is a gracious host inside the drinking hall, and contrives an excuse to lead the party out to the derelict barn in the hour after sundown.

The tactics on encounter sheet A assume that the cultists aren't expecting the adventurers. In the case that cultists get to spring an ambush, the tactics are mostly the same with a few exceptions. The cult fanatic will cast *shield of faith* prior to the start of combat, allowing him to deploy his *spiritual weapon* a round earlier. While the cultists are ready with their scimitars, they remain untrained and undisciplined fighters.

Tracking Down the Cult

If the party arrives at the meadery with the intention of seeking out the derelict barn, it's not hard to find (see *Derelict Barn*, below). The Snobeedles allow anyone to wander around the property as they please. In the late summer into fall, the outdoors is full with customers carrying sacks of freshly picked fruit.

If the characters inquire about cults or demons inside the drinking hall, they are met with pure skepticism. Such perversion must be rampant in the city, of course, but surely not down in this more civilized area. There is one exception, however. On a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check, a character notices that Quentin Snobeedle has gone even paler hearing demons or cults mentioned, and is showing visible signs of nervousness.

If the party confronts Q.S., it's clear that he's hiding something. A successful DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check is enough to get something out of him. He stammers out an unconvincing lie about having overheard outsiders from the city talking about scarecrow animating rituals in the basement of the *Harvest Home* in Undercliff Village. A character expressing doubt can determine that the halfling is not being truthful with a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check.

Q.S. is weak spined without his friends around to back him up. If a character threatens the halfling, have them make a DC 14 Charisma (Intimidation) check:

- On a success, Q.S. turns on the cult in an attempt to save his own skin: "Look, I didn't want to have anything to do with it! Tye (Tye Tosscombe, T.T. from the meeting minutes) roped me into it. You can't tell my cousins. The family business would be devastated!" Q.S. informs the characters when and where the cult meeting will soon be taking place, and agrees to help the party in any way they ask. A successful DC 18 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that he has steadied his resolve to bend to which ever side is going to come out on top, and won't hesitate to betray the party.

- On a failure, Q.S. feigns offense, "My family welcomes all who wish to enjoy our hospitality, but I personally will not tolerate such rudeness. Good day!". Q.S. leaves to go about his duties and makes sure catch the other cultists prior to the meeting to warn them of the party's presence.

Derelict Barn

One of the original structures built decades ago by the Snobeedle family still stands at the northeast edge of the property, adjacent to an old plot of apple trees which have long since stopped producing fruit.

The barn is 40 feet wide by 80 feet long, though the rear 30 feet has caved in and is completely unusable. The 20 by 20 foot wide opening in the front sits open to the world, the doors long ago having rotted off their hinges. Numerous halfling-sized openings are visible in the rotting lumber that makes up the barn's side walls.

A rickety ladder leads 20 feet up to a 15 foot deep loft above the door spanning the barn's entire width. Both are dangerous after decades of neglect. Any creature traversing either during its turn must make a DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check as they do so. On a failure, the entire structure collapses under their weight and they fall with it to the ground, taking 2d6 bludgeoning damage and landing prone among the debris.

The barn offers a number of places to take cover, including a wheelless wagon with a broken axel and numerous large hay bales (which are dangerously dry and can easily burst into flames).

Rusty old shovels, hoes, and other farming tools are scattered around the edges of the bar, which could be used as improvised weapons.

A dozen or so milking stools, all capable of supporting sitting weight, are arranged in a circle in the middle of the barn's usable area.

When the cult is meeting, the interior of the barn is dimly lit by candles safely placed inside of glass jam jars.

Encounter C -

96 Mercilessly Gloved Fingers

Shortly after dusk the cult members, all wearing six fingered leather gloves with a carrot playing the role of the digit of the extra finger inside, arrive at the barn for the meeting. Just enough candles are lit to provide dim light through the interior of the barn, yet not draw attention from the outside.

Vance Liffen, who lead the tiefling lynching at the beginning of the adventure, is a **cult fanatic** (MM 345) and leader of the 7 **cultists** (MM 345) remaining now that Mureal is no longer among them. The cult fanatic is clearly identified as the leader by the fancy vestments he wears, compared to the simple black robes of the other cultists.

If Liffen has been killed, make Villhelm Price (of the prison) the cult fanatic instead. If both men are dead, choose another cultist to play the role. If it was necessary to move on to understudies, reduce the number of cultists accordingly. Note that Q.S. is included in their ranks, and his role may have changed depending on his interactions with the adventurers.

Don't forget that if an evil cultist is killed by *Mureal's Ball-peen* during the encounter, a smelly **dretch** (MM 268) will burst from the dead cultist's corpse!

Cultists Ambush. If the party didn't find out about the meeting from the clues in Mureal's cottage and are instead being lead to the barn by Q.S., a lookout warns that the party is approaching. The cultists position themselves to ambush the adventurers, and the cult fanatic prepares for the fight by casting *shield of faith*.

Make a single Dexterity (Stealth) check for the cultists. This sets the DC for being noticed by the adventurers as they enter the barn. If the DC is higher than a character's passive Wisdom (Perception) score (-5 due to disadvantage because of the dim light), they are surprised and can't move or take actions or reactions during the first round of combat. If a character indicates that they are actively looking for danger as they enter the barn, have them make a Wisdom (Perception) check (at disadvantage due to the dim light) instead.

Characters Ambush. It's fine if the party decides to storm the barn while the meeting is taking place, but they may also decide to plan an ambush. Each character can successfully hide with DC 8 Dexterity (Stealth) check.

If Q.S. is on to the party, he arrives with the rest of the cult on high alert, and they can't be surprised. They undertake a thorough search of the barn, locating the nearest character lying in wait (no check required) and then engage in combat.

Otherwise, the cult arrives as a group and begins to light the candles scattered throughout the barn. The characters observe one cultist excitedly whispering to the cult leader and pointing at a piece of paper in his hand.

If the party waits as the meeting proceeds, it goes along the same lines as the previous meeting minutes would suggest. Basil Mureal's absence is noted, and sympathy is expressed about the terrible tragedy he had to witness at the prison. The cultist with the map triumphantly announces that he has located the tunnel, to rousing cheers. A **quasit** (MM 63) is summoned, which promptly polymorphs into a bat and flies from the barn. Social Hour is especially celebratory. If the characters waited this long, their patience is rewarded. All of the cult members get drunk enough to suffer the *poisoned* condition, imposing disadvantage on their attack rolls and ability checks.

Developments. If the party defeats the cultists, they find the hastily drawn map of the cliff, with an arrow pointing to a spot behind a wooded area slightly north of where the last guard tower marks the end of the city wall before Cliffwatch to the south. "Tunnel! crazy dark" is scribbled on the paper.

Digging In

Although transformed from Basil Mureal's innards, there really isn't anything left of the man in the babau demon. The creature's thoughts extend only as far as achieving its objective: locating a long lost tunnel in the cliffside which leads to the city of Waterdeep above.

After crawling out the window of Basil Mureal's cottage, the babau scoured the cliffside nonstop for two days before it found the heavily obscured and caved in opening, seemingly intentionally filled in with rocks ranging in size from rubble to boulders. Shrouded the whole time in magical darkness, the babau tirelessly continues excavation.

Encounter D - My Sweet Babau

The **babau** (VGtM 136) demon presents a possibly deadly challenge to adventures who attempt to slay it. However, it is singularly focused on excavating the tunnel and ignores anything not actively standing in its way of accomplishing its work. If combat goes poorly, the characters can easily escape.

After about 20 feet, the 5 foot diameter tunnel opens up into a roughly 40 foot wide by 60 foot deep natural cavern. The cavern is littered with numerous 5 ft diameter boulders which can provide 3/4 cover to a medium sized creature.

A 15ft sphere of magical darkness emanates from a point on the far end of the cavern, where the babau is currently excavating. It attacks if it senses hostile creatures approaching.

Epilogue

If the adventurers return to Waterdeep alive and report what they learned about the scarecrows to the faction that assigned the adventure, they gain 1 renown, or 2 renown if they also defeated the scarecrows.

Anslem Griggons visits the party at Trollskull Manor two days later to personally thank the characters for ridding Undercliff of the scarecrows (and the cult and babau demon, if applicable). As a (former) fellow adventurer, he's impressed with how they handled themselves and presents a reward of 100gp from his own personal fortune. If the party was able to slay the babau demon, he also presents a gift from his adventuring days, a *peript of health* (DMG 184).

Anslem shares that word of of the character's deeds has spread through Undercliff, and a popular drinking song detailing their accomplishments has caught on in his taproom. He notes that there's been a marked change in attitude about city folk, and if the party contained any "undesirable" races, he seems optimistic that those attitudes are slowly changing as well.

Encounter A - The Lynch Mob

Initiative & HP Tracking

Liften

Armor Class: 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points: 33 **Speed:** 30

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+0	+2	+1	+0	+1	+2

Two melee attacks or one ranged attack

Shortsword: +4 to hit, damage 5 (1d6+2)

Dagger: +4 to hit, damage 4 (1d4+2)

Tactics: Fights from horseback, guarding the tiefling from rescue.

Flee: Half (16) HP, or if any of his henchmen flee or are killed.

Treasure: 1d6 gp. Six fingered gloves.

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Thugs (MM 350)

Armor Class: 11 (leather armor)

Hit Points: 32 **Speed:** 30

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+2	+0	+2	+0	+0	+0

Two melee attacks or one ranged attack

Mace: +4 to hit, damage 5 (1d6+2)

Heavy Crossbow: +2 to hit, damage 5 (1d10)

Tactics: Target undesirable race characters. Prevent party from rescuing tiefling.

Flee: Quarter (8) HP. Two other Thugs fleeing or dispatched.

Treasure: 1d4 gp.

15

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Angry Mob

Armor Class: 9 (unarmored)

Hit Points: 4 **Speed:** 30

If mob mentality level higher than 0, ending turn in area DC 14 Strength or prone

Attacks vary by level. See sidebar page 5

5

Overview: Liften's thugs either are trying to capture characters of undesirable races to be lynched, or defending tiefling from rescue.

Environment: Barren and grassy. Large lone oak tree, lowest branches 25 feet up. Mob between party and tiefling.

Difficulty: CR 3, 900XP. Party of 5 2nd - Hard

XP Award: 450 XP

Round: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Encounter B - What a Riot!

Initiative & HP Tracking

Prison Guard

Armor Class: 14 (leather armor)

Hit Points: 12 **Speed:** 30

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+2	+2	+1	-1	-1	-2

One melee or ranged attack

Spear: +4 to hit, damage 5 (1d6+2)

Unarmed: +2 to hit, damage 1

Tactics: Attempt to double-team the most dangerous prisoner and wrestle to ground (help action for grapple at advantage) and then knock out and manacle. If any guard is killed, will attack with spears in attempt to kill.

Flee: Will fight to the death.

Treasure: None.

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Hardened Prisoner

Armor Class: 11 (unarmored)

Hit Points: 55 **Speed:** 30

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+3	+1	+2	+0	+0	+0

Weapon Steal: If target fails DC 14 Dexterity save, contested Athletics (+5) to take weapon.

Two melee attacks or one ranged attack

Unarmed: +3 to hit, damage 3

Stolen Weapon: +5 to hit, damage 7 (1d6+3)

Tactics: Attempt to steal weapons. Engage guards first, only attack party members who engage in combat.

Flee: Fight to the death.

Treasure: None.

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Overview: One guard is grappled by a prisoner, another prisoner has the guard's spear. The standoff turns to combat when the guard attempts to break the grapple.

Environment: 3x2 grid of 30x20ft barracks, 20ft high wooden fence surrounds area, 10ft from buildings.

5

Difficulty: CR 4, 1200XP. Party of 5 2nd and 5 guards - Hard/Deadly.

XP Award: 800 XP

Round: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Encounter C - 96 Mercilessly Gloved Fingers

Initiative & HP Tracking

Cult Fanatic (MM 345)
Armor Class: 13 (leather) / 15 (shield of faith)
Hit Points: 33 **Speed:** 30
 STR DEX CON INT WIS CHA
 +0 +2 +1 +0 +1 +2
Two melee or one ranged dagger attacks
Dagger: +4 to hit, damage 4 (1d4+2)
Spellcasting: save DC 11, +3 to hit
 Sacred flame (272) +3 to hit, damage 4 (1d8)
1st level **○ ○ ○ ○**
command (223), *inflict wounds* (253),
shield of faith (275)
2nd level **○ ○ ○**
hold person (251), *spiritual weapon* (278)
Tactics: 1st round: bonus action *shield of faith*,
 moves behind cover, *sacred flame*.
 2nd round: *spiritual weapon* near melee fighters,
sacred flame. Continue retreat under cover.
 Further: Bonus action *spiritual weapon* attacks.
 Looks for opportunity to use *command* grovel on
 character surrounded by cultists.
Flee: Constantly, slowly, behind cover. From barn
 on half (16) hp or 3 or fewer cultists left in fight.
Treasure: 1d12+3 gp. *Potion of healing*.

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Cultist (MM 345)
Armor Class: 11 (leather armor)
Hit Points: 9 **Speed:** 30
 STR DEX CON INT WIS CHA
 +0 +1 +0 +0 +0 +0
Scimitar: +3 to hit, damage 4 (1d6+1)
Tactics: Disarray. Swings rapier at nearest target.
Flee: Half (4) hp or 4 other cultists dead or fleeing
Treasure: One dispatched cultist has hand drawn
 map to tunnel in cliff.

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Overview: The party was either led into an
 ambush or (hopefully) set up their own ambush in
 the derelict barn.

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Environment: Huge old barn, front 30ft wide
 sliding door stuck 10ft ajar. Back collapsed. Many
 small holes in sides. Scattered with hay bales,
 broken wagon, other junk. Easy to find ways in
 and out.

Difficulty: CR 4, 1550XP. Gang of low XP
 enemies. Party of 5 2nd - Hard/Deadly.

XP Award: 625 XP

Round: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Encounter D - My Sweet Babau

Initiative & HP Tracking

Babau (VGtM 136)
Armor Class: 16
Hit Points: 82 **Speed:** 40
 STR DEX CON INT WIS CHA
 +4 +3 +3 +0 +1 +1
Resistant to cold, fire, lightning, and nonmagical weapon damage
Immune to poison *Darkvision 60ft*
Innate Spellcasting: save DC 11.
At will: *darkness* (230), *dispel magic* (234), *fear* (239), *heat metal* (250), *levitate* (255)
Two melee or one ranged attacks AND weakening gaze
Claw: +6 to hit, damage 8 (1d8+4)
Spear: +6 to hit, damage 7 (1d8+4)
Weakening Gaze: within 20ft, DC 13 Con save or damage from strength based weapons only deal half damage for 1 minute. Save to end each turn.
Tactics: The babau is singularly focused on excavating the collapsed tunnel, and ignores hostile creatures if left to continue its task. It works shrouded in magical *darkness*. If the babau senses a threat beyond its darkness, it begins combat by casting *fear*.
 The babau is a cunning enemy. It prefers to remain shrouded in the magical *darkness*. It will *dispel magic* harmful ongoing effects, *heat metal* the armor of enemies, and *levitate* incoming melee fighters. If it attacks as its action, it first uses its *weakening gaze* on the strongest strength based melee fighter in range.
Flee: Fights to the death or until it can resume excavation.
Treasure: None.

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Overview: The babau is excavating a rubble filled tunnel and has made about 5 feet of progress when the party enters the cavern.

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Environment: A 5ft diameter tunnel in the cliffside meanders for about 20 feet before opening into a 40x60 naturally formed cavern. The cavern is littered with numerous 5 ft diameter boulders which can provide 3/4 cover to a medium sized creature. A 15ft sphere of magical darkness emanates from a point on the far end of the cavern, where the babau is currently excavating a collapsed tunnel.

Difficulty: CR 4, 1100XP. Party of 5 2nd - Deadly.

XP Award: 1100 XP

Round: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Encounter S - Scarecrows Come to Life!

Scarecrow (MM 268)

Armor Class: 11

Hit Points: 36

Speed: 30

STR DEX CON INT WIS CHA

+0 +1 +0 -0 -0 -0

Vulnerable to fire damage

Resistant to nonmagical weapon damage

Darkvision 60ft

Two Claw Attacks

Claw: +3 to hit, 6 damage (2d4+1). DC 11 wisdom save or frightened until end of next turn

Terrifying Glare: Within 30 feet, DC 11 wisdom save or frightened and paralyzed until end of next turn.

Tactics: The scarecrows may wait for the characters to approach, having put themselves en route to an objective. If the characters are close by, they might attempt to sneak up on the party. Either way, as soon as the characters are within 30 feet, they begin combat with their *terrifying glare*, and then move into close range making claw attacks. All three scarecrows focus their attacks on the weakest character.

Flee: Will fight to the end.

Treasure: None.

Initiative & HP Tracking

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Overview: The scarecrows have sensed that the characters are dangerous allies of Waterdeep and set their sights upon the party. The encounter occurs at a time of your choosing. Unless caught creeping up on the party, the scarecrows start combat with a surprise round.

Difficulty: CR 4, 1200XP. Party of 5 2nd - Deadly.

XP Award: 600 XP

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Round: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

The Merciless Glove of the Six-Fingered Hand.

Meeting #14 Minutes.

Rollcall.

Officers Present: V.L., President, V.P., Vice President, B.M., Secretary, M.E., Treasurer

Members Present: T.T., Q.S., I.P., G.G.

Recruits Present: N.G.

B.M. Reads minutes of meeting #13. Minutes approved by unanimous consent.

M.E. Reports cash on hand 9 sp. Reminds all that ale does not magically appear at these meetings on its own. Passes the hat.

V.L. Thanks Q.S. for continued use of derelict barn at meadery for meetings. Seconded by all.

V.L. Inquires on attempts locating tunnel. No success reported.

Q.S. Moves to attempt summoning. V.L. seconds. V.P. objects as it has not been successful since we last heard THE VOICE in meeting #9. Motion approved 5-3.

Demon successfully summoned. Demon bites N.G. Demon emits retch inducing green gas. Demon killed by V.L. Barn temporarily evacuated.

Meeting resumed.

V.P. posits successful summoning a blessing. Offers thanks, asks that THE VOICE appear to give guidance. No appearance made.

N.G. shares oatmeal cookies baked by mother. Declared delicious by unanimous consent.

V.L. moves to induct N.G. as full member. I.P. seconds. Motion approved 7-1.

Social hour.

V.L. moves to adjourn. V.P. seconds. Motion approved 9-0.

