



PARAGON

11-20

CLASH OF STEEL

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An adventure for characters of 13th level

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The small city of Barrinsgate has only recently become a fairly respectable trading center. It began as a ragtag bandit encampment, but over the years slowly evolved into a safe haven for shady dealings and illegal trade. Its most powerful bandit leaders grew wealthy and expanded the scope of their trade to more legitimate goods and services. In time-honored tradition, they gave themselves noble titles. The former fireside council of warlords has become the Circle of Peers, presided over by a Lord Mayor who is little more than a mouthpiece for the council. Nevertheless, bandit gangs are still a large part of the city's landscape.

Unknowingly, the bandits had established their lair close to the territory of an elder steel dragon, Irvythisk. At first, their small predations went unnoticed by the dragon, who was more concerned with consolidating control over the rest of her territory. As the bandits became more influential and more wealthy, though, her attention turned toward expanding her influence over the burgeoning settlement. Irvythisk infiltrated the bandits in human form, taking the name Stella Daybringer. She quickly rose to power as a powerful warlord and helped direct Barringsgate's development into a true city. All the while, she diverted wealth to her ever-growing hoard.

Now the Lady Stella wields great power within the Circle of Peers, both through her own reputation and behind-the-scenes influence on key rivals. The Circle, through the Lord Mayor, generally speaks with her voice. As a respected antiquities merchant, Stella is well placed to have first pick of rare or unique items that pass through the city's markets for her "collection." Through an alternative humanoid form, known as Dark Star, who can be contacted only through a criminal network, she fences difficult-to-move items. She provides wealthy collectors with hard-to-find pieces at a very nice profit, or simply spirits items away to her hoard. Her Dark Star persona also makes occasional deals with several of the city's gangs to help her lay hands on valuable goods or put pressure on rivals.

Irvythisk's sister, Vythcaex, has long coveted her sister's wealth and territory, and the two dragons have been involved in power struggles for over a century. Vythcaex, also an elder steel dragon (known as "Blade" to her contacts) is working to undermine Lady Stella's reputation in Barringsgate. She has inserted a mercury dragon operative into the city's most powerful gang, the Bloody Knives, replacing its leader, Sven the Fist. Lady Stella has worked well with this gang in

the past but has not formed an intimate relationship with its leader, so the replacement is not known to her. Under Blade's control, the gang is bringing in "heavy hitters" to overpower watch patrols and throw the city into disorder. This also provides good cover for thefts and other mayhem to help enrich the gang and its secret patron—and destabilize Lady Stella's operations.

In addition to her agent in the gang, Blade has seduced a key rival to Stella on the council. This gentleman has long espoused a law-and-order crackdown in the city, and she has been suggesting to him that only the free market can handle the job properly. As the city becomes more lawless and chaotic, his voice carries more influence on the council.

Stella sees her grip on the city steadily slipping away, and she suspects that the increased gang violence is being directed by someone behind the scenes—quite possibly her sister. Gang activity is moving well beyond her occasional deals, and she has been unable to find out what's going on. She cannot reveal her true nature, and she is afraid that her gang connections might become public knowledge—which would destroy her politically and commercially. She needs outside agents with no stake in Barringsgate to investigate and deal with the threat. That's where the adventurers come in.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The heroes receive a letter from Lady Stella. In it, she explains that Barringsgate is being threatened and that she needs seasoned and competent agents to help her deal with it. She offers to pay generously and invites the party to meet with her in her council offices to work out the details.

However, Blade has secretly introduced her cat familiar into Lady Stella's household. It informs her

that Stella has sent for outside help. She orders Sven to eliminate the PCs before they get to the meeting.

After they deal with the ambush, the adventurers meet with their would-be employer and negotiate the terms of their hire. At this time Stella does not inform them of her criminal connections. But as the negotiations proceed, a city watch patrol is ambushed by Sven's heavy hitters, killing all of its members. The news comes to the councilor's chambers during the meeting. From this point the PCs can take several paths as they investigate.

They might talk to a deceased watch soldier. They can learn from the spirit that the patrol was ambushed by a group wearing the distinctive colors of another gang. However, this was a misdirection intended to divert the PCs away from the Bloody Knives.

If the PCs try following the cat familiar, they are lured to an abandoned warehouse in the waterfront district. Once inside, gangsters block the exits and set alight the oil-soaked timbers of the structure.

Should the PCs try to track gangsters or find out more about the Bloody Knives gang, they are directed to the vicinity of a construction project. They are attacked by a rogue industrial automaton that has been tampered with by Blade.

If the PCs get too close, or they survive one or more of the above traps, Sven decides to take them out preemptively. He sends a tougher squad of heavies to kill them.

After several life-threatening encounters, and under pressure to restore order, the PCs talk with Stella again to see if she knows more than she has been saying. At that point she has no choice but to come clean about her dealings with the gangs. She reveals her connections with the Bloody Knives gang and is surprised to learn that its leader is no longer loyal to her.

With Stella's assistance, the heroes face Sven in person. She contrives a challenge by another rival gang, leaving Sven defended by only a few trusted bodyguards. When he sees the jig is up, he reverts to his dragon form for a final showdown.

STARTING THE ADVENTURE

As the adventure begins, the characters are between adventures. They are met by a courier bearing the insignia of a noble, who after confirming their identities, brings a message from Barrinsgate addressed to them. Show or hand to the players the letter provided here.

The letter includes a calling card impressed with a noble seal (a cat rampant) to present as proof of her invitation.

OTHER WAYS TO GET THE PCs INVOLVED

A letter out of the blue can be a hard sell for your players. Here are some ideas for connecting Lady Stella's request to the PCs' activities in your campaign.

HOOK: SOMETHING WICKED THAT WAY GOES

If the offer of money and the opportunity to do good aren't enough to motivate your players, maybe the chance to smash monsters is. A rampaging terror is troubling the countryside near Barrinsgate, and only doughty adventurers can defeat it. This creature can be anything well suited to the party's level, such as a hill giant with its pet gorgons, a roc preying on local herds, or a ravenous behir. It might even be a raiding party of drow or a roving squad of elemental archons.

*To the brave and honorable company of adventurers
from the Lady Stella Daybringer, count of Barrinsgate, greetings.*

As a councilor of Barrinsgate's Circle of Peers, I have the responsibility for security in this frontier city. In recent weeks, the city watch has come under increasingly violent attacks, and crime on the whole has increased. These assaults seem calculated to weaken both the rule of law in Barrinsgate and my own authority on the council.

Word of your bold exploits has come to my ears. I am in need of proven investigators to act as my agents in this matter. I invite you to meet with me in private to discuss this assignment and negotiate terms of employment. I assure you that you will be paid most handsomely for your efforts.

This matter is of the utmost urgency. My messenger has been instructed to await a response. In the name of peace, I trust that you will accept this invitation.

Whatever the threat, the PCs are hired by the Circle of Peers to deal with it.

Quest XP: 500 (minor quest) for defeating the monster and bringing proof to the Circle. Lady Stella then sends a private communication, inviting them to meet with her on an unrelated but equally dangerous threat to the community. This hook bypasses the gang ambush but can lead to a direct attack by Sven (page 83).

HOOK: INNOCENT BYSTANDER

An acquaintance or relative of the PCs in Barrinsgate has fallen victim to the rising lawlessness. He or she might be a shop owner who can't make newly raised

protection payments, or an ordinary citizen or someone passing through who was caught in the crossfire and seriously wounded or even killed. Whatever the circumstance, the PCs get word of the trouble and are asked to help.

Quest XP: 3,500 (major quest) for investigating the incident and determining the Bloody Knives' involvement. This hook bypasses the gang ambush but can lead to a direct attack by Sven. Lady Stella learns of the PCs' activities and invites them to work with her.

PART 1. SHANTYTOWN AMBUSH

As the PCs approach Barringsgate, they are ambushed in the crowded, filthy shantytown outside the city.

Tactical Encounter: R1. Shantytown Ambush (page 72).

If they manage to take any captives, the PCs don't learn much. The assassins do not wear identifying colors or other insignia, although their leader has a distinctive scar. The heavy hitters have been infused with draconic essence to create servants loyal to Blade. Any such captive refuses to provide useful information and does not reveal his or her affiliation with the Bloody Knives without magical compulsion. However, the infusion manifests in unexpected abilities not normally possessed by that race. Astute characters might notice this and wonder about it—it is a subtle clue that the thugs are more than they appear.

A minion has no such compunction, however, and can be forced to admit membership in the gang. (The captive might even assert this proudly, threatening the party with revenge by his or her gang mates.) The minion knows nothing more than that the group was sent to kill the PCs.



INTERLUDE: A PUZZLING THEFT

After the ambush fails, Blade looks for other ways to stop or at least interfere with the heroes. The meeting with Stella can't be prevented, but further snooping into the gang's business could be bad for the party's health.

Blade concocts a fiendish plan. The first step requires obtaining a personal but unimportant item, such as shoes, a kerchief or headband, or something similar.

If the characters are staying at an inn that is in or near the Bloody Knives' turf, the gang forces the innkeeper to procure such an item. A bar server distracts the character by flirting outrageously and plying him or her with drink, then slips the item off or creates an opportunity for an associate to do so. Alternatively, gang members might start a bar fight to provide a chance to snatch the item in the melee.

If the characters are staying in another area, getting an item requires another tactic, such as using street urchins to snatch something, or a simple lift using Thievery.

In the next phase of the plan, Blade incorporates the stolen item into an industrial automaton as a key to attack the party (see "Hard Hat Area," page 68).

A character might never notice the item is missing. If its absence is discovered, though, the PC might be puzzled by the situation. Resourceful characters might use a Detect Object ritual to try tracking it down. Locate Object can find it precisely, but this is beyond the ability of the party unless the PCs can find a high-level ritual caster. If the PCs can get a handle on the item's general location, they are not surprised when the trap is sprung.

PART 2. MEETING LADY STELLA

Whether or not the PCs immediately begin to investigate the gangs, at some point they have to meet with their prospective employer. (The messenger has already returned with their acceptance.)

Lady Stella maintains offices in the Circle district, adjacent to the council's meeting hall. From here she conducts most of her legitimate city business but is suspicious of information leaks from her public office.

Read or paraphrase the following as the PCs approach.

At the center of the great plaza stands a sumptuous edifice of massive timbers adorned with stonework: the Hall of the Circle, seat of the city's government. Uniformed guards flank the heavy front doors, and squads of the city watch ostentatiously patrol the plaza and the wide street that rings the hall. Surrounding the hall, across the circular street, are several smaller buildings that house the machinery of government: the court, records offices, and the like. To the rear of the hall rises another impressive structure, almost as richly built as the government building itself, and with its own complement of guards. These are the offices of the Circle members.

When the PCs ask to see Lady Stella, the guards will not allow the heroes access unless they present her seal. Once the guards have verified their identities, they escort the PCs to the councilor's office.

You are ushered into a richly appointed antechamber, hung with the insignia of the city watch as well as the noble device of the Lady Stella Daybringer. An officious secretary asks your names again and instructs you to wait, disappearing behind a highly polished and gilded wooden

door. After a few minutes, the secretary reappears and gestures for you to enter. The door closes behind you with a solid thunk.

This room is immense, with high ceilings and leaded windows framed by heavy brocade curtains—which are currently drawn. Several chandeliers illuminate the space, which contains a small number of expensive-looking art objects: exquisite vases, old-looking paintings, delicate ivory sculptures, and the like. Behind an antique desk sits a slightly built female eladrin of indeterminate age, dressed simply but elegantly. A jeweled patch, its gems outlining the form of a cat, covers her right eye as she gazes appraisingly at you.

Skill Challenge: R2. The Negotiation (page 74).

GETTING PAID

If the PCs successfully negotiate this skill challenge, they earn a promise of substantial payment from Lady Stella, equivalent to one treasure parcel (level 13), on completing the mission. In addition, they earn 3,500 XP (major quest) for revealing the conspiracy to her.

If the PCs fail and must undertake a task to restart the negotiations, the payment offer is reduced by 25%. Should they manage to fail more than once but eventually conclude the deal, they still receive the reduced payment, but the quest XP is reduced by half (1,750 XP).

Finally, the PCs also find a level 13 treasure parcel in the Bloody Knives hideout at the end of encounter R7 Rumble.

BARRINSGATE'S GANGS

Whether the PCs learn about the Bloody Knives' involvement in the attack on them or simply want to investigate before they decide what to do next, they might want to ask around in town about that gang. In the course of their investigations, they can learn some basic information about the history and structure of the gang struggles in Barrinsgate.

History: Basic inquiries at the city's hall of records or by talking to old-timers can glean the following bits of information.

DC 10: The city of Barrinsgate was, until fairly recently, a large bandit encampment. Leaders of various bandit groups met at the site from time to time to discuss territorial boundaries and mutual responses to outside threats (that is, the law).

DC 15: Fifty years ago, a new bandit lord arose. The eladrin Stella Daybringer was a charismatic leader who quickly established a strong voice in the fireside councils. She recommended that the brigands, having tamed the surrounding territory, found a proper settlement. She argued, correctly, that the authorities would not harass the gangs so much if they were engaged in maintaining some sort of order in the district—even if not all the activities were strictly licit.

DC 17: The campgrounds of the various bandit gangs developed into the “neighborhoods” of the new settlement. The most powerful groups claimed the best turf, while the weakest were pushed toward the less desirable areas. The leaders awarded themselves noble

titles and established an exclusive living area. The fire-side council site became the new Circle of Peers.

DC 20: The city's bandit history has colored the community to this day. In the less well-policed parts of town, several gangs have de facto control over business and day-to-day affairs. There are two major gangs, one smaller one, and a handful of street-corner toughs. Hand out the map of gang turf on page 58.

DC 22: After her elevation to the peerage, Stella Daybringer, who now holds the title of count, dissolved her ties to her former bandit gang. Most of its former members became more-or-less respectable citizens, but it's said a few holdouts became what's now the Bloody Knives.

Streetwise: Making inquiries in gang-controlled neighborhoods or speaking with local experts reveals the following.

DC 10: Gangs are the de facto government of the poorer areas. In the market and waterfront districts, no one gang has control and turf struggles are common. Heavily patrolled areas, such as the Circle and the Peerage, and the more exclusive shopping district, have no gang presence. The shantytown outside the river gate is a no-man's-land in which any sort of criminal roams freely. Proxy turf wars are common there.

DC 15: There are three major gangs (give players the city map handout), as well as a handful of small groups that exist mainly in the shantytown and in small corners of the poorest areas.

The Bloody Knives are the largest and most powerful gang. They control much of the waterfront and Fireside, a poor working-class district. The River Rats are the second-largest group and claim the rest of the waterfront—they are in constant turf struggles with the Bloody Knives there. They also have some influence in the dirt-poor Stumpton district. The third gang, the Black Hearts, is much smaller than the River Rats and largely confined to the worst sections of Stumpton.

DC 20: Lately the Bloody Knives have been more aggressive in their turf wars, and they have been cracking down more brutally in the areas they control. There have been some brazen attacks on watch patrols recently, and rumors swirl that the Knives are behind them. The gang's leader, Sven the Fist, has been uncharacteristically aggressive these last few months.

DC 22: Stella Daybringer, who now holds the title of count, established an antiques and rarities business as an example of legitimate commerce. She deals in consignment by appointment only. Rumors persist that she is still in contact with the gangs, but no one has ever discovered any evidence to that effect.

DC 25: Stella's rival in the Circle, Lord Erinblad de Vast, has been the most vocal public figure condemning the gangs. He has recently begun consorting with a veteran of the bandit wars, and since that time has begun to claim that Lady Stella knows more about them than she has let on.

DISASTER STRIKES

While the negotiations proceed, the situation in Barrinsgate suddenly becomes much more serious. Another watch patrol is ambushed after dark, in a less well-traveled area of the market district, and all its members are killed. The news comes to the Lady Stella's chambers as she is meeting with the PCs.

If the PCs succeed on the skill challenge during the third stage, the message does not arrive until after all parties have agreed on their next action. Lady Stella considers the matter urgent but is willing to let the PCs make their own decisions about how to proceed.

If they fail the skill challenge, news of the attack comes in the midst of bargaining. Lady Stella abruptly ceases negotiations and demands that the PCs immediately investigate the crime. See "From the Horse's Mouth" below.

PART 3. INVESTIGATION

From this point the PCs can take several paths in any order during the course of an extended skill challenge as they begin their investigation.

Skill Challenge: R3. The Investigation (page 76).

FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH

If the PCs talk to a dead watch soldier, the spirit does not recall very much. The assault was swift, well coordinated, and brutal.

The soldier does remember that the ambushers wore yellow-and-green headbands. If the PCs have made any inquiries into the gangs of Barrinsgate, they recognize the distinctive colors of the River Rats gang. One detail that impressed the soldier, though, is

that the attackers used swords rather than the simple clubs and knives normally expected of gang fighters.

The spirit also mentions that one of the attackers had a scarred face, including a mangled ear. This is the gang lieutenant who led the first ambush against the party (see "Development" in encounter R1). If the PCs have killed or captured her, the soldier instead recalls a distinguishing feature of a dragon-infused gangster, who is part of the group that attacks a second patrol (see encounter R6).

The attack took place in an area of the market district that borders on the riverfront. If the PCs make any inquiries into the gangs of Barrinsgate, they recognize that territory as being hotly contested by the River Rats and the Bloody Knives.

What's Really Going On: Sven, taking matters into his own hands, ordered a squad of his newly recruited heavies to take out the patrollers while disguised as members of a rival gang. He hopes to give the Bloody Knives an advantage in its bid to control more of the market district, as well as to raise the general level of chaos.

However they handle the situation, the PCs ultimately learn that the River Rats didn't have anything to do with the attack. Indeed the Rats' leader, if he or she survives, is angry to learn of the setup and is interested in getting revenge on whoever is responsible. Clever PCs might exploit this situation and call on the leader as an ally in the final confrontation (see "Rumble," page 84).

RAT CATCHERS

If the PCs decide to confront the River Rats directly, they are powerful enough to effectively destroy the gang. You can create a level 10 tactical encounter in an urban setting (the street scene from encounter R6 will do in a pinch) using the thugs from encounter R1 as ordinary gangsters and human knife fighters (*Monster Manual 2*, page 146) as tougher warriors. A human pirate captain (*Monster Manual 2*, page 148) makes a suitable gang leader.

If the PCs instead choose to try talking to the gang's leader, they have to make contact and convince the gang members that the meeting is legitimate. This can be handled as a fairly basic skill challenge (level 12, complexity 1 [4 successes before 3 failures], DC 16 Diplomacy, Perception, and Streetwise checks, DC 21 Intimidate checks) or simply through roleplaying.

ABANDONED WAREHOUSE

If the PCs successfully warned Lady Stella about her cats, Blade learns of it from her familiar during that night's contact. Gathering information in that way is now too great a risk. But she has one more task for the familiar, which might rid her of the troublesome investigators.

If the PCs decide to observe the cat, it makes sure they follow it to an old warehouse on the riverfront, which has been rigged as a death trap. It enters through a partly open door, waits a few moments, then slips out again through a small ventilation opening.

Blade rigs a simple deception to convince the PCs to enter the warehouse. She has created the illusion of a cloaked and hooded humanoid figure standing in a corner opposite the door, holding the cat. The illusion activates when the familiar moves past it, then appears to pace about and whisper in arcane gibberish.

Skill Challenge: R4. Burning Warehouse (page 78).

The PCs should escape, but unless they put out the fire, the warehouse explodes. The good news is

that the explosion blows out that fire; the bad news is that it scatters flaming debris over nearby buildings and triggers additional blazes. The resulting pandemonium makes further tracking impossible in the neighborhood. All the city watch patrols (except one in the Circle and one in the Peerage) are called to help deal with the conflagration, which means the crime rate increases in the unguarded parts of town. Stella's rival on the council insists on hiring mercenary forces immediately and finds little resistance to the idea (see "Law and Order" on page 69).

HARD HAT AREA

Although Sven's people have been pressuring the inhabitants of areas controlled by his gang to keep quiet, he knows that someone will talk. So he also had the gangsters drop false hints about an upcoming deal at a construction site.

Blade has created a key from the item stolen earlier from a party member (see "Interlude: A Puzzling Theft" above) and arranged for it to be implanted into the industrial automaton at the site.

Tactical Encounter: R5. Construction Site (page 80).

Once the automaton is triggered, it pursues that character relentlessly, even if the party flees the site, and causes untold destruction in its wake. If the party doesn't destroy it, the town's patrols must try. Focusing on this threat means the crime rate increases in unguarded parts of town. In addition, some of the watch soldiers are likely to be killed in the fight, leaving the city dangerously weak even if the rampaging construct is defeated. This situation gives Stella's rival on the council the political leverage to force the hiring of mercenary forces (see "Law and Order" on page 69).





WATCH OUT!

If the party decides (or is ordered) to shadow a watch patrol, Sven eventually makes a move against it, forcing the PCs to intervene.

Tactical Encounter: R6. Patrol Ambush (page 82).

In his overconfidence, Sven attacks the patrol in broad daylight. This time the ambushers don't bother wearing River Rats colors, but they don't wear those of the Knives either. One of the PCs might recognize one or more of the heavies from an earlier attack or from the dead patroller's recollection.

LAW AND ORDER

The latest attack on the watch patrol (see page 82) shocks the city. No one is safe, it seems, and the aristocratic class demands that something be done to restore stability to the streets of Barrinsgate.

The half-elf Lord Erinblad de Vast is an influential member of the Circle who oversees public works, including the maintenance of government offices. A key rival of Lady Stella, he has long coveted her portfolio of city security. Erinblad is a loud proponent of law and order and suspects that Stella retains some connection to the gangs, but he has no proof. Recently, though, he gained some support for his suspicions in conversations with Amydis, a retired soldier who settled in Barrinsgate a little over a year ago. The two soon began an intimate relationship, and his lover has been urging him to keep a close eye on Lady Stella. As a result, Erinblad has been stepping up his attacks on her in the Circle.

Amydis is another identity for Blade, who is covering her bets by exerting influence directly on the council as well as through her agent in the gang. In her humanoid guise, she poses as a veteran of campaigns against bandits who still has useful contacts among military organizations. She is urging Erinblad to have the city hire a private security force as an alternative to the watch, but he has never been able to secure enough votes in the Circle to do so. With the outbreak of violence, Lord Erinblad sees a chance to make his move. He calls an emergency session of the Circle.

Lady Stella has no choice but to attend. She cannot bring the PCs to this closed meeting, nor does she want to call attention to the fact that she has hired mercenaries of her own. A raucous session ensues,

and the general panic leads the rest of the Circle to support Lord Erinblad's motion to bring in a private security force over Lady Stella's objections.

Amydis just happens to have a group of mercenaries ready to go. They are in fact toughs from the Bloody Knives gang, hired through Sven. Groups are assigned to patrol the Circle, Peerage, and market districts. Rough and brutal, they push aside ordinary citizens and threaten anyone they consider unsavory. They severely beat, and in one case kill, troublemakers (conveniently, members of a rival gang). The first citizens of the city—with Lady Stella a notable exception—praise the new, no-nonsense approach to security.

Now the pressure is really on Lady Stella to identify and put an end to the gang troublemaking. She has lost a lot of prestige on the council, but if she can expose and eliminate a dangerous influence, she can regain her stature. Even better would be to discredit Erinblad's mercenaries—and by extension, her political rival. She pushes the PCs to resolve this matter quickly.

MAKING THE CONNECTION

Sven has once again been reckless: One of the hired mercenaries was part of the group who ambushed the party or the watch patrol. Whether the PCs get into a fight with the toughs or simply spend time observing them, they eventually recognize the gangster.

Confronting Lord Erinblad is difficult. He refuses to meet with the PCs and has private soldiers guarding his office and home. Even if the PCs do somehow speak to him, he refuses to believe the PCs' assertions. He accuses them of sowing chaos with their wild accusations and threatens to have them arrested or

worse. The mercenaries, he says, were hired through a reliable source with unimpeachable credentials.

If the PCs report what they've learned to Lady Stella, she is forced to accept the fact that the Bloody Knives have turned against her. Telling the PCs requires revealing her own connections to the gang. But she can't let things continue as they are, and she can't deal with the Bloody Knives overtly. She has to come clean.

OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER: PUBLIC ENEMIES

If you really want to ratchet up the pressure or simply give your players more opportunities to fight, you can arrange to put the PCs right in the middle of the gangs and the mercenaries.

Blade sees another opportunity to get the adventurers out of the picture. She suggests to Lord Erinblad that they are a threat to the city's stability, being little more than a band of hired thugs themselves. He sees his chance to further weaken Stella on the council and dispatches a patrol of mercenary guards to arrest the party or run them out of town. Alternatively, the party runs afoul of a mercenary patrol (perhaps when they try to speak with Lady Stella again.)

This is a level 13 encounter (XP 4,000). You can use the city streets map from tactical encounter R6 (Patrol Ambush). Replace the watch patrollers on the map with dragon-infused gangsters and the watch sergeant with a Bloody Knives lieutenant; there are no ambushing gangsters.

Even if the PCs prevail, they are going to be seen by the public as dangerous hoodlums—especially if they kill any of the mercenaries.

Why didn't you tell us earlier about your connection with the Bloody Knives?

"I didn't think it was important. I do 'business' with the organization from time to time, but I have never ordered violent activity."

Who is in charge of the gang?

"A man named Sven. He has been the gang's leader for years, and I trusted him completely. I don't understand why he has turned on me like this."

Could he be under some sort of malign influence?

"Possibly. Or someone paid him a lot of money. He's still a bandit at heart."

How can we get to Sven?

"The gang's headquarters is a fortified manor in the Campfire district, but the place is well defended, especially if he has brought in such tough warriors. It would be better to isolate him."

Stella's idea is to draw out at least some of the gang through a challenge to Sven's authority. The best way to manage this is a gang confrontation. While some of the gang is off dealing with the challenge, Sven will be less heavily protected, allowing the party a shot at him.

As Dark Star, Stella has occasionally made contact with the city's other gangs, usually through intermediaries. If any of the River Rats (or at least their leader) still survive, they might be persuaded to set up a joint attack with the Black Hearts—but both gangs are going to need a big payoff to take such a chance.

RUMBLE

Dark Star arranges with the Black Hearts to make a show of force in a section of the riverfront abutting Stumpton, where the River Rats and the Bloody Knives have been feuding for influence. Unknown to the Black Hearts or River Rats, this "show of force" is just a decoy assault intended to give the adventurers a shot at Sven. For his part, once he learns of the massing gang members along the riverfront, Sven musters a large force of Bloody Knives and sends them on the attack. This plays directly into Stella's plan, as it leaves the gang's headquarters lightly defended—perfect for the heroes to stage a strike against Sven, who she knows will stay behind. Stella provides directions to the Bloody Knives' hideout if the PCs haven't already learned that information.

Tactical Encounter: R7. Rumble (page 84).

Whether or not the PCs manage to slay Sven, they reveal the existence of a dragon infiltrating the city's gangs and disrupt Blade's plans as a result. This revelation is sure to cause a sensation—not least among gang members, who didn't know that a dragon had assumed Sven's place. Although a few close associates might have noticed Sven was behaving differently of late, many had no inkling of the substitution. The revelation causes disarray in the Bloody Knives, greatly weakening the gang. Any dragon-infused heavies who survive no longer have a coordinator and leave the city.

AFTERMATH

Lady Stella produces evidence connecting the mercenary patrols with the gang, which completely discredits Lord Erinblad. He is seen as a fool at best and a collaborator at worst, and he is forced to resign from the Circle. The mercenaries are driven out of town (positively identified gangsters might be arrested), and the city watch is restored.

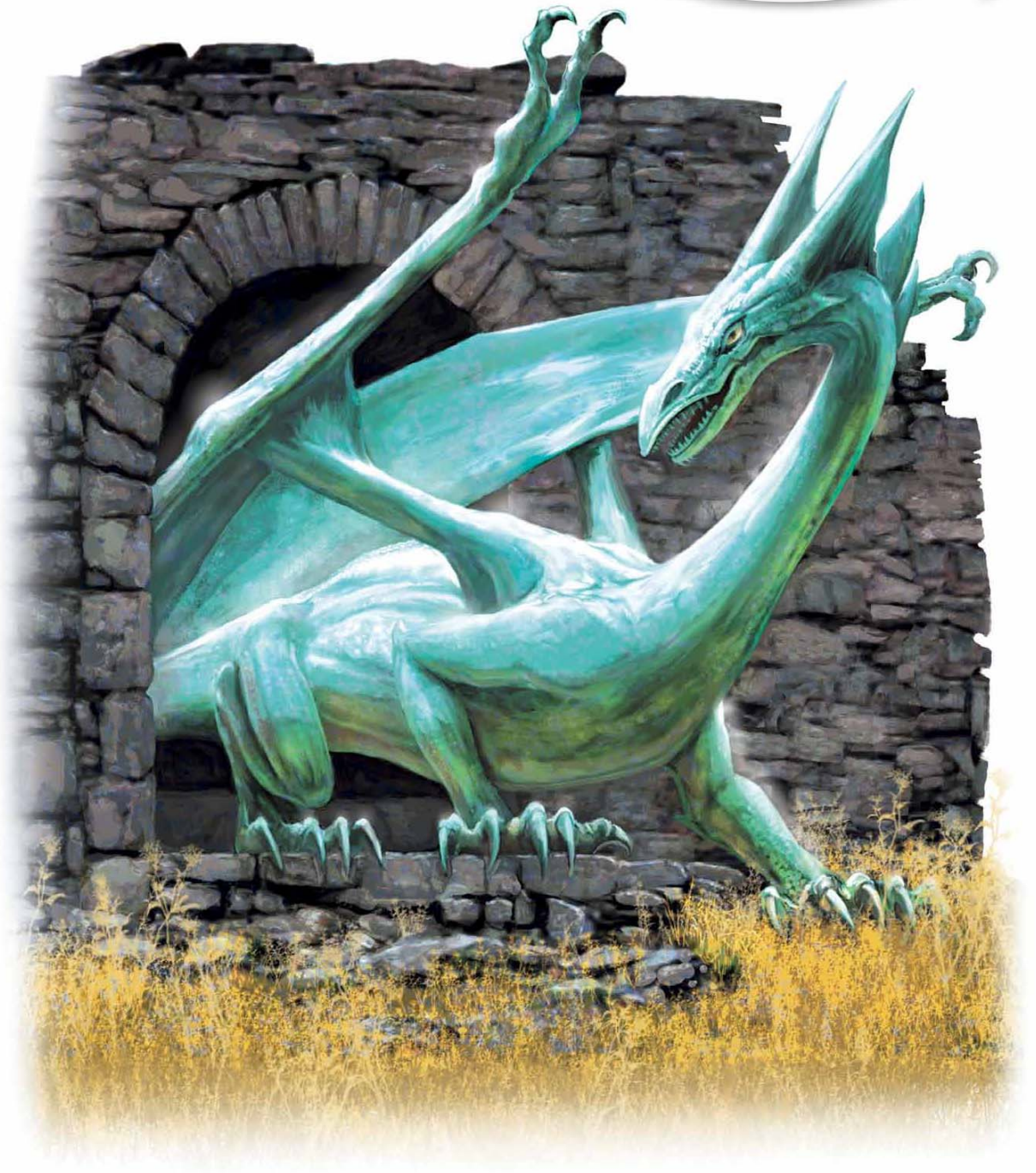
Lady Stella's star is ascendant once again. The noblewoman pays the party the agreed-upon reward and hails them as saviors of the city. From this point on, the PCs have a powerful and generous patron in Lady Stella. The safety of Barrinsgate is in her best interest, and she will likely have need of bold heroes again. But the story isn't quite over . . .

EPILOGUE: STRANGE ENCOUNTER

As the PCs are leaving the council chambers to return to their quarters or are on the road out of the city, they meet a lone figure: a young female tiefling in silvery garments.

She makes no hostile moves but simply says, "Take a message to my sister: She may have won this time, but we are not done."

She then blinks out of sight. In the distance, a huge winged form lifts into the sky and quickly flies away.



RI. SHANTYTOWN AMBUSH

Encounter Level 10 (2,700 XP)

SETUP

- 8 thugs (T)
- 2 dragon-infused gangsters (G)
- 1 Bloody Knives lieutenant (L)

The PCs arrive at Barringsgate in response to the summons and must traverse the shantytown that has grown up around its gate.

When the PCs enter, read:

The crowded, stinking streets of the shantytown are slippery with sewage and choked with garbage. Ragged children of half a dozen races run through the warrens, mutilated beggars cry, and half-starved dogs slink aside as you make your way through this sea of misery.

Perception Check

DC 21: *What you had taken for more vagrants suddenly move toward you, weapons raised.*

If the PCs fail to notice the ambushers, they are surprised. The ruffians have been waiting for the party's arrival and cannot be surprised.

Streetwise Check

DC 16: *The shantytown is a warren of narrow, trash-strewn passages.*

8 Thugs (T)		Level 8 Minion Brute	
Medium natural humanoid, human		XP 88	
Initiative +7	Senses Perception +4		
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.			
AC 20; Fortitude 20, Reflex 20, Will 19			
Speed 6			
⊕ Morningstar (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon			
+11 vs. AC; 7 damage.			
↓ Beatdown (standard; requires combat advantage; at-will) ♦ Weapon			
+11 vs. AC; 7 damage, and the thug knocks the target prone.			
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Common	
Str 17 (+7)	Dex 16 (+7)	Wis 10 (+4)	
Con 12 (+5)	Int 10 (+4)	Cha 14 (+6)	
Equipment leather armor, morningstar			

2 Dragon-Infused Gangsters (G)		Level 10 Skirmisher	
Medium natural humanoid, half-orc		XP 500	
Initiative +10	Senses Perception +10		
HP 104; Bloodied 52			
AC 24; Fortitude 24, Reflex 22, Will 120			
Speed 6			
⊕ Longsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon			
+16 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage.			
⊕/☞ Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon			
+15 vs. AC; 1d4 + 5 damage.			
↓ Double Attack (standard; at-will)			
The gangster makes a longsword attack and a dagger attack.			
↓ Steely Resolve (standard; recharge ☞☞☞) ♦ Weapon			
+14 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 10 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square.			
Furious Assault (free, when the dragon-infused gangster hits an enemy; encounter)			
The gangster's attack deals 1d10 extra damage.			
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Common, Giant	
Skills Athletics +15			
Str 20 (+10)	Dex 16 (+8)	Wis 10 (+5)	
Con 16 (+8)	Int 10 (+5)	Cha 8 (+4)	
Equipment leather armor, longsword, 3 daggers			

TACTICS

The thugs look for flanking opportunities or exploit the lieutenant's *bloody brand* power.

The dragon-infused gangsters focus on a target, using *furious assault* to land a finishing blow after dealing damage with another attack against a bloodied target. They use *steely resolve* to drive enemies into situations where the thugs can flank them.

The lieutenant directs the actions of the others, using her combat powers to keep the most dangerous enemy off balance. She seizes the better part of valor once she is bloodied or half the attackers are down, tumbling away or using *slash and dash* to escape melee.

The ambushers have no compunctions about using innocent bystanders as human shields if necessary, or about making attacks that hurt nearby beggars and urchins.

DEVELOPMENT

The lieutenant has a deep scar on her left cheek that extends into the hairline, and her left ear is mangled. Any character who engages her in combat notes this detail.

Bloody Knives Lieutenant (L) Level 10 Elite Soldier
Medium natural humanoid, half-elf XP 1,000**Initiative** +10 **Senses Perception** +12**HP** 212; **Bloodied** 106**AC** 26; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 22**Saving Throws** +2**Speed** 6**Action Points** 1⊕ **Bastard Sword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+17 vs. AC; 1d10 + 6 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the lieutenant's next turn.

⊕/☞ **Dagger** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

Ranged 5/10; +17 vs. AC; 2d6 + 6 damage.

⊕ **Bloody Brand** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Weapon**+17 vs. AC; 2d10 + 6 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 damage and grants combat advantage (save ends both).
Miss: Half damage.⊕/☞ **Slash and Dash** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

The Bloody Knives lieutenant makes a bastard sword attack, shifts 2 squares, and makes a dagger attack against a different target.

⊕ **Bloody Blade Riposte** (immediate reaction, when hit by a melee attack; recharge ☞☞☞) ♦ **Weapon**

+16 vs. AC; targets triggering enemy; 1d10 + 6 damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the lieutenant's next turn.

Combat Tumbleset (move; encounter)

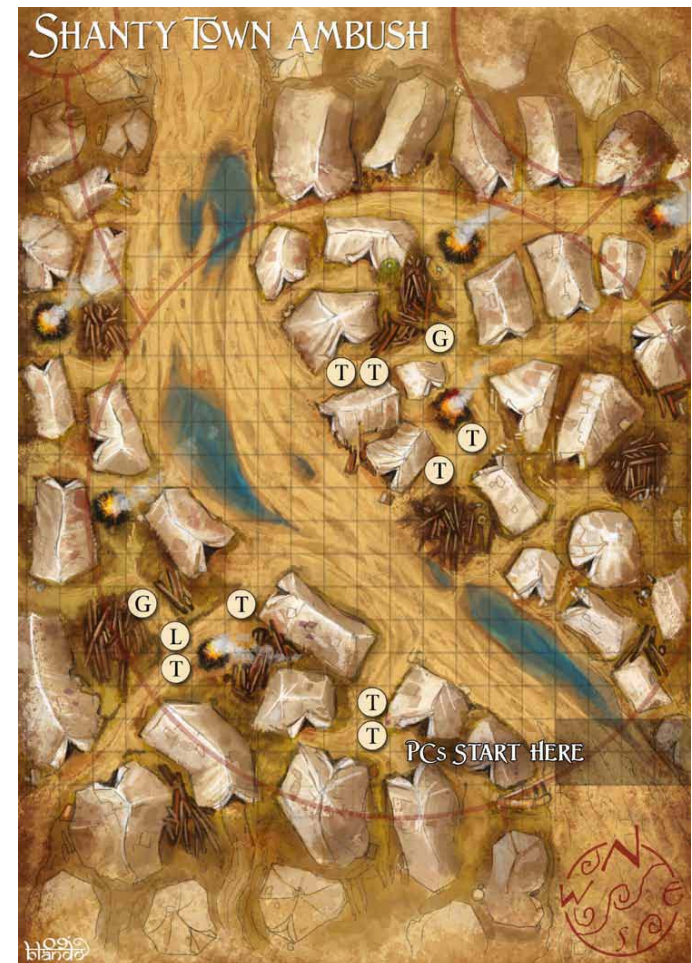
The lieutenant shifts its speed, and can shift through enemies' squares during this movement, but must end the move in an unoccupied space.

Combat Advantage

The lieutenant deals 1d8 extra damage to any creature granting combat advantage to it.

Alignment Unaligned**Languages** Common, Elven, Goblin**Skills** Acrobatics +13, Diplomacy +13, Stealth +13**Str** 16 (+8) **Dex** 16 (+8) **Wis** 14 (+7)**Con** 18 (+8) **Int** 13 (+6) **Cha** 16 (+8)**Equipment** leather armor, bastard sword, 6 daggers**FEATURES OF THE AREA****Illumination:** Bright light during the day; at night, flickering trash fires provide dim light.**Bonfire:** A creature that enters or starts its turn in a square containing a bonfire takes 1d6 fire damage.**Sludge Puddles:** These areas of sewage and other waste are slick and dangerous. A creature that enters a square containing a sludge puddle must make a DC 16 Acrobatics check to maintain its balance. On a success, the creature continues its move. A failure by 4 or less causes the creature to slip; treat that square as difficult terrain. Failing by 5 or more means the creature falls prone in that square.**Trash Heaps:** These piles are difficult terrain. As a move action, a creature can transfer a trash heap occupying 1 square into an adjacent square. Chunks of trash can be thrown as improvised ranged weapons.**Huts:** The wretched hovels of the shantytown have been cobbled together from scrap lumber, old barrels, bits of hide, and the like. A DC 16 Strength check can break through a hut's wall.

The flimsy huts are extremely flammable, and an attack that deals fire damage to a square containing a hut ignites that square on a roll of 1 on a d6. At the start of each round thereafter, roll a d6 for each hut square adjacent to that square; the fire spreads to the new square on a roll of 1. A burning hut square goes out on a roll of 6. Treat a burning square as a bonfire (see above).



R2. THE NEGOTIATION

Encounter Level 12 (3,500 XP)

At this initial meeting, the dragon wants to get a feel for the adventurers' mettle and establish some basic ground rules for negotiations. Her office enjoys typical security measures, including a permanent Eye of Warding, but she suspects some sort of insider leak; once she is satisfied with their merits, she requests a private meeting with her potential employees in the privacy of her home.

Lady Stella is much older than even her eladrin shape enables her to appear. She is calm, collected, and distant, even if inwardly concerned. For someone who rose to power as a bandit leader, she also seems sophisticated and well read. Give the PCs cool stares and allow her long pauses after questions to convey this to the heroes. They should feel intimidated and a little out of their league with Lady Stella.

The PCs might already know something of the Bloody Knives' involvement (having learned it from a minion or perhaps through a ritual such as History Revealed). If they inform Lady Stella of this fact during the course of the skill challenge or ensuing conversation, she is taken aback, although she covers her surprise and discomfort well. (A DC 21 passive Insight check reveals the slightest double take.) She doesn't understand why the Knives would attack the party and dares not inform the PCs of her involvement with the gang. This information makes her more insistent on shadowing a watch patrol to be certain of the attackers' identities.

The Negotiation Skill Challenge

Level 12
3,500 XP

This is a sequential skill challenge in which success in one portion leads to a followup test. During the challenge, the PCs must demonstrate their competence, negotiate a price, and come up with a plan of action. The challenge uses stages to reflect the characters' progress during the negotiation, measured by the total number of successes they accrue. Some skills can be used at any time, while others are suited only to specific points in the discussion.

Complexity

2 (6 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills

Diplomacy, Insight, Streetwise

Diplomacy DC 16 (1 success, maximum 4 successes)

The character demonstrates an ability to adjust his or her attitude according to the social situation rather than simply bulling ahead. This skill can be used to gain up to 4 successes. After that, Lady Stella is sufficiently impressed that further Diplomacy checks do not contribute to overcoming the challenge.

Insight DC 16 (1 success, maximum 1 success per stage; see below)

Lady Stella plays things very close to the vest, but the character senses what she prizes most dearly and turns the discussion toward that topic, eliciting a less guarded response. This skill can be used to gain 1 success in each stage.

Streetwise DC 16 (1 success, maximum 1 success per stage; see below)

The character describes his or her experience in dealing with the criminal underworld, especially since arriving in Barrinsgate. If the PCs undertook basic inquiries into the gangs of the city before meeting with Lady Stella, this skill check is made with a +2 bonus. This skill can be used to gain 1 success in each stage.

Secondary Skills

Perception

Perception DC 21 (0 successes, no maximum)

Noting the furnishings of Lady Stella's office and her private salon, the character draws conclusions about her interests. A success on this check does not contribute to overcoming the challenge but grants a +2 bonus to Insight skill checks.

Stage 1: Proving Your Worth

As a potential employer, Lady Stella hopes to ascertain whether the PCs are truly skilled enough to take on this assignment. They must convince her of their competence before the negotiation can proceed further.

Lady Stella thanks you for accepting her invitation and looks you over with a merchant's eye.

Primary Skills

Bluff, History

Bluff DC 21 (1 success, maximum 1 success)

The character plays up his or her experience, embellishing past exploits. Lady Stella is a consummate bargainer and enjoys a spirited haggling session. After the first success, further attempts cause Lady Stella to see through self-aggrandizing efforts and results in an automatic failure—she nods and smiles but no longer seems quite as easy to convince.

History DC 16 (1 success, maximum 1 success)

The character relates something about the history of Barrinsgate and its gangs, showing Lady Stella that the PCs have the skills and patience to conduct research and have prepared for this meeting. This skill can be used to gain 1 success in this stage.

Stage 2: Down to Brass Tacks

After 2 successes in this skill challenge, Lady Stella is convinced that the party can handle this task. Now it's time to talk turkey.

Lady Stella gives a small, satisfied nod. "You seem competent as investigators. I am sure we can arrive at suitable remuneration for your services."

Primary Skills

Arcana, Intimidate, Thievery

Arcana DC 16 (1 success, maximum 1 success)

The character demonstrates arcane prowess at gathering information through spells, rituals, and research.

Intimidate DC 16 (1 success, maximum 1 success)

The character hints broadly at competing offers and implies that Lady Stella's might not be the most attractive.

Thievery DC 21 (1 success, maximum 1 success)

The character deftly produces a small object lifted from the councilor's office, such as a pen or candle snuffer, noting that these skills can procure other such clues.

Secondary Skills

Dungeoneering, Stealth

Dungeoneering or Stealth DC 16 (0 successes, maximum 1 success per stage)

The character explains that expertise in skulking about and avoiding hazards, especially in the literal underground, can be helpful in negotiating the figurative depths of the criminal underground. A success on this check does not contribute to overcoming the challenge but grants a +2 bonus to Streetwise skill checks.

Stage 3: The Next Step

After 2 more successes in this skill challenge (4 total), the PCs have negotiated a mutually satisfactory payment. However, Stella has strong ideas about how to proceed, and the PCs must get her to see things from another point of view to investigate as they see fit.

Lady Stella leans back. "You are hard bargainers, adventurers, but I think you will be worth the price. The situation is urgent, but it is also of an extremely sensitive nature. I would prefer not to discuss the particulars in this somewhat public location. Please meet with me privately at my home this evening after supper."

If the party incurred no failures in the first stage of this challenge, or if the players roleplayed that encounter exceptionally well, Lady Stella invites the PCs to dine with her first. Once they arrive at her home and enter her private salon, read or paraphrase the following.

A servant leads you to a high-ceilinged, spacious drawing room, decorated far more lavishly than the councilor's office. Gorgeous works of art hang from the walls, and sturdy sculptures decorate other surfaces. The room has no windows. You sense a frisson of arcane energy as you pass the threshold, a sure sign of magical warding, and the servant quietly closes the doors behind you.

Lady Stella occupies an antique divan, stroking a long-haired white cat, but her tense face belies the apparent ease of her posture. A number of comfortable chairs are drawn up in a circle around her couch, some of which are occupied by cats of various descriptions; other cats doze in various corners.

The noblewoman motions for you to sit. "Don't worry about dislodging my pets," she says. "There are many other comfortable places for them." She scratches behind the ears of the cat in her lap.

Primary Skills

Arcana, Diplomacy, Endurance, Nature

Arcana or Nature DC 16 (1 success, maximum 1 success)

The character realizes that one of the cats is behaving in a manner contrary to its nature or seems strangely attentive to the discussion, and points this out to Lady Stella. She is unwilling to believe that her pets have been compromised, but a successful check convinces her to have all the cats removed from the chamber. She takes the party's position more seriously. Only 1 success can be gained in this way.

Diplomacy DC Special (1 success, maximum 1 success)

The first time in this stage that a character attempts this action, make the check opposed by Lady Stella's Diplomacy (she has a skill check bonus of +18). If Lady Stella wins, this does not count as a failure, but the DCs of all further skill checks in this challenge are increased by 2. If the PC wins, the DCs remain unchanged and the party accrues 1 success.

Endurance DC 16 (1 success, maximum 1 success)

Lady Stella can be stubborn, but simply outlasting her in the discussion can help the PCs' case.

Secondary Skill

Perception

Perception DC 21 (0 success, maximum 1 success)

The character's observation of the room and the cats raises his or her suspicions. Something about their general movements isn't quite right. A successful check grants a +2 bonus to Arcana or Nature checks during this stage.

Conclusion

The PCs negotiate payment and receive assignments based on the degree of success. Once the challenge ends, Lady Stella bids them good night, and the party can proceed to planning their next actions.

Victory

If the PCs attain six successes, they earn a respectable payment and are able to proceed as they think best.

Defeat

If the PCs earn 3 failures, determine their total number of successes up to that point. If they failed in the first stage of the challenge, the dragon is not certain of the PCs' ability and assigns them a test: shadowing a watch patrol to forestall another ambush and learn more about the attackers. If they perform satisfactorily, this negates 1 failure and negotiations pick up where they left off.

If they succeeded in the first step, Lady Stella finds them suitable for the task but is unwilling to pay them as much as they demand. See the "Getting Paid" sidebar.

If they succeeded in the second step, she is willing to pay well but dictates the party's next course of action, most likely shadowing a patrol.

CATSPAW

As evidenced by her eyepatch and her house full of pets, Stella has a weakness for (some would say an obsession with) cats. Blade has taken advantage of this situation to introduce her own cat familiar into the household (in humanoid guise, she convinced a servant to take in a pathetic-looking stray). This spy overheard Stella dictating the message to the PCs as and repeated what it heard to its master, allowing her to arrange the shantytown ambush.

The familiar continues to observe and report on a regular basis, through a Sending ritual performed by Blade each midnight. As a purported stray, the cat still is allowed to prowl. It makes a terrible fuss, and the servant who first brought it to the household often gives in to its complaints and lets it out at night. (This lets it get outside magically warded areas). Sometimes, though, it needs to get close to its master for detailed communication.

R3. THE INVESTIGATION

Encounter Level 12 (3,500 XP)

The heroes are off into the unsafe streets of Bar-ringsgate, attempting to do Lady Stella's bidding and discover the cause of the unrest in town.

The Investigation Skill Challenge

Level 12
3,500 XP

This is a structured skill challenge in which the actions taken and the number of successes gained determine the direction the investigation takes. Depending on which lines of inquiry the PCs follow up and how well they do so, any or all of the following scenes might take place.

Success and Failure

This challenge does not follow the normal rules: Successful skill checks help the characters accomplish interim goals but don't accrue toward a final goal for the challenge. Likewise, failures don't determine the end point of the challenge but measure how much more difficult gathering information becomes. The challenge ends when the characters accomplish the adventure's goal.

Victory

Party members might try different skills separately, or the entire party might pursue one course of action at a time. Count the number of successes using a given skill or group of skills: The result dictates the next encounter area or development.

Defeat

When the characters fail skill checks, they draw some amount of attention to themselves, and the leader of the Bloody Knives might take action against them. Keep track of the failures the characters accrue over the course of the challenge. Failures are cumulative, so each time they reach one of the following milestones, they suffer all the consequences for the number of failures they've accrued, including those for fewer failures.

Three or more failures: Sven instructs his followers to lean on shopowners and other businesses. Increase the DC of all Perception checks by 2 in areas controlled by the Bloody Knives.

Four or more failures: The gang starts breaking legs. Increase the DC of all Intimidate and Streetwise checks by 2 in areas controlled by the Bloody Knives. However, the tension in the streets becomes palpable. Decrease the DC of Insight checks in those areas by 2.

Five or more failures: Sven posts lookouts, interfering with the PCs' activities. Increase the DC of all Acrobatics and Athletics checks by 2 in areas controlled by the Bloody Knives.

Six or more failures: Sven attacks the PCs before they get any closer. See the "Optional Encounter: Public Enemies" sidebar on page 70 for details.

Primary Skills

Insight, Nature, Perception, Streetwise, special

Insight DC 16 (1 success, maximum 2 successes)

The character reads body language and observes interpersonal dynamics in city districts to get a sense of the tension level. **Two Successes:** The character senses that the Bloody Knives might attack again soon. Go to "Watch Out!" on page 69.

Nature DC 10 (1 success, maximum 2 successes)

PCs who noticed the cat's suspicious behavior during the meeting with Stella might decide to observe it. At your discretion, the character can use Arcana instead (DC 16). **One Success:** The cat leaves the house and prowls the streets. At one point, it stops and sits for several minutes. Then it returns to the house. It might repeat this action several times over a couple of nights to ensure the heroes take notice. **Two Successes:** The cat leaves the house and heads out of the neighborhood. It stops periodically as though listening, then continues. Eventually it arrives at an abandoned warehouse and slips inside. The cat is leading the characters into a trap. Go to "Abandoned Warehouse" on page 67.

Perception DC 16 (1 success, maximum 3 successes)

The character tracks the movements of gang members. Which gang depends on the district investigated. **One success:** The character learns the general area of the gang's headquarters. **Two successes:** The character discovers the location of the gang's headquarters. **Three successes:** The character observes the activities of the gang members. This familiarity means the character (or the party if he or she is with them) cannot be surprised by gang attacks, although it confers no advantage against traps.

Streetwise DC 16 (1 success, maximum 4 successes)

The character tries to talk with shopowners, innkeepers, or shadier customers to determine the level of gang activity, especially that of the Bloody Knives. **Two Successes:** The party picks up a lead on an imminent criminal transaction. The information points to a construction site in the Campfire district, near the boundary with the market. The meeting is to be held the next night, after construction work has ceased for the day. If the PCs decide to investigate, go to "Hard Hat Area" on page 68.

Four Successes: Further inquiries turn up a disturbing fact: A couple of people were nosing around asking similar questions a few weeks ago. Several days later, their bodies were found in the river. Having been so alerted, the party gains a +2 bonus to Insight and Perception checks during this challenge. (If the PCs manage to retrieve a corpse and perform Speak with Dead, they can learn that the attackers wore red bandannas and were led by a woman with a scarred face.)

Ritual Special (1 success, maximum 1 success)

The character might choose to talk to a deceased watch soldier using Speak with Dead; Lady Stella insists on it if the party failed the negotiation skill challenge. She provides component costs and a ritual scroll if necessary. Go to "From the Horse's Mouth" on page 67.

Secondary Skills

Acrobatics, Athletics, Bluff, Intimidate, Thievery, special
Acrobatics/Athletics DC 16 (0 successes, no maximum)

The character takes to the rooftops to observe watch patrols or areas of likely trouble. A successful check negates a failure with a Streetwise or Perception check.

Bluff DC 21 or Thievery DC 16 (1 success, maximum 1 success)

The character puts out word in the underworld that he or she needs to move an interesting item he or she has "acquired." Word eventually reaches the Bloody Knives, who contact Lady Stella in her Dark Star persona. She encourages the gang to size up the prospective sellers, granting an automatic success with one Streetwise check.

Intimidate DC 21 (0 successes, no maximum)

The character tries leaning on shady sorts. However, Sven's people are already applying pressure. A successful check grants a +2 bonus to the next Streetwise check made as part of this challenge (only once per Intimidate check).

Ritual Special (0 successes, no maximum)

Using Whispers of the Edifice (*Arcane Power* 158) to check the abandoned warehouse (page 67) before entering reveals one or more of the following data points: No one other than the cat has entered in the last 24 hours; it was used to store flour; people rarely come in, except the occasional vagrant seeking shelter. This information alerts the character to the likelihood of a trap (+2 bonus to Perception checks to spot hidden gangsters).

Ritual Special (0 successes, no maximum)

Object Reading used on a weapon from the watch ambush provides images of the fight, such as the distinctive hoodlum or the headbands. The information is sufficient to identify the attackers, though not as detailed as what the patroller's spirit can tell them (see R6, Patrol Ambush).

R4. BURNING WAREHOUSE

Encounter Level 12 (3,500 XP)

During this skill challenge, the PCs must find a way out of the blockaded and burning warehouse before they are roasted alive or blown apart. The first round of the challenge begins once the timbers are lit, dealing damage (see the “Time Pressure” sidebar).

Perception Check (passive)

DC 16: *The warehouse seems abandoned. Broken crates and barrels are piled about a decrepit wagon, and similar rubbish is heaped around the walls.*

DC 21: *A skulking figure is barely visible in a shadowed alley.*

Burning Warehouse Skill Challenge

Level 12
3,500 XP

You’ve managed to follow the creature you suspect is more than just a simple cat. But as you hunt the shadows for the creature, you hear a loud crash followed immediately by the roar of flames!

Four Bloody Knives thugs and two dragon-infused gangsters are hidden in nearby alleys, watching the PCs approach. A gang lieutenant is prone on the roof, observing the door. If the PCs enter the building, the gangsters quickly move to close and bar the door, blocking it with a wagon full of rubbish. The lieutenant then lights a trash heap piled on top of the exit to the roof, whose timbers have been soaked in oil, and leaps or climbs down. The blaze quickly spreads through the dry wood while the inside of the building begins filling with smoke. Worse yet for the PCs, the building was formerly used to store sacks and kegs of flour. The fine and highly flammable dust is still present in high volume in the air, ready to explode.

Complexity

3 (8 successes before 3 failures).

Special

Time Pressure: Each round after the blaze is initially lit, the interior of the warehouse grows hotter and smokier, with flaming debris falling from above. At the start of the first round, each creature in the warehouse takes 1d8 fire damage. The damage increases to 2d8 the next round, and so on each round (maximum 5d8).

On the first round after the fire is lit, only the ceiling is burning. On each subsequent round, the fire moves 1 square down the walls until, after 5 rounds, the entire structure is aflame.

Primary Skills

Athletics, Endurance, Heal, Thievery, special

Athletics DC 21 (standard action, 1 success, no maximum)

The character tries to push or lever open a blocked exit. Up to two other characters can assist this check. A success partially shifts the blockage but does not open the exit completely. Each success at the same exit helps widen an opening in this way.

However, pushing against a burning surface deals 1d8 fire damage unless the character uses an object to extend his or her reach or protects his or her hands (see Heal below).

Endurance DC 16 (minor action, 1 success per group, maximum 1 success per round)

The hot, choking air threatens to overwhelm the party. Once per round, this skill check must be attempted by each character at the start of the round. Score 1 success if at least half the group succeeds. Otherwise, each character loses a healing surge.

Heal DC 16 (standard action, 1 success, maximum 1 success per round)

The character uses first aid to reduce the ongoing threat from the smoke and heat: keeping people close to the floor, creating impromptu filters with damp cloths, and so forth. This skill can be used to gain 1 success per round.

Alternatively, a successful Heal check represents wrapping a character’s hands so he or she can push against a burning surface without taking damage for 1 round.

Thievery DC 16 (standard action, 1 success, maximum 1 success per round)

The building’s walls contain several small openings for light and ventilation. Although they are too small for any creature larger than Tiny to pass through, using thieves’ tools or an improvised crowbar expands an opening a bit to allow more fresh air in. This skill can be used to gain 1 success per round.

Strength DC 26 or DC 21 (special, 1 success)

The character starts to break through a wall. An area that is burning requires only a DC 21 check. Attacking a burning section of wall deals 1d6 points of fire damage to any character adjacent to that section of wall from flying flinders of burning lumber.

Secondary Skills

Acrobatics, Athletics, Perception, Streetwise, special

Acrobatics DC 16 (standard action, 0 successes, no maximum)

The character hooks a rope around a roof beam and swings up to the burning ceiling. On subsequent rounds, he or she can make Strength checks (see above) to lift the trapdoor (DC 21) or break through the weakened roof timbers (DC 26), with a +2 bonus to the check.

At the DM’s discretion, the character can instead make a DC 16 Athletics check to climb a support beam to reach the ceiling.

Perception DC 10 (standard action, 0 or 1 success, maximum 0 or 1 success)

The character inspects broken barrels and old sacks in the warehouse and discovers that they contain flour. Informing the others of the imminent hazard urges them to greater efforts. A successful skill check grants a +2 bonus to the next round’s Endurance checks or converts one failed Athletics check into a success. Perception can be used in this way only once during the challenge.

Streetwise DC 16 (minor action, 0 successes, no maximum)

The character’s knowledge of warehouse construction lets him or her make educated guesses about weak points in the building’s structure, granting a +2 bonus to the next Strength or Athletics check.

Cold Powers Special (action as power, 0 successes, no maximum)

Using a close or area power that deals cold damage slows the spread of the flames, reducing the fire damage dealt at the start of the following round by 1d8.

Rituals Special (minor action, 0 successes, no maximum)

A character who has previously performed the Affect Normal Fire ritual (*PH2* page 212) can take a minor action to extinguish 1 square of fire. Spending two consecutive minor actions reduces the fire damage dealt at the start of the following round by 1d8.

Rituals and powers that reduce fire damage are cumulative. If these effects reduce the fire damage dealt in a round to 0, the fire is extinguished.

Victory

If the PCs get 8 successes, they escape the warehouse before it explodes. Depending on their actions, they might be able to put out the fire. The lieutenant stays around after the fire is lit to make sure the job gets done. If the PCs escape quickly (in 3 rounds or fewer), they might be able to spot and catch him before he can report.

Failure

If the characters accumulate 3 failures, the flour dust ignites before they can escape. Each creature inside the warehouse takes 3d8 + 7 fire damage. In addition, the building collapses.

← Close burst 10; targets creatures in the warehouse; +16 vs. Reflex; ongoing 10 damage, and the target is restrained (save ends both).

Another creature can free a restrained one by taking a DC 16 Strength check as a standard action.

Any creature outside the warehouse but within 2 squares of it takes half the fire damage dealt; if hit by the Reflex attack, he or she is knocked prone instead of restrained and takes no ongoing damage. The gang lieutenant might attack badly injured or prone PCs.

overcome the character. He uses *bloody brand*, lights the fire as a minor action, then spends an action point on *slash and dash*.

The gangsters also follow these tactics against a character who teleports out of the burning building.

DEVELOPMENT

If a character notices the hidden gangsters, one or more PCs might try to engage them. The gangsters do not offer battle in this case but scatter into the streets, taking roundabout paths back to the gang's headquarters. They wear Bloody Knives colors (a red bandanna).

If not all the PCs enter the building, the gangsters take action if only one or two remain outside. They try to surprise and overpower such lookouts; a couple of thugs close and block the doors as planned, then join the fight. The lieutenant starts the fire and then either joins the fight or runs off, depending on the progress of the combat. You can use the city streets map from encounter R6 or create one of your own.

A character might try to scale the roof. The lieutenant takes cover behind the trash heap (becoming hidden) and waits for a chance to quickly engage and

R5. CONSTRUCTION SITE

Encounter Level 12 (3,500 XP)

SETUP

1 industrial automaton

The PCs approach the construction site expecting to crash a gang meet but instead activate the tampered construct.

When the PCs approach, read:

The construction site is deserted, dark, and quiet. An enormous machine looms over a deep pit flanked by heaps of building materials and scaffolding. It resembles a cross between a crane and a siege tower, with massive arms. One ends in a clenched fist and the other a shovel.

Arcana Check

DC 21: *You sense something not quite right about the immense construct. It seems . . . alert.*

When the PC whose item has been keyed to the automaton approaches within 5 squares of it, read:

The huge automaton suddenly activates and attacks!

Unless the PCs succeed on the Arcana check or tracked the item previously stolen (see page 65), they are surprised.

Industrial Automaton	Level 12 Solo Brute
Huge natural animate (construct)	XP 3,500
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +6
HP 516; Bloodied 258	
AC 24; Fortitude 25, Reflex 22, Will 22	
Saving Throws +5	
Speed 6 (cannot shift)	
Action Points 2	
⊕ Hammerhand (standard; at-will)	
Reach 3; +15 vs. AC; 2d12 + 4 damage (2d12 + 9 while bloodied), and the target is knocked prone and grabbed. Sustain Minor: The automaton sustains the grab, and the target takes 10 damage. The automaton cannot make hammerhand attacks while grabbing a creature.	
⊕ Shovel (standard; at-will)	
Reach 3; +15 vs. AC; 2d8 + 8 damage (2d8 + 13 while bloodied), and the target is pulled 2 squares.	
⊕ Automation Fury Attack (standard; at-will)	
The industrial automaton makes two hammerhand attacks and two shovel attacks. Each attack must target a different creature.	
⊕ Fling (immediate reaction, when hit by an attack; at-will)	
Reach 3; targets the triggering enemy; +13 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 5 damage, the automaton slides the target 3 squares and knocks it prone.	

TACTICS

The automaton stands at the west side of the building, as illustrated on the map. It focuses its attacks on the character to which it is keyed. It grabs and hoists other enemies that interfere with it, or tramples right through them. It smashes walls and scaffolding to get at a target taking cover and hurls shovelfuls of construction material at a creature that tries to stay out of reach.

The automaton does not stop attacking until it is destroyed.

⊕ Hoist (minor; usable only while the automaton has a creature grabbed; at-will)		
Targets grabbed creature; +13 vs. Reflex; 2d12 + 8 damage (2d12 + 13 while bloodied), and the target is restrained (save ends) and no longer grabbed. Only one target can be restrained in this way at a time.		
⊕ Trample (standard; at-will)		
The automaton moves its speed and can enter enemies' spaces. The automaton makes an attack against each enemy whose space it enters; +13 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 10 damage (1d10 + 15 while bloodied), and the automaton slides the target 2 squares.		
⚡ Death Burst (when the automaton drops to 0 hit points)		
The automaton explodes in a shower of metal shards and loose gears: close burst 2; +15 vs. AC; 3d8 + 8 damage. Miss: Half damage.		
⚡ Reverberate (when first bloodied; encounter) ⚡ Thunder		
+13 vs. Fortitude; 3d8 + 8 thunder damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends). Miss: Half damage.		
🏹 Catapult (standard; at-will)		
Area burst 1 within 10; +13 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 8 damage. The burst creates an area of difficult terrain that lasts until the end of the encounter.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –	
Str 26 (+14)	Dex 10 (+6)	Wis 11 (+6)
Con 25 (+13)	Int 3 (+2)	Cha 3 (+2)

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Dim light.

Pit: The building site is a 20-foot-deep pit that forms the basement of the building under construction. The partially built walls block much of it, but creatures can move through the various openings.

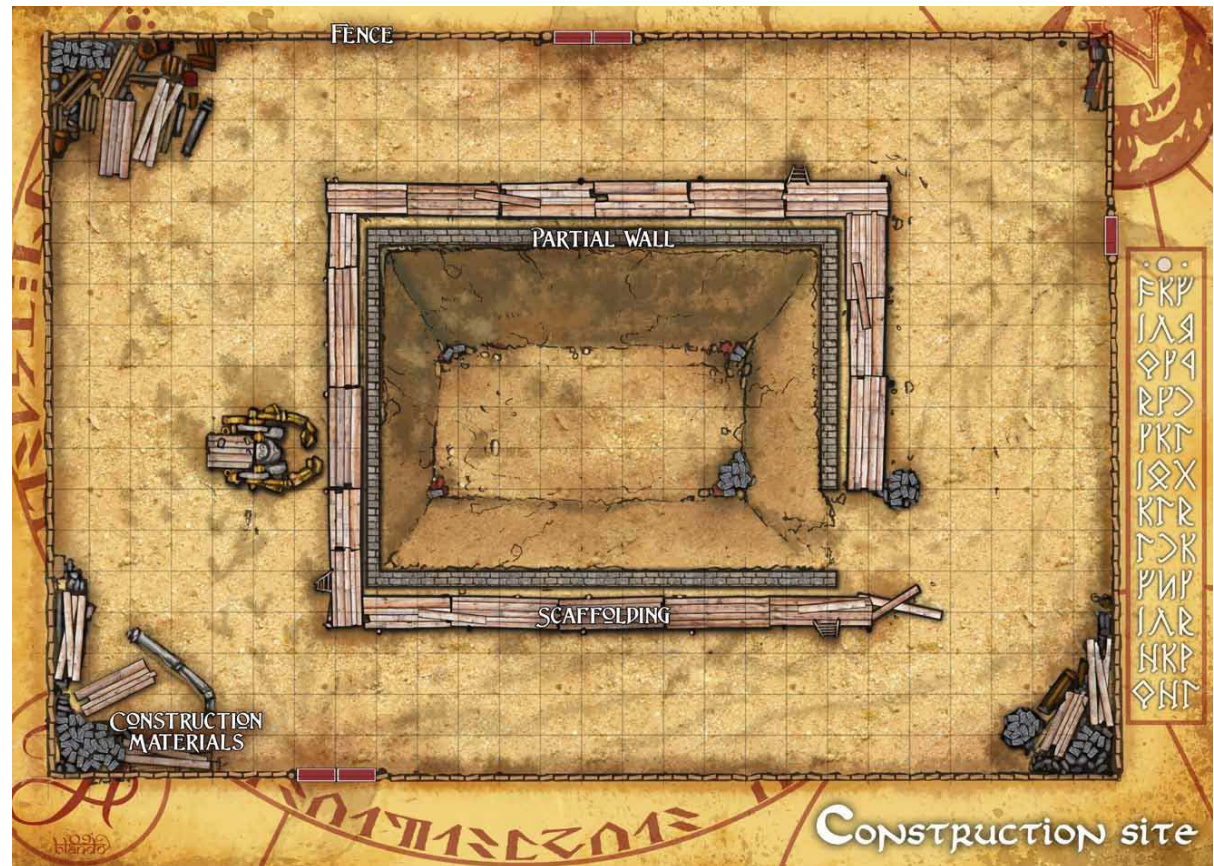
Construction Materials: Lumber and bricks are piled up around the building site. Each heap is about 10 feet high. Scrambling up a pile is awkward; treat each square as difficult terrain. A creature making attacks from above its target gains a +1 bonus to the attack roll. A creature can use planking as an improvised two-handed weapon; a brick can serve as an improvised thrown weapon.

Fence: A 10-foot-high wooden fence surrounds the construction site but provides privacy more than security. The timbers are easy to scale (Athletics DC 5) and do not withstand force well (per 1-square section: break DC 16; AC/Reflex 4, Fortitude 12, 20 hit points).

Scaffolding: Wooden scaffolding has been erected to a height of 20 feet around the building site where walls are under construction (per 1-square section: break DC 16; AC/Reflex 5, Fortitude 10, 20 hit points). Climbing onto the scaffolding requires a DC 10 Athletics check. A creature can climb just half-way up to a lower level at 10 feet. A creature making attacks from above its target gains a +1 bonus to the attack roll.

When a square of scaffolding is destroyed, the squares adjacent to it also break away, dealing 1d10 damage per 10 feet fallen to any creature below. A creature on the collapsed scaffolding takes falling damage.

Partial Walls: The walls of the building have been built to a height of 15 feet or so. They are supported by temporary joists but are not as solid as fully constructed walls; a DC 28 Strength check can knock over a 5-foot section of wall (AC/Reflex 4, Fortitude 12, 40 hit points). Climbing across a section of wall requires a DC 16 Athletics check.



R6. PATROL AMBUSH

Encounter Level 13 (4,000 XP)

Sven sends a group of heavies to attack a watch patrol.

SETUP

- 6 watch patrollers (P)
- 1 watch sergeant (S)
- 6 dragon-infused gangsters (G)
- 1 Bloody Knives lieutenant (L)

If the PCs are stealthily tailing the patrol, the gangsters do not notice them before the attack and can be surprised. If the PCs are making no attempt to hide, though, the heroes are surprised at the attack.

When the PCs approach, read:

The noise of the city streets abates as citizens desert the area. They know a fight is coming. The patrollers adopt defensive stances, nervously watching for trouble.

6 Watch Patrollers (P) Level 8 Minion Soldier

Medium natural humanoid			XP 88
Initiative +8	Senses Perception +4		
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.			
AC 23; Fortitude 20, Reflex 21, Will 19			
Speed 5			
⊕ Glaive (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon			
Reach 2; +15 vs. AC; 6 damage.			
⊖ Stop in the Name of the Law (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon			
Reach 2; +13 vs. Fortitude; 6 damage, and the target is slowed until the end of the patroller's next turn.			
Phalanx Soldier			
The watch patroller gains a +2 bonus to AC while at least one watch patroller or watch sergeant is adjacent to it.			
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Common	
Str 15 (+6)	Dex 14 (+6)	Wis 10 (+4)	
Con 14 (+6)	Int 10 (+4)	Cha 12 (+5)	
Equipment scale armor, glaive			

Perception Check

DC 16 *The leader of the attackers has a scarred face and a torn ear.*

If the PCs killed that lieutenant, then they recognize one of the gangsters from a previous encounter instead.

Watch Sergeant (S)		Level 10 Soldier (Leader)	
Medium natural humanoid, human		XP 500	
Initiative +10	Senses Perception +12		
HP 104; Bloodied 52			
AC 26; Fortitude 22, Reflex 22, Will 22			
Speed 5			
⊕ Longsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon			
+16 vs. AC; 2d8 + 7 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the watch sergeant's next turn.			
⊖ Line Support (immediate reaction, when an enemy marked by the watch sergeant makes an attack that does not include the watch sergeant; at-will)			
+16 vs. AC; targets triggering enemy; 2d8 + 7 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square.			
↘ Crossbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon			
Ranged 15/30; +14 vs. AC; 2d8 + 5 damage.			
↖ Call to Arms (free; when first bloodied; encounter)			
Close burst 10; targets allies; the target makes a melee basic attack or shifts 3 squares as a free action.			
Phalanx Soldier			
The watch patroller gains a +2 bonus to AC while at least one watch patroller or watch sergeant is adjacent to it.			
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Common	
Str 16 (+8)	Dex 16 (+8)	Wis 14 (+7)	
Con 16 (+8)	Int 13 (+6)	Cha 16 (+8)	
Equipment chainmail, longsword, crossbow, 10 bolts			

TACTICS

The gangsters move to take out the patrollers first, while the lieutenant pins down the sergeant. Once the PCs get involved, the gangsters double up on dangerous-looking opponents while the lieutenant directs their actions. These gangsters intended to leave no witnesses and fight until it becomes apparent that the battle is lost.

The patrollers form a tight circle or line up to close off an alleyway and take advantage of their *phalanx fighting* ability. The sergeant stands in the second rank, ready to strike out with *line support*.

6 Dragon-Infused Gangsters (G) Level 10 Skirmisher

Medium natural humanoid, half-orc			XP 500
Initiative +10	Senses Perception +10		
HP 104; Bloodied 52			
AC 24; Fortitude 24, Reflex 22, Will 120			
Speed 6			
⊕ Longsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon			
+16 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage.			
⊕/⊖ Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon			
+15 vs. AC; 1d4 + 5 damage.			
⊖ Double Attack (standard; at-will)			
The gangster makes a longsword attack and a dagger attack.			
⊖ Steely Resolve (standard; recharge ☒ ☒) ♦ Weapon			
+14 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 10 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square.			
Furious Assault (free, when the dragon-infused gangster hits an enemy; encounter)			
The gangster's attack deals 1d10 extra damage.			
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Common, Giant	
Skills Athletics +15			
Str 20 (+10)	Dex 16 (+8)	Wis 10 (+5)	
Con 16 (+8)	Int 10 (+5)	Cha 8 (+4)	
Equipment leather armor, longsword, 3 daggers			

Bloody Knives Lieutenant (L) Level 10 Elite Soldier
Medium natural humanoid, half-elf XP 1,000**Initiative** +10 **Senses Perception** +12**HP** 212; **Bloodied** 106**AC** 26; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 22**Saving Throws** +2**Speed** 6**Action Points** 1⊕ **Bastard Sword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+17 vs. AC; 1d10 + 6 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the lieutenant's next turn.

⊕/⊗ **Dagger** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

Ranged 5/10; +17 vs. AC; 2d6 + 6 damage.

⊕ **Bloody Brand** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Weapon**+17 vs. AC; 2d10 + 6 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 damage and grants combat advantage (save ends both).
Miss: Half damage.⊕/⊗ **Slash and Dash** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

The Bloody Knives lieutenant makes a bastard sword attack, shifts 2 squares, and makes a dagger attack against a different target.

⊕ **Bloody Blade Riposte** (immediate reaction, when hit by a melee attack; recharge [2][2]) ♦ **Weapon**

+16 vs. AC; targets triggering enemy; 1d10 + 6 damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the lieutenant's next turn.

Combat Tumbleset (move; encounter)

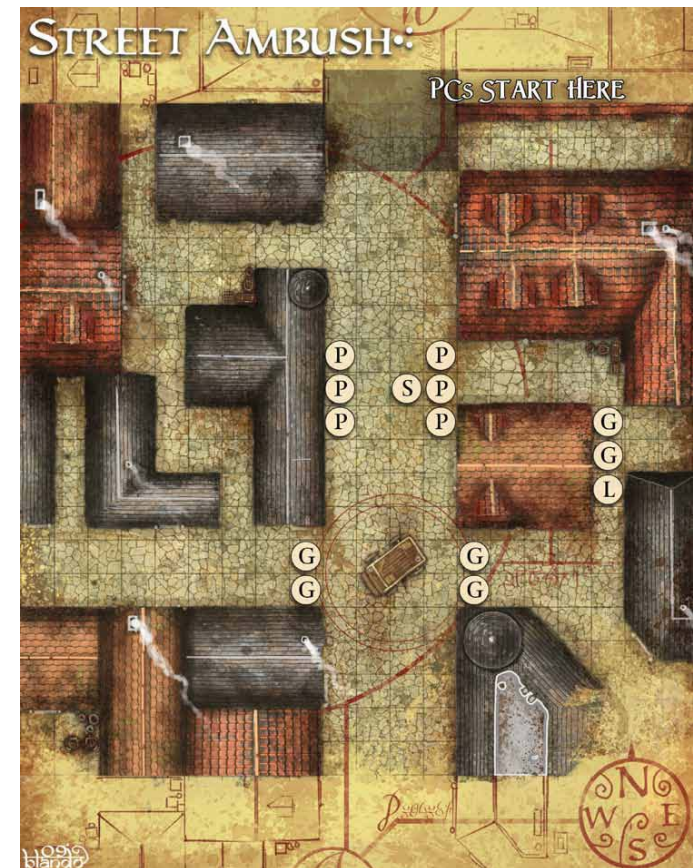
The lieutenant shifts its speed, and can shift through enemies' squares during this movement, but must end the move in an unoccupied space.

Combat Advantage

The lieutenant deals 1d8 extra damage to any creature granting combat advantage to it.

Alignment Unaligned**Languages** Common, Elven, Goblin**Skills** Acrobatics +13, Diplomacy +13, Stealth +13**Str** 16 (+8) **Dex** 16 (+8) **Wis** 14 (+7)**Con** 18 (+8) **Int** 13 (+6) **Cha** 16 (+8)**Equipment** leather armor, bastard sword, 6 daggers

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light.**Doors:** Sensing a fight, the citizens have closed and barred the doors to public buildings (break DC 20; AC/Reflex 5, Fortitude 10, 20 hit points).**Fruit Cart:** A street vendor fled, leaving behind a cart filled with various sorts of fruit. The cart provides cover, or superior cover to a prone creature. If the cart is pushed over (DC 16 Strength check) or is damaged by an area or close attack, fruit scatters in a blast 3; each square in the blast is difficult terrain until the end of the encounter or until a creature spends a standard action to clear the square. Fruit can be used as an improvised thrown weapon; on a hit, the sticky juice also imposes a -2 penalty to the target's next attack roll before the end of the attacker's next turn.

R7. RUMBLE

Encounter Level 14 (5,675 XP)

The PCs challenge Sven on his home ground.

SETUP

Sven, adult mercury dragon (S)

3 dragon-infused gangsters (G)

2 crossbow thugs (T)

When the PCs approach, read:

Three tough-looking half-orcs bar the way into the squat manor house. All wear red neckerchiefs. A couple of crossbow-wielding gangsters patrol the roof.

The gangsters are alert and, unless the PCs can approach from an unexpected direction, cannot be surprised.

Perception Check

DC 16: *Inside the house is a slim, silver-haired male human.*

TACTICS

The gangsters form a loose skirmish line, using *steely resolve* as often as possible to prevent attackers from closing with Sven. Against a determined advance or long-range attacks, they retreat behind the door and bar it.

The thugs on the roof guard against attempts to climb, using bull rush attacks to push off interlopers. They call out a warning against such intruders and then retreat through the trapdoor, which they bar behind them.

Sven readies his *frightful presence* power and waits for an opportunity to catch several PCs in the burst. He assumes his dragon form as a minor action and

flies into melee position against a stunned character, then spends an action point to use *draconic fury*. On his next turn, he uses his breath weapon on as many heroes as possible, spends an action point to make another *draconic fury* attack against a target that grants him combat advantage (preferably the same target as before), and then flies back behind the skirmish line. Thereafter he looks for opportunities to exploit combat advantage, using his breath weapon whenever it is available. Sven saves *quicksilver form* to attempt a getaway through a window if he is reduced to one-quarter hit points.

Sven, Adult Mercury Dragon	Level 13 Solo Lurker
Large natural magical beast (dragon, shapechanger) XP 4,000	
Initiative +16	Senses Perception +11; darkvision
HP 516; Bloodied 258; see also <i>bloodied breath</i>	
AC 27; Fortitude 26, Reflex 27, Will 23	
Resist 20 poison	
Saving Throws +5	
Speed 7, fly 7 (hover), overland flight 10	
Action Points 2	
⊕ Bite (standard; at-will)	Reach 2; +18 vs. AC; 1d12 + 7 damage.
⊕ Claw (standard; at-will)	Reach 2; +18 vs. AC; 1d10 + 7 damage.
⊕ Draconic Fury (standard; at-will)	Reach 2; the dragon makes two claw attacks and one bite attack.
⊕ Quick Snap (immediate interrupt, when an enemy moves adjacent to the dragon; at-will)	The dragon makes a bite attack against the triggering enemy. On a hit, the target also grants combat advantage to the dragon (save ends).
⊕ Breath Weapon (standard; recharge ☹ ☹) ⊕ Poison	Close blast 5; +16 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 4 poison damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 poison damage and treats the mercury dragon as invisible (save ends both). Miss: Half damage.

⊕ Bloodied Breath (free, when first bloodied; encounter) ⊕ Poison

Breath weapon recharges, and the dragon uses it.

⊕ Frightful Presence (standard; encounter) ⊕ Fear

Close burst 5; targets enemies; +16 vs. Will; the target is stunned until the end of the dragon's next turn. *Aftereffect:* The target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).

⊕ Quicksilver Form (move action; encounter) ⊕ Polymorph

The dragon becomes a liquid wave of quicksilver and shifts 4 squares. It remains in its quicksilver form until the end of its next turn. While in quicksilver form, the dragon cannot attack or fly, but it gains a climb speed of 6, ignores difficult terrain, and doesn't provoke opportunity attacks. It can squeeze through any aperture a Tiny creature could fit through. The dragon can return to its normal form as a free action on its turn. When it returns to normal, each creature within 2 squares grants combat advantage to the dragon until the end of the dragon's next turn. *Sustain Minor:* The quicksilver form persists.

⊕ Change Shape (minor; at-will) ⊕ Polymorph

The dragon can alter its physical form to appear as any Medium or Large humanoid, including a unique individual (see "Change Shape," MM2 216).

Alignment Unaligned Languages Common, Draconic
Skills Acrobatics +17, Bluff +16, Stealth +17

Str 19 (+10)

Dex 23 (+12)

Wis 11 (+6)

Con 17 (+9)

Int 13 (+7)

Cha 20 (+11)

2 Crossbow Thugs (T) Level 8 Minion Brute

Medium natural humanoid XP 88

Initiative +7 **Senses Perception** +4
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 20; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 19
Speed 6

⊕ **Morningstar** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+11 vs. AC; 7 damage.

⊗ **Crossbow** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
Ranged 15/30; +11 vs. AC; 7 damage.

↓ **Beatdown** (standard; requires combat advantage; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+11 vs. AC; 7 damage, and the target is knocked prone.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common

Str 17 (+7) **Dex** 16 (+7) **Wis** 10 (+4)

Con 12 (+5) **Int** 10 (+4) **Cha** 14 (+6)

Equipment leather armor, morningstar, crossbow and 10 bolts

3 Dragon-Infused Gangsters (G) Level 10 Skirmisher

Medium natural humanoid, half-orc XP 500

Initiative +10 **Senses Perception** +10
HP 104; **Bloodied** 52
AC 24; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 120
Speed 6

⊕ **Longsword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+16 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage.

⊕/⊗ **Dagger** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+15 vs. AC; 1d4 + 5 damage.

↓ **Double Attack** (standard; at-will)
The gangster makes a longsword attack and a dagger attack.

↓ **Steely Resolve** (standard; recharge ☞ ☞) ♦ **Weapon**
+14 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 10 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square.

Furious Assault (free, when the dragon-infused gangster hits an enemy; encounter)

The gangster's attack deals 1d10 extra damage.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common, Giant
Skills Athletics +15

Str 20 (+10) **Dex** 16 (+8) **Wis** 10 (+5)

Con 16 (+8) **Int** 10 (+5) **Cha** 8 (+4)

Equipment leather armor, longsword, 3 daggers

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light during the day; at night, dim light outside and bright light inside.

Door: The wooden front door is reinforced with iron straps (break DC 22; AC/Reflex 5, Fortitude 12, 30 hit points).

Roof: A steel-reinforced trapdoor allows access to the roof (break DC 25; AC/Reflex 8, Fortitude 10, 40 hit points).

Walls: The manor house has masonry walls (Climb DC 20, break DC 35).

Windows: The building's windows have been partially bricked up, making them too narrow for a creature larger than Tiny to pass through. However, they are easier to break than the masonry walls (DC 30).

