

Evil stirs in Ormpetarr

Tales from Ormpetarr

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EVIL STIRS IN ORMPETARR

ABOUT THIS MODULE

Evil stirs in Ormpetarr is designed for 4-6 1st level PCs and of a non-evil alignment. It takes place in the Forgotten Realms, in the city Ormpetarr, south of Vilhoun Reach. The module can be run using any urban setting. All encounters can easily be modified to fit either a larger or a smaller party.

When the wife of the famous tailor, Hiliar U'lar, is kidnapped by the infamous gang Iron Rats, it's time for action. Are there any heroes out there brave enough to face this terrorizing group of thieves and cutthroats?

This book is meant for the Dungeon Master and refers the Player's Handbook, Dungeon Master's Guide and Monster Manual. Spells and items are described in the Player's Handbook, magic items can be found in Dungeon Master's Guide and stat blocks for monsters and villains are in the Monster Manual.

Included in the module you'll find the author's thoughts, notes and suggestions for beginner game masters. These notes are just that, ideas and thoughts, that hopefully can help you become an even better storyteller. Please note that these suggestions and thoughts are not related to game mechanics and are first and foremost simply suggestions. Nothing can replace experience and as long as you focus on having fun and tell a good story, you've mastered the most important thing of being a great game master.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Dornan Druu'gir, rogue drow from Menzoberranzan, came to Ormpetarr few months ago. The drow, once of a noble house, grew a bit too arrogant and tried to seduce one of the younger Baenre women, which the Matron Mother of this most powerful house in the drow city didn't like at all. She demanded that Dornan be sacrificed to Lolth but he escaped before suffering that terrible fate.

After few years of wandering through the Underdark, Dornan joined a band of adventurers and ventured to the surface. Years later he found himself once more in a tight spot due to his need to seduce the wrong kind of women, this time in the Yuan-Ti city of Hlondath. He managed to sweet talk his way out of trouble this time, but the Yuan-Ti leaders made him their vassal and sent him on a mission to Ormpetarr, along with Ssithal Tal, a true blood Yuan-Ti.

Dornan settled in Ormpetarr's Dock District and started immediately a small gang of thieves, murderers and bandits. The gang, The Iron Rats, has earned a terrible reputation and is feared among the people of the Dock District. They have made money on breaking into many warehouses, blackmail, kidnapping and even assassination. Therefore, many merchants and craftsmen have been forced to seek money from the Banking Guild in Ormpetarr, and especially Isthmar El'Alzadar, which is one of the most prominent bankers in the city.

Unbeknownst to Ishtmar, Ssithal Tal murdered his wife, Isoabel, and assumed her role, altering her appearances with magic. She plays her role perfectly and has Ishtmar completely fooled. Ssithal's power and influence in the city is considerable, and she makes sure that the Iron Rats only hit the merchants that aren't indebted to the El'Alzadars.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

Hiliar U'Lar is one of the most prominent tailors in Ormpetarr and the U'Lar family has run a business in Longstreet, Ormpetarr's main market street, for decades. U'Lar is doing good and has a solid business, which means that he and his family have managed to get by without ever needing a loan from the Banking Guild.

U'Lar has also been quite outspoken and concerned about how the Banking Guild has in the past few months gained more and more influence in the city council, and that has made Ssithal Tal especially angry with him, since she doesn't want any attention brought to what she is trying to accomplish. She orders Dornan to kidnap U'Lar's wife, Isoabel, and demand a fortune in ransom.

However, U'Lar seeks the help of the PCs, who need to trek down into the city sewers, seeking out the hidden den of the Iron Rats. Once there, the PCs need to figure out a way to rescue Isoabel and help her return to U'Lar.

IN ORMPETARR

Before the Spellplague Ormpetarr served as a capital of the barony of Sespech. When the plague hit Ormpetarr became a sanctuary for spell scarred pilgrims. Before the plague many towers reached for the sky, the sunlight dancing on their bronze roofs, making it seem as if the city was bathed in gold. During the plague many of these towers collapsed and the city lost a great deal of its glory.

In 1491 DR much of the city has been rebuilt and it is slowly regaining its former glory and place as a center of trade and banking. The fact the Golden Road passes through the city has helped a great deal, making sure that many powerful trading companies and merchant guilds operate within the city walls.

The city is ruled by a council, which is composed by the abbot of the Kelemvor monastery, the copper dragon Tyrangal and leaders of the merchant guilds and the Banking Guild.

Law and order are maintained by the guilds and members of the council. The Copper Guard is probably the most prominent group. It is a group of able warriors and spellcasters, run by Tyrangal. The monastery also has its own group of guards and makes sure that any undead creatures are quickly dealt with. The city officials make sure that order is maintained and that everyone know the law,

e.g. gate guards inform all travelling merchants that they need a permit from any of the merchant guilds to trade within the city.

Ormpetarr is by the Naga lake and trade is just as prominent in the Dock District as it is in the city markets. During high season there live about 50.000 people in Ormpetarr, mostly humans, dwarves and half-elves, though of course the other races can be found there as well. Surrounding the city is a massive city wall, where there are a couple of gates, one on the north side facing the Vilhoun Reach and the other on the south side, facing the Shining South. The docks are on the west side.

Most houses in Ormpetarr are built on a stone foundation, but otherwise of dark wood harvested in Chondath forest and Winterwoods. The houses are tall, most are three or four stories high and stand close to each other. The roofs are steep and windows small. The cobblestone streets are narrow and, due to the high houses, offer shade save for high noon. Under the streets is the sewer system and most people in Ormpetarr empty their potties in the morning into the streets, which means that much of the city smells like urine, especially during summer. Some merchants claim that they can smell the city long before they can see it.

In the city center is a large mansion, one owned by Tyrangal. The fact that Tyrangal is a dragon is not a common knowledge. The Copper Guard guards the mansion, but Tyrangal has also many enchantments and wards in place, deterring any rogue to try her luck. The mansion has three massive towers rising from the main building, each inlaid with copper and bronze.

THE FOUNDRY

The Foundry is among the most popular taverns in the Dock District. It stands in the northern side of the district, overlooking the docks. It used to be a stone mason's workshop and it is run by the dwarf couple Kristina and Helga Darkhammer. The tables are old anvils and stones which were worked by the stone mason before he sold it to the Darkhammers. The ceiling is low and there are still many tools on display on the walls, tools that are used by stone masons.

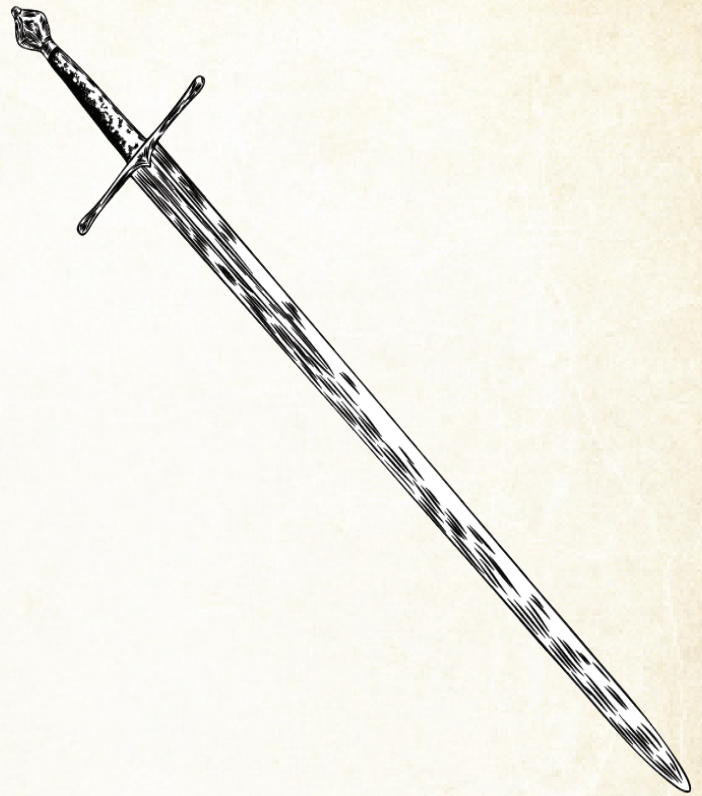
The Foundry is perhaps not the liveliest tavern in Ormpetarr, since Kristina and Helga make sure that not known trouble-makers or bar brawlers feel welcome there. Therefore, many respectable merchants and craftsmen, especially among the dwarven populace of Ormpetarr, visit the Foundry. Travelers and adventurers looking for good mead and decent food, easy-going atmosphere and a good place to plan often seek out the Foundry.

Read or paraphrase the following:

Heavy, gray clouds roll across the sky above Ormpetarr, the city by Naga Lake. The air seems laden with energy and it won't be long until the first raindrops will fall, and thunder shake the many towers of the city.

Not far from the docks, where Weaversroad and Longstreet meet, is a three-story house of stone, with steep roof laid with copper tiles and narrow windows. Judging by the moss and lichen growing on the walls and the weathered gargoyles it seems obvious that it has stood there for decades, even ages, unlike many other houses in the Dock District, that look like they've been built sometime after the Spellplague struck. Where the stone house faces Longstreet are steps leading down to iron-wrought doors, from where a deep voice echoes, citing a dwarven poem. Above the door is a sign that says: The Foundry - A tavern.

There aren't many guests in the Foundry this night. Kristina and Helga Darkhammer, the two dwarves that own and run the tavern, stand by a large anvil and wash clay mugs. The tables, which are in fact large anvils and blocks of stone, are mostly empty, save for one close to a large fireplace, where an old graying man sits and reads in a book. In the far corner of the room a dark-haired dwarf in a decorated breastplate stands on a dais and cites a poem in Dwarven. The smell of cooked deer and spiced potatoes fills the air.



introduce himself as Brongur Battlehammer, a royal skald of Mithril Hall. With a successful DC 8 Wisdom (Insight) check the PCs get the feeling that there's something more to his story. If the PCs ask him, Brongur will admit that due to a "wrong and unfortunate misunderstanding" Dagnabbet, the Queen of Mithril Hall, had him cast out. Brongur isn't too keen on sharing why he was cast out, but it had much to do with him acting before he thinks. Brongur can tell the PCs that he was in love with Dagnabbet, and to win her love he wrote a poem about her fight against the orcs of the Kingdom of Many Arrows. She didn't like the poem, he confesses sadly, and his metaphors. No amount of reasoning will get Brongur to reveal what those metaphors were.

If the PCs wish to speak with the gray-haired man, he's a bit annoyed being disturbed, but introduces himself as Albert von Albrect, a scholar and an inventor. If the PCs show more interest in him, Albert becomes eager to show them some of his inventions, like the Spife, a spoon that is sharp and can also serve as a knife. He claims that many adventurers use the Spife, though most only use it once, he adds and seems a bit puzzled. Albert is rather strange; his hair is wild, and his fingers are constantly twitching. However, Albert is knowledgeable and despite his eccentric behavior and completely useless inventions, wise and kind hearted.

Many game masters voice act their NPCs, while other game masters use pictures or any other way to portray an extra. It's good to keep in mind, that players are more likely to remember how an NPC made them feel, rather than what the NPC said. Whatever method you use to portray your NPCs don't forget to emphasize the

If the PCs understand Dwarven, they know that the poem the dwarf is citing is about the Heroes of Mithril Hall.

Now is a good time to give your players the chance to introduce their characters. Encourage your players to talk about what their character looks like, how they act and even how they sound. If your players are hesitant to describe their characters you can help them along by asking them questions but try and avoid asking questions that relate to systematic values, e.g. instead of asking what their Strength score is, as if their character is fit or muscular. Encourage the other players to ask similar questions. If this is the first time the characters meet, give them time to get to know each other and learn a few things about the other characters.

If the PCs wish to hear rumours or learn what's going on in Ormpetarr, it's easy, since both Helga and Kristina are eager to speak to them and other guests, and share stories. They can tell the PCs that since it is late Marpenoth there aren't as many caravans travelling along the Golden Road and therefore harder for guards to find jobs, which means that many of them will head on south for the winter. Also, the word on the street is that Tyrangal, the leader of the Copper Guard and a member of the city council, hasn't been around much this summer and some say that she has been on some private business in Baldur's Gate.

Should the PCs wish to speak to the dwarven bard, he'll

relationship and the underlying feeling between the NPC and the PCs, e.g. Brongur hides the sorrow of being cast out of Mithril Hall, Albert is comical and once he gets to know the PCs he shows much interest in them. As long as you convey the feeling of how it is to deal with the NPC, the players will most likely remember that person.

Once the PCs have settled in the Foundry, gotten to know the NPCs and each other, even had mead and food brought to their table, Hiliar U'Lar comes crashing through the door, all bloody and his clothes torn. The Iron Rats waylaid him and Isoabel while they were coming from a party at the El'Alzadars. Read or paraphrase the following:

The front door swings open. A bold man, his face bloody and his clothes torn, leans against the door post. His eyes are desperate, and he frantically reaches for the Darkhammers, who stand by the kitchen door. "They took her," he stammers before falling to his knees, unconscious. A bloody note has been lodged with a dart in his back.

Helga and Kristina recognize Hiliar U'Lar and rush over to him. If the PCs ask who he is, they can inform them that Hiliar is a respected and known tailor in Ormpetarr, he runs a shop on Longstreet, not far from the Foundry. If the PCs wish to help him, they can tell with a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check that he is injured and has lost some blood and he needs healing. If the PCs use any sort of healing magic, he regains consciousness and thanks them. After being helped to a seat and given something to drink, Hiliar is ready to answer any questions the PCs might have. If the PCs do not use any healing magic, Brongur has a Potion of Healing he is ready to give Hiliar.

The note in Hiliar's back contains a message: "10.000 gold pieces before noon, or you'll never see your wife again. The Iron Rats will find you."

If the PCs ask U'Lar what happened, read or paraphrase the following:

We were coming from the El'Alzadar party and decided to make a short cut as we sometimes do through Shadow Alley, since the weather isn't good. Suddenly black clad persons attacked us, hit me on the head and dragged Isoabel away. I could hear her screams as they pulled her away from me. I tried to fight back but got hit on the head again, everything went black. Still, I got back on my feet and tried to follow them, but as I entered Longstreet, they had disappeared.

If the PCs ask about the Iron Rats, read or paraphrase the following:

I don't know much about this gang of thugs, other than they have been quite active of late and many merchants have complained about them. I don't understand what they want from me, I'm just a meager tailor.

With a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check the PCs are certain that he is telling the truth. Albert says that he

has heard that the gang is led by someone they refer to as the Shade. Kristina can confirm this rumor and adds that a member of the Iron Rats came to the Foundry a few days ago, demanding protection money, but she simply showed the thug her mace and had the ruffian running. Helga isn't too happy hearing about this encounter from her wife this way, with a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check the PCs know this. U'Lar doesn't anything else about the Iron Rats. However, he's pretty sure that the assailants were at least for, though he didn't see all too well.

If the PCs show him the note or ask about the ransom, read or paraphrase the following:

I can't get that much money in time. The only solution is to visit Ishtmar El'Alzadar and ask for a loan. What would my father think? But what can I do? They took Isoabel, my dear Isoabel. What can I do!?

Hiliar U'Lar is desperate and afraid, if the PCs offer their help he thanks them heartily with tears in his eyes. Helga and Kristina also nod their heads in approval. Award the PCs inspiration. If the PCs do not offer their help Brongur suggests they investigate things for Hiliar and rescue his wife. If the PCs ask for payment the tailor says that he can make each of them a decent suit or dress and he can write a letter of recommendation for Tyrangal, whom he knows.

If the PCs decide to go and rescue Isoabel U'Lar, Helga Darkhammer proposes that they start their search in Shadow Alley, which not far from the Foundry. If the PCs demanded payment for rescuing Isoabel they might overhear Albert speaking to Brongur. With a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check they hear Albert say: "Not much of heroes, these people, more like them mercenaries that guard the caravans that come here."

One of the main reasons many roleplayers like D&D is the fact it offers them a chance to escape reality for a while and be the hero. Other players like playing villains or see every adventure as a mean for the characters to earn experience and gold. Most modules however assume that players take on the role of the hero, or the protagonist. Therefore, it is important to make sure that society responds to the PCs action. Perhaps some people have heard of their heroic deeds and want to talk to them. You can also use game mechanics to represent this, e.g. award characters advance on Charisma based checks when dealing with someone who has heard or seen the characters act heroic. When the setting is reactive and notices the PCs it is more likely that your players will be ready to play the heroes. Of course, if they decide not to, NPCs should react accordingly.

SHADOW ALLEY

Read or paraphrase the following:

Shadow Alley is a narrow street interlinking Dock Street

and Long Street. On either side are tall buildings and high above the cobblestones are clotheslines, though these are mostly empty now. The alley is dark and smells of cat urine and dog shit, yet it offers shelter from the pounding rain. Save for the howling wind, everything is silent.

A good description does not only contain what the PCs can see, but also what they can sense, smell, hear and even taste. By appealing to all five senses you help your players envision what their character is experiencing.

Shadow Alley is narrow, only 10 feet across. There are three side alleys. In the first one there's a door to an apartment where a family of four lives. If the PCs knock on the door or break through it with a successful **DC 15 Strength** check, the members of the family claim they didn't hear anything. With a successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Insight)** check the PCs can see that one of the boys is nervous. With a successful **DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation)** check the young boy admits he heard something and looked outside, he saw three men drag a woman down the middle alley.

In the middle alley the PCs find steps leading down to a locked iron gate. The smell there is awful. Beyond the gate the steps lead down into the sewers. With a successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception)** check the PCs notice faint drag marks in the steps and a couple of blood stains, left by Isoabel bleeding from the nose after being hit by one of the thugs. With a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** check the PCs can see that gate was recently opened. The gate is locked, with a successful **DC 12 Dexterity check** and thieves' tools the PCs manage to open it. The bars can be bent with a successful **DC 20 Strength** check.

The last side alley is where the Iron Rats ambushed the U'Lars, as is evident by the blood there. With a successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Survival)** check the PCs manage to track the trail of blood to the gate in the middle side alley. In the last side alley are doors with engraved unicorn. With a successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Religion)** check the PCs know that this is the holy symbol of Miellikki. The doors are unlocked and on the other side is a small courtyard, where a beautiful oak stands and shrubs holding red berries are on either side of the door. The courtyard is an hallow ground and if the PCs decide picking some of the berries, they have the same effect as the spell Goodberries. With a successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Nature)** check the PCs know that the tree is ancient and that the berries are not poisonous.

THE SEWERS

The first thing that meets you is a nasty smell of rotten food, urine, feces and any unpleasantness that the people of Ormpetarr throw into the sewers. The steps are slippery and in the darkness it's not easy to figure out where to

plant your feet. The sewers have a low domed ceiling, making it hard for the average man to walk up straight. In the middle of the sewers a thick fluid slowly slithers towards the Naga Lake. As you enter the sewers you see where rats scurry away and dive into the water as you start walking along the narrow ledge.

If the PCs found the trail of blood in Shadow Alley they can try to keep, follow it in the sewers. With a successful **DC 5 Wisdom (Survival)** check they manage to do so. If the PCs did not find the trail in the alley, with a successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception)** check they notice that the ledge to their left has been cleared of trash and debris.

The sewers are dark save for a few columns of light from grates in the ceiling. PCs that do not have darkvision are at a disadvantage if they have no other source of light. With a successful **DC 5 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** check the PCs manage to move slowly along the ledge, a failed check means that the PCs lose their footing and fall in the sewer water, meaning they will smell awfully until they wash or change clothes.

Not far from where the PCs enter the sewers is a secret door, neither well concealed nor guarded, since the Iron Rats have full confidence in that no one sane would chase them down into the foul-smelling sewers. If the PCs are following the trail of blood left by Isoabel's nose bleeding, they have advantage on finding the secret door. With a successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception)** check the PCs spot the door. If the PCs are not following the trail, they might notice the change in the debris on the ledge, with a successful **DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation)** check the PCs see that the ledge suddenly becomes full of debris and trash from the sewers in one place. With a successful **DC 12 Dexterity check** and thieves' tools the PCs manage to open the secret door.

In roleplaying games, we use dice to define the results of some actions. Keep in mind that you're first and foremost telling a story, and just as the players are supposed to steer away from meta-gaming, you as a storyteller should too. It can be helpful to never tell players the DCs of rolls, but describe the results of their character's action, e.g. instead of saying that the skill check was successful, tell the player how her character succeeded or failed the action. Does the door open with a loud click or did the one of the pins in the thieves' tools brake?

THE PURPLE CAVE

You follow a narrow tunnel for a short while, until you enter a large cavern. Strange purple phosphorene light shines from the cave floor, which is some 20 feet below the entry to the cave. In the ceiling you see dark and menacing

stalactites. The cave is filled with a sweet honey-like smell. In the other end is an opening, from which you see warm light.

There are a couple of **Violet Fungus** (See MM p. 138) in the deepest reaches of the cave. The purple light comes from strange Underdark lichen that is there as well. In the ceiling are four **Piercers** (see MM p. 252), the ceiling is 30 feet above the cave floor. With a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Nature)** check the PCs recognize the fungi, but the Piercers are indistinguishable from stalactites.

To the right of the cave entrance is a narrow ledge, which the Iron Rats use when they need to pass through the cave. With a successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception)** check the PCs spot the ledge. If the PCs were following the trail of blood, the trail is almost gone, however it does grant them advantage on the Wisdom (Perception) check.

If the PCs wish to climb down from the cave entrance, it's not hard using rope. With a successful **DC 10 Strength (Athletics)** check the PCs manage to climb down, using a rope or if the PCs co-operate grants advantage. If the PCs spot the ledge and use that to reach the other end, neither the Piercers or the Violet fungi attack. With a successful **DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** check the PCs manage to follow the ledge and reach the other side of the cave.

If the PCs climb down the monsters attack and fight to the death.

When the PCs enter encounters and life-threatening situations it is important to make sure that the players get a good feel of the surroundings. You don't have to describe every detail, but make sure that the description contains enough information for them to make the best possible decisions. If you describe the setting in a manner that everything that happens after that doesn't completely blindside the players, yet make things interesting (it's a tightrope, I know), you're on the right path. It's never good to blindside players, since they might feel tricked or that things are unfair, especially if it leads to a character death. When you set up an encounter, describe it as you would when entering the situation for the first time and give your players a chance to investigate, explore and ask questions.

THE IRON RATS HIDEOUT

The hide-out isn't large, but the Iron Rats have made the best of it. It's beneath the tavern the Red Naga, which the gang uses as a meeting place and a hang out. If the hide-out is attacked or threatened in any way the members of the gang take up defensive position while one of the gangs goes up the hidden stairway and calls for help from whatever gang members are present in the Naga (1d10 **Bandits**, see MM p. 343).

Hideout features

Unless otherwise noted the following are the hide-out's features. The hideout is in a stone cellar, built by human stonemasons about five decades ago, with a successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Stonecunning)** check any dwarf can quickly determine that the craftsmanship of the stonework is inferior to dwarven stonework.

Floors and walls

The floors and walls are worked, but in many places uneven and the mortar not of good quality.

Doors

All doors are made of wood, but not of good quality. With a successful **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** check they can be kicked in. All doors are unlocked unless otherwise noted.

Visibility and light

There are oil lamps on all walls, which provide light all through the hideout.

I. GUARD ROOM

A short cave leads to a stone wall, from which a few stones have been removed, making a good hole in the wall. Light shines from a couple of oil lamps on the wall opposite the hole. Two guards sit by the door leading to the cells. One is a female half-orc, the other is a human and both are busy playing dice, which means that they have a disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks. If the guards notice any approaching danger, the human runs into the sleeping quarters and calls for help. The guards fight until half of their group has been either killed or knocked unconscious, they try to flee upstairs using the secret stairway, where they call for help.

When roleplaying enemies, especially humanoids, it's good to keep in mind that most of them will use any opportunity to gain the upper hand. When faced with a dangerous foe or life-threatening situation most people's survival instinct kicks in. Make sure that the PCs adversaries show common sense and act according to the threat that the PCs pose, and you make your game more fun and exciting.

2. HALL AND HALLWAY

Beyond the doors is a short hallway. In the middle of the hallway is a worm Calimshite rug. On both walls are lit oil lamps and there's a faint sour and rotten stench in the air.

With a successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception)** check the PCs notice that the mid-section of the rug is a bit lower than the ends. It hides a 20' deep **Spiked Pit Trap** (see DMG p.

120). At the bottom, stuck to one of the spikes, is the rotting carcass of a dead. If the PCs fail to notice the trap, with a successful **DC 13 Dexterity save** they can escape falling into it.

For traps to really shine and give the players a real scare it's a good idea to ensure that the players have a chance to figure out that there something off where the traps are laid. By making sure that the players attention is drawn to the traps or whatever is hiding them you give the players a chance to discover the traps. Finding and disabling traps can give players a sense of accomplishment. Also, by making sure that there are clues, you make sure that if the PCs happen to set off a trap, you are not blindsiding them completely. Finally, finding one trap and disabling or setting off a trap it reminds the player that their characters are in a life threatening situation and makes the game more exciting.

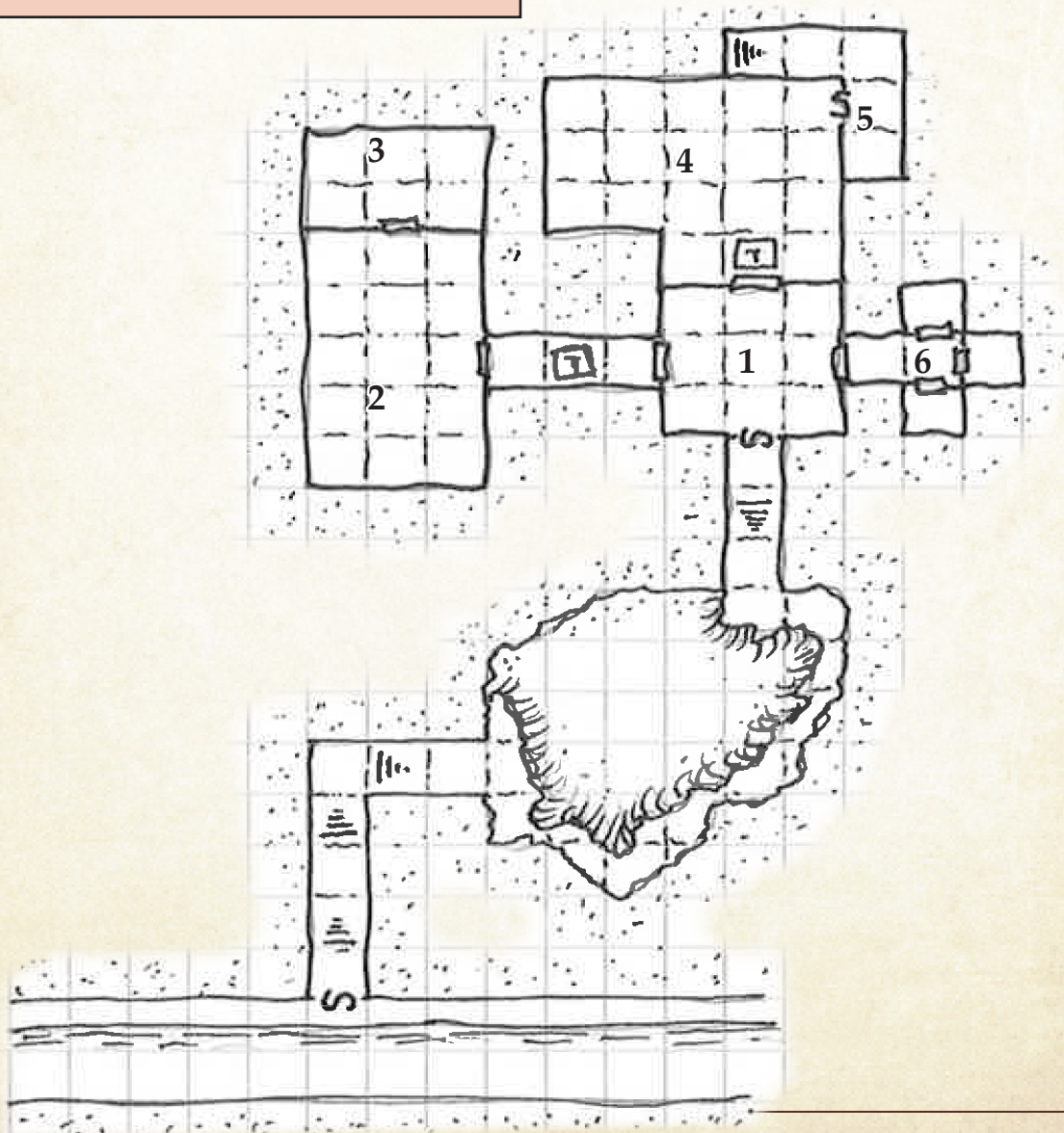
You enter what seems to be a hall and some sort of a storage room at the same time. In the other end is large table and few chairs. By all walls are boxes, crates, barrels and chests.

The Iron Rats hall is dominated by large table and a few chairs, along with many crates, boxes, chests and barrels which contain much of the what the gang has pilfered, stolen or received as bribes in the last few weeks. There are all kinds of products worth 1000 gold pieces, if sold at the market. In one corner is a small shrine dedicated to Mask, the god of thieves, and a few recent sacrifices lie there. With a successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Religion)** check the PCs recognize the shrine. The sacrifices are a small bloodstone worth 3 gp, a silver necklace worth 20 gp and an iron ring worth 2 sp.

Two members of the Iron Rats tend to the hall, Andor (human **Cultist**, see MM p. 34), and Besla (gnome **Acolyte** of Mask, see MM p. 342). If they hear a call for help or some noise coming from the hallway, they leave the Hall to investigate.

If the PCs managed to bypass the trap in the hallway and make sure that the alarm hasn't been raised in the hideout, Besla and Andor are taken by surprise.

If the PCs make noise while fighting the couple, Dornan (Drow **Bandit Captain**, see MM p. 344) becomes aware of



the intruders and joins the fight. If he is there he calls for other Iron Rats and raises the alarm. If he loses 75% of his hit points he drinks a *Potion of Invisibility* and tries to escape back into the sewers, where he hopes to outrun the PCs.

One of the chests is locked and trapped. With a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** check the PCs spot a **Needle Trap** (see DMG p. 120). With a successful **DC 12 Dexterity** check and thieves' tools the PCs manage to open the chest. It contains 3 *Potions of Healing* and 2 amethysts, worth 150 gp.

3. DORNAN'S ROOM

The leader of the Iron Rats claimed a room for himself and has gathered there many treasures. There are two ivory statues, inlaid with silver, showing Selune in her human form, one showing her as a dusky skinned, long limbed woman, while the other shows her as a young woman of radiant beauty with dark hair and in flowing robes. These were taken from a temple dedicated to Our Lady of Silver in Weaver Street. If the PCs return the artifacts the priests, there will pay them 100 gps for finding and returning the statues.

Dornan has also stored a couple of Potions of Healing in his desk. With a successful **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception)** check the PCs discover a small hidden compartment in the desk, where the vials are. On the desk is also parchment similar to the note the PCs found in Hiliar U'Lar's back.

If the alarm hasn't been raised or if the PCs have been very cautious and made sure their presence in the hideout is unknown, Dornan sits by the desk and read a letter from Ssithal Tal. If he has heard anything he has already burnt the letter, which says that Dornan should meet Ssithal Tal by the North Gate tomorrow at sundown.

This room is comfortable and decorated. Beside a cozy bed are two statues, both made of ivory and laid with silver, depicting two women. On the opposite wall is a detailed tapestry, with gold threads, showing a golden eyed woman with flowing, blond hair. In the other end is a desk where a small oil lamp is lit.

With a successful **DC 5 Intelligence (Religion)** check the PCs recognize both the woman in the tapestry and the women in statues. The tapestry depicts Waukeen.

Dornan is of House Druu'gir in Menzoberranzan. However, after trying to seduce one of the Baenre sisters, he fled the city and tried his luck in the Underdark. Dornan is a good fighter and uses a pair of handaxes, which are fastened to his bracers with short chains. His fighting style is more akin to dancing and he often lets go of the hand axes and swings them around, which allow grants him reach with the small weapons. He is fearless in battle but smart enough to know when to fight and when fleeing is his best option. He isn't ready to die for Ssithal Tal, in fact he isn't ready to die for anyone. If he loses 75% of his hit points he will drink a *Potion*

of *Invisibility* and try to escape. Dornan has the only key to the cells hidden in his boots.

Villains and antagonists are fun to play, yet sometimes you must go the extra mile to make sure that your players love to hate the villain, and even hate to love her. There are a couple of things that can be helpful to keep in mind. For the first part, remember to make sure that your villain has some distinguishable feature. This can be a part of their personality, what they look like or even like some sort of a call sign, e.g. Dornan might come across as arrogant bully, eager to test his fighting skills versus the characters, but flees at the moment he sees things turn sour and he doesn't fight fair, or the fact that he uses two hand axes strapped to his bracers.

The other thing is being evil isn't all about torture, murders or robbing people, it's also, and even more so, about being ready to throw other people under the bus to save yourself. Where the PCs, the heroes, would always stand and fight, the evil villain only has to outrun the slowest member of her party, so to speak.

Finally, many interesting villains have a tragic backstory, one that both players and characters can relate to. It can be helpful to let the villain's backstory in a way reflect the characters' choices, so it shows where they could end by making the wrong choices.

4. SLEEPING QUARTERS

The Iron Rats use the sleeping quarters as a place to hide after a heist or other actions that require them to lay low for a while. There are 4 members of the gang at the moment in the sleeping quarters. If the alarm is raised one of the members runs upstairs via the secret stairway to get help.

This room is large and has five bunk beds. In one corner are cooking utensils and a small fireplace. There's a red rug on the floor by the entrance and a bookcase to the left. The air smells faintly of burnt bacon.

With a successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception)** check the PCs discover the secret entrance to the secret stairway, but only if they specifically are searching for secret doors.

The rug on the floor is not trapped, however there's a *Glyph of Warding* etched on one of the tiles beneath the rug. Anyone stepping on the tile activates the rune, which casts the spell *Hold Person* (**DC 14 Wisdom save**). The members of the Iron Rats know about this and try not to step on the tile. With a successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Insight)** check the PCs might get the feeling that the Iron Rats are deliberately avoiding a certain part of the rug, if the PCs see any member of the gang enter or exit the room.

There are 2 **Guards** (see MM p. 347) and 2 **Thugs** (see MM p. 350) in the room. If the PCs defeat or knock half of them unconscious the rest surrenders.

5. SECRET WAY

Beyond the secret door is a dark hallway. At the other end is a wooden ladder. Faint shouts and laughter filters down through a small opening, along with a stench of cheap ale, vomit, sweat and smoke. Beside the ladder is a bucket with a few old short swords.

The ladder leads to a backroom in the tavern The Naga. There's nothing else of interest in the hallway.

6. CELLS

Isoabel U'Lar is being held captive in one of these cells. Rovar Graystone, a dwarf rogue and a former member of the Iron Rats, is also there, in another cell. He has been brutally beaten, his face is swollen, and his nose is broken, as is his left arm. He was accused of stealing from the Iron Rats, which is true, and begs the PCs to free him. Rovar is ready to do anything to escape being murdered by Dornan. Rovar knows that Dornan has an accomplice in the Banking Guild, but he doesn't know who it is. He also knows that the main agenda of the Iron Rats is to make sure as many merchants become indebted to the Banking Guild as possible.

As soon as you open the doors you see that there are two persons being held captive in cells. In one of the three cells you see a half-naked dwarf, his nose is broken, his right eye dark and bloody and he has many bruises on his body. In the middle cell is a dark haired and proud woman. Her

blue dress is torn, and she holds it close, to ensure that she is decent. When she sees you, she stands up and says: "My husband will never pay you, thugs, you will never be able to extort money from him." Her voice quivers a little. The dwarf opens his one good eye and looks up. A female half-orc, sleeping on a chair, almost falls over and wakes up with a startle. "Oy, you shouldn't be here, dis only Dornan and me's place. Ye rats better get out 'fore I bashes yer head in," the half-orc grunts.

The half-orc Wendy (**Bandit**, see MM p. 343) has been instructed to let no one in, by Dornan. With a successful **DC 15 Charisma (Deception, Persuasion or Intimidation)** check the PCs manage to convince Wendy to allow them to speak with Isoabel. The cells are locked, and Dornan has the only key. With a successful **DC 15 Dexterity check** and thieves' tools the PCs manage to open the lock.

If Wendy suspects that the PCs are not a part of the Iron Rats she will sound the alarm and attack them.

If the PCs save either or both Rovar and Isoabel without dealing with the Iron Rats first the gang quickly discovers that their captives have escaped and come in pursuit.

CONCLUSION

If the PCs manage to free Isoabel Hiliar U'Lar is eternally grateful and promises to make each of them a splendid suit. He also writes a letter of recommendation which they can present to the Copper Guard and at Tyrangal's mansion to gain an audience with her.