

DRIFTING CITY SETTING GUIDE



5e

Learn more about the Drifting City in this world building supplement. History, Locations, People, and more. Includes Character Creation Addendum and Campaign Outline.

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SETTING GUIDE

The Drifting City is a unique and interesting location to place your adventures. The constraints of the city push the gamemaster to look at things a different way and find creative ways to tell a story. This setting guide expands on the information found in the Rebels of the Drifting City adventure in order to give the gamemaster a stronger foundation on which to build stories.

Within this setting guide you will find short sidebars providing information such as advice to gamemasters, including secret history, tips on players interacting in this world, and comparisons to real-world examples.

Known History

One of the most strictly enforced rules within the Drifting City is the ban on written materials. Early in the history of the city, the Five conducted a purge of all books, scrolls, and other records they could find. No written information exists from the World Before because of this purge. Since this knowledge purge, the Five and their underlings have continued to enforce this dictate with brutal efficiency. Most writing, and learning, happens on an ephemeral basis, commonly done with chalk and slate. History and knowledge are passed down through oral traditions.

Secret History The ban on written materials is a coordinated effort by the Five, and most specifically Draga, to destroy any information regarding the World Before. This limitation on information is a method by which the Five

have maintained their power by minimizing the ability to record and pass along knowledge. The Five are able to quell rebellion and decrease the likelihood of anyone developing enough power to challenge them. The Five work to make sure that to the people of the Drifting City, the only option for their survival is the Drifting City, and by extension the Five.

Timeline

A specific calendar of events in the history of the Drifting City has never been established due to the ban on written materials by the Five and the early focus on simple survival.

Generally speaking, most people in the Drifting City measure time and history as a reference to specific events that affected the city as a whole such as the Raising, the Great Famine, or the founding of enclaves. Another way to measure time on the macro scale is counting the generations of the races. As an example, the elves of the Drifting City refer to the current time period as the 3rd Generation, indicating it has been three generations of elves since the Raising, roughly 1,800 to 2,000 years.

HISTORIC EVENTS

The Raising

As the war of the gods raged, the detritus of their battles fell to the world below causing widespread disasters. Wildfires, tsunamis, tornadoes and earthquakes ravaged the lands. The damage wrought by

the disasters nearly wiped the world clean of its inhabitants. Those who survived made their way high into the mountains to seek shelter and escape the rising flood waters. At the peak of a high mountain, five powerful wizards gathered at a place of power and undertook a ritual never before attempted. After a time spent in deep meditation, their voices came together, and their hands moved in unison weaving a spell of incredible complexity. The first visual sign on the spell began as a small glowing speck of light hovering above them. As they worked the spell, they drew in the energy released by the gods and began us it in their ritual. It slowly trickled into the speck of light into it began to grow into a globe. The seconds turned to minutes, minutes turned to hours, hours turned to days and the globe of light slowly grew.

After a time, the five wizards were finally able to charge the orb of light with enough eldritch energy to sustain their ultimate goal, raising the refuge mountain high above the dying world. The very power of the gods that nearly destroyed them gave them their last hope. The moment their voices stopped, the earth rumbled and the mountain they stood upon raised into the sky, creating a refuge for those people who remained in the world.

Secret History While the people of the Drifting City lived their lives, raised families, and struggled for survival, the Five fought a battle against themselves. While it is true that the Five did raise the Drifting City from the ground to float above the world below, their motivations were not altruistic as the legends tell. The Five were indeed very powerful wizards, but their motivations were dark and selfish. They wished to have a private world to practice their dark magic with subjugated people

under their control. They staged the destruction of the world below as a ruse to draw people to them.

Once the Drifting City was raised and the Five successfully cut off the outside world, they eventually began fighting with each other, as none believed the others to be their equal. No one truly knows how each of them died, but ultimately Draga remained as the sole surviving member of the Five, though he had traded his true life for the un-life and power of a lich. He maintained the illusion of the Five for reasons only he knows.

The Founding of Fabrica

In the early years after the Raising, simple survival was the goal of everyone. As such, few considered anything other than food and shelter. The dwarves, with their excellent building and engineering knowledge, quickly established the first structures on the Surface and did their part to make sure everyone was protected from the elements. They pulled their weight in establishing the Drifting City as a safe haven from the horrors below. Once the Drifting City found itself in a more stable position from a survival standpoint, many dwarves began to long for their homes underground that they had left behind in the World Before.

After a bit of surveying and tunneling, natural caverns within the body of the Drifting City were discovered and many of the dwarves laid claim to an area and began to move in. These caverns sat far enough below the Surface to be separate and distinct but were still close enough that the dwarves frequently interacted with those on the Surface. The dwarves began to rebuild their culture, based on what was remembered.

Under the leadership of the first true dwarven leader in the Drifting City, Abarrak Turnstone, Fabrica became the founding enclave of the Warrens.

The Culling

Before the majority of people started moving underground, there were already concerns of overcrowding and resource management. The elves were especially concerned because many other species procreated at a faster pace than them and they feared the overpopulation would reach dire levels before they themselves had reached a significant population.

A large group of elves, joined by leaders from the other races, approached the Tower of the Five and demanded the Five address the issue. Though the group was not allowed into the Tower, the Five did come outside to address them, the first time the Five had been seen in months. The group outlined their concerns to the Five, providing a detailed plan on what they thought the best course of action should be. The Five indicated they did not agree with the proposal and they had a more immediate solution to the concerns.

Their solution was as simple as it was brutal. With what seemed like little effort, they released a burst of magical energy that destroyed everything in its path. Buildings and people disintegrated in an instance. Nearly 20% of the total population at that time and nearly 80% of the elves overall, simply ceased to exist due to the Five. The final words spoken by Isolde to the gathered group before the Five returned to their Tower were “Return here when you wish for us to solve further issues you may have.”

Hundreds of years later, some rebuilding in the area has begun, but most of this area still stands empty and charred. Now known as the Cull, it stands as a solemn reminder of the power of the Five. An additional result of the Culling was the retreat of most of the remaining elves from the public spaces of the Drifting City. After the tragedy of the Culling, most elves moved into the Warrens and founded the elven enclave, Helica.

Haggard's Rebellion

The first generation born within the Drifting City, never knowing the World Before, grew up with a different perspective on the life they had. Without a basis for comparison, most accepted their lives as normal without reservations, especially in the shorter-lived races such as humans. Some did not though, believing they deserved more than what they had. Specifically, they believed that the Five, who had become increasingly absent in the day-to-day running of the Drifting City, should give the authority in the Drifting City to the people.

The dwarves have always been a stalwart pillar of the Drifting City community. There is no one in the city who would not acknowledge the contribution of the dwarves to the success of the city. But even with this acknowledgment, some of their ranks believed they should be elevated above others in influence and power, perhaps even that they should be in control of the city.

This growing sentiment reached a peak with the actions of Haggard Turnstone, son of the dwarven leader. By the time Haggard came of age, the Five had mostly retreated to their Tower and were rarely seen in public, with the Cadre

primarily keeping order. Haggardie believed that the fealty his father showed to the Five was unearned and that they had grown weak and undeserving of their station. He gathered a group of other disenfranchised people, of many races, and led an assault on a group of Cadre gathered at the Fighting Pit. Many Cadre died that day, and Haggardie was quick to claim victory and rally more people to his cause.

If the response had come from the Cadre alone he perhaps would have been successful. But it was the mages of the Dark Sky that brought the short rebellion to a close. Haggardie believed he knew what to be prepared for, but being young and born in the Drifting City, he had very little knowledge of the power of high-level mages. Even the Dark Sky, far below the might of the Five, were able to rain terrible horrors upon those following Haggardie.

Haggardie and his followers ultimately retreated to the Warrens and hid within the Fungal Grottoes. Their fate was sealed the moment they shed the blood of the Cadre though, and the Dark Sky mages easily defeated them, with considerable collateral damage. The Dark Sky mages were spiteful as well, turning on the dwarves as a whole after Haggardie's death. It was only through great sacrifice that Abarrak was able to appease the Dark Sky and end their assault on the dwarves.

The Great Famine

The battle that ended Haggardie's Rebellion had a lasting impact beyond further cementing the Five's control over the Drifting City. The collateral damage of the Dark Sky's attack on Haggardie's fighters resulted in the largest of the Fungal Grottoes being decimated, with all

crops lost, and several connected chambers being polluted as well.

Despite the best efforts of the Mycelists, it was several years before these chambers were able to be used for food growth again. In the best of times, food grown in the Drifting City has barely kept up with the demand. The loss of these chambers and crops had a cascading effect on the food security of all people in the city and ultimately resulted in widespread famine.

Many deaths occurred, mostly in the young, old and sick, but the malnourishment of those who did survive would negatively affect their health for years to come. And the memory of Great Famine would haunt generations.

The Orta Discovery

Though it seems exploration of the Drifting City would have run its course quickly, it took many decades after the Raising before anyone made their way into the deepest portions of the Warrens. Expecting to possibly find resources they might be able to use, the explorers were shocked when they broke through stone wall and entered into a cavern full of homes and movement, though completely in the dark. The leader of the explorers, a human name Draften, described the discovery this way,

“As we waved our lights around the entrance we had created into the large cavern, shapes moved in the darkness drawing closer to us. As one of the shapes moved in front of the others, it stepped forward morphing into a humanoid shape and by the time it entered the light fully, it looked just like me, though its skin was pale and its eyes red. Many more began to enter the light, taking the form of my companions, though again with pale skin

and red eyes. Most of us drew our weapons, but one dwarf stepped forward and said to the one in front, 'We mean you no harm, you are unknown to us.' He tried it in Common first, and then in Dwarvish. The one in the front looked at him and responded mixing the phrase in Common and Dwarvish, 'We are Orta.'

In the years after, that dwarf, Rikon Luthregon, became something of a champion to the Orta, protecting them from persecution and working to integrate them into the world of the Drifting City. And though few acknowledge their contribution, the Orta were vital to the ongoing sustainability of the Drifting City. Their knowledge and experience with the raising of fungus as a food source, as well as the varieties they shared, were crucial to the food security of the Drifting City.

Even hundreds of years later, rumors still persist that the Orta are undead creatures because of their appearance and behavior, but they live and breathe like any other. Their appearance and interactions are often unsettling to others. This has led to fear and mistrust against them, even though there is no record of any conflict ever started by the Orta.

The First Turning

Periodically throughout the history of the Drifting City, unrest will reach a crescendo. Sometimes it is driven by a single charismatic leader, such as Haggardie Turnstone, but others are more nebulous and arise out of loose affiliations of people. Such was the precipitating event of what eventually became known as the First Turning.

Civil unrest had been building throughout the Drifting City for months, held mostly in

check by the Cadre and Dark Sky. Their unflinching methods of enforcement were ultimately the spark that lit a fire under many people. The death of a prominent and well-liked merchant who refused the demands of the Cadre, prompted large-scale rioting throughout the Drifting City, culminating in hundreds rushing the Tower of the Five, demanding change.

It had been long enough since the Culling and their energy was so heightened that the rioters did not consider the risk they were putting themselves in. As they gathered around the Tower, the Five exited through the upper balcony door, floating in the air above the gathered mob.

As they hovered, the Fire began to grow brighter, and the Drifting City began to rotate on its axis. Many tried to escape, hold on, or anything else that might save them. Very few succeeded. The hundreds gathered in the square that day fell from the Drifting City to the horrors waiting for them below. Hundreds more, not part of the riots, died as well, falling from the Surface, or sustaining injuries within the Warrens.

The Second Turning

No one is really sure why the people gathered in the Raising Square surrounding the Tower of the Five on the day of the Second Turning, but regardless hundreds were there, all pounding at the walls of the Tower. Unlike before, the Five did not exit the Tower, but the Fire did glow with greater intensity and the Drifting City did pivot on its axis again, killing the hundreds gathered, and more throughout the city.

Secret History The second turning was a result of the final battle between Draga and

Requis. Requis had used considerable magical coercion to draw people to the tower in an effort to distract Draga from his plans. Ultimately though, Draga was not distracted and in fact used the deaths of the gathered to power his spell to fully become a lich. Once he had taken on this un-life, he was able to defeat Requis and become the sole ruler of the Drifting City.

GEOGRAPHY

In the early days, the people of the city survived and thrived on the Surface. Eventually though, with such limited space and limited resources, more and more people moved underground. With the high winds around the city and the unstable nature of the city's movement through the sky, underground proved to be the safest place. Known as the Warrens, the underground space has become limited as well. The city above ground is large enough that a person can walk for about an hour from edge to edge and underground is far larger due to its volume.

Swirling around the Drifting City are dark storm clouds, streaked with violet lightning, remnants of the eldritch war of the gods that led to the city's creation. The thick cloud cover obscures the ground below, and none have seen the surface in known history. In general, the city floats above the worst of the storm clouds, but occasionally the heavy storms surge up over the city and buffet it about. The cloud cover commonly extends above the city and limits sunlight to only a few hours a day. The high winds across the surface city can become exceptionally dangerous and many lives have been lost this way. In the underground portions of the city, the storms create earthquake-like reverberations.

The Surface

The oldest part of the Drifting City, and the part most like a traditional city, the Surface is the smallest portion overall. It is primarily inhabited by the species that prefer the open air, such as halflings, elves and humans, though there is a mix of all

races on the Surface and in the Warrens. Broadly speaking, the Surface is laid out in concentric rings with roads and avenues connecting them. The structures are tightly packed together, and gaps between buildings usually only exist due to natural disasters, such as the frequent lightning strikes and windstorms, or natural rock formations that pierce through the surface making building difficult. Most surface buildings are low to the ground, to avoid the danger of the winds.

For many years, much of the Surface was abandoned by the people of the Drifting City. Over time, most people have moved into the Warrens, both for the safety of its structures and to move further from the Five and their underlings, all of whom live on the Surface. But as the space in the Warrens is getting tighter, more have moved back to the Surface, with all the dangers inherent with it.

Many buildings on the Surface have private entrances into the Warrens, and public access points exist throughout the Surface city as well.

The Tower of the Five

The most visible landmark and a constant reminder of the tyranny of the Five, their Tower stands high above all other structures on the Surface. Multiple stories high, the Tower of the Five has an organic quality to it. Unlike the other buildings on the Surface, the Tower was not built, but rather mystically pulled from the ground through the arcane powers of the Five. The Tower sits centrally surrounded by the largest open area on the Surface, the Raising Square.

Atop the Tower, an occult light shines at all times, emitted from the artifact known as the Fire. It crackles with eldritch

lightning, casting a twilight hue across the City even in the darkest hours. Pieces of stone circle the Fire, remnants of the spell that formed the city originally. Imbued and sustained through the magic of the Five, the Fire gives them complete control over the Drifting City.

The Cull

One of the darkest events in the history of the Drifting City left not only a deep emotional scar in the hearts of the people but also a dark gash across the landscape of the Surface. The blackened remnants of the Five's destruction of this area is clearly visible even hundreds of years later. The rebuilding that has begun is spreading from the center of the surface outward.

A strange repercussion of the magical force that decimated this portion of the city is that the darkness permeating this area is something beyond natural. Those who enter it report that light has a much more difficult time penetrating the darkness, and cannot travel as far as expected. If one stays too long in it, they report hearing whispers in the darkness and seeing movement out of the corner of their eyes. Perhaps it was the large number of victims here, perhaps it is a side effect of the magical energy in the attack, or perhaps the devastation released something sinister and unknown. Regardless of the reason, The Cull is one of the most avoided areas in the Drifting City.

The Grove of the Sun

The soil in the Drifting City is rocky and poor. The growth of plants is difficult except for one area maintained by a group of highly protective and militant druids.

Originally the Grove was open to all, and the halflings, in particular, found solace there. But over time, as demand for the

resources of the Grove grew stronger, the druids began to reject the others of the city, becoming aloof and cold. As the druids fought against the outside influences on the Grove, they ultimately chose to seal it off from everyone but their order.

Roughly pentagonal in shape, the Grove of the Sun is full of trees and plants seen nowhere else in the Drifting City. The Druids allow no one other than their order in, and a thick, tall hedge full of razor-sharp thorns circles the entire grove. The Druids in the grove are self-sufficient and rarely leave it. They do offer a bit of trade periodically with the greater city, allowing some wood and other products to be shared, sold, or bartered. They are also known to provide materials to the Five and their subordinates, as the price to be allowed to function on their own.

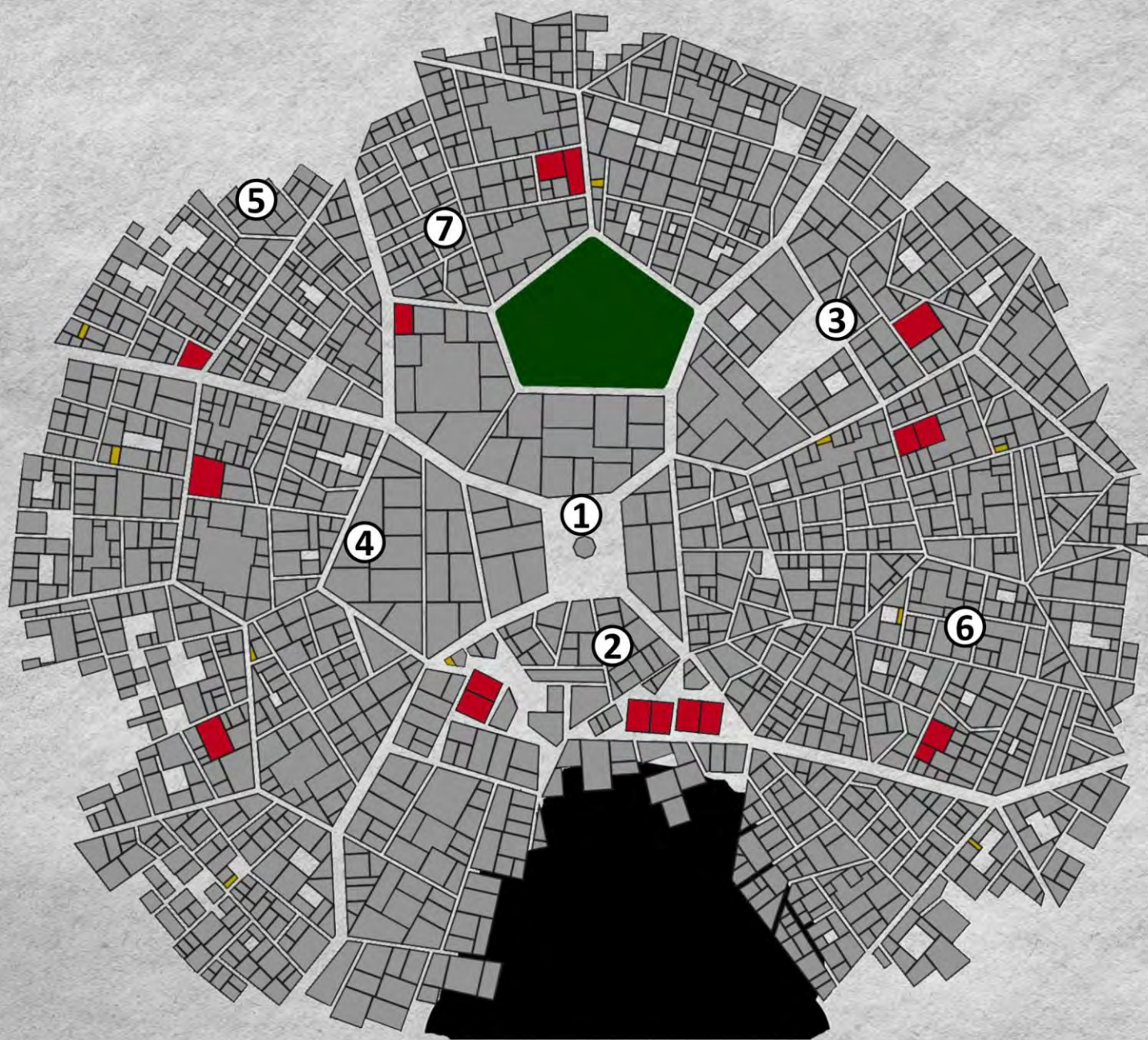
Over time, many have attempted to enter the Grove to exploit its treasures. Few have returned from their excursions, and those who have spoke of the very plants of the Grove turning against them, seeking their blood and flesh as fertilizer.

Dark Sky Lyceum

A group of interconnected obsidian buildings on the Surface contains the Dark Sky Lyceum, a facility for teaching the arcane arts to those who will become mages. Some come to the Lyceum as adults, but the preference is to take children with magical potential from their parents and raise them in the ways of the Dark Sky. These children train to become the most loyal and powerful servants of the Five, enforcing their will through coercion and fearsome magic attacks.

Life in the Lyceum is dualistic in nature. The students there live a life of luxury not

THE SURFACE



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|  Grove of the Sun |  Tower of the Five |  Aviaries |
|  Cadre Barracks |  Archive of the Acolytes |  Lacala |
|  Warrens Entrances |  Fighting Pit |  Dryka |
|  The Cull |  Dark Sky Lyceum | |

seen anywhere else in the Drifting City. They want for nothing and answer to no one but their superiors. But the sheer brutality of their training offsets any positivity found in it. Few rise to the rank of a full mage of the Dark Sky and those that do are the most powerful and brutal of them all. The Dark Sky clearly believe in the concept that only the strong survive and those who live through their training are powerful and strong. Students of the Lyceum are as likely to die from the machinations of their fellow students as they are from the lessons they are learning.

Cadre Barracks

The Cadre, like other servants of the Five, live on the Surface. More than a dozen Cadre Barracks are spread through the Surface city with the greatest concentration being close to the Raising Square and the Tower of the Five. Each barrack is self-contained serving as home, training center, and administrative offices of Cadre officers. Most barracks house a dozen or more Cadre along with a Lieutenant and possibly other officers.

The Cadre maintain manned outposts within several areas of the Warrens, including a contingent in the Central Bazaar, but do not maintain living quarters in the Warrens.

Archive of the Acolytes

Tucked away near the Tower of the Five is a nondescript building that has no entrances, exits, or windows. The common citizen has no knowledge of what is in this building and pays it no mind. But within Archive of the Acolytes lies the secrets of the Five, of history, and of the World Before.

The Archive serves as both a repository of information, maintained by the Acolytes,

as well as the primary place of worship that the Acolytes use for their rituals to the Five.

Secret History The ban on written material in the Drifting City appears to most to be one built on destruction, when it is in fact built on collection. All of the written materials taken by the Five and their underlings ultimately end up in the Archive of the Acolytes where it is reviewed and cataloged. A vast repository of information from the World Before is found here as well. History, science, and magic all have references within the shelves of the Archive. After centuries of the prohibition on the written word, very few people in the Drifting City would even know what to look for if they gained access to it.

The Acolytes themselves do not know why the Five require them to keep and maintain the information in the Archive. Though periodically a request will come from the Five to bring a tome, scroll, or other references from the Archive to the Tower for some arcane, and likely malevolent, purpose.

Aviaries

With most livestock and other domesticated creatures long gone from the Drifting City, the only “traditional” animals raised in the city are birds, and even then only two species have survived. The aviaries are primarily maintained by the halflings, who have found a successful niche in the society by maintaining the small bird colonies.

The first species of birds, primarily used as food supplies, is called a faloon. Faloons are short, squat birds, rarely reaching a foot tall. They are considered delicacies within the city and can fetch quite a price

at market. They produce many eggs, which are more common and less costly, but their fertilization rate is very low, so their population is never significant.



The second species of birds, the goran, is large, generally standing around 4 feet tall, with thick, strong legs. Though not nearly as strong as the giant beetles, it can still be easily used for moving small loads, and the smaller races, such as halflings and gnomes, will often train them to be used as steeds. Unfortunately, the meat of these birds is not useful for food as their muscle tissue contains a toxin that is deadly to most. Both species of birds are flightless.

Panaker's Row

Several dozen merchants and shopkeepers have set up storefronts along this street now known as Panaker's Row to sell their wares. Most prominently, the sellers from the aviaries sell meat, eggs, feathers, and more here. Very rarely do they make their way into the Warrens for selling these items.

Though not nearly as large or bustling as the Central Bazaar in the Warrens, Panaker's Row is the biggest merchant

area on the Surface. Named after the first merchant on this street, a halfling name Tiron Panaker, it has experienced substantial growth due to its proximity to the Dark Sky Lyceum and several Cadre Barracks. The followers of the Five find it far more convenient to purchase their supplies there rather than venture into the Warrens.

Fighting Pit

At some point in the history of most cultures, gladiatorial combat has developed as an entertainment for the masses and the Drifting City is no different. Situated in an indentation in the Surface, the Fighting Pit serves as a natural stadium, and many small vendors have set up around it serving those who patronized the fights. While people from all walks of life are spectators at the Fighting Pit, the Dark Sky and the Cadre are particularly fond of it and their attendance is commonplace.

Fighters in the Pit are there for many reasons. Some are prisoners brought in by the Cadre, sentenced to fight for the chance at freedom through winning. Others are the poor and unfortunate with no other option than to fight in order to earn a meal. Some portion of the fighters are there simply because they enjoy inflicting harm on others. Bouts are not necessarily to the death, but those with the highest stakes are generally the most well-attended. And the winners of them are the most rewarded.

Enclaves

Most people in the Drifting City live in groupings of connected buildings or chambers known as enclaves. Some are built around a family structure, some by

race, some by an occupation, still others by shared beliefs. Ultimately the only defining characteristics of the multitude of enclaves is that those living in them have enough in common that they are willing to live in close proximity and share their lives with the others. Dozens of enclaves exist, but other than the largest of them, few have proper names.

Lacala, Enclave of the Humans

Some races do better in the open air than they do underground, which is why humans have predominantly stayed on the Surface. Unlike the dwarves or elves, the humans did not found their enclave through specific decision, but rather by default. As the other races primarily moved underground, the humans found themselves spreading across the Surface.

This has led to no specific concentration of humans like the other races. Ultimately, the focus of their enclave is a neighborhood named after its founder, Savannel Lacala. This neighborhood became the hub of human activity due to Lacala's willingness to take in anyone who needed assistance. Lacala was a healer by nature and her positivity and support were fundamental to the overall human influence on the Drifting City.

Dryka, Enclave of the Halflings

The race with the greatest difficulty in adapting to life on the Drifting City were the halflings. An amiable people accustomed to a life of farms, fields, orchards, and sun, the steady darkness and despair of the Drifting City weighs heavily upon them. The halflings sought out a space to build their homes that gave them the ability to remember what they had lost. As such, they gathered their people and built their homes around the

Grove of the Sun. In the early days, the halflings came and went throughout the Grove, but as the Druids of the Grove became more isolationist and militant, the halflings settled into living near the Grove. Naming the community Dryka, meaning "vista" in their language. Each day the halflings can look upon the Grove though they are unable to enter it anymore.

The Warrens

Underground, in the Warrens, is where most people live. In fact, some have never gone to the Surface before. In the early days of the Drifting City, most lived on the Surface, but it didn't take long before the dwarves began excavating and discovered many natural caverns within the body of the city. Between the natural caverns and the new chambers and tunnel pathways created by the dwarves and others, the Warrens quickly grew to accommodate the burgeoning population of the Drifting City.

For many years, this allowed the population to grow without issue, but eventually, after generations, the Warrens grew crowded like the Surface. From an area and volume perspective, the Warrens are 3-4 times larger than the Surface.

Central Bazaar

The largest natural cavern within the Drifting City, located somewhat center of the stone base, the Central Bazaar has grown into a large gathering place for people looking to work, trade, and to socialize on a daily basis. The craftsman of the Drifting City have learned their trades for generations and there is always someone willing to trade for the right price.

Likely the remnants of an eons-old caldera, the Central is composed of a large floor and a handful of tiers rising up the sides.

Rows of tents crafted by the stoneweavers stretch out across the large space and the majority of commerce in the city happens here. Hundreds of merchants sell wares and supplies of any type available in the Drifting City. On one end, a stone fence contains the livestock available for sale, mostly giant taurus beetles. The smells of cooking food waft from small stalls and carts throughout. Though the tents themselves absorb some sound, there is a low hum of noise reverberating off of the walls of the bazaar, acting something like a quiet, white noise in the background. A dim light always glows from the cavern ceiling due to bioluminescent lichen growing on the rocks, but the merchants are likely to have lamps of their own outside their tents to light the paths more clearly.

A side effect of being near Fabrica and the forges there, the Central Bazaar maintains a warmer temperature than most parts of the Warrens, and substantially higher than found on the Surface. This warmth contributes to the social aspect of the Central Bazaar by creating a comfortable environment for gathering.

Real World Example To describe it in real-world terms, imagine the Central Bazaar to be the size of a professional sports stadium

and filled with tents and merchants like the largest flea market you can imagine.

Fungal Grottoes

Dozens of interconnected caverns, spreading across multiple levels of the Warrens, produce most of the foodstuffs of the Drifting City in the form of mushrooms, molds, lichens, and yeasts.

The environmental conditions needed for successful growth vary due to the types of crops grown within, and the Mycelists work diligently to maintain the necessary equilibrium in the caverns for their

success. It is only through the dedication of this group that the people of the Drifting City have managed to thrive as they have and the Mycelists maintain a status in the Drifting City that few have.

Though fungus, and the other species grown within the Fungal Grottoes, have been part of the Drifting

City diet since the very beginning, it was not until the Orta became an integrated part of the city that true success in growing crops was found. The Orta had been growing fungus as a primary food source for most of their existence, and the crops they had quickly became staples for everyone.



Of note is a species of lichen, Harkot's Folly, grown specifically for its properties in fermentation. After brewing, it is blended with other ingredients to create a thick, dark, highly alcoholic drink, full of vitamins and minerals that is typically referred to as "murk." Murk is very commonly offered and drank throughout the Drifting City.

The Great Famine occurred when one of the largest caverns was thrown into disarray due to a clash between Cadre forces, supported by the Dark Sky, and the supporters of Haggard's Rebellion who had taken refuge there.

Insectariums

Livestock and other domesticated creatures, in the traditional sense, faded from the Drifting City many generations ago. What few animals remained in the city after the Raising were not of sufficient population to be sustained nor were there adequate resources to sustain them. The need for animals for food, as well as work animals, never went away though, especially as the population of the city grew. Creative solutions were eventually developed and sections of the Warrens were partitioned off for the breeding of domesticated beasts.

While most nutritional needs within the city are met by the Fungal Grottoes, they do not provide sufficient protein for most races. Through the domestication of insects, both normal size and giant, a solution was found. Selective breeding, coupled with subtle magic influences, has led to the creation of large insect species capable of providing the resources historically provided by domestic mammals.

Many species are bred for food and several species of horned beetles have been propagated to serve as draft animals, and even pets. The giant taurus beetle is the most widespread and will often be seen pulling carts through the tunnels of the Warrens.

Another common species is the giant rhinoceros beetle, which are much stronger than the taurus breeds, but also much more prone to violence. They are most commonly used by the dwarves because their strength and resistance to heat makes them essential in the operation of the forges. Occasionally, giant beetles will escape their enclosures and wreak havoc in more populated areas and those that escape capture may roam the tunnels of the Warrens.

Fabrica, Enclave of the Dwarves

The largest and most respected of the enclaves is Fabrica. Part home, part factory and forge, part mining and recycling operation, Fabrica provides most of the raw materials used within the city. The dwarves and gnomes heavily populate this enclave, though some others can be found here as well. This enclave is the industrial heart of the city. The two most prominent roles in Fabrica are those that work the forges producing and recycling metal and metal products for use and the miners excavating the rock from deep within the Drifting City, finding raw ores and coal. Another important trade is that of the stoneweavers. These skilled craftspeople have learned to spin the molten stone runoff from the forges into very strong, but light and soft, fabrics that are used for everything from tents to armor.

Unlike some of the other enclaves, Fabrica is open to any who wish to enter and many do, seeking out the dwarven expertise for a variety of reasons. When one enters Fabrica, a large chamber serves as the main plaza with side chambers and tunnels branching off from it. A large stone statue of Abarrak Turnstone stands inside the main plaza. Fabrica is located centrally in the Drifting City, not too far below the Central Bazaar, giving it easy access for the commerce resulting from the manufacturing in Fabrica.

Helica, Enclave of the Elves

The enclave of the elves is the most secretive of all the communities in the Warrens. Originally, most elves had lived on the Surface, but after the events of the Culling, the remaining elves gathered together in what seemed like the safest place. The elves took a different approach to their enclave than most races have. In general, most enclaves in the Warrens are built around a central hub space with chambers and tunnels spreading out from there, as Fabrica did.

Helica is different though, occupying a fairly narrow band of chambers that spread across a much larger area. Most people do not wish to be near the edges of the Drifting City, but the elves have embraced it, utilizing the very outer stone of the city as a functional part of their enclave. Helica spirals around the outer edge of the Warrens with portions of it built to be exposed to the exterior of the stone structure. This affords the elves of Helica a view outside that others in the Warrens do not have, though they see nothing but the heavy storm clouds surrounding the Drifting City.

Though the elves come and go from their enclave as they please, and some live

outside of it, non-elves are not allowed in Helica and even the Dark Sky and the Cadre appear to follow this rule with little argument. To the common knowledge, the Five themselves have never attempted to enter it, and it would be a historic day if they attempted.

Pyrma, Enclave of the Gnomes

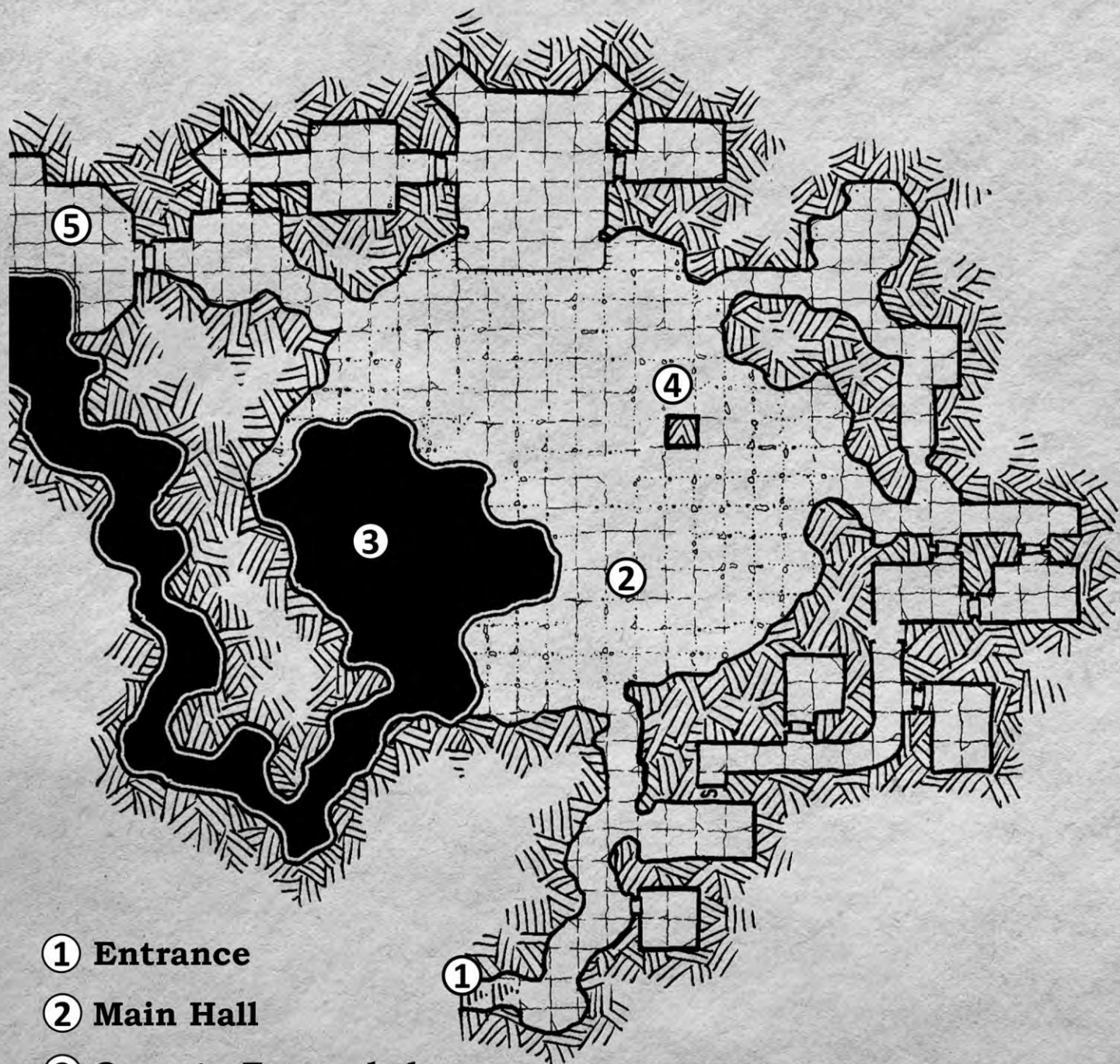
The development of industry and trade in the Drifting City was most strongly influenced by the dwarves, but the gnomes were a close second to them. Another race comfortable in the Warrens, the gnomes have succeeded in taking the raw materials sourced by the dwarves and turning them into processed commodities. Due to their close working relationship, the gnomes developed their enclave near the dwarves and named it Pyrma, in honor of a gnomish city from the World Before. Pyrma is located directly above Fabrica, between the Surface and the dwarven enclave, allowing the gnomes easy access both above and below.

Access to Pyrma is difficult for most because it has been built to gnomish size and few other races can comfortably enter it. The gnomes do have several chambers near their enclave entrance that are of a size that any can visit it. Visitors to these chambers occasionally sneak glimpses further into the gnome enclave where they can see clockwork contraptions and automatons moving about. The gnomes stick to their kind more than most. They're not aloof, like the elves, or purposefully withdrawn like the Druids of the Grove of the Sun, but they nonetheless prefer the company of their kind over others.

Escada, Enclave of the Orta

Little is known about the Orta enclave because few visit it other than the Orta. Deep in the farthest reaches of the Warrens, the Orta live in a cavern network completely devoid of light, as they do not need it. The few who have visited it have witnessed little there because of the lack of illumination.

FABRICA MAIN HALL



- ① Entrance
- ② Main Hall
- ③ Open to Forges below
- ④ Statue of Abarrak
- ⑤ To Mines

PEOPLE

The remnants of all civilized races found a place in the Drifting City. Dwarves, humans, and halflings are common. Less plentiful but still common are the elves and gnomes, and other races even less than them. Each has found their niche in the city, but due to the majority of people living underground, races comfortable there have done best. Though no formal census has been completed, there are clearly thousands of people in the Drifting City.

There is a constant dark cloud over the Drifting City, both literally and figuratively, and it mutes the colors of life to those that live there. Despite the issues of scarcity and the oppression of the Five and their minions, the people of the Drifting City live their lives as any others might. Despite the hardships, people still raise families, still work and trade, and still take joy in living. The bright light that is the resilience of citizens of the Drifting City is something that can never be snuffed out by the tyranny of the Five.

Tip One interesting component to use during adventures set in the Drifting City is the low population. Even with thousands of people living in the city, it is likely that players will run into people they know throughout their encounters. For example, if combating a large group of Cadre, it is definitely possible that a player may see someone they grew up with. If that Cadre dies, then the player may have to deal with seeing the family of soldiers on a regular basis, knowing that they caused the death.

Real World Example

While life in the Drifting City is difficult, the people still live and love. If I were to give an overall tone to be used in a Drifting City adventure, perhaps it could be compared to East Berlin during the Cold War and before the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Or to use an example from fiction, I might compare it to the reimagined Battlestar Galactica series from 2004. While there was definitely a sense of oppression there, people still lived their lives as best they could.

Major Non-Player Characters

Brogan Turnstone (male dwarf thug)

Brogan is a member of the Turnstone family, leaders of the dwarves, but descends from the line of Haggardie Turnstone. As such, he carries a stigma within the dwarven enclave even hundreds of years after Haggardie's failed rebellion. Brogan has chosen to live outside of Fabrica, and make his way as a tavern owner of the Bright and Bold Tavern rather than live with the whispering and distrust of other dwarves around him.

Haggardie Turnstone was the firstborn of Abarrak Turnstone, and Brogan has the rightful claim to the leadership of the dwarves. He has made no effort to ever claim it and his cousin Turvan sits in leadership. Brogan is rude and standoffish to most, but treats people fairly. He dislikes gossip and will typically not spread it, even though as a barkeep he hears a great deal of it.

Turvan Turnstone (male dwarf noble)

Turvan descends from Abarrak Turnstone's second son Urmir and serves as the current leader of the dwarves.

Turvan has served as a capable leader for many years and Fabrica has prospered under him. He takes a very active role in the workings of the enclave and can be found pitching in at any job that needs to be done. He is well respected by his people. Turvan's biggest weakness is a nearly overwhelming fear of the Dark Sky. The stories of reprisals against the dwarves after Haggard's rebellion that he heard throughout his childhood have lingered with him his whole life. His greatest fear is that the dwarves might come to the same fate while he is leading.

Other dwarf non-player characters:

- Krumdren Stonebender, mining foreman
- Grenmun Holdanvil, forge master
- Nyssiel Luthregon, stoneweaver
- Lylinn Luthregon, lore keeper
- Ebberest Broadblade, ore dealer
- Solia Grimhammer, secret cleric



Marissa Talidar (female elf spy)

For over 200 years, Marissa has been the public face of Helica to the rest of the Drifting City in her role as Speaker for the Elves. Any significant decision that involves the elves runs through her. She is often seen outside of Helica interacting with the other enclave leaders as well as the common people. She is highly regarded by most and few have issues with her, not even the underlings of the Five. Marissa does not lead the elves though, but merely carries out the will of the elves' true leader.

Tragarash Grafissar (male elf archmage)

At the time of the founding of Helica, in the aftermath of the Culling, the remaining elf leaders decided that there must be a contingency plan to address the gross negligence and fatal indifference of the Five. The choice was made to raise an elf child to receive all knowledge the elves had, all training they could give, and every advantage they could find so that one day this child would be able to defeat the Five. This child was secreted away in Helica, never to leave it or be known to outsiders. This child now serves as the secret leader of the elves and has for centuries. Few elves within the Drifting City know the full extent of the elves' plan, but many know that Tragarash is their true leader and keep this secret.

Tragarash is extremely old, even for an elf. In his early years, it became clear to them that the Five were using the natural cycle of life and death as a method of keeping the people of the city uneducated. He focused on learning ways to extend his life and now is well over 1,000 years old. His great age has not decreased his mental facilities though and he has used his long

lifespan to retain information and make connections that few others have.

His age is not the most striking thing about him. His size is. Tragarash is a grossly obese elf. Most elves are slender and graceful and with the periodic food shortages in the Drifting City, it is truly rare to see anyone who is overweight, and definitely no one as morbidly obese as Tragarash. Each elf in Helica gives a portion of their food to Tragarash to maintain his weight. This is not tribute or an offering for his leadership though. It has a much more practical purpose. With the strictly enforced ban on paper and other written materials in the Drifting City, Tragarash uses his body as a living history book. Tattoos cover his body, recording the history of the elves, the Drifting City, and the World Before. He has grown so obese that his movement is impeded in the narrow confines of his enclave.

Tragarash is a powerful magic user, though few would know this due to his seclusion. In addition to the history tattooed on his body, he is covered in arcane symbols and spells that he has learned and developed. His abilities rival that of the most powerful of the Dark Sky and possibly even the Five themselves, but due to his physical limitations, he cannot actively seek to combat them himself.

Tragarash realized hundreds of years ago that directly fighting the Five was never going to produce a desirable conclusion. He has bided his time, gathered information and worked through intermediaries. Few know it, but Tragarash created the Lawless and perfected their cell structure in order to set motion to the plan he had been preparing for centuries. It was only after years of divination finally allowed him to pierce the

mystic clouds around the Drifting City and learn the real truth of the world that he knew it was time to act.

Other elf non-player characters:

- Dareth Alonian, artist
- Lieon Felthwin, Cadre soldier
- Salia Tyrios, insect wrangler
- Paviron Walynn, mycelist
- Markan Teliar, alchemist and merchant
- Holmin Sianok, deathgroom

Xopher Thornleaf (male halfling commoner)

Xopher works each day raising birds in the aviaries. He loves his work, but as a descendent of halflings who once lived in the Grove of the Sun, Xopher grew up hearing stories of the wonders of the Grove. Each day he gazes upon the Grove from the roof of his home, braving the high winds and the storms just for the chance to view the Grove. Over the years, he has been secretly breeding a goran subspecies to reintroduce flight capabilities. After many generations, this may be the one where they achieve it.

Kelwis Shanderleap (female halfling commoner)

Since her twin sister Telis went missing, Kelwis has been the complete opposite of the traditional halfling. Sullen, withdrawn and short-tempered, she goes through the motions of her day in Dryka but doesn't really participate. Many have told her to forget about her sister, that the winds pulled her off the Drifting City, or perhaps she threw herself off, a not uncommon occurrence. But Kelwis knows her sister was too careful and too smart to ever let that happen. Kelwis has never gone into

the Warrens, but she thinks it is time to go looking for her sister there.

Other halfling non-player characters:

- Lavia Harshmal, plumer (feather dealer)
- Tonyak Durrienian, butcher and merchant
- Andrie Underflow, glassblower
- Telis Shanderleap, tunnel rat and runaway
- Nela Horngage, brewer and barkeep
- Perrie Highgather, Cadre Initiate

Trina Hartrove (female human berserker)

There is always an underbelly to every city, and if one person knows it well, it is Trina Hartrove. Getting her start as a gambler, Trina has proven to be ruthless enough to start her own criminal organization and more than willing to take chances. She's got her fingers in extortion, contraband and, rumors say, even murder. Her gang has dozens of members, all willing to do what she asks, as long as she keeps the money rolling in.

Lieutenant Jakon Teeve (male human bandit captain)

Second in command to Captain Meltik, Jakon is a skilled soldier and proficient leader, but he lacks the moral compass and honor of Captain Meltik. All of the bad traits that people accuse Captain Meltik of having can be found in Jakon. He often takes bribes, conducts extortion, and has no problem inflicting pain on others for his own gain. Jakon is very careful to make sure that Meltik doesn't become aware of his behavior, though it is only a matter of time before she finds out.

Other human non-player characters:

- Philo Cashan, mason and bricklayer
- Barden Dotsch, baker and miller
- Alkara Heldraven, criminal
- Ambeth Berskamble, carpenter
- Jianjun Taledel, Cadre Soldier
- Acton Domio, metalsmith, partner of Waylun Derfol

Burgeftel Cardonan (male gnome spy)

Burgeftel, Burgie to his friends, is pleasant to talk to and wonderful to have at a party, which is probably why he was chosen to be the Gnome Greeter. While having no formal authority within the gnomish community, he's been given the responsibility of being the person to greet outsiders when they come to the greeting chambers of Pyrma. As such, he's probably one of the most well-known gnomes in the entire city. He relishes this notoriety and loves to spend time telling stories and jokes to anyone who takes the time to listen. Those who pay careful attention though, may find that Burgie's stories are so engaging that they often find themselves running out of time for their purposes at Pyrma, and leaving with resolving anything.

Lishi Felstrig (gnome commoner)

A mechanical genius, even by gnomish standards, Lishi has created devices and contraptions that improved the lives of gnomes and others. They never seek credit for it though, preferring to spend their time tinkering on the next project rather than basking in the accolades. Their most visible invention seen by others is the iris-like doors leading into Pyrma made of metal and stone. The smoothness by which they move makes them almost seem

fluid in nature. Unfortunately, their skills have begun to catch the eyes of some of the more unsavory inhabitants of the Drifting City.

Other gnome non-player characters:

- Rosee Flipnibber, painter and artist
- Breaca Derfol, gemcutter
- Timmon Timbon, cartographer and amateur astronomer
- Waylun Derfol, silversmith, partner of Acton Domio
- Hepelto Toshweevil, tailor in the Central Bazaar
- Simaron Dawted, gear maker

Tasha Sallad (female Orta/elf shape noble)

One of the few Orta that are well known, Tasha Sallad is the primatriarch of the Orta, serving as both cultural and political leader. She maintains the appearance of a human woman in her thirties, though she has looked that way for more than 30 years. She holds authority over all Orta, though clan leaders under her may make decisions as well.

Rouniton Feedmeer (male Orta/halfling shape assassin)

An outlier among the Orta, Rouniton is a jovial, lively, and very charismatic individual. He has become a celebrity in the city because of his skill in singing and playing the harama, a stringed instrument. He can often be found on a small stage in the Central Bazaar or performing in taverns and bars throughout the Drifting City. To the common people, he is seen as a fool and joker. Those in positions of authority have serious concerns about him though, because he acts as no other Orta does.

Other Orta non-player characters:

- Kreth Grekli, mycelist
- Rondo Tapper, the only Orta serving in the Cadre
- Mangeron Teerf, tanner
- Siphew Shrit, apothecary
- Kienel Tennus, clan leader
- Klara Vilagree, aviary worker

Other Races

All civilized races found a place in the Drifting City. As the dungeon master, you can decide how widely to interpret that. The races detailed here are the most common, and you should decide if the less common races are an important part of your story. If a player wishes to be a tielfing or dragonborn, for example, you can allow it, but their numbers would be few in the Drifting City.

Nonplayer Character Statistics

Statistics for most characters and monsters referenced in this setting guide can be found in the Monster Manual or the free resource System Reference Document (SRD). Non-player characters and monsters specific to the Drifting City are found in either the Rebels of the Drifting City adventure booklet or listed below.

TAURUS BEETLE *Large beast*
Armor Class 11 (natural armor)
Hit Points 26
Speed 40 ft., climb 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18(+4)	10(+0)	16(+2)	2(-4)	13(+1)	7(-2)

Senses Blindsight 60ft., Passive Perception 11

Actions

Multiattack The taurus beetle makes two attacks, one with its horns and one with its pincers.

Pincers. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit 1d8+4 piercing damage.

Horns. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 1d8+4 slashing damage.

RHINOCEROS BEETLE *Large beast*
Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 53
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19(+4)	13(+1)	15(+2)	1(-5)	9(-1)	3(-4)

Senses Blindsight 60ft., Passive Perception 9

Actions

Multiattack The rhinoceros beetle makes three attacks, two with its horn and one with its pincers.

Pincers. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit 1d8+4 piercing damage.

Horn. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 1d10+4 slashing damage.



CHARACTER CREATION

THE ORTA

"Many years ago, there was only darkness. The stones were solid and the world was simple. The great quake caused concern for many, as did the shaking that continued, but over time we learned to adapt to them, as we always do. Life became somewhat normal again until the pounding began. It did not take much time until the Others entered the dark, bringing light and noise with them. But we adapted to that as well, as we always do." Tanisk Hurrando, Orta shaman

Unknown Neighbors

Decades after the Raising, the Orta were found living deep within the perpetually dark recesses of the city in natural caverns that existed before the people of the Drifting City started moving downwards. Dwarven expansion of the Warrens discovered many strange things within the stone of the Drifting City, the Orta being the strangest. Initially, communication with the Orta was difficult, because the Orta speak telepathically to each other and they had no spoken language before they first started interacting with the people of the city. Even their name, Orta, is taken from the dwarven word for "unknown". They quickly adapted though, mastering Common, and the other languages over time.



The Orta culture remains a mystery to most outside their race. They are organized in a tight-knit clan structure with a predominantly matriarchal leadership structure. A society developed in isolation, where true intent is always felt during telepathic conversations, the Orta are honest with each other and find the deception, even small lies, used by other races to be distasteful. Permission to leave Escada, the Orta enclave, is only granted with approval of the clan leader, and only for a specific purpose. If choosing to play an Orta, discuss with your gamemaster what your reason would be for leaving Escada.

Unknown Faces

Natural shapeshifters and mimics, knowledge of the original form of the Orta has been lost to time. From the moment the first dwarves carved through the rock into the Orta chambers, they have only

been seen in the forms of other races. Though an Orta can take on the appearance of any race they've seen, each individual usually has a preferred form. Even though they may look like the other races, they're distinctly identifiable due to their pale, mottled skin and red eyes, a likely byproduct of having evolved underground in the darkness.

The Orta are intelligent and soft-spoken but often find themselves at a disadvantage in social situations with other races. Emphasis and expression are carried through their telepathic speech within their race and their experience with verbal language can be limited. As a result, Orta have a somewhat flat affect when compared to other races. Between their appearance and their interactions, they can often be unsettling to those not familiar with them. Despite their integration into the society of the Drifting City, rumors persist that they are undead creatures because of their appearance and behavior, but they live and breathe like any other. This has led to fear and mistrust of them, even though there is no record of any conflict ever started by the Orta.

While some Orta have become part of the greater community, most continue to live in the deepest caverns of the Drifting City, keeping to themselves. Few non-Orta have entered the darkness of their home. No one is quite sure of their numbers, but they're one of the smallest minorities in the city.

Orta Names

The true name of an Orta is not expressed through verbal language and can only be understood through telepathic communication, most commonly with

someone of their own race. For simplicity when dealing with other races, the Orta will choose a name that can be spoken that may come from any other race.

Orta Traits

Your Orta character has a number of traits in common with other Orta.

Ability Score Increase

Your Intelligence score increases by 2.

Ability Score Decrease

Your Charisma score decreases by 1.

Age

Orta appear to mature at approximately the same rate as humans, but live somewhat longer, typically 120-140 years. It is difficult to tell an Orta's age due to their shapeshifting abilities.

Alignment

Most Orta are lawful good. The Orta have developed as a race where deception is easily identified and honesty is dominant. They typically prefer order but have a strong streak of independence as well.

Size

Orta take on the size characteristics of the race they are currently mimicking.

Speed

Orta take on the speed characteristics of the race they are currently mimicking.

Superior Darkvision Accustomed to dark caverns and tunnels, you have superior vision in dark and dim conditions. You can see in dim light within 120 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it

were dim light. You can discern color in darkness.

Languages

You can speak Common and Orta. Additionally, the Orta can communicate telepathically with others of their race.

Racial Traits

Shapeshift

Once per day, you can change your appearance to that of another race you have seen before. You can choose to duplicate the features of another humanoid creature, or an appearance of your own devising.

You decide what you look like, including your height, weight, facial features, the sound of your voice, coloration, hair length, sex, and any other distinguishing characteristics. When you make yourself appear as a member of another race, you take on the Size and Speed traits of that race as well as their physical racial traits, for example, Dwarven Resilience, Halfling Nimbleness or Elven Fleet of Foot. Your ability scores do not change as a result of shapeshifting.

You also cannot appear as a creature of a size other than Small or Medium, and your basic body shape and limb count stays the same. Your clothing and other equipment does not change in appearance, size, or shape with you. Regardless of which species you are mimicking, you will always have pale, spotted skin and red eyes.



SUB-CLASSES

Balance Domain Cleric

Divine Domain

At 1st level, a cleric gains the Divine Domain feature. At the DM's discretion, the following domain option is available to a cleric, in addition to those offered in the Player's Handbook.

Balance Domain

The Balance domain focuses on achieving harmony in the world around it. The gods of balance sought to enrich the world by maintaining the equilibrium necessary for all creatures to thrive. Power is meant to be spread to all, and only through the distribution of power, political, magical, social, can a utopia be reached. If power or influence tips too far one way it becomes necessary to redistribute it in order to maintain the equilibrium.

In the Drifting City, it is known that the gods are dead, destroyed in the final war that rendered the World Before uninhabitable. Nonetheless, the traditions of the clerics continue to be practiced in secret, because belief and knowledge are two very different things. Those in the Balance domain continue to work to bring peace and balance to the world that remains and address the imbalance of power in their own way.

Order Domain Features

- **1st level** Calming Presence, Cantrip
- **2nd level** Channel Divinity: Life Balance
- **6th level** Razor's Edge
- **8th level** Divine Strike
- **17th level** Flow Walker

Domain Spells

- **1st level** Divine Favor, Sleep
- **3rd level** Calm Emotions, Suggestion
- **5th level** Counterspell, Nondetection
- **7th level** Fabricate, Resilient Sphere
- **9th level** Modify Memory, Mislead

Bonus Cantrip

When you choose this domain at 1st level, you gain the Guidance cantrip if you do not already know it.

Calming Presence

You have a unique way about you that puts people at ease, causing them to be more attentive around you. Starting when you choose this domain at 1st level, you can use your action to give a willing creature, including yourself, advantage on Charisma (Persuasion) checks.

Channel Divinity: Life Balance

Starting at 2nd level, you can use your Channel Divinity to transfer life energy from one creature to another. Present the symbol of your domain and evoke a life energy transference up to 5 times your cleric level from one creature to another. The creature receiving the energy receives hit points equal to the amount and the one transferring loses hit points equal to the amount.

Razors Edge

At 6th level, your mastery of balance gives you the ability to use an opponent's attack against them. As a reaction when you are attacked, you may make one melee attack against your opponent or you may use the attacker's momentum to throw them to the ground, rendering them prone. They may not stand up until their next turn, even if they have movement left. You may use this feature a number of times equal to

your Wisdom modifier and regain expended uses after a long rest.

Divine Strike

At 8th level, you gain the ability to infuse your weapon strikes with divine energy. Once on each of your turns when you hit a creature with a weapon attack, you can cause the attack to deal an extra 1d8 radiant damage to the target. When you reach 14th level, the extra damage increases to 2d8.

Flow Walker

At 17th level, your ability to redistribute power becomes even more potent. When you receive damage from a successful attack roll, spell, or effect, you may redistribute the damage, up to half of the total, to other creatures, including your attacker, within 30 feet of you, dividing it as you choose.

Pit Brawler Fighter

The Pit Brawler is a fighter that has survived and thrived by always being the winner in the gladiatorial combat of the Fighting Pit. An unwillingness to yield and sheer brutality have proven your worth. While you have learned to master many weapons, your skill with your fists is what has put you above the rest.

You have the additional fighting style option.

Fighting Style: Unarmed but Deadly

At 1st level, you can roll a d6 in place of the normal damage of your unarmed strike. You use Strength as your modifier and are proficient. You gain a +2 bonus to

attack and damage rolls you make with an unarmed strike.



Pit Brawler Features

- **3rd level** Fists of Steel, Sucker Punch
- **7th level** Counterpunch, Fancy Footwork
- **10th level** Going the Distance
- **15th level** Knock Out Punch
- **18th level** Rope-a-Dope

Fists of Steel

Beginning when you choose this archetype at 3rd level, your unarmed strikes use a d8 for their normal damage.

Sucker Punch

Once per turn, you can deal an extra 1d6 damage to one creature you hit with an unarmed strike if you have advantage on the attack roll. You don't need advantage on the attack roll if another enemy of the target is within 5 feet of it, that enemy isn't incapacitated, and you don't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Counterpunch

When another creature hits you with a melee attack, you can use your reaction to make one unarmed strike against them. Your attack die for unarmed strikes increases to d10 at 7th level.

Fancy Footwork

Survival in the Fighting Pit is as much about avoiding deadly attacks as it is about dealing them. Your speed, battle sense and agility protect you. You gain +2 to AC while you are wielding no weapon other than your fists.

Going the Distance

You gain an additional Second Wind. On your turn, you can use a bonus action to regain hit points equal to 1d10 + your fighter level. Once you have used this feature, you must finish a short or long rest before you can use it again.

Knock Out Punch

Starting at 15th level, your unarmed strikes score a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20. Additionally, when receiving a critical hit the target must succeed on a Constitution saving throw, DC 10 + your Strength modifier, or be rendered Unconscious.

Rope-a-dope

You have reached the pinnacle of your combat prowess and endurance. Your attack die for unarmed strikes increase to d12 at this level. Additionally, you may take the Dodge action as a bonus action.

BACKGROUNDS

Deathgroom

In a world where the resources are finite, everything must be used to its fullest, including the bodies of the dead. You learn to speak with the mourning and comfort them in public, while in private you prepare the bodies of the dead for their roles in the success of the city. Parts to the compost to feed the plants, parts to the masons to build the walls, parts to the family to remember the lost.

While the people of the Drifting City recognize, and even respect, the skills you have in your role, most will keep you at a distance because your work is unpleasant to them. As such, being a deathgroom can be something of a lonely life. You feel camaraderie with the few others in your profession, but each of you has learned to live a life of solitude, and so even when together you feel apart. The skills of a deathgroom are commonly passed down through apprenticeships, often within families.

Skill Proficiencies Insight, Medicine

Tool Proficiencies Deathgroom's Tools (undertaker's tools)

Equipment Insignia of the Deathgroom, small carving knife, leather apron

Feature: Death comes for all

Over a long enough timeline, everyone will come in contact with deathgroom in the Drifting City. As such, you have interacted with a multitude of people and have many contacts in many walks of life. Typically you will know who to go to when seeking information.

Suggest Characteristics

Use the tables for the **guild artisan** background in the *Player's Handbook* as the basis for your traits and motivations. Adjust them as appropriate for your setting.

Cadre Washout

The odds of survival are always against you in the Drifting City and few paths will guarantee success. Choosing to serve in the Cadre is rarely popular with a person's friends and family, but it is a near guarantee that you'll get by. There is an inherent danger in the role, but you know you'll be fed, sheltered, and clothed.

You went through the training, learning weapons, tactics, and the skills needed to keep the order, as the Five see fit. But it wasn't enough and you failed out of the program. You turned your back on the common folk to join the Cadre, and now the Cadre has discarded you. You carry the dishonor, and a few scars, with you as you go through life now. Choose a reason you were washed out of the Cadre during the initiate phase, such as: your personality traits, an unwillingness to follow orders, discrimination against your race, etc.

Skill Proficiencies Athletics, Animal Handling (Giant Insects)

Tool Proficiencies One type of gaming set

Equipment Gaming set, Cadre Initiate's uniform, 4 teeth taken from a foe

Feature: Service Knowledge

Though you never became a full member of the Cadre, you've received all of the training they have. You have knowledge of their organization, distribution, and

general practices. You can use this knowledge to your advantage such as identifying Cadre in disguise, identifying their weapons, and guessing their tactics.

Suggest Characteristics

Use the tables for the **soldier** background in the *Player's Handbook* as the basis for your traits and motivations. Adjust them as appropriate for your setting.

Black Sky Savant

Magical skill of any significance is closely regulated in the Drifting City. If magical talent is recognized in childhood, the child is typically taken from the parents and raised within the Dark Sky Lyceum. Having been raised this way, you were afforded privileges that few received. You never wanted for food, water, or shelter. You had access to fine clothes and goods. Most of all, you had access to knowledge and the most forbidden of items, books. While the life was luxurious, the punishments were also brutal. You have many scars representing your past mistakes, and bruises of recent ones, inflicted to teach you the limitations of the knowledge you have received. As a mage in training, you also possess a paper spellbook, something the common person in the Drifting City is forbidden from having.

Skill Proficiencies Arcana, Perception

Languages Common, plus two of your choice

Equipment Ink, Paper and a spellbook, fine clothes

Feature: More Knowledge than Most

You have spent years studying books, scrolls and being taught by more senior

magicians. Your knowledge of history is limited, as is the case for all in the city, but you have well-learned knowledge of magic and what remains of the natural world. If it exists in the Drifting City, you probably know something about it.

Suggest Characteristics

Use the tables for the **sage** background in the *Player's Handbook* as the basis for your traits and motivations. Adjust them as appropriate for your setting.

Tunnel Rat

Orphans, outcasts, and others who simply don't have an enclave in the Drifting City can get by moving through the tunnels and chambers and living on the scraps left behind. You've likely scrounged your way through life from childhood to adulthood all on your own. You've become experienced in thieving, hiding, and most of all surviving. The people you know best are those like you, but they're also the people you like least.

Skill Proficiencies Deception, Sleight of Hand

Tool Proficiencies Forgery Kit, Thieves tools

Equipment disguise kit, common clothes with a hood, worry stone rubbed smooth

Feature: Hidden Sanctuary

Years of sneaking around have helped you learn of a little place that is often overlooked by others. It gives you the opportunity to take a short break without being found. It's not too big, but you could fit a handful of your closest friends in it. If you ever make any friends.

Suggest Characteristics

Use the tables for the **criminal** or **urchin** backgrounds in the *Player's Handbook* as the basis for your traits and motivations. Adjust them as appropriate for your setting.

Last of Your Kind

This background option is intended to be used as an addition to another background. Not available if playing human, elf, dwarf, half-elf, halfling, or gnome.

The remnants of all civilized races found refuge in the Drifting City at the end of the World Before. Over the centuries, some races have thrived, but unfortunately, others have not. You are part of a race that has been in decline since the beginning of the city. You find yourself in the position of being the last of your race in the Drifting City, and ultimately the world.

Languages The language of your people that no one else knows

Equipment An heirloom of your family and people that is only important to you

Feature: Infamous and Known

Though the citizens of the Drifting City number in the thousands, few are as well recognized as you. You represent something that all of the people of the city fear whether they acknowledge it or not, extinction. Your notoriety has positives and negatives. You often find yourself

treated as a welcome guest, or at least a novelty, when you're seeking someone's favor. But you also find it difficult to hide even when in a large group.



FEATS

A feat represents a talent or an area of expertise that gives a character special capabilities. It embodies training, experience, and abilities beyond what a class provides.

At certain levels, your class gives you the Ability Score Improvement feature. Using the optional feats rule, you can forgo taking that feature to take a feat of your choice instead. You can take each feat only once, unless the feat's description says otherwise.

Close Quarters Fighter

You have mastered combat in the narrow confines of the caverns and caves you live in. When you are in a space that has at least one dimension of 20 feet or less, excluding height, you may gain one of the following benefits per round:

- You gain a +5 to successful melee attacks' damage rolls; or
- You may take the dodge action as a bonus action.

Unflappable

The life you have led has prepared you to handle nearly anything without an issue. You are able to remain calm and focused in almost all situations. You gain the following benefits:

- You have advantage on Charisma (Deception) checks and checks to resist Intimidation.
- You have advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

Minor Magic

Years of practice have fixed minor magic spells in your mind and you are able to cast them at will. You know up to 4 cantrips from spellcasting classes that use your lowest spellcasting ability score as the spellcasting modifier. Charisma for bard, sorcerer, or warlock; Wisdom for cleric or druid; or Intelligence for wizard.

You may choose the cantrips from the spell lists of multiple classes, but all classes must use the same spellcasting modifier. Cantrips learned this way do not increase in strength as your experience level increases.

Bloodlust

The thrill of combat excites you to a frenzied level that you barely keep contained. As a bonus action, you can succumb to your bloodlust, dealing an additional 1d8 of damage with each melee attack you make. When the bloodlust is upon you, you may only take the attack action on your turn, though you may move. You will continue to attack the next nearest creature to you, regardless of whether they are friend or foe. The bloodlust ends if you are rendered unconscious or after you have made an attack against an ally or an ally attacks you.

CAMPAIGN OUTLINE

The Rebels of the Drifting City adventure module was intended to be played as a one-shot adventure for players at level 5. Due to the popularity of this adventure setting, this outline provides a brief thumbnail sketch for a small campaign, taking characters in the Drifting City from level 1 through Level 5.

This outline does not necessarily give the detail for everything needed to run this campaign, but rather is a broad overview for you to build upon. These encounters are primarily linear, action-oriented ones. You are encouraged to add your own encounters or downtime as needed to allow the players to explore the Drifting City in your campaign. For information regarding the Drifting City and its inhabitants, refer to the Rebels of the Drifting City Adventure Booklet and the Drifting City Setting Booklet.

This adventure is divided into episodes, each with several scenes, culminating in episode 5, the original Rebels of the Drifting City adventure module. Players begin as members of a cell of the Lawless, the rebel organization of the Drifting City. As members in this group, they are assigned missions via dead drop in a lantern on the rear exterior wall of the Bright and Bold Tavern.

Encounters in this outline are mostly scaled to be deadly to the players. They will need to think, plan, and sometimes run, in order to succeed. This is not an adventure for simply being “murder hoboes.” If you find that the encounters are too difficult for your players, use your discretion to rescale by decreasing the

number of monsters in encounters, or decreasing the hit points of the monsters listed. Another way to rescale the encounters can be to introduce the optional flanking rule as found in the Dungeon Master's Guide (DMG), which gives the players a greater chance at successful attacks.

Rather than detailing specific experience point quantities for character advancement, this campaign uses the alternative milestone method, with players advancing a level of experience after each episode. This would result in the players being at level 5 at the beginning of the final episode. This may progress players slightly faster than the typical structure, but it keeps the energy and momentum of the adventure moving.

EPISODE 1

Race through the Bazaar

The players begin in the middle of action, being chased down a major tunnel toward the Central Bazaar. They have just stolen several bags of potatoes from a Cadre storeroom and are being pursued by 4 Cadre Initiates (2 human **guards**, 2 dwarf **guards**).

As the players enter the Central Bazaar, they can either choose to run and hide or fight the Cadre. If they choose to fight, complete the combat and as they defeat the final Cadre Initiate, 2 Cadre Soldiers (human **veterans**) and 4 more Cadre Initiates (2 human **guards**, 2 dwarf **guards**) arrive as reinforcements.

If they choose to hide, a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check will identify a merchant who has a yellow sash across the entrance to their tent stall. This indicates they are supportive of the Lawless and will give the players a place to hide. Attempting to hide with a merchant who is not supportive of the Lawless will require a successful Intimidation or Persuasion Check.

Alternatively, the players may attempt to hide in a pen used for 2 **taurus beetles**. These large, bull-sized beetles are upset by the players' presence in their pen and will attack unless a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check is made. If the taurus beetles attack the players, the Cadre are made aware of the characters' location by the noise.

Ultimately, the players are to escape the Central Bazaar and make their way to the Bright and Bold Tavern with the potatoes.

They give the potatoes to Brogan Turnstone, owner of the Tavern, and take some downtime at the tavern to wait for their next dead drop message.

After a short time at the tavern, a lean human bumps into one of the players, spilling his drink. He's quite intoxicated as are his two companions, a female halfling and a male gnome. All three are **Thugs**, armed with daggers and clubs, and will fight with the players until all are rendered unconscious, or one of them is killed.

If the players kill one of the drunken bar patrons, rather than knocking them unconscious, Brogan throws the players out through the back entrance of the bar and tells them they owe him for cleaning up their mess. As they leave, they see a message is waiting for them in the dead drop. If they dispatch the Thugs without significant incident, they notice the signal for the dead drop a bit later.

The message says,

"We're in the end game. We need to get supplies from several places. Go to Escada, the Orta enclave, and negotiate for the glittering dust. They are expecting you. When you receive it, leave it at Markan's tent in the Bazaar."

Though the players do not know this at the time, glittering dust is a mineral deposit deep within the Drifting City that can be used as an alchemical component to make explosives.

EPISODE 2

A Long Walk in the Warrens

This episode consists of several random encounters, as detailed in the table below, as the players descend through the Warrens to the Orta enclave, culminating in a social encounter with the Orta leadership. It takes several hours of walking through the tunnels in the Warrens to the Orta enclave near the bottom.

Play out two encounters from the Upper Encounters list and two encounters from the Lower Encounters list. The first two encounters, when the players are in the more populous areas, may be resolved through social interaction. The encounters lower in the Warrens are more combat-oriented. Roll 1d4 each time to determine encounters, rerolling if the same encounter is chosen twice.

Upper Encounters

1. A friend of a player's mother (**commoner**) sees them, wants to chat, and will not leave them alone.
2. A Cadre Soldier (dwarf **veteran**) and 2 Cadre Initiates (human **guards**) are stopping people at a checkpoint, searching for contraband.
3. A group of 4 **Thugs** (2 dwarf, 1 human, 1 halfling), led by Trina Hartrove (female human **Berserker**), confront the players about a gambling debt one player owes. Trina will escape after 2 Thugs go down.
4. A group of 4 dwarf miners (**commoners**) have a cart with a broken wheel that is blocking the path.

Lower Encounters

1. A **glaber** bursts through a wall of the tunnel
2. A feral **rhinoceros beetle** charges down the tunnel
3. In a narrow tunnel space, a **Gelatinous Cube** is fully blocking the players path.
4. The players stumble across 4 **Acolytes** of the Five (2 human, 1 gnome, 1 tiefling) transporting a large, locked, metal box. The lock of the box contains a Poison Needle Trap as described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* or the System Reference Document (SRD). The box contains the skull of a minotaur, a creature the players do not recognize.

Players may take rests after these encounters, at dungeon master's discretion.

Conversation in the Darkness

Upon arriving at the Orta enclave, the players are met by several Orta guards at the entrance. The guards will not attack unless provoked. When the players request to speak to someone about the glittering dust, they are escorted into the Orta enclave proper and a request is made for them to wait in a room. They are locked in the room. There is no light beyond the entrance to the enclave as the Orta have superior darkvision and have no need for light. It is also eerily silent because the Orta communicate with each other telepathically.

The players are kept waiting for an hour or so. When the Orta return, it is one female Orta in elf form and two guards in human form. The female is clearly in charge and begins to ask the players why they are interested in glittering dust. The players

must convince the Orta to provide the glittering dust. It is integral to the Lawless plan. The Orta value honesty and the more the players lie, the more difficult it becomes to convince the Orta to provide the glittering dust. If the players reveal they are with the Lawless, the Orta will confer with each other telepathically and the leader will leave. Two more guards will enter and wait with the players.

Eventually, the leader will return with a bag of glittering dust. She explains that the players' honesty and willingness to endanger themselves by revealing their affiliation proved they were worthy of receiving the dust. If questioned, the leader will explain that the glittering dust has many properties, but the one she expects the Lawless wants it for is that, in the proper combination with a few other rare substances, it makes a potent explosive.

NOTE: If a player is playing an Orta character, the encounter will play out the same, but the Orta player character must explain to the Orta leader why they are aligned with the Lawless.

As the players leave the Orta enclave to make their way back, they have one more encounter based on the Lower Encounters table above, again rerolling if a duplicate is chosen.

EPISODE 3

Forest for the Trees

A couple of days after the encounter with the Orta, another dead drop reveals a new mission. The message says, "We're close now. But we need the nectar of the glorown flower. It can be found in the

Grove of the Sun. Get as much as you can."

This is a mission based on infiltration and stealth. Though the Druids of the Grove will periodically leave for trade, no such day is currently scheduled. The players must successfully get through the thick, tall hedge wall full of razor-sharp thorns, find the glorown flowers, and escape back to Markan's tent in the Central Bazaar.

Dryka, the halfling enclave, is near the Grove of the Sun and the halflings may have some information regarding the best way to enter it. A successful Charisma (Persuasion) DC 13 check and a halfling will describe to them the layout of the grove from what they know.

The hedge wall itself is not guarded other than the physical dangers of which it is composed. The wall is 40 feet high, 40 feet thick, and covered in razor-sharp thorns, equivalent to a dagger, on all surfaces. Players may attack with weapons or spells to cut through the hedge wall (AC 13). If an attack against it is successful, players cut through 1 foot per point of damage, but it regenerates at a rate of 5 feet per round. Players take 1d4+2 damage each time they touch the thorns. Players caught in the hedge as it regenerates are grappled and must make a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to break free.

Once beyond the hedge wall, the players will find that there are four concentric rings leading to the center of the Grove, each with smaller plants as they go, trees in the first ring, shrubs in the second, flowers and grass in the third, and the final is the druid homestead, a huge tree in the center of the Grove. The glorown flyers grow in the shade of the homestead tree.

Each ring is difficult terrain and takes the players around 2 hours each to travel across if they're traveling slowly and stealthily, 1 hour each if they're moving quickly but not masking their presence. Players may rest, long or short, in any ring if they so choose, this includes if they escape combat. A successful DC 13 group Stealth check is required to hide.

For every 2 hours the players are in the Grove, roll on the encounter table below for what they encounter. Roll only once if the players are taking a long rest. Roll 1d4 each time to determine encounters, rerolling if the same encounter is chosen more than once.

Ring One (Trees)

1. One **awakened tree**
2. Two **awakened trees**
3. One **druid**
4. Three **swarms of insects**

Ring Two (Shrubs)

1. Five (5) **awakened shrubs**
2. Fifteen (15) **awakened shrubs**
3. One (1) **druid**
4. Six (6) **giants wasps**

Ring Three (Flowers and grass)

1. One (1) **shambling mound**
2. Three (3) **swarms of insects**
3. One (1) **druid**
4. Twenty (20) Shrieking Flowers (use **Shrieker** statistics from the *Monster Manual* (MM) or SRD)

Druids of the Grove

If the players do not move with stealth, or encounter a Druid or the Shrieking Flowers, the Druids of the Grove are aware of their presence when they enter the third ring and will be waiting in ambush at the

homestead tree. Three Druids (1 human, 1 halfling, 1 half-elf) will fight until there is only one druid left. The final living druid will invoke the homestead tree, which awakens as a **treant**.

Ultimately, the players must gather as many glornown flowers as they can and escape the grove. The amount doesn't matter; whatever they gather will be enough to take to the alchemist. The treant will pursue the players, but will not leave the Grove. Once the players leave the Grove, it will return to its original spot and become immobile again.

When the players leave the Grove, they are observed and followed by a Cadre Soldier. The soldier does not engage, but watches and identifies the players. A successful DC 19 Wisdom (Perception) check will discover him, but he will escape if the players try to pursue.

EPISODE 4

The Deal in Fabrica

Upon dropping off the flowers with Markan, he informs them that their next dead drop message is already waiting at the Tavern.

"One final component and we'll be ready to put everything in motion. Go to Fabrica tomorrow and purchase all of the trayk gravel they have. Brogan has the money. Deliver it as with the other components."

As the players leave the tavern, the Cadre Soldier that has been following them is waiting in the tunnel. He confronts them, accusing them of conspiring against the Five and being members of the Lawless. He grabs an amulet he's wearing and

states that unlike others, he came prepared. He summons a **Shield Guardian** to his aid.

The patrons of the tavern watch through the window. If the players do not understand that removing or destroying the amulet is the key to stopping the Shield Guardian, Brogan yells at them from the tavern doorway explaining it to them. Once the Shield Guardian is defeated, the Cadre Soldier runs away unless stopped.

Upon entering Fabrica, the players must seek out an ore dealer who can provide the trayk gravel. Several alcoves off of the main hall of Fabrica have such dealers in them, though not all deal in trayk. Once the players find someone to speak with about it, their request for all of the trayk gravel eventually leads the ore dealer to tell them that he must get Turvan Turnstone's personal approval on that. The players are told to hang around the main hall until the ore dealer returns with Turvan.

When Turvan returns, he's friendly but very cautious about the players' request. Ultimately, the quantity of money they're offering convinces him and he sends several dwarves to gather all of the trayk gravel they have.

The Moving Stone

As they are waiting, two Dark Sky **mag**es (1 human, 1 half-elf mages), with a **Shield Guardian**, arrive into the main hall of Fabrica. One raises his voice announcing that they are seeking a group of rebel traitors and that all harboring them will be executed as well. The mages and guardian begin circulating through the people in the main hall seeking out the players.

Turvan begins to become very agitated. As the dwarves bring in the bags of trayk gravel, Turvan looks at the players and accuses them of being the rebels. If the players try to convince him they are not, it will require a successful DC 18 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check. If he doesn't believe them, he calls out to the Dark Sky. If he believes them, he'll let them go on their own way, but they will be spotted by the Dark Sky because of the large heavy bags they are carrying.

Once combat begins, Turvan reaches a fevered panic. He runs toward the statue of Abarrak Turnstone in the center of the hall while screaming, "You won't hurt the dwarves again." When his hand touches the statue, a blue glow engulfs it and the statue begins moving. Turvan states to it, "On dwarven honor, I command you, kill all the non-dwarves." The statue is actually a **stone golem** carved into the likeness of Abarrak.

The golem will attack whatever non-dwarf is nearest it, including the players. If the players position the mages or shield guardians near the golem, it will essentially assist them, but if they get too near it will attack them. If one of the players is a dwarf, the golem will not attack that player. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana or History) check, and the dwarf knows that it can take control of the golem by taking an action to touch it, saying "On dwarven honor, I command you," followed by a command. Commands must be simple and direct.

Once the players escape and deliver the gravel they move into the final episode, the original Rebels of the Drifting City adventure. They receive the dead drop message that starts off that adventure.

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