

Dragon Heist One-Shots

Alternative adventure hooks
for Dragon Heist maps

Mark A. Wilson



DRAGON HEIST ONE-SHOTS

ALTERNATIVE ADVENTURE HOOKS FOR DRAGON HEIST MAPS

CREDITS & LEGAL

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Acknowledgements: PDF interior created using [The Homebrewery](#). Dragon Heist maps were created using Dungeon Designer 3 by [ProFantasy Software](#). All artwork was obtained on [Pixabay](#) and is released under Creative Commons CC0, free for commercial use.

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“Waterdeep is an incomparably multifarious city of moving parts and changing personas. I’ve been in and out of its Wards on dozens of occasions, and there hasn’t been a single time where the inhabitants and shops were the same as when I last visited. This sort of constant change might upset the more pastorally minded types, but for those of us who love discovering new things, it’s all the more reason to come back and again to its magnificent streets. But it also means that where you went for a particular purpose on one occasion, might harbor entirely different possibilities (or dangers!) than before!”

-Volothamp Gedarm

USING THIS RESOURCE



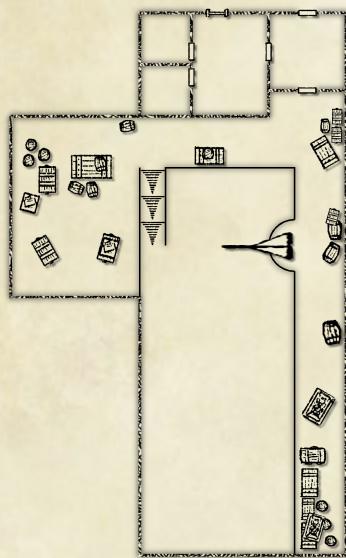
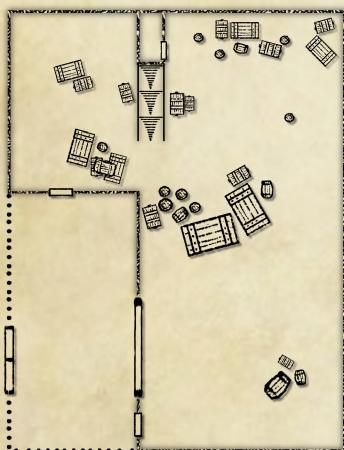
This document outlines alternative hooks and adventures for the maps included in Waterdeep: Dragon Heist. These can be used outside of the Dragon Heist adventure, or incorporated into it. Some are relatively minor hooks that will not constitute a full adventure. Others will take longer to resolve, and may be used as standalone adventures. Dungeon Masters are encouraged to mix and match ideas to best suit the needs of their table.

Wherever possible, I tried to keep the layout, room furnishings and even enemies the same as in the book, to facilitate easy integration with the existing Dragon Heist location descriptions. However, when encounters or descriptions change to facilitate the new hook, they are indicated in this supplement.

ENCOUNTER ADJUSTMENTS

The new hooks and encounters are largely intended to be balanced for the same average party level (APL) as they exist in the official adventure. However, an APL key is included for each new hook to account for variations to this.

In general, the APLs listed assume a group of four players. Minor adjustments may need to be made to account for differences in level or player count.



ADVENTURE 1: BOXING BABIES

Map: 1.1. Zhentarim Hideout

APL: 1

Hook: As the party is traveling in the Dock Ward at night, their unique attire catches the attention of a local woman, who runs up to them, seemingly distressed. “You! You can help! I seen them takin’ babies into that warehouse over yonder. There was some birdmen that did it. The guard don’t believe me, but you have to help them; they’re just poor children!”

Adventure Summary: The woman is intoxicated, a DC8 Wisdom (Insight) check will reveal as much. What she saw were plastic baby dolls being carried into the warehouse. Inside the warehouse, four kenku are loading crates filled with the dolls. They will feign ignorance of any wrongdoing, but a closer investigation will reveal that the dolls are a cover for stolen goods, mostly sculptures and paintings.

Room/Encounter Adjustments:

- The kenku are Zhentarim workers, and may have information about the larger Black Network as it pertains to your campaign.
- The kenku will feign ignorance at first, but will attack if provoked or if the stolen goods are found.
- In addition to the paintings (Z3) six marble sculptures worth 25gp each can be found in the crates underneath the baby dolls.
- The offices in Z5 contain notes to the kenku from a local Zhentarim boss. The notes contain a dropoff location for the goods in the North Ward, and instructions to make sure the “good stuff” is safely hidden beneath the dolls.
- DMs may want to tie the black market sale to a particular noble or crime lord in Waterdeep to trigger further adventures.

ADVENTURE 2: CURIOSITY KILLED THE COBBLER

Map: 1.2 Guild Hideout

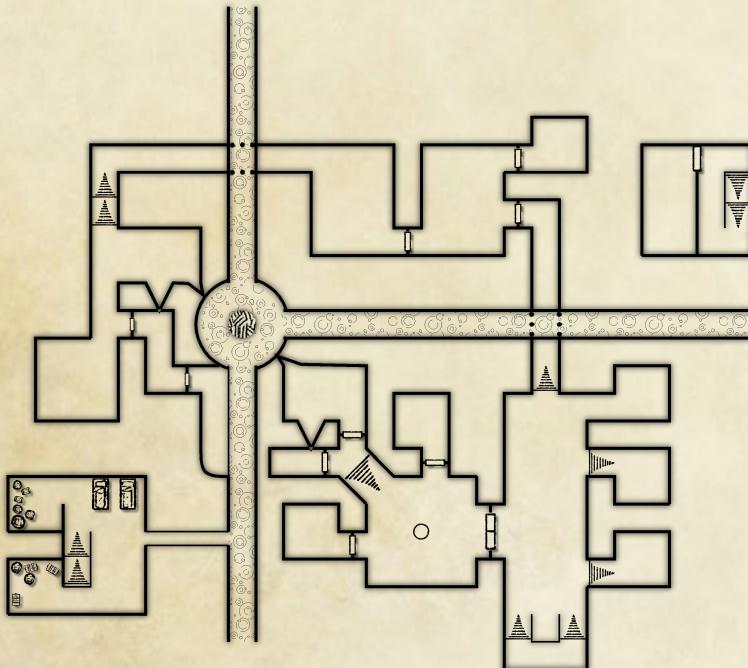
APL: 1

Hook: The Q9 location on the map is the basement of a local cobbler. Unbeknownst to the family, their basement contains secret passage to an area being used as a base for the Xanathar Guild. The 12-year-old son of the cobbler - Jessop Cobblestone - discovered the passage during a game of hide & seek with his friends, and has not returned. The parents are seeking his safe return.

Adventure Summary: The boy's father is a former adventurer and will join them in the hideout. Use the **Swashbuckler** stats for him. In Q7, the same retinue of enemies is there, except they are planning on using Jessop as a host for the intellect devourer. The boy is prone and unconscious in the room. As in Dragon Heist, the mind flayer will leave upon giving orders to the others.

If Jessop is saved, upon returning to Q8, they find the secret tunnel caved in, with water running into it from the sewer line above. A secondary exit will need to be discovered. Unless the party find a way through the cave-in or find the secret door in the Q10 area, this will likely require them to trek through the hideout to Q1, back to the main sewer line.

Room/Encounter Adjustments: The hideout is still being used by the Xanathar Guild, and has the same layout of potential enemies. Jessop's father acts as Renaer would in the main adventure.



ADVENTURE 3: PEEKABOO!

Map: Trollskull Manor and Tavern

APL: 2

Hook: A friendly ghost inhabits Trollskull Manor, and wishes to play with its new owners. It will reveal the location of a treasure in the manor if the players win a game against it.

Adventure Summary: The ghost wants to play Hide & Seek. However, being a ghost, it has a distinct advantage, but promises to remain at least nominally visible, and to stay inside the rooms of the Manor. In the game, players are given five rounds of the game, in which they'll have time to carefully inspect a single room each. Magic is prohibited, it says, though it is unable to tell if magic is used to detect it. The ghost tells PCs to close their eyes, then chooses a room.

To run the game, roll on the chart below each round to determine which room the ghost hides in. If one of the players successfully guesses the room, a successful DC12 Dexterity (Investigation) check will locate the ghost. If the ghost is not found, he taunts the party playfully at the end of each round. The game lasts five rounds. If attacked, the ghost flees.

If the players try to cheat and have their characters peek while the ghost is hiding, you may require a roll to hide the deception. Upon success of this strategy, you can tell them whether or not the ghost is on their current floor.

Basement:

- 1 - Wine Cellar
- 2 - Ale Cellar

First Floor:

- 3 - Taproom
- 4 - Pantry 5 - Kitchen

Second Floor:

- 6 - Den
- 7 - Common Room
- 8 - Hall
- 9 - Bedroom
- 10 - Spare Room

Third Floor:

- 11 - Bedroom
- 12 - Private Bath (northern)
- 13 - Privy (northern)
- 14 - Library
- 15 - Privy (southern)
- 16 - Master Bedroom
- 17 - Private Bath (southern)

Garrets:

- 18 - Attic Bedroom
- 19 - Attic Storage
- 20 - Turret Peak

If the players are successful, the ghost will reward them. Beneath some stonework in the basement is a Lord's Ensemble (see Appendix A of Dragon Heist). If this is deemed too powerful by the DM, a suitable substitute may be used.

Room/Encounter Adjustments: N/A

ADVENTURE 4: MUG COLLECTION

Map: The Yawning Portal

APL: 2

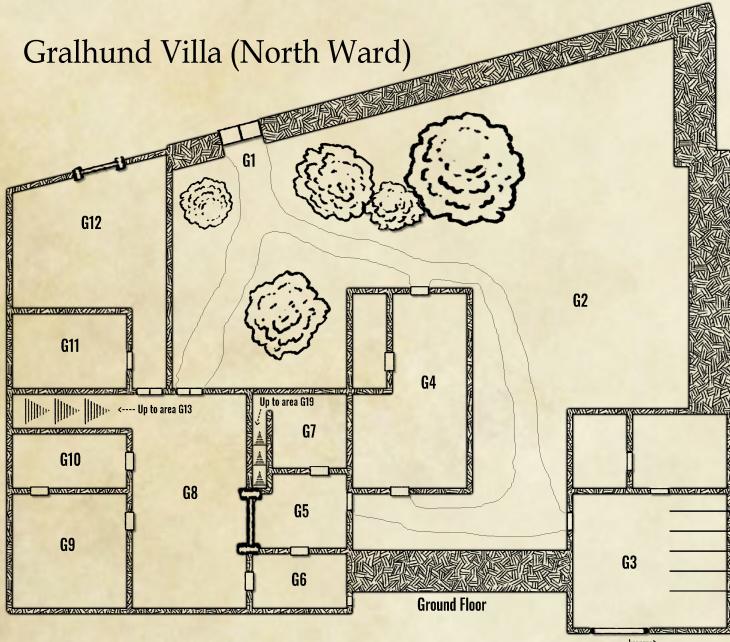
Hook: A young nobleman approaches the party, claiming to be a collector of odds & ends. He's particularly fond of his collection of mugs from across Faerun. He's heard of specially engraved mugs that Durnan keeps in the back rooms of The Yawning Portal, but only those invited into the back have even seen them. The nobleman asks the players to procure one of these mugs, and will reward them with 50gp each for their trouble.

Adventure Summary: Durnan may know the players, in which case the hook may be declined. The nobleman may up his offer if this seems likely. The center room behind the bar contains a chest that has the special mugs. It is locked, and requires a successful DC15 check with Thieves Tools to open.

Room/Encounter Adjustments: Six staff members will be in The Yawning Portal along with Durnan. Roll 1d4 to determine how many are in the back rooms. Durnan will stop any player who is discovered, and if they're caught stealing, he'll attack, but not to kill. If the caught character doesn't fight back, Durnan will ban them from the Portal. If they do fight and attempt to escape once caught, Durnan will turn them into the authorities if captured. Use Durnan's stats in Dragon Heist as needed.

The nobleman will disavow knowledge if the players are caught. If the players keep any mugs for themselves, the mug is carved from wood with a metal handle, and purifies any drink poured into it of poisons (except alcohol).

Granhund Villa (North Ward)



ADVENTURE 5: TROLLTIDE TERROR

Map: 3.1 Gralhund Villa

APL: 5

Hook: The Trolltide holiday (1 Kythorn) brings with it a share of false alarms and pranks masquerading as something darker. So when a teenaged girl - Arleigh - reports a haunting at Gralhund Villa, it's passed off as a prank by the City Guard. She stumbles across the party, claiming that her sister works for the Gralhund family, and that the entire villa is possessed of some dark force. She can unlock the front gate for the party. Will they investigate and try to save her sister?

Adventure Summary: A trio of demonic skulls resides in the family's library. The family did not realize that the skulls were infused with necromantic energy, and had them up as part of their Trolltide decorations. The skulls absorb information from nearby items - in this case, open books in the library that discuss zombies, trolls and other dark creatures - then bring the information to life.

Room/Encounter Adjustments:

- **Zombified Creatures:** In any instance where an enemy has become a zombie, use their stats as you would normally, but add the “Undead Fortitude” feature to their abilities.
- G2 - One lone zombie, blinded by a series of knife wounds, stumbles blindly through the courtyard. It has disadvantage on Perception rolls to discover the party.
- G3 - Three Gralhund workers have locked themselves in the back room and are unable to escape due to the horses, which have turned undead. Three zombie **riding horses** will attack any who enter the main Coach House.
- G4 - Two guards at half health are fighting off seven zombies. If any of the guards remain, they'll assist the party in investigating the rest of the house.
- G6 - The Gralhund's oldest son, Zartan, has locked himself in here in an attempt to hide.
- G8 - Two **thugs** have become zombies and are hovering over the corpses of various Gralhund workers.
- G10 - In the den, Orond's **hawk** remains caged but is now undead. Additionally, the suit of armor in the room is now a **Helmed Horror**.
- G12 - The skulls hang over the center of the room, approximately eight feet in the air and attached to wire. They glow a sickly green. Each has an AC of 10 and 20 hit points. When any are attacked or tampered with, the glow will intensify and a nearby book will similarly glow. Springing from the book are a zombie **troll** and two **zombies**. While Dispel Magic will not affect the skulls, Remove Curse will cause the glowing to stop.
- G14 - Six **zombies** dance awkwardly around the ballroom. They will attack upon seeing the party.
- G18 - Yalah Gralhund and her youngest, Greth, remain unaffected and are hiding out here. She'll aid as she can and will point the party toward the library.

Any creatures who weren't killed when the skulls are destroyed or dispelled will return to their normal state. Arleigh's sister Margaret is one of the zombie in room G14. Orond Gralhund was one of the zombies in G4.

ADVENTURE 6: MORADIN'S BLESSING

Map: 4.9 Vault of Dragons

APL: 4

Hook: The Dwarven God Moradin comes to one of the characters in a dream, charging them with saving a local cleric of Moradin. If there is a dwarf in the party, this is the most likely candidate. The dream reveals the location of a vault that contains the cure to madness that has overtaken her. In exchange, he'll bestow his blessing on the adventurer.

Adventure Summary: Inquiries to the local temple to Moradin will confirm that there is a cleric who has succumbed to an apparently incurable madness. The vault is located under a decrepit old tower along the sea wall in the Sea Ward. Use the 4.5 Old Tower map from Dragon Heist as needed for this portion.

Room/Encounter Adjustments: The Vault of Dragons can be run largely as-is, with a couple notable exceptions:

- There is no dragon in the vault. Instead, the players will encounter a group of Modrons who have tunneled into the vault from beneath it. They are assessing the room when the players enter. The group includes one each of a **Monodrone**, **Duodrone**, **Tridrone**, **Quadrone** and **Pentadrone**.
- In lieu of the hoard of money, there are five old dwarven paintings, worth 50gp each. In addition, there are small caches of gold, totaling 120gp, located around the room in small shrines to Moradin.
- In one of the caches are three potions. Each is a dull crimson liquid that pulses slightly with light. These are modified version of *Potion of Vitality*, which act as they might regularly, but can also cure indefinite forms of madness.

ADVENTURE 7: SKULLPORT SEARCH & RESCUE

Map: 5.1 Xanathar's Lair

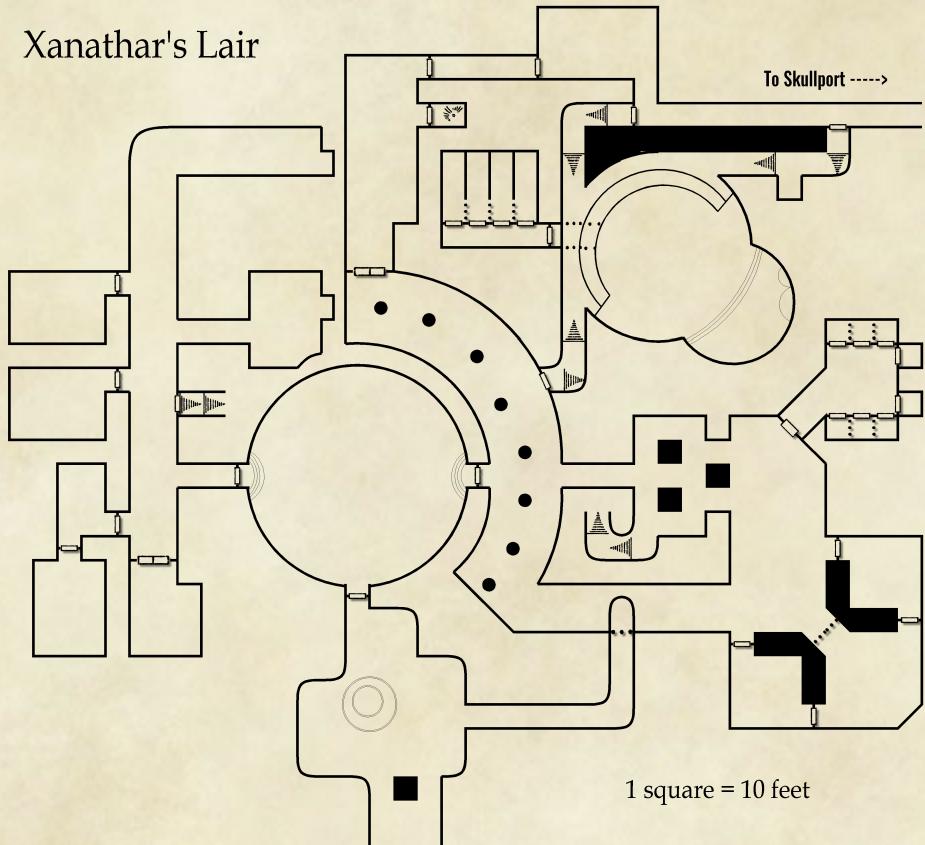
APL: 5

Hook: The party are approached by one of the factions of Waterdeep (use your discretion in which this should be). One of their undercover agents has been discovered by the Xanathar Guild and is scheduled for death by gladiatorial combat in the Xanathar's lair. The identity of other faction agents has been similarly compromised after the agent was tortured for information. The party are asked to extract the faction agent, and are given directions to get to the lair and are promised a considerable sum of gold and items as reward.

Adventure Summary: The Guild will be on high alert for any attempted extractions, so DM's may consider beefing up the number of creatures around X7. Additionally, there may be other goals the players can pursue while in the lair. If you'd like to make it more challenging, consider including another request in the hook, to steal plans from X19.

Room/Encounter Adjustments: None, though the faction agent is being kept in one of the cell blocks of X7, awaiting his execution by combat in X6.

Xanathar's Lair



ADVENTURE 8: THE CASSALANTER COLLAPSE

Map: 6.1 Cassalanter Villa and 6.2 Temple of Asmodeus

APL: 4

Hook: The Cassalanters are throwing a party. You've been asked on behalf of the Grey Hands to attend the party. They suspect that there's a plot to murder several members of the nobility in attendance. The party are to learn what they can and - if possible - capture the murderer(s) and stop any wrongdoing.

Adventure Summary: The Grey Hands can secure up to two formal invitations to the party. The players will need to brainstorm other ways to infiltrate the complex for everyone to be present. If they get stuck, NPC allies could offer suggestions, such as sneaking in through the top-story windows or posing as one of the catering staff.

The Cassalanters themselves are the perpetrators of the plot. The plan is to trap the nobility in the house and cause it to collapse. The Cassalanters, having quietly positioned themselves to benefit from the disruption to business that this will cause, while also courting public favor by appearing to be the victims of a murder plot.

While the other members of the family discreetly leave, Ammalia Cassalanter will address the gathered crowd. Once she has their attention, she'll activate a one-time use teleportation item to escape, and a magical barrier consistent with the Force Cage spell will encase the villa. Minutes later, the house will collapse unless stopped. In the underground Temple, a **Bulette** is chewing through the foundations that keep the villa standing.

Room/Encounter Adjustments:

- Floors one and two are open to the attendees, and the party may come and go as they please. Two veterans (both unaware of plot) stand guard at entrances to the basement and third floor.
- Allow each player a Perception roll while on these first two levels. Successful DC13 Wisdom (Perception) checks will allow them to overhear bits of information passed between plain-clothed guards who are in on the plot. They'll say things like "keep an eye on the basement entrance...don't want anyone drunkenly wandering down." or "Make sure you get outside before Ammalia finishes her speech. Then push anyone else back in who comes out."
- The third and fourth levels are unoccupied.
- C22 - In Ammalia's study, a successful DC10 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals a letter written by Ammalia that outlines their new business investments, which match those in attendance. In the margins, it mentions many of the other noble families by name and includes parentheticals indicating the names of their current investments and business ventures. This can be used as evidence, should the party later attempt to pin the crime on the Cassalanters.
- C23 - A locked trap door (DC14 to unlock, or DC22 Athletics to pry by force) connects the room to the villa's roof. It may be used as an alternative entrance.

- A7 (Temple) - The Bulette is here, chewing through pillars of stone. If it is not killed in four combat rounds, the house above will collapse. Players will be able to escape through the tunnels the bulette burrowed to get to the temple.
- No cultists or Cassalanters are down here, though any undead remain as indicated in the book.

ADVENTURE 9: ANIMAL RESCUE

Map: 7.1 Ships of the Sea Maiden's Faire

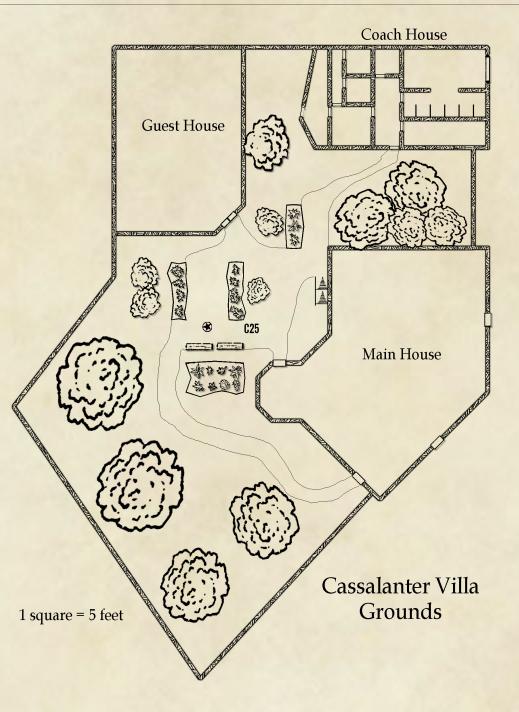
APL: 5

Hook: An animal rights group has approached the party, claiming that the Sea Maiden's Faire has been abusing the animals in their keep (whether or not this is true is up to you). The group wants to attempt a jailbreak, so to speak, but lacks the resources to do so. Will the party help them rescue these defenseless animals?

Adventure Summary: The animal rights group is led by two **aarakocra**, who will aid as they're able. Additionally, they can provide up to two manned rowboats in order to ferry the animals off of the boats. It's up to the players to form the rest of the plan.

Room/Encounter Adjustments:

- J14, J20 and J26 - The rooms adjacent to these areas contain the animals. These range from small, harmless animals to larger, more dangerous ones. Choose 12 animal types in total and form appropriate Animal Handling DCs for the party to be able to mollify the animals and escort them without issue to the rowboats.



ADVENTURE 10: SPIRIT'S AWAKENING

Map: 8.1 Kolat Towers and 8.2 Extradimensional Sanctum

APL: 5

Hook: The ghost of Duhlark Kolat, a former owner of Kolat Towers, visits the party in Trollskull Alley. He seems confused that he hasn't contacted other, more powerful allies, but seems convinced the party can help him. His spirit was split into three pieces, each of which still resides in the Tower. If the party can collect them, Duhlark will manifest and will be able to aid them in overthrowing the tower's evil usurper. To accomplish this, the ghost guides the party to a Soul Stone capable of harnessing these spirit fragments.

As reward, the city will see a great evil vanquished (Manshoon) and Duhlark will reward them appropriately in gold and items.

Adventure Summary: Once the soul stone contains each of the fragments, Duhlark will manifest in a new body, with the stats of an **Archmage**. He'll manifest at half health, with no spell slots available above 5th level, and with one level of Exhaustion, but will want to press on and defeat Manshoon and his minions in Kolat Tower.

Room/Encounter Adjustments: Duhlark's ghost will not be able to aid them directly in combat until he manifests fully, but can sense the spirit fragments and lead the party toward them.

- K12 - One of the staves in the room contains the first spirit fragment.
- K19 - The **flameskull** in this room contains the second fragment, and must be defeated to be collected.
- K21 - One of the books in the study contains the final fragment.

