

**GROUP PATRONS
FOR WATERDEEP**

**SAVED!
\$1000**



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CLASSIFIED

The boss don't want no one seeing this. Show this to the Xanathar so it knows what they know about us. Capiche?

I, Elminster Aumar, have recently found this bloodied and sodden envelope lying on the ground. It appears to show a detailed summary of what one would do to use the Xanathar Guild as an employer in some sort of storytelling game.

How odd.

Upon consulting my scrying mirror for more information on the origin of this mysterious document, it gave me the following message:

Like this sample*? Then check out the full product in *Group Patrons for Waterdeep*, now available on the DMs Guild website! 22 patrons and counting!

This is nothing if not cryptic. I know not of what it speaks. What is a "website"? What is a "DM," why is there a guild of them, and why do they know so much of such a powerful, dangerous organization? I hope to investigate these matters further before the "DMs" do irreparable damage to themselves or the city.

*Blood, stencils, and handwritten notes not included in full product.

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USING THIS BOOK

This book builds on the Group Patron framework originally presented in *Eberron: Rising from the Last War* and *Tasha's Cauldron of Everything* by describing over twenty specific, canonical group patrons from the Waterdeep, Skullport, and Undermountain area. Group patrons are influential people or organizations that may assemble, regularly hire, or otherwise sponsor your adventuring party. Group patrons often play an important role in a campaign's story.

You can readily use this book with any Waterdeep, Skullport, or Undermountain adventure, whether it be an official Wizards of the Coast product, a homebrew campaign, or somewhere inbetween. It is consistent with the canon of 5th edition Dungeons and Dragons, and draws further inspiration from earlier editions, video games, and other sources.

Chapter 5 of this book contains further information on how to use each patron as a player faction in *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*, including alternative plot books and adventure beginnings. This makes Dragon Heist the ultimate replayable adventure.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

This book builds on many other excellent products and references such products frequently. To fully utilize this book, we strongly recommend you have access to *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*. Readers may also find the following useful:

- *Dungeon Master's Guide*, by Wizards of the Coast (for renown rules and downtime activities)
- *Sword Coast Adventurer's Guide*, by Wizards of the Coast (for lore and backgrounds)
- *Tasha's Crucible of Everything Else* Volume 1, by QL Games, now available on the DMs Guild (for downtime crime)
- *Waterdeep: Dungeon of the Mad Mage*, by Wizards of the Coast (for lore and stat blocks)
- *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*, by Wizards of the Coast (for downtime activities)

This product is fully compatible with the following popular Waterdeep-area products:

- *Blue Alley*, by Alan Patrick and M. T. Black
- *Dragon Heist: Forgotten Tales*, by Will Doyle, James Haeck, and James Introcaso
- *Options for Trollskull Manor*, by Janek Sielicki
- *Rats of Waterdeep*, by Will Doyle and Lysa Penrose
- *Residents of Trollskull Alley*, by Donna and Hal Howard
- *Skullport: Shadow of Waterdeep*, by Cassandra MacDonald
- *Unseen Waterdeep*, by James Introcaso
- *Volo's Guide to Getting Murdered*, by Matthew Whitby
- *Waterdeep: City Encounters*, by the Guild Adepts
- *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*, by Wizards of the Coast
- *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist Complete DM's Bundle*, by Eventyr Games
- *Waterdeep: Dungeon of the Mad Mage*, by Wizards of the Coast
- *Waterdeep: Kitten Rescue*, by Michelle Churchill
- And more!

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WHAT’S INSIDE

Chapters 1-4 contain information for each group patron. Chapter 5 contains information for using each patron as a player faction in *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*. Read chapter 5 at your own risk; it contains spoilers intended for the DM’s eyes only! Consult the following for more information on how to read chapters 1-4.

- Patron Description.** This section describes the patron and its history, interests, enemies, and allies.
- Perks.** This section describes benefits your party may have because of your patronage.
- Contacts.** This section lists characters your party may frequently interact with, depending on your renown with the patron.
- Important Locations.** This section lists locations in and around Waterdeep, Skullport, and Undermountain that your patron may ask you to visit in their service.
- Roles.** This section describes various responsibilities your patron may need filling and character backgrounds associated with each one.
- Suggested Downtime Activities.** You can gain renown with your patron by participating in downtime activities relevant to their interests and agendas.

USING RENOWN

This product includes perks and side quests only available to characters who are trusted by a given patron. You can use the optional renown rules in chapter 1 of the *Dungeon Master’s Guide* to track a character’s influence with any patron. These rules have also been reprinted in Appendix B of this book for your convenience.

RANKS

The *Dungeon Master’s Guide* and *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist* give ranks, which are special titles, for characters with a certain degree of renown with some patrons. Not all patrons offer formal ranks. Example ranks and their corresponding renown threshold are listed in the Patron Ranks table.

PATRON RANKS

Patron	1 Renown	3 Renown	10 Renown	25 Renown	50 Renown
Bregan D’aerthe	Orbb (private)	Kyorlinorbb (corporal)	Khal’abbil (sergeant)	Mallasargtlin (lieutenant)	Ilareth (captain)
Church of Lathander	Awakened	Dawnbringer	Dawngreeter	Dawnlord	High Dawnlord
City Watch	Constable	Armar	Civilar	Senior Civilar	Ward Civilar
Cult of Asmodeus	Goat	Sheep	Tail	Blood	Right Hand
Emerald Enclave	Springwarden	Summerstrider	Autumnreaver	Winterstalker	Master of the Wild
Force Grey	Gray Hand Initiate	Junior Gray Hand	Senior Grey Hand	Force Grey Initiate	Defender of Waterdeep
Harpers	Watcher	Harpshadow	Brightcandle	Wise Owl	High Harper
Lord’s Alliance	Cloak	Redknife	Stingblade	Warduke	Lioncrown
Order of the Gauntlet	Chevall	Marcheon	Whitehawk	Vindicator	Righteous Hand
Xanathar Guild	Eyestalker	Agent of the Eye	Eye Ray	Guild Boss	Hand of the Eye
Zhentarim	Fang	Wolf	Viper	Ardragon	Dread Lord

ALTERNATIVES TO RENOWN

If you are not tracking renown, you can use a classic rule of thumb: the dungeon master simply goes with what feels right and would be fun for your group.

If you are not tracking renown but want to numerically approximate a character’s renown with a given patron, you can do so by multiplying the number of levels a character has gained while serving that patron by an Approximate Renown Multiplier, found in the Approximate Renown table. For example, if a level 14 character has gained 4 levels while serving Patron A and 10 levels while serving Patron B, it would have approximately 8 renown with Patron A and 20 renown with Patron B. If a level 20 character has gained 19 levels serving Patron A and 1 level serving Patron B, it would have approximately 57 renown with Patron A and 3 renown with Patron B.

The number of levels gained serving a patron represents how much you’ve earned a patron’s trust. The Approximate Renown Multiplier represents how useful your skillset is to a patron.

APPROXIMATE RENOWN

Character Level	Approximate Renown Multiplier
1-4	x1
5-10	x1.25
11-16	x2
17-20	x3

DOWNTIME AND RENOWN

In addition to the methods for gaining renown described in chapter 1 of the *Dungeon Master’s Guide*, you can also earn renown by completing downtime activities associated with your patron. Chapters 1-4 of this book suggest suitable downtime activities for each patron. Unless otherwise noted, you gain 1 renown with a patron for every 30 days you spend doing suggested downtime activities in their service. A day of a downtime activity requires 8 hours of activity.

ROLES

Asmodeus can offer impressive power to those who are willing to pay the price. Many come to him to gain the upper hand—but beware, greater power comes at increasingly steep prices. Those seeking wealth, fame, longevity, a particular prize, or any number of things may find themselves bound to the archdevil's service.

Some avoid selling their souls outright, sometimes for impressive amounts of time, and think that they have outsmarted the fiends. Devils are quite adept at entangling people in their snares, however, or else guide them down a path that takes them to hell without ever requiring the soul as a bargaining chip.

The Cult of Asmodeus Roles table suggests positions you might fill in the cult and the backgrounds frequently associated with each role.

CULT OF ASMODEUS ROLES

Roles	Backgrounds
Effectuator	Criminal, Knight of the Order*, Soldier, Mercenary Veteran*, Urban Bounty Hunter*
Interrogator	Charlatan, City Watch*, Criminal, Noble, Soldier, Urban Bounty Hunter*
Muscle	City Watch*, Mercenary Veteran*, Outlander, Soldier
Proselytizer	Acolyte, Charlatan, Courtier*, Far Traveler*, Sage
Soothsayer	Acolyte, Cloistered Scholar*, Sage, Far Traveler*
Recent Convert	Any

*Found in the *Sword Coast Adventurer's Guide*.

SUGGESTED DOWNTIME ACTIVITIES

You can gain renown with your patron by participating in certain downtime activities, such as the following. Some activities direct readers to other sources for more information, using the following key:

D = chapter 6 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*

P = chapter 8 of the *Player's Handbook*

T = chapter 4 of *Tasha's Crucible of Everything Else* Volume 1, available on the DMs Guild

X = chapter 2 of *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*

Assassination. The cult would never survive in the open, and so the cult is always listening for who might be spreading rumors, and adding them to the ever-expanding hit list. Many of the targets will never even have attempts made against them, as the list is constantly being reorganized as suspicions are confirmed or dismissed. Speak to a cultist with 30 renown or more if you don't know who is next on the hit list.

Hunting. Waterdeep is full of all kinds of people. Plenty of them would join the cult, but aren't aware that it exists. As it stands, they might lack support, might get themselves hurt or killed, or worse, may be working for enemies of the cult.

That's a terrible waste of potential, and so the cult often sends people out to see who might be interested in joining them in their devil worshipping. Approach potential proselytes without revealing your personal identity, and ensure they know to keep the invitation a secret if they want to live.

Imp Training. Imps are fiendish little critters, and they need to be trained so as to carry information accurately, not give themselves away, and otherwise complete assigned tasks. Doing so enables you to understand devils better and interact with them more successfully in the future. Imp training is hard work; leaders will note you for your willingness, peers will thank you for taking care of it, and those below you will look to you as an example of devoted sacrifice. Loreloth leads the largest imp-training program, in the God Catcher, but others do exist.

Indoctrination (X). New recruits must be carefully taught the tenets of the cult and encouraged to work with ambition. These gatherings are usually held in the old windmill to keep private locations and sacred artifacts away from prying eyes. The more people you help to bring in, the more people know and respect you personally within the cult.

Worship (D). While contracts dictate the transactions between devils and mortals, those who prove to be profitable servants are likely to be extended more favorable contracts. Offering treasure, professing loyalty, removing obstacles, and perpetuating the devils' purposes are just a few examples. Lord and Lady Cassalanter hold worship services where instruction is given once every tenday in the temple to Asmodeus.

XANATHAR GUILD

To properly use the Xanathar Guild as a group patron, you'll need access to Waterdeep: Dragon Heist, by Wizards of the Coast. It may also be useful to have access to Waterdeep: Dungeon of the Mad Mage, by Wizards of the Coast, and Skullport: Shadow of Waterdeep, by Cassandra MacDonald.

The most powerful crime syndicate in Waterdeep, the Xanathar Guild controls more of the city's operations than the noble houses would like to admit. Their network is primarily spies and bravos, though they also have mages, engineers, and even some nobles on the payroll. On the surface, in Waterdeep, they don't engage in anything so grandiose as protection racketeering, instead, focusing on running gambling houses and vice dens in the Field Ward and Dock Ward.

These operations are made profitable by the conservative use of blackmail, bribes, and threats, as well as espionage from within the system, giving a veneer of civility to the guild's operation. Beneath Waterdeep though, in the subterranean town of Skullport, all bets are off. The Xanathar Guild rules with an iron fist there and brooks no insolence. They demand taxes from all businesses, protection money from all residents, and respect from anyone who crosses their path. Those who cannot meet their demands are killed, imprisoned, or enslaved and sold.

At the head of their organization is Xanathar itself, a mysterious and enigmatic gang boss who oversees the operations. All manner of mythology and rumors surround

this figure, who has ruled the faction for centuries. Some believe them to be an especially-ambitious elf, while others suspect an immortal mage such as a lich. In truth, Xanathar is a beholder, and there have been numerous Xanathars over the years. Each time one dies, another usurps the position and claims the previous Xanathar's empire. The only thing that remains consistent is Xanathar's immortal paranoia. Knowing the fate of its predecessor, each Xanathar becomes more cautious than the last, seeing betrayal at every bend and death on every doorstep.

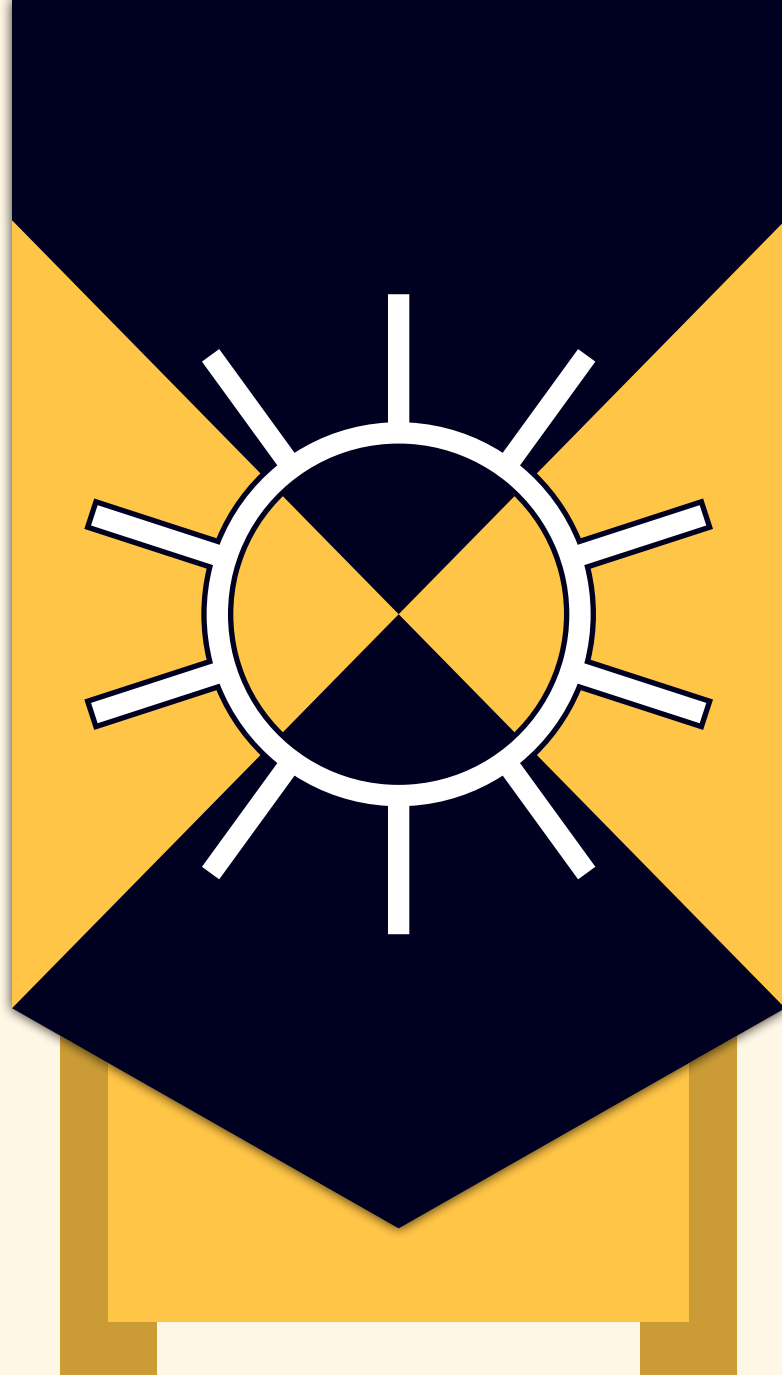
Loyalty and Subservience. Every member of the Xanathar Guild pays tribute to Xanathar, the mysterious and enigmatic ruler of the Guild. Few have ever met Xanathar, and fewer are aware of its true nature, as it uses many layers of trickery to mislead even its own subordinates. Nonetheless, to defy its direct orders is to court death. Those who fail in their duties, double-deal with the enemy, or disrespect the hierarchy of the organization are often permanently relegated to inglorious duties, or never seen again.

Allies? The Xanathar Guild is highly insular and large enough to stand mostly alone. As an organization, it makes few allies. Temporary alliances do form from time to time, but even those who share a motive with the enigmatic Guild know better than to shake hands on lasting alliances with them. Still, the Guild occasionally makes fleeting alliances with other criminal organizations. These alliances almost always end with the smaller organization being subsumed or destroyed, as Xanathar's paranoia gets the better of it.

The City Watch. At the most basic level, law enforcement limits the Guild's operations in Waterdeep. Their frequent patrols, investigations, and raids mitigate the Guild's ability to enact its will on the surface. That said, the Watch, noble as they are, are not incorrigible, and the Guild often uses bribes, extortion, and threats to keep individual watchmen silent, or even loyal, in some cases. They prefer not to kill members of the Watch where it can be avoided—blood in the streets draws the attention of far more dangerous organizations.

Force Grey. The aforementioned “far more dangerous organization”, Force Grey operates at the behest of the Blackstaff. When their agents, known as Grey Hands, turn their ire on the Guild, many operations must go to the ground, disappear, or risk being shut down. The Xanathar Guild is constantly aiming to plant spies within Force Grey, but intense scrutiny in the vetting process has foiled each and every one of their efforts. Though the Grey Hands would like to move on Skullport and eradicate the corruption at its seed, such a mission is far too dangerous to consider, meaning these two organizations remain at something of a stalemate.

The Zhentarim. Though the Zhentarim and the Xanathar Guild could potentially see their way to an alliance under other circumstances, the capricious and unstable nature of the Xanathar forbids this. As such, they often compete for turf, and Xanathar remains paranoid of Black Network spies within its Guild. This fear is founded, as the Zhentarim has made some headway in their infiltrations, but Xanathar is just as likely to disintegrate one of its own as it is to successfully root out the source of its corruption.



House Auvryndar. Prior to the Guild's hostile takeover of Skullport, the drow of House Auvryndar had alliances with House Tanor'thal, one of the town's previous rulers. Since then, House Auvryndar has sought to control the port again. The Guild is only peripherally aware of these schemes, but nonetheless remains skeptical of drow in Skullport, and plans to use the Legion of Azrok, implanted with intellect devourers, as a bulwark against House Auvryndar.

Harpers. Given the Xanathar Guild's propensity for cruelty, it's little surprise that they would draw the ire of the Harpers. And given the Harpers' propensity for secrecy, it's no surprise that they have also had a great deal of success in infiltrating the Guild. There are multiple Harper spies living in Skullport, and the Xanathar's trusted chief engineer, Thorvin Twinbeard, sells Guild secrets to the Harpers. Thus far, the Guild has had little success in discovering the spies, but Xanathar's paranoia continues to grow.

PERKS

With the Xanathar Guild as your patron, you gain the following perks.

Assignments. The Guild may assign you tasks such as security for its businesses, disappearing troublesome whistleblowers, or digging up blackmail on officials. If you complete these missions well, you can earn good coin from your superior, and in cases where a mission earns coin and advances the goals of the organization (such as a heist), they allow you to keep up to 75% of the loot.

Contraband. Poisons, narcotics, and drinks from far-off lands can all be within your reach, thanks to the Guild's network of smugglers and distributors. You get no discount on these products, but so long as you're in a place where the Guild is operating, you know who to ask.

Fences. Members of the Guild can readily sell stolen goods for you. They'll give you a fair price, and make sure the goods are moved anonymously. Expect to pay a cut of the profits in dues to Xanathar, though—the guild looks poorly upon those who don't cut their shadowy master in.

Guild-Owned Businesses. The Xanathar Guild operates numerous businesses throughout Waterdeep and other cities, primarily as fronts for money laundering, fencing, and smuggling. Nonetheless, when you shop at these "legitimate businesses", you know what to tell the shopkeeper to get a 10% discount on all goods and services as a member of the Guild.

Proficiencies. Each member of your party gains proficiency in Thieves' Cant and learns specific codes and symbols known only by the Xanathar Guild for arranging drops, indicating safehouses, and communicating surreptitiously.

Safehouses. Members of the Guild can find safehouses to lay low wherever the Xanathar's operations are established. Invisible in the eyes of the law, these safehouses are perfect for the scoundrel in danger of being caught. Of course, if you're sloppy, and lead the Watch to a safehouse, or you exploit the charity of your comrades while providing little yourself, you may find your reputation suffering.

CONTACTS

With the Xanathar Guild as your patron, you may interact with any of the following personalities:

Ahmaergo, the Horned Dwarf. The Xanathar's senechal, the shield dwarf Ahmaergo (LE male mountain dwarf champion) gets his title from the horned helmet he wears, which gives him a silhouette like that of a minotaur. Once a member of the Iron Ring, a now-scattered slaver organization, Ahmaergo is now unflinchingly loyal to his new master—Xanathar. Though outwardly civil, he strikes fear into the hearts of his underlings, who much prefer not to risk getting him involved in situations. Nonetheless, if one needs the ear of Xanathar, Ahmaergo is the closest anyone can expect to get.

Noska Ur'Gray. An enforcer within the guild, Noska (LE male duergar thug) is a shield dwarf whose left hand and forearm have been replaced with a heavy crossbow mounted to the stump. He mediates disputes, and sees to the day-to-day functioning of the Guild, overseeing troublesome

underlings, and intimidating those who would stand up to the Guild's might. Though hardly cheery or understanding, Noska doesn't let personal feelings get in the way of Guild business, and can be relied upon to pass messages along when necessary.

Captain Karim Tefi. A merchant captain who brings goods from Baldur's Gate and the Moonshae Isles, Captain Karim (N female Calishite swashbuckler) keeps her Guild membership a secret even to most of her crew as she smuggles goods for the Guild. Cheerful and exuberant, Karim often brings news of the Guild's dealings elsewhere in the Sword Coast when she comes. Unbeknownst to her, her first mate Mateo Lund has had his brain replaced with an intellect devourer—a spy of her master. Should she step out of line or show signs of disloyalty, she is surely next in line.

Quietude. The proprietor of the Guts and Garters in Skullport, Quietude (NE male tiefling bandit) runs the business, guarding the secret passage in the cellar leading to the Xanathar hideout. As his namesake suggests, he does his job and keeps to himself—he may listen to your troubles, but don't expect him to respond verbosely. For Guildmembers in Skullport, however, most news goes through him. Those looking to get updates on various goings-on within the faction almost always come to Quietude first.

Suki Vai. A crafty newcomer to the Guild who's quickly proven her worth, Suki (LE female Illuskan mage) co-ordinates many of the Guild's espionage operations between the surface and Skullport. Those who wish to contact her leave a brass coin (a taol, in Waterdhavian parlance) in a specific mailbox in the Dock Ward, then check back after midnight, when the coin will have been replaced by a note with a time and place to meet. She keeps track of this mailbox by way of a modified alarm spell she recasts once a week, which informs her telepathically if a brass coin is deposited there.

Myrtha Maveer. The innkeeper at the Deepwater Tuna, Myrtha Maveer (LE female Tethyrian commoner) is an overworked, underpaid Guildmember who is, by all accounts, looking for a way out of the business. However, she doesn't confide this in anyone, keeping a friendly demeanor when dealing with other operatives. She runs The Deepwater Tuna, a vice den masquerading as a dive bar.

IMPORTANT LOCATIONS

The Xanathar Guild has special locations all over (and under) Waterdeep. With it as your patron, expect to visit places such as:

The Guts and Garters. A quiet three-story inn in Skullport tended by Quietude, the Guts and Garters hides an unexpected secret. A tunnel in its cellar hidden behind a false stack of crates leads to the Xanathar Guild hideout, where Xanathar itself resides. Few non-Xanathar locals will rest here, as those in the know would rather avoid confrontation with the Guild.

Xanathar Hideout. This ancient Netherese dungeon complex underneath Skullport has been claimed by Xanathar as a fortified hideout. A secret staircase within spirals up to the sewers of Waterdeep, where it connects up to the Castle Ward—the Guild uses this to move between Skullport and Waterdeep. The Xanathar's highest-ranking

underlings, such as Ahmaergo, live here as well.

Skull Island. This fortress on the Sargauth River abutting Skullport is held by the Xanathar Guild, and the bulk of their forces live here. It is tremendously well-fortified, and at its south side is a 140-foot tall stone column carved out into a tower, where Sundeth, the half-ogre master of the island, lives.

Suki's Safehouse. Suki Vai owns a two-story farmhouse in the Field Ward of Waterdeep. The lower story is old brick-and-mortar construction, while the upper half is made of newer wood. Here, Suki lives with, at any given time, as many as a dozen other guild members. She allows this building to be used as a safehouse, but her room is off-limits, and she brooks no insolence from her guests—those who show her disrespect are thrown out on their ear.

The Deepwater Tuna. This unassuming bar in the Dock Ward sells mediocre food and drink at a fitting price. It's not a popular or well-loved establishment by any means, and Myrtha Maveer, the innkeep, doesn't seem that interested in improving its reputation as a dive bar. What really brings in the customers, however, is what goes on upstairs. The bar is a front for a vice den run out of the old rooms upstairs, which are no longer rented out.

ROLES

The Xanathar Guild, despite its reputation for mistreating its underlings, still draws a fair number of new recruits frequently. They frequently recruit from those who are beaten down or broken, and seek a family and purpose, or simply from those who want money and aren't picky on ethics.

The Xanathar Guild Roles table suggests positions you might fill in the Guild and the backgrounds frequently associated with each role.

XANATHAR GUILD ROLES

Roles	Backgrounds
Enforcer	City Watch*, Criminal, Mercenary Veteran*, Outlander, Sailor, Soldier, Urchin
Spy	Charlatan, City Watch*, Criminal, Entertainer, Urban Bounty Hunter*, Urchin
Assassin	Criminal, Outlander, Soldier, Urban Bounty Hunter*, Urchin
Contraband Dealer	Charlatan, Criminal, Far Traveler*, Entertainer, Guild Artisan, Sailor
Guild Mage	Acolyte, Charlatan, Cloistered Scholar, Criminal, Hermit, Sage
Promising Upstart	Any

*Found in the *Sword Coast Adventurer's Guide*.

"Manshoon has a vision for this city, a true vision that puts the Black Network in charge. What's not to love?"
-Urstul Floxin

SUGGESTED DOWNTIME ACTIVITIES

You can gain renown with your patron by participating in certain downtime activities, such as the following. Some activities direct readers to other sources for more information, using the following key:

- D = chapter 6 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*
- P = chapter 8 of the *Player's Handbook*
- T = chapter 4 of *Tasha's Crucible of Everything Else* Volume 1, available on the DMs Guild
- X = chapter 2 of *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*

Carousing (D, X). The Guild is always looking to add more contacts to its network, and as such, those who can get into upper-class circles and make some new friends can rapidly gain respect within the organization.

Crime (T, X). The Xanathar Guild is involved with a wide variety of criminal enterprises, and especially active members of these enterprises can even expect to see their status within the Guild grow.

Gambling (X). The Guild runs a number of gambling houses throughout Waterdeep and Skullport. Either by running some of these activities, or playing at them, you can do some gambling in your downtime.

Pit Fighting (X). Though the Watch has cracked down on underground fighting pits, you know where to go for a proper brawl outside the Field of Triumph.

ZHENTARIM (MANSHOON BRANCH)

To properly use the Zhentarim (Manshoon branch) as a group patron, you'll need access to Waterdeep: Dragon Heist, by Wizards of the Coast.

The Zhentarim, also known as the Black Network, is a faction dedicated to achieving absolute rule through whatever means necessary. Waterdeep has not one, but two competing Zhentarim branches. By joining Manshoon's Zhentarim, your group is choosing a side in what may prove to be a devastating turf war. With Manshoon as your group's patron, you are saying that mere gold fails to satisfy when compared to outright control over all of Waterdeep. Most members also seek individual power and are willing to do whatever it takes to actualize those aspirations.

This power-hunger lends itself to carrying out missions to collect information for blackmail or to outright display strength to subjugate the weak. The Zhentarim continue to work from the shadows, knowing that the City Watch and the Watchful Order of Magists and Protectors remain considerable obstacles. That is until the Zhents can bolster the ranks of these law enforcement agencies. Their efforts have been slow but successful, leading to a number of nobles, guildmasters, and Watch captains bribed or threatened into submission.

Joining this branch of the Zhentarim isn't any more challenging than their counterpart, and realistically most entry-level members barely even know they're working for Manshoon until their tenacity sees them promoted. Still, if

CHAPTER 5: PATRONS IN DRAGON HEIST

Player factions can play an important role in *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*. This chapter explains how to use each patron in this book as a player faction for that adventure. However, proceed with caution as this chapter contains spoilers for *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*. If you are a player, leave this section for the DM's eyes only.

PLOT HOOKS

In the original adventure, you begin your adventure when Volo asks your party for help after seeing you hold your own in a bar fight. This chapter provides four new alternative plot hooks tied to each patron.

Help Wanted. In this version, Volo still comes to your party for help to look for his missing friend Floon Blagmaar. It assumes you did not get in the bar fight at the start of chapter 1, and that Volo either approached your party because of your patron, or approached your patron, who asked or assigned you to help him.

Skip the sections Tavern Brawl and Troll and Friends from chapter 1 of *Dragon Heist*. The party still receives the same information from the Meeting Volo section but may receive it in a different format, such as a note, a meeting with their patron instead of Volo, or some other medium.

Where's Renaer? In this version, Volo does not ask you or your patron for help finding Floon Blagmaar. For some reason related to your patron, your party is asked, assigned, or takes the initiative to search for the missing Renaer Neverember. Skip the sections Tavern Brawl, Troll and Friends, and Meeting Volo. The party can learn through their patron or other resources that Renaer was last seen at the Skewered Dragon in the Dock Ward.

Originally, Xoblob and the Skewered Dragon patrons remember a few details about Floon and Volo. They now also remember similar details about Renaer.

If the party rescues Floon, Volo may reward you with Trollskull Manor out of gratitude, even though he may not have sent you on the quest in the first place. If not, Renaer may give them the deed as a thank you, or you can use the A Home of Our Own plot hook below, or they may receive it from another source of your choice.

A Home of Our Own. In this version, you have access to Trollskull Manor because of some reason related to your patron, not because of a reward from Volo or Renaer. This can be used with the Where's Renaer and Dalakhar plot hooks, or with a custom plot hook.

Skip the A Good Deed section from the end of chapter 1. The party receives the deed through this alternative method instead.

Dalakhar. Originally, Dalakhar comes to the party with the Stone of Golorr because they famously had just rescued the kidnapped son of his employer, so surely they would be trustworthy to hold on to the powerful artifact for a few

days. In this version, the party does not rescue Floon or Renaer. This plot hook describes some other reason Dalakhar would come to your party or patron for help with the Stone.

Skip all of chapter 1. The party may have access to Trollskull Manor because of the A Home of Our Own plot hook, or another reason of your choice. The fireball scene and investigation of chapter 3 may need to be adjusted to fit this plot hook, depending on the patron.

RECRUITING

If you catch the interest of a potential patron, they may reach out to you to request your service or membership. Some patrons may even attempt to steal your loyalty from another! This section describes how patrons may communicate with prospective recruits. It corresponds to the "Joining Factions" section in chapter 2 of *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist* (p. 34-40).

SAMPLE MISSIONS

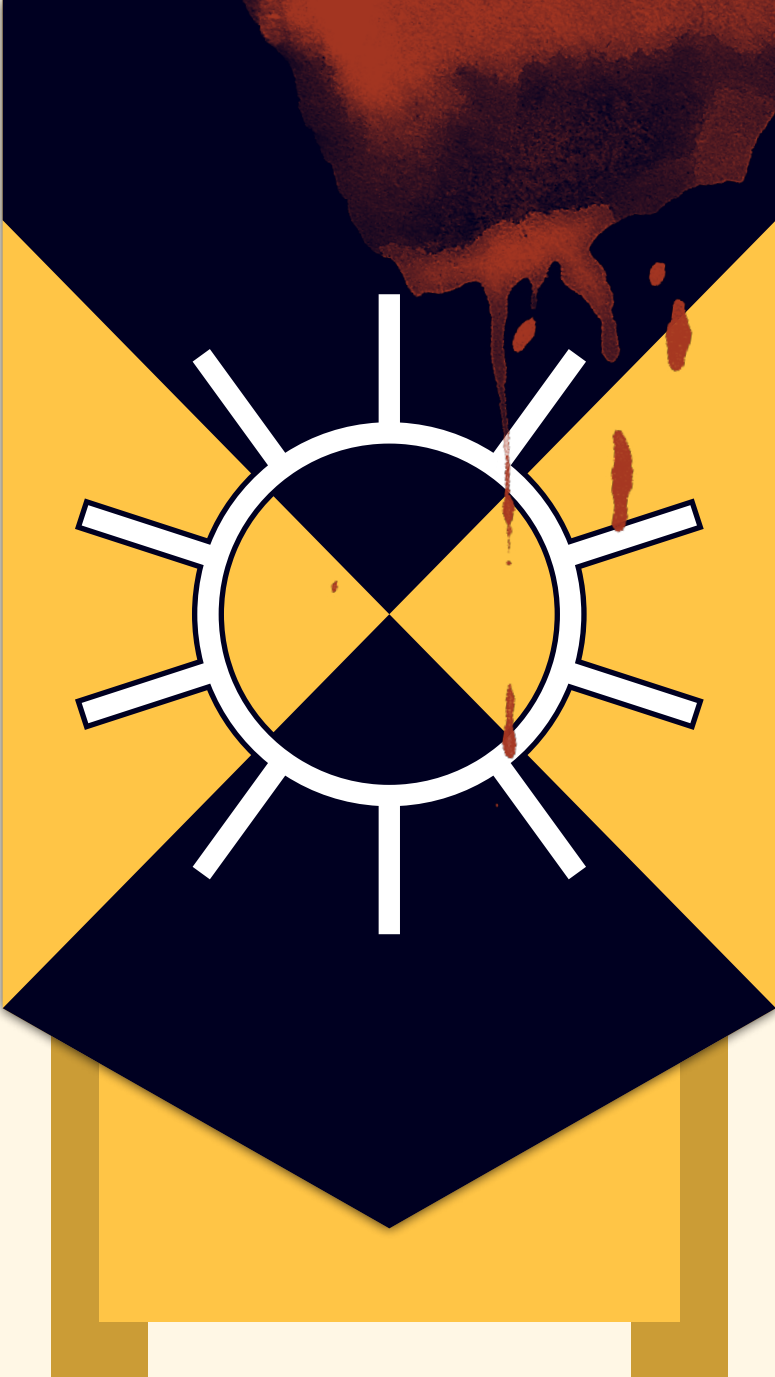
Characters who belong to factions in *Dragon Heist* are granted missions upon gaining a level, from 2nd through 5th level. This section provides examples of such missions for each patron. It corresponds to the "Joining Factions" section in chapter 2 of *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist* (p. 34-40).

FACTION REINFORCEMENTS

The main villain or villains of your adventure wait outside the Vault of Dragons to apprehend the party as they leave. If the characters have kept their group patron informed of their progress, you can have reinforcements arrive to help combat the villains or introduce a new element to the situation. This section describes such reinforcements and corresponds with the "Faction Reinforcements" section in chapter 4 of *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist* (p.97-98).

GETTING TO THE LAIR

The Xanathar's secret lair is well-hidden, but group patrons are well-informed. This section describes how a group patron can help a party find the lair. It corresponds with the "Getting to the Lair" section in chapter 5 of *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist* (p.101).



ascertain the identity of the fabled Xanathar—would easily be the feature of the year. Gaxly suggest the characters seek out Noska Ur'gray at The Hanged Man in the Dock Ward, and either sign up for the tournament, or stealthily follow him as he returns to the Xanathar's Lair.

XANATHAR GUILD

PLOT HOOKS

Help Wanted. One of the Xanathar contacts has heard word that a friend of Volo's has gone missing. Word on the street is, the disappearance might be tied to the Zhents. Sticking it to the Black Network and scoring a favor with Volo at once sounds like a good deal right about now, just don't let him know who you work for.

Where's Renaer? Renaer Neverember has been taken by the Zhentarim, and apparently has some very important intel that Xanathar would prefer didn't make it into their hands. Get him out of there before he spills it!

A Home of Our Own. Trollskull Manor was an old Xanathar gambling den way back in the day that got busted up by the Watch. Since then, however, it's become city property, and no one's wanted it. The Guild has managed to reacquire it at a bargain and wants to see it restored to its former glory.

Dalakhar. A few Xanathar Guild operatives have been getting close with Renaer Neverember in hopes of winning the favour of folks in high places without revealing their nature. As a result, word has got to Dalakhar about the party being friends of the Neverember family, giving him some faith that they may be able to secure the Stone of Golorr temporarily.

RECRUITING

The Guild's recruiting strategy is often described as "direct." They consider all of Waterdeep and Skullport their turf, and small-time criminals caught poaching are dragged in by the Guild. If the offender seems to have some guts, the Guild may consider taking them in. The consequences of refusal are often implied. Other times, the Xanathar guild recruits higher-class individuals by slowly making deals with them under the guise of legitimate business, until before they know it, the mark is taken in with the wealth and prosperity of working with organized crime.

FACTION REINFORCEMENTS

The Xanathar Guild can send a pack of 4 thugs, led by Nar'l Xibrindas and his grell attendant, to the party's aid so long as they remain in Xanathar's good graces. Nar'l, however, is a Bregan D'aerthe spy, and will betray his comrades in a moment of vulnerability if he sees a chance to secure greater wealth for his faction.

GETTING TO THE LAIR

Unsurprisingly, it is very easy for members of the Xanathar Guild to get to the Xanathar Guild lair. For the most part, any member of the Guild can ask another member for an escort to the passageway. Members in bad standing may find themselves being apprehended for "disciplinary action" when they arrive.

what they do while writing about – or at least informing Gaxly of—their experiences and earn some extra gold while doing it?

FACTION REINFORCEMENTS

Gaxly isn't a fighter himself, but he knows where they can be hired. If the characters are in need of aid as they come out of the Vault of Dragons, Gaxly sends Melyna Crestmoon (CG female half-elf scout) alongside three hired human veterans. Melyna Crestmoon fights bravely and fearlessly, but the mercenaries flee when reduced to half hit points or less.

GETTING TO THE LAIR

In a chance meeting with some sordid sources in a Dockside Tavern, Gaxly heard a rumor that the Xanathar's Guild is organizing a gladiatorial tournament. An inside scoop from the Xanathar's Lair—that would perhaps even

ZHENTARIM (DOOM RAID-ER BRANCH)

PLOT HOOKS

Help Wanted. Davil Starsong wants the Zhentarim to continue and make allies out of Waterdeep most influential, what better way to befriend Volo than to help return his dear friend safe? He asks that the party ensure that they are explicit in saying they represent the Doom Raiders.

Where's Renaer? The Doom Raiders caught wind of Manshoon's plan to kidnap Renaer, while not knowing his true intentions, standing idle simply isn't an option. Davil Starsong points out a warehouse in Candle Lane claimed by Manshoon's Zhentarim, suspecting that Renaer would be held there.

XANATHAR GUILD MISSIONS

Party Level	Mission Brief	Mission Requirements and Reward
2nd	"We're having a little celebration, at a house in Two Flasks Alley. We suspect Zhents might try and crash it, so we want some security on hand. A couple people to stand by at the door and inside, that's all."	Players can be stationed either inside watching the crowd, or at the doors checking invites. New arrivals are asked "How many eyes does Xanathar have?" The correct answer is "As many as there are stars in the sky". The celebration is a party of gambling, drinking, and carousing, and includes a Zhentarim prisoner having their head shaved while the crowd cheers and mocks him. During the party, a pair of Zhentarim spies will try to get in and spring their comrade once the Guildsmen are sufficiently drunk. They may try this by faking an invitation at the door, or just by sneaking in. However, they will try to lift the manacle key off of a Xanathar veteran in the crowd, undo the Zhentarim prisoner's bindings, and escape into the night. Reward: If this is prevented and the night goes off smoothly, the party receives 10gp each for their trouble.
3rd	"Monica, the blacksmith at the Silver Stirrup in the Field Ward, owes 200 dragons to the Guild, which she's been lax about paying back. Give her a chance to pay up, but if she doesn't, send her a message. Break something. Glass or bones, doesn't matter. No killing."	When they arrive, Monica insists she can have the money soon, and offers 30gp as a show of good faith. She promises she'll have more, and even offers to fix up the party's gear, if they'll just let her have a little more time to cover the debt. Reward: If the party finds a way to square her debt, or sends a "message" about being late on payments to the Guild, they receive 25gp each.
4th	"A couple of small-time burglars robbed Southwest Jewellers in the Southern Ward, and got away clean. Thus far, they haven't paid a cut to the Guild. Investigate the theft, find the culprits, and show them that no criminal in Waterdeep operates without paying dues to the Xanathar Guild."	How exactly they go about investigating is up to them. Southwest Jewellers is run by an elderly Illuskan man named Rudi. He's reluctant to talk about what happened to anyone who doesn't appear to be part of city services. He was robbed in the night, the burglars picked the lock and let themselves in. He awoke and heard someone downstairs, and came down to see three people, all wearing white masks. They stole quite a few high-value pieces, including a gold-and-emerald amulet worth 500gp. He recognized the voice of an old apprentice of his, a moon elf named Linnea, who used to frequent the Yawning Portal. The three burglars are two spies, and Linnea, a veteran. They will be trying to fence their goods, which is one method by which to find them, but players can also ask around at the Yawning Portal to find out more about Linnea. Reward: Characters who successfully drag Linnea and her two allies back to the Guild earn a cut of the proceeds, in the form of 100gp each worth of various stolen jewellery.
5th	"Meddling adventurers are holding one of ours hostage in a house at the Field Ward. Pay them a visit, get our ally back, and make an example of the troublesome fools."	Ott Steeltoes is being held prisoner in the basement of the house, trapped in iron bands of bilarro and guarded by a veteran, a mage, a priest, a druid, and a gladiator. Whether they sneak in, talk their way in, or kill their way in, all that matters is that Ott Steeltoes is returned. If desperate, the adventurers might put Ott to the blade and try to negotiate with him as a hostage. Reward: If the adventurers return Ott Steeltoes, they receive 100gp each, and the iron bands of Bilarro used to restrain him.

A Home of Our Own. As payment for successfully assisting the Zhentarim, Davil Starsong provides the party with the deed to Trollskull Manor. It was collected from someone who was indebted to Istrid Horn's illegal lending business. He suggests it could be renovated to a profitable business, a Zhentarim safehouse, or a combination of the two.

Dalakhar. The Stone of Golorr would be at risk in the hands of most people, but delivering it to a group experienced in delving into lich lairs would be safer than nothing. Dalakhar seeks out the adventuring party in hopes they can deliver the stone straight to the Doom Raiders without directly interacting with the Zhentarim himself.

RECRUITING

Zhentarim (Doom Raider branch) recruitment is described in *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*.