

The Princess

In this issue, we will update the plot and take a closer look at some of the NPCs the group visited in the previous session. In addition, we will explore two places in the Maze (which the characters perhaps will visit), and I've included the rough draft of a map of metropolitan Tan Dorra.

Running Plot Summary

Deepnight:

Steelworth calls in big favors from three relatively no-names: a proud stree runner Eb, fighter/nobleman Moss, and sly arcanist Dunmar to track down and rescue his daughter Sarbi. The three look for clues first at the Fire Red Flagon, where Moss accosts his Maze contact Cavindish for information regarding Sarbi's kidnapping. After a bribery, Cavindish reveals that there had been talk of trying to take down Steelworth, and that he had heard this at Enzo's pub a few weeks ago. On their way to Enzo's the group stops at the Den, the hideout for Eb's gang. Although his gang has no information on the kidnapping, they assure Eb that they would have his back should the effort turn to violence.

At Enzo's, the group reveals out loud that they are looking for the missing girl, which prompts a brutal assault from a group of thugs. The bartender, Enzo, is also clearly involved. He belies that the Lieutenant may be the perpetrator through his proxy, Umberto. Moss and Eb waste no time making things lethal, and they kill



The Unseen Sorceress

People and Places

Umberto: Known in his muscle-for-hire teenage years as “The Bulette,” Umberto now leads a respected outfit seemingly bent on establishing their version of order to the Maze. That being said, Umberto isn't all bad, despite what his breath might smell like. When the Magistrate decided to purge the Maze in the 1340s, Umberto rallied a resistance and within the week, half of Tan Dorra's economy had shut down, including ferrymen, masons, and suppliers of expensive hair. The initiative to invade the Maze was rendered kaput almost overnight. Umberto in 1251 is still an outspoken defender of the Maze's natives against outside abuse. He holds a grudge against the nobility, and his opinion toward Steelworth is typical.

Cavindish: They say Cavindish was a thug before the war. And then, when the nobles saw their investments overseas crumble, many of them turned to the petty pleasures nearby. Cavindish was there to be their man; he gave them what they wanted without trying to usurp them, and by doing so he gained the trust of many where his peers failed. Making a killing by Maze standards, Cavindish continues to be a friendly contact for Tan Dorra nobility in the Maze, much to chagrin of fellows like Umberto who would rather see an open rebellion.

Drape Factory: Tan Dorra is the most economically productive city in its hemisphere. It has many factories in its industrial district. In the aftermath of the War of the Nine Graves, most of the large financial powerhouses around the world were crippled, and the quickly changing global economy in 1251 is dominated by the small business: one that is agile and capable of rapid evolution. The turnover rate for buildings is very high, and the business of any given factory is just as likely to be out of business as active. This particular factory, though used most recently to mass manufacture textiles, has been used in the past to construct automatons, mint crowns, and barrack soldiers.

two thugs. In addition, one member from the Scorpions, a rival gang to Eb's, attempts to capitalize on the chaos to steal money from Dunmar, and although the attempt ultimately proves unsuccessful, tensions are felt between the two parties. The group considers leaving the scene in a hurry, but instead decides to ransack Enzo's backrooms for clues. They find that the man was paid about a week ago a sizable sum, and upon opening a locked chest, discover that these coins were free of the grime that normally collects on coins circulating within the maze. The group concludes that Enzo was paid off by someone outside the maze.

Nightfade:

Having many questions with little answers, the group decides to return to Steelworth. Steelworth informs them that he has no contact with the kidnappers since his daughter disappeared from his home two days ago. The group decides to travel to his mansion to learn the circumstances of her disappearance. There, they encounter an inexperienced staff who found that she has disappeared from her room after she didn't show up for a routine midnight snack. The group searches her room, and finds that the arcane lock that protects her window was not disturbed, and there is no other evidence of forced entry. The group comes to the conclusion that the girl had not been taken by force from her room, but had rather left of her own volition.

Dunmar is struck by the Spartan way in which Sarbi seems to live – she is clearly different from a typical noble teenager. Further searching reviews a number of sketches that Sarbi had drawn. Eb has an encounter

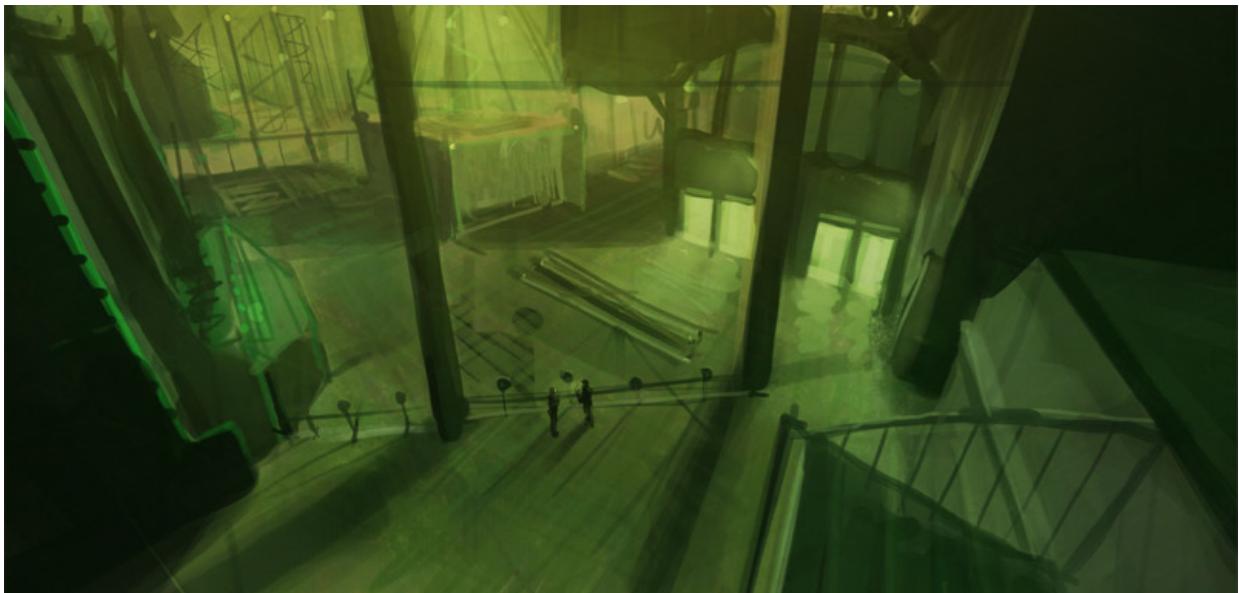
with a kitchen girl who's countenance shows evidence of prior crying. Eb's questioning eventually reveals that the girl was one of the only people in the house who spoke regularly to Sarbi. Unfortunately, the group is unable to procure any more information.

Newday:

They find the nearest dock for ferries to see whether the girl had used them to get across town, taking a portrait of her along. At least of two of the ferrymen are familiar with the girl, and the group learns that she traveled this way virtually every night for the past several years, and that about half the time she asked to be dropped off at a location very close to the Sanctum. The group assumes that this was her destination.

Entry into to the Sanctum (which is closed in the morning) is difficult until someone reveals that they are looking for Sarbi – afterwards, the Sorceress becomes personally interested in the case. Impressed with how much the group has already uncovered, she admits that Sarbi indeed had sought her out repeatedly over the past few years, and the two had developed an odd friendship. She also informs the group that there the kidnapping was part of a much bigger plot to destroy Steelworth and that they were better off not getting in the way of so much of the Maze. The group, however, chooses not to back down for various reasons not disclosed to each other. The Sorceress, in addition, is able to provide them the location of Umberto's hideout.

Upon leaving the Sanctum, the group is immediately ambushed in the midst of a thick crowd by one of Umberto's men with several armored and profes-



Many factories are reincarnated barracks, taverns, warehouses, or brothels.



A view of metropolitan Tan Dorra. The muck of the Maze is evident even from above.

sionally trained soldiers with crossbows and long swords (they are clearly not of the Maze). Eb engages Umberto's man with a knife while Moss threatens the soldiers and Dunmar magically incapacitates them. Eb is able to kill Umberto's thug, but the squad of soldiers is too much for the group and they attempt to flee. Dunmar is unable to push his way past such a thick crowd. Moss goes back to help him, and is cut down in a flurry of swords, while Dunmar gets away. The soldiers bag Moss and haul him away. ■

Artwork courtesy of, respectively, Aprill and gizmodus via deviantart.com

The Tofu Kitchen: There's a strong business niche in providing cheap food to poor people. Laborers don't have time nor the equipment to cook, and fresh groceries are expensive to import into cities. As a result, the commercial landscape in metropolitan areas is dotted with cheap eateries that manage to stay afloat of intoxication. The Tofu Kitchen, as its colloquially called, is a rather successful small restaurant that hires gangs to protect its rather large cash flow. The food isn't even half bad, although the thick smell of steamy food mixed with the grime and dirt of its patrons can be suffocating during dinner rush. ■