

For 4 to 8 characters of levels 6 to 8

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# FORGOTTEN REALMS

ADVENTURE

## Marco Volo Journey



AD&D  
2nd Edition



# Marco VoLo: Journey

by ANTHONY PRYOR

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# Our Story So Far

*In which the author attempts, in his modest fashion, to refresh the reader's memory as to previous events. The reader is cautioned against using this simple synopsis as a replacement for reading the first volume of our trilogy, and is strongly advised to purchase said volume, if for no other reason than to further the fortunes of the humble author and his generous publisher.*

**M**arco Volo—*Journey* is the second volume of the Marco Volo trilogy of adventures for the AD&D® 2nd Edition game. In the first volume, *Departure*, the adventuring party met a young and somewhat annoying rogue who called himself Marco Volo. After disrupting a party at Mother Tathlorn's Festhall, Marco makes his escape after implicating the characters as his accomplices.

The PCs are incarcerated by the Waterdeep city watch and rot in cells for a few days before they are brought before Maskar Wands, patriarch of the venerable Wands family. Marco Volo, they are informed, is Maskar's nephew Marcus, a ne'er-do-well thief, bard, and embarrassment to his family.

Maskar offers to have charges against the PCs dropped if they hire Marcus as their guide for a journey to Shadowdale, in the hope that the experience will teach his nephew some responsibility. Additionally, the journey will keep him out of Waterdeep while the family uses its prodigious influence to cover up his misdeeds. In addition, Maskar asks the party to carry a message to Lord Mourngrym of Shadowdale, and offers them generous compensation for the job. If they refuse, Maskar darkly suggests that the PCs might be sampling the pleasures of Waterdeep's dungeons for some time to come.

The party accepts Maskar's offer and finds Marcus in a low dive. After all concerned have negotiated through a minor comedy of errors and misunderstandings, he is eventually persuaded to guide them to Shadowdale.

Not surprisingly, the entire matter is far more complex than it appears on the surface. Marcus's career as a thief has made him a number of powerful enemies, among them the demented wizard Sabbar. With an unusually severe lack of judgment, even for him, Marcus stole from Sabbar an extra-planar artifact called the Dragonking's Eye. The little thief planted evidence pinning the crime on the infamous Volothamp Geddarm, author of *Volo's Guides* and the suppressed work *Volo's Guide to All Things Magical*. Marcus's ruse succeeded, but only partially—Sabbar accepts that Volothamp is the guilty culprit, but he has incorrectly decided that Marco Volo is actually Volothamp incognito.

Sabbar has offered a rich reward for Marcus. To ensure Marcus's capture or demise, Sabbar has obtained the services of the wizard-assassin Felibarr Blacklance, an evil man of infamous reputation.





As the party attempts to leave Waterdeep, the adventurers run afoul of Blacklance and his mercenaries, but manages to escape his clutches. The characters take their leave of the city, more or less in one piece. As their journey progresses, they are plagued by Felibarr's agents, as well as other bounty hunters who are also seeking Sabbar's reward. Eventually, they reach the Way Inn, battered and suspecting that Maskar Wands's "simple" mission has turned into something far more complex, confusing, and potentially deadly.

## The Course of The Adventure

**M**arco Volo – Journey follows Marcus and the PCs from the Way Inn to the Stone Lands north of Cormyr. As the adventure begins, the PCs approach the Chauntean Monastery near Berdusk, where Maskar Wands suggested they could seek shelter. Arriving at the monastery, all is pastoral and pleasant, and the monks offer an unmatched feast in celebration of an exceptional harvest. Before long, though, the adventurers discover once more that things are not as they seem. The pacifistic Chauntean Brothers have been replaced by the evil Black Monks, servants of the Dead Gods, who try to dispose of the adventurers and capture Marcus in hopes of winning Sabbar's reward.

After escaping from the Black Monks, the PCs make their way to the Cormyrean frontier. There King Azoun's Purple Dragons are on the lookout for the infamous thief, Marco Volo, and his "accomplices" – a story carefully planted and spread by Sabbar and his agents to further impede the party's movements.

A good deed (the rescue of a harassed gnome) brings its own reward, albeit belatedly. When the Purple Dragons have the hapless adventurers at something of a disadvantage, they find themselves rescued by the timely intervention of Heino and his Woodland Troupe. This band of wandering minstrels, actors, dancers, acrobats, and similar entertainers is on its way to a command performance in Shadowdale.

Once they have fallen in with Heino's troupe, the PCs will have to earn their keep among the entertainers, assisting and even performing. The characters learn the joys of being in a traveling troupe, performing for a different audience each night. In the course of the adventure, the PCs also learn more about Marcus and his secrets. The adventure ends with Shadowdale in sight, and a final confrontation with the evil wizard-assassin Felibarr Blacklance, who has been the PCs' foe since the first volume.

Like the previous volume, *Marco Volo – Journey* is a picaresque adventure with lots of action and intrigue. Unlike *Departure*, however, there are extensive opportunities for role playing, especially (but not exclusively!) when the adventurers are traveling and performing with Heino's troupe.

To prepare for the adventure, DMs might read or locate a video of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, as well as *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, a surrealistic and comedic "sequel" to *Hamlet* written by modern author Tom Stoppard. Both these tales deal, at least in part, with traveling players and their practices. Karl Edward Wagner's *Dark Crusade*, a rousing sword and sorcery epic in which the hero takes refuge with a band of entertainers, is also a good choice for reading material.

Previously-published AD&D® products will be of use to the DM. These products include the *FORGOTTEN REALMS® Campaign Setting*, *The Complete Bard's Book*, and the various *Volo's Guides*. The *Cormyr* accessory product describes much of the party's route in great detail, and is especially useful.

### A Last Word

The author wishes to express his gratitude to his friend, Dale Ivan Smith, for assistance and inspiration, and for the loan of Heino and his Woodland Troupe.



# Cast of Characters

Being a list of characters who make their appearance in the present volume of our saga, presented in a tasteful and well-organized format that should prove relatively simple to read and use.



These characters are apt to appear in *Marco Volo – Journey*. For convenient access, Marco himself is repeated, as is the assassin Felibarr Blackclance. Other characters, written in greater or lesser detail, are representatives of several organizations—the Black Monks, the Purple Dragons of Cormyr, and Heino's Woodland Troupe.

## Marcus Wands

(aka *Marco Volo*)

CN (G) hm B6

Str 11; Dex 16; Con 15; Int 14; Wis 6; Cha 17

**Armor Class:** 7 (-2 due to dexterity)

**Move:** 12

**Hit Points:** 24

**Number of Attacks:** 1

**Damage:** 1d6+2 (*rapier +1*)

**THAC0:** 18

**Weapon Proficiencies:** Rapier, dagger, crossbow

**Nonweapon Proficiencies:** Blind-fighting, dancing, gaming, musical instrument, riding (horse), seamanship, singing

**Languages:** Common, elvish, dwarvish

**Magical Items:** *Rapier +1*, *boots of elvenkind*

**Spells:** First Level (3): *alarm*, *magic missile*, *taunt*; Second Level (2): *knock*, *stinking cloud*

**Thief Abilities:** CW 75; DN 35; PP 30; RL 25

Marcus was fully described in *Journey*, and the reader is encouraged to examine that volume if greater detail is required. Here, it is sufficient to remind DMs that Marcus thinks himself a dashing and handsome outlaw, beloved by the ladies. As a member of the Wands family, he is something of a rebellious embarrassment struggling to make a name for himself independent of his real status.

Marcus's life became much more complicated when an escapade took him to the hidden residence of the mad wizard Sabbar. There, Marcus stole a likely-looking artifact from Sabbar's study and escaped. Unfortunately, Sabbar is a vengeful wizard.

Marcus's spell books contain several different spells, including *sleep*, which Marcus will use to good effect in the present adventure.





## Felibarr Blacklance

CE hm W12

Str 14; Dex 12; Con 17; Int 17; Wis 12; Cha 4

**Armor Class:** 7 (*amulet of protection +3*)

**Move:** 12

**Hit Points:** 35

**Number of Attacks:** 1

**Damage:** 1-4 (dagger)

**THACO:** 17

**Weapon Proficiencies:** Dagger, staff

**Nonweapon Proficiencies:** Etiquette, heraldry, engineering, herbalism, reading/writing, spellcraft

**Languages:** Common, elvish, drow, goblin, orcish

**Magical Items:** *Amulet of protection +3*, *wand of fireballs* (16 charges), *gem of seeing*

**Spells:** First Level (4): *burning hands*, *detect magic*, *feather fall*, *magic missile*; Second Level (4): *improved phantasmal force*, *invisibility*, *knock*, *Melf's acid arrow*; Third Level (4): *blink*, *dispel magic*, *fireball*, *slow*; Fourth Level (4): *Evard's black tentacles*, *minor globe of invulnerability*, *phantasmal killer*, *polymorph other*; Fifth Level (4): *blacklance* (see below), *passwall*, *summon shadow*, *teleport*; Sixth Level (1): *shades*

This evil wizard-mercenary is a notorious bounty hunter and hired killer. Skeletally thin, sporting a small black beard and deep-set eyes, he is known to associate with many evil forces, including tanar'ri and fiends. Fully described in *Journey*, Felibarr remains a thorn in the side of the adventurers in this volume.

Aside from his activities as a hired killer, Felibarr has developed the *blacklance* spell.

### Blacklance (Evocation)

**Level:** Fifth

**Range:** 10 yards + 10 yards/level

**Component:** V, S

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Casting Time:** 7

**Area of Effect:** Special

**Saving Throw:** 1/2

Felibarr's most prized spell, from which he took his surname, is a spear of pure black energy tapped from the Negative Material Plane. When cast, it visibly streaks from the wizard's fingertips, inflicting 1d4 points damage on its target per level of the caster. After it hits the first target, the spell leaps to the next closest target, inflicting half the damage done the first. So it continues, halving damage each time, until the damage is reduced to 1 or less. If only one target is available, the *blacklance* discharges into the ground. It never doubles back on the caster unless some other effect such as *spell turning* takes place, nor will it strike a given target more than once.

## The Black Monks

This secret evil society is made up of worshippers of three dead evil gods—Bane, Bhaal, and Myrkul—all of whom were slain over the past few decades. The Sect of the Black Monks was created from the surviving priesthood of these gods, many of whom had transferred their allegiance to other evil deities, including Cyric, Loviatar, and Malar. Members of the new sect worship the “new” gods, but also seek the return of the Dead Three. Though this might seem wishful thinking, the return of a “slain” god is not unprecedented—the resurrection of the Moonshaes's Earthmother is but one recent example.

The Black Monks have access to *amulets of counter-detection*, enchanted items that make a wearer's alignment seem exactly opposite. A chaotic evil person seems lawful good when subjected to *know alignment* or a similar spell. Chaotic neutral becomes lawful neutral, and so on. Neutral alignment has no opposite, so stays neutral. An *amulet of counter-detection* is useful to evil characters, and much trouble for good ones.

### Nayal

CE hm P8

Str 13; Dex 14; Con 13; Int 15; Wis 16; Cha 11

**Armor Class:** 5 (*bracers of defense*)

**Move:** 12

**Hit Points:** 45

**Number of Attacks:** 1

**Damage:** 1d6+1 (footman's mace)



**THACO:** 16

**Weapon Proficiencies:** Club, flail, mace, morning star.

**Nonweapon Proficiencies:** Blacksmithing, heraldry, riding (horse), rope use, ancient history, astrology, herbalism, reading/writing, religion, spellcraft

**Languages:** Common, orcish, ogre

**Magical Items:** *Amulet of counterdetection, bracers of defense (AC 5)*

**Spells:** First Level (3): *curse, cause light wounds (x2)*; Second Level (3): *aid, chant, spiritual hammer*; Third Level (3): *continual darkness, cause disease, pyrotechnics*; Fourth Level (2): *abjure, cause serious wounds*

Nayal is one of the order's most valued members. A skilled actor, he is especially talented at playing a friendly, bumbling, and completely unthreatening monk. He is not as sadistic as his assistant, Separ, but still enjoys the mayhem he creates in the service of his dead gods.

When his superiors learned of Sabbar's reward for Marco Volo's capture, they soon discovered Marco's true identity, and obtained knowledge of his itinerary. Nayal was sent to take over the Great Mother's House at Berdusk, impersonate the abbot, and capture Marcus. If the PCs and the monks are all killed in the process, so much the better—more sacrifices to the memory of the slain gods, and fodder for their possible return.

### Separ

CE hm P5

Str 16; Dex 11; Con 15; Int 10; Wis 15; Cha 8

**Armor Class:** 6 (studded leather under habit)

**Move:** 12

**Hit Points:** 28

**Number of Attacks:** 1

**Damage:** 1d6+1 (footman's mace; +1 due to strength)

**THACO:** 18

**Weapon Proficiencies:** Club, flail, mace

**Nonweapon Proficiencies:** Local history, riding (horse), weather sense, ancient history, reading/writing, religion, spellcraft

**Languages:** Common, orcish, ogre

**Magical Items:** *Amulet of counterdetection*

**Spells:** First Level (3): *cause light wounds (x3)*; Second Level (3): *flame blade, spiritual hammer (x2)*; Third Level (1): *cause serious wounds*

Separ's lean, frail appearance is deceiving—he is actually quite strong. A quiet, glowering man, he has a deep hatred of all who do not share his faith in the dead gods. This hatred is manifested in a sadistic nature that compels him to inflict pain and suffering whenever possible. He is an efficient and skilled assistant to Nayal, who keeps Separ's violent nature in check until needed.

## Heino's Woodland Troupe

Originally a small band of gnomes living as traveling entertainers, this troupe has won recognition throughout Faerûn under the tutelage of Master Heino, himself a talented illusionist. Since its formation, the troupe has taken on performers of many different races. Heino's players are individualists who owe allegiance to no one outside the troupe. They champion the cause of the underdog and consider themselves truly free folk, unhindered by the obligations of "ordinary" people. The major players in the troupe are discussed below, with Heino, the group's leader, given full statistics.

### Heino

CG gm I8

Str 10; Dex 17; Con 12; Int 18; Wis 10; Cha 17

**Armor Class:** 8

**Move:** 6

**Hit Points:** 20

**Number of Attacks:** 1

**Damage:** 1d6 (short sword)

**THACO:** 18

**Weapon Proficiencies:** Dagger, short sword

**Nonweapon Proficiencies:** Animal handling, artistic ability, brewing, cooking, riding (horse), singing, ancient history, herbalism, reading/writing, religion, spellcraft

**Languages:** Common, gnomish, elvish, dwarvish, orcish





**Magical Items:** *Wand of illusion, chime of opening*

**Spells:** First Level (5): *cantrip, change self, color spray, Nystul's magic aura, phantasmal force*; Second Level (4): *blur, fool's gold, improved phantasmal force, invisibility*; Third Level (4): *clairvoyance, invisibility (10' radius), spectral force, wraithform*; Fourth Level (3): *fear, illusory wall, rainbow pattern*

Heino is a friendly and, at times, too jolly gnome. He considers himself a samaritan, helping those in need and looking after the welfare of his players like a doting father. He can be very serious, however, and will not hesitate to use whatever means necessary to assist his performers and companions if they are in trouble.

Heino spent years learning his craft, traveling as a performer with his two brothers. About five years ago, Heino struck out on his own, leading a small group of gnomish tumblers and jugglers. Since then, his band has grown in size and influence, as his reputation as a master showman. He was contacted by the Harpers two years ago, and he has done work for them on occasion. However, he feels that joining the order would limit his freedom, which he values highly.

DMs should play Heino as someone seemingly superficial at first, whose showman's veneer encloses a person of little depth. As events progress, his true character and considerable intelligence become evident as he grows more concerned and interested in the PCs' plight. If the adventurers fail to wring the truth out of Marcus, the DM may determine that Heino and Marcus have struck up a friendship, and that the gnome has persuaded Marcus to come clean.

## Philip

CG hm B4

The troupe's newest member is a human bard of limited experience but considerable potential. One of his most important roles is to simply keep his eyes and ears open in taverns, inns, and other public places, gathering information that might be useful to Heino and the players. At other times he is companionable, if outwardly naive. Philip spends most of his time practicing the lute, lyre, and recorder, and composing songs—most of which are better than Marcus's.

## Ina

N gf T6

Ina is a skilled juggler, although it is her skills as a spy and sneak thief that have saved the troupe on a few occasions. She is a strong and independent gnome, highly protective of Heino, with whom she was once involved romantically. Today, although their romance has ended, Ina still loves Heino like a brother. In return, Heino remains quite fond of Ina, and both retain warm memories of their former relationship.

## Shareal

NG hf P5

Shareal is a cleric in service to Selune who sees a traveling theatrical troupe as the perfect opportunity to serve her goddess. She assists Heino and the performers in all aspects of the troupe's operations, administering *healing* and other spells as needed. She is a spiritual advisor to troupe members also. She is a typical servant of Selune in her changeable and somewhat chaotic opinions, dress, and outlook, but she is a true and loyal friend to the troupe. If they prove themselves to be good and faithful individuals, the PCs will find her equally a friend to them.

## Dalyor

CG em F6

When their parents departed for Evermeet three years ago, Dalyor and his twin brother Ralnor decided to stay behind, more interested in sampling the adventures to be had on the Faerûn mainland. Dalyor and Ralnor are both highly skilled archers, performing trick shooting exhibitions and acting as the troupe's scouts when the company is traveling on the road. They appear to share a magical link, each being aware of the other's feelings and emotions.

Dalyor is outwardly happy-go-lucky and carefree, as humans expect of elves, but he secretly nurses an urge to join his parents on retreat and travel to Evermeet. A secret motivation for this desire is his love for the wild elven druid Aerilaya, who has also returned to Evermeet. Dalyor's emotions of love are known to his brother, but he believes the emotions he feels back from Ralnor are his brother's joy for him.



## Ralnor

CG em F6

Unlike his brother, Ralnor wishes to stay in the Realms, but their magical bond keeps them together. As the brothers share many emotions, Ralnor has had to work hard to keep secret from his brother that he, too, loves Aerilaya. Thus far, Dalyor believes that the emotion he senses from Ralnor about Aerilaya arises from Ralnor's happiness for his brother's joy. In part, the dissembling has succeeded because Ralnor is happy for his brother, and wishes him no ill.

## Zan

CN (G) gm I3

Heino's understudy is a promising young illusionist. He has a strongly independent streak, however, and has been known to act against Heino's wishes simply for the sake of doing so. He feels genuine affection for his mentor, but has a somewhat inflated opinion of himself and his abilities, and feels that Heino's training is too slow and bookish. Zan wishes to become a famed illusionist, and favors flashy and exciting effects.

## Starlight

NG Sprite

Starlight is a sprite "aerobat" whose exciting aerial displays have enchanted audiences from Sembia to the Western Heartlands. She is an unusual sprite in that she enjoys the company of other races, although she has been estranged from her tribe for some years and has begun to grow homesick. She is flirtatious and outwardly naive, but intelligent; she can be quite serious.

## Ulwe

CN gm T8

Ulwe spent time in the dungeons of Sembia for theft before meeting up with Heino. Now reformed, Ulwe performs as an escape artist, breaking free of chains, sacks, locked chests, and other torturous devices. Ulwe's talents also come in handy in breaking friends out of prison and avoiding unwanted contact with the law, although his days as a thief are now behind him.

## Darna

CN hf T4

This human female exotic "cultural dancer" performs at various adults-only shows, along with her Chultan python, Trevor. She also assists other performers—in particular, Darna serves as the "target" for Grax's knife-throwing exhibitions. Her flexibility while dancing is legendary, as is her fondness for male companionship. However, she rarely forms lasting attachments.

## Grax

CN (G) half-orc male F5

Grax is one of the band's most unusual members. His performances feature his skill as a knife thrower, tossing specially-balanced weapons at targets living and non-living. Darna the exotic dancer usually serves as his assistant.

Although he is half-orcish and outwardly rather ugly, Grax has the soul of a poet. Relaxing among those he trusts, he waxes long and eloquently on the state of the universe, the nature of the gods, and the travails of mortal existence. His songs and poems are sometimes performed by the troupe, although Grax never reads his work himself, feeling his appearance is too distasteful to an ordinary audience. Those who know him, know Grax to be a bright and caring individual who will not hesitate to sacrifice himself for his friends.

## Other Troupe Members

Other members of the troupe include "The Amazing Pyramidists," six gnomish tumblers and acrobats who double as wrestlers, engaging in various matches for patrons to watch and bet on. There are also 15 human mercenary guards and 40 or so other gnomes, humans, and elves—families and associates of Heino's players.

The troupe travels in a motley procession of guards walking, gnomes on ponies, humans and elves on riding horses, with wagons and caravans (gypsy-style houses on wheels) rolling along. Heino himself lives in a roomy caravan stuffed with costumes, manuscripts, props, and other brummagem.





# Chapter One

*In which our heroes, sore beset by various enemies, travel to the Chauntean Monastery at Berdusk, there to seek shelter. Unfortunately for our adventurers – and of absolutely no surprise to the reader – the forces of evil have cast their malign influence over the monastery, and are up to their usual mischief. Fine potables, delectable viands, and sweet confections are consumed, though their aftereffects prove unpleasant.*



**M**arco Volo – Journey begins as the PCs, supposedly guided by the troublesome Marco Volo (Marcus Wands) take their leave from the Way Inn. They head south to the Chauntean monastery near Berdusk, where Maskar Wands told them they could seek shelter. The map on page 11 indicates the party's route. No major encounters interrupt the journey, but the DM is encouraged to add encounters as desired. Suitable incidents along the way include:

- Marauding bandits ambush the party on the road from the Way Inn to the ruins of Dragonspear.
- A small group of humanoids or fiends is still lurking in the vicinity of the now-ruined Dragonspear Castle, and the party finds it necessary to hunt them down to rescue some innocent victim.
- Talkative, bigoted, or outrightly dishonest ferrymen require heavy payments to take the PCs across the Wandering Water. Clever negotiating is necessary to get everyone to the far side.
- Merchant caravans are on the Trade Way between Soubar and Scornubel. One caravan master has a puzzle for the party to solve.
- Various groups have heard rumors of Sabbar's reward for Marco, and they take it upon themselves to attack or shadow the party.

Marcus himself is surprisingly reserved after the previous volume's adventures. He is finally beginning to respond, at last, to the PCs' generous behavior toward him, and his humbling by the innkeeper at the Way Inn. Occasionally he converses with the characters in a quiet, almost respectful manner although he still can cause trouble: singing loudly, offering to gamble with passersby, or chasing after pretty women. However, the mildest rebuke or admonition from the characters will easily dissuade him from continuing these actions.

The DM may prefer to allow the PCs to make the journey to the Chauntean monastery uneventfully. However, if the players feel that the characters are in special danger, they will be more likely to accept shelter at the monastery, and are therefore much more likely to believe the monks' cover story.





## The Merry Monks

As the party approaches Berdusk, remind them of Maskar's suggestion that they stop at the Chauntean monastery. If they decide not to, have a monk on a horse appear, tell the PCs that they are "expected," and accompany them to the monastery. This may alert the players that something is up, but it really shouldn't matter.

The monastery is well known around Berdusk, and the PCs can easily obtain directions. It is located about five miles north of Berdusk, on the edge of the Reaching Woods. As the party approaches the woods, read the following.

As you draw closer, a pair of monks approaches you, smiling broadly.

"Welcome, travelers, to the Great Mother's House at Berdusk!" declares the first, a pudgy man with a big smile. "I am Abbot Nayal and this," he continues, indicating his companion, a tall and sour-faced monk, "is my chief assistant Brother Separ. Say hello, Separ."

"Hello," says Separ disinterestedly.

"Forgive my companion's rudeness," Nayal chuckles. "He's taken a vow of seriousness."

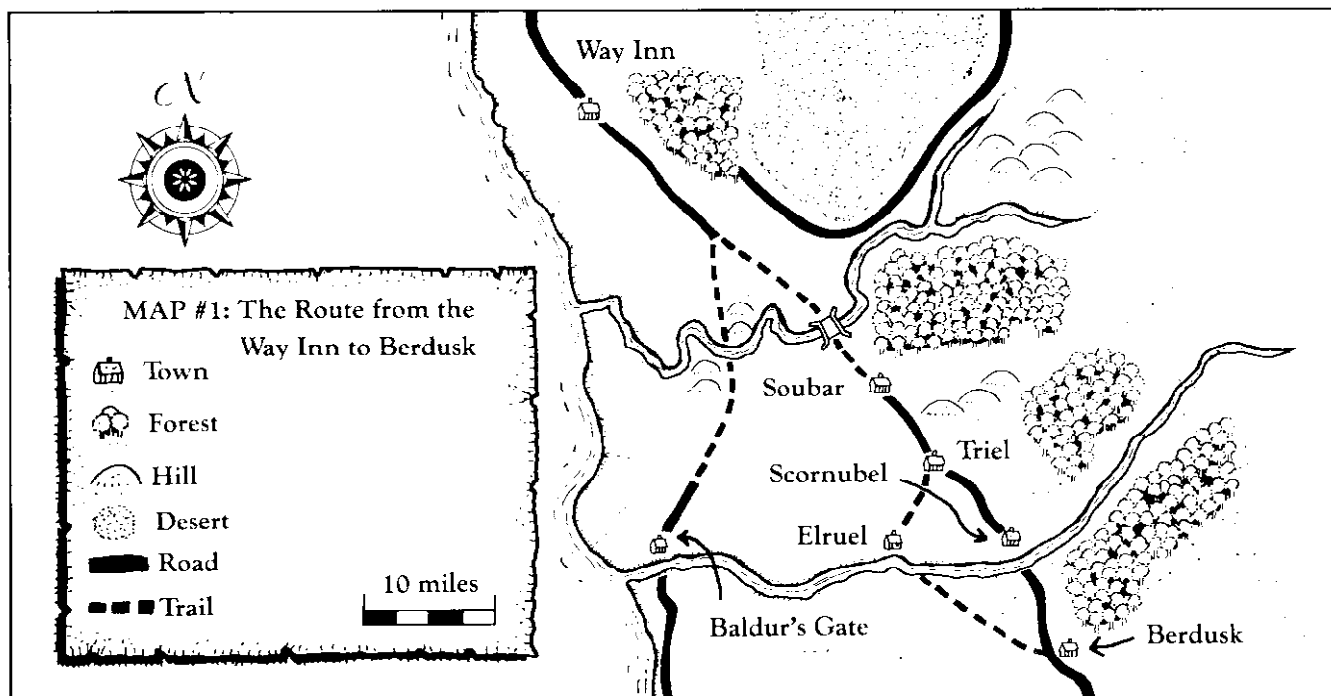
Separ does not look amused.

"Come," says Nayal. "Follow us to the sacred house and sample the Great Mother's generosity."

The road winds up a shallow slope to the Reaching Woods. At the edge of the forest is a cleared area about ten acres in size. Everything is lush and green, with birds flitting about and domestic animals wandering here and there. You see extensive vineyards tended by men in brown habits, an orchard full of fruit trees, and several outbuildings and sheds. In the center looms a towering stone structure—a military fortification that seems out of place in this pastoral setting.

The two monks guide the party to the monastery. Once there, the PCs' horses are stabled and their traveling cloaks or coats taken by helpful monks. Nayal and Separ usher the adventurers to the guest quarters (map and key, page 13).

DMs should play up the PCs' surroundings: the pastoral and peaceful nature of the monastery and its grounds, the happy smiles on the faces of the monks as they labor in the vineyards and orchards or tend the animals. It will not hurt to overplay this unless





the players are unusually suspicious. Encourage the players to be amused by the jolly monks' antics: it could put them off guard when the monastery's inhabitants turn nasty later that night.

### What's Going On

As the PCs can learn if they ask any locals, the Great Mother's House at Berdusk is a well-known spot, and has been here for at least two centuries. The monks are famous for their wine, fruit preserves, and confections—particularly their divinity, which is known as far away as Calimshan and Thay. Recently, the monks have begun to produce chocolate fudge made from sugar and cocoa imported from the new lands of Maztica. The fudge is making a sensation in Waterdeep and Cormyr, further enhancing the monks' reputation, and swelling the church's coffers. The monks also import coffee from Durpar, using it to flavor their confections and brewing it as a stimulating drink.

Since the beginning of the Marco Volo affair, however, things have changed at the monastery. Sabbar's offered reward has come to the attention of the Black Monks, who see in it an opportunity both to expand the power of their order, and to acquire a little extra money. Back in Waterdeep, the monks penetrated the "Marco Volo" identity, discovering Marcus Wands behind it.

Through nefarious means—the bribery and magical interrogation of certain members of the Wands household staff—the monks learned that "Marco Volo" and his traveling companions were expected to stop at the Great Mother's House at Berdusk. This information in hand, the Black Monks set their plans in motion.

Disguised as travelers, a band of Black Monks visited the monastery and easily overpowered the pacifistic Chauntean brothers. The real monks were imprisoned beneath the monastery and replaced with members of the Black Monks' evil order, under the leadership of the seemingly inoffensive Nayal and his assistant Separ.

It is Nayal's plan to lull the adventurers into a false sense of security, drug their food or wine, and fall on them during the night, disposing of any "useless baggage"—that is to say, the PCs—and spiriting away the unfortunate Marco Volo.

Nayal and Separ have taken serious precautions to avoid detection. The monks in the dungeons are heavily

guarded and their substitutes have all been issued with *amulets of counterdetection*. Nayal is a consummate actor, and plays his role as the happy monk to perfection.

### The Great Mother's House at Berbusk

Founded over two centuries ago as a fortress to defend the surrounding countryside from marauding bands of humanoids, the Great Mother's House became in time a peaceful retreat for the contemplation of nature and Chauntea's bounty. The monks, who were originally a martial order dedicated to the eternal struggle against evil and chaos, have modified their mission, becoming pacifistic scholars, scribes, vintners, and chefs. Recently, their use of cocoa imported from the Maztican lands, and coffee shipped to western Faerûn from Durpar, has added to the monks' reputation as purveyors of fine food and drink.

The following key describes the major areas of the monastery and its grounds. The monastery's normal staff of Chauntean brothers has been replaced by Black Monks. When an NPC monk is required for the adventure, choose from among the following statistics as appropriate to the encounter and the party's strength.

**Acolyte (1st-level priest):** Int Average; AL NE; AC 10; MV 12; HD 1; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (mace); SZ M; ML 13; Spells: *cause light wounds*

**Black Brother (3rd-level priest):** Int Average; AL NE; AC 7 (leather armor); MV 12; HD 3; hp 18; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (mace); SZ M; ML 14; Spells: *cause light wounds* (x2), *aid*

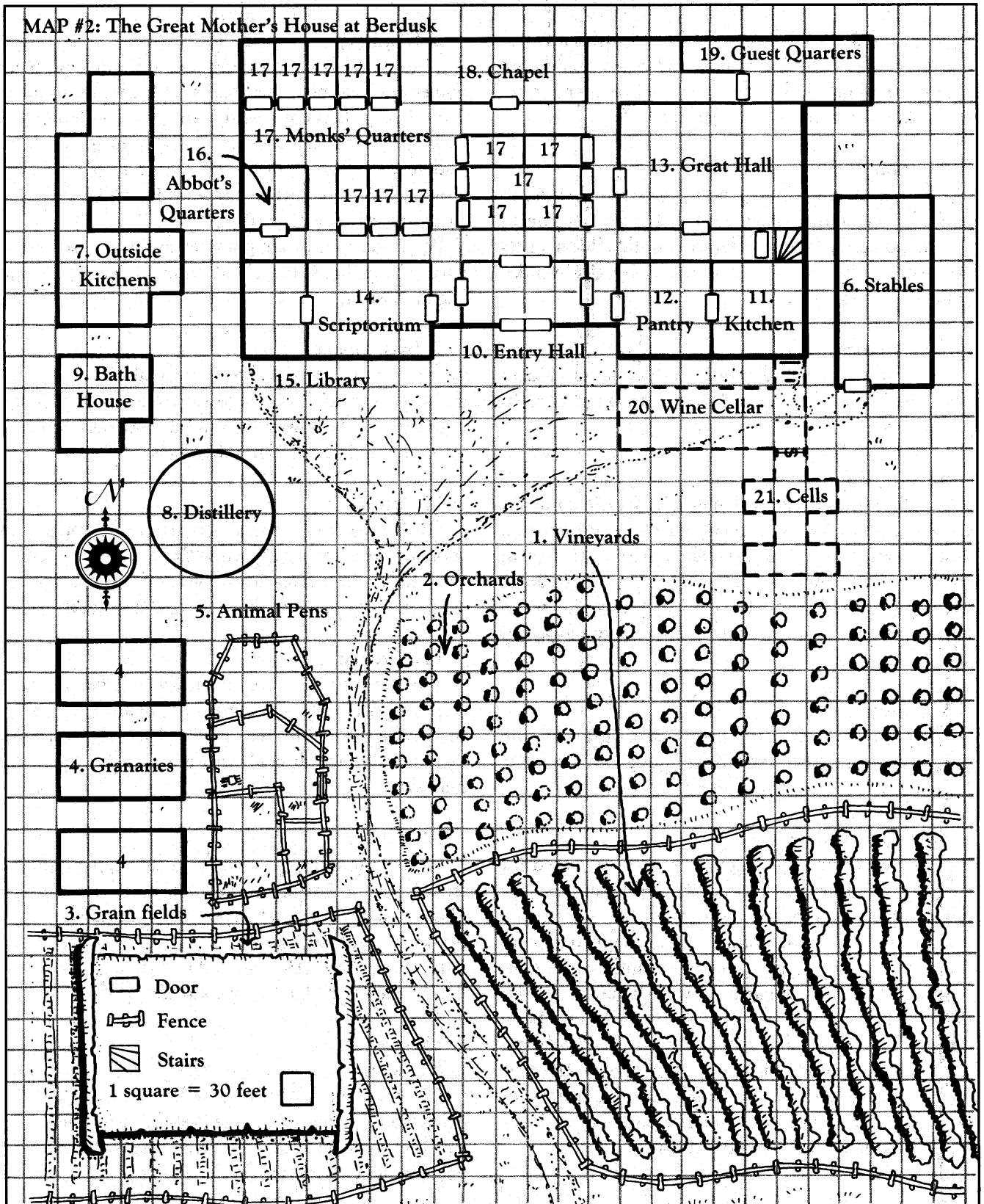
**Black Father (5th-level priest):** Int Average; AL NE; AC 5 (chain mail); MV 12; HD 5; hp 24; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (mace); SZ M; ML 15; Spells: *cause light wounds* (x2), *darkness*, *aid*, *enthrall*, *silence* (15' radius), *cause blindness*

#### 1. Vineyards

The monks grow a special breed of dark purple-red Chauntean grapes here and harvest them for making into wine.



MAP #2: The Great Mother's House at Berdusk





## 2. Orchards

The monks cultivate apples and pears, which are sold by the bushel. The fruits are also used in wine, candied fruit, and other confections.

## 3. Grain fields

These fields grow hops, barley, and wheat, used to make breads and pastries, and in the production of the monastery's famous Chauntean ale. Sugar beets are also cultivated for sugar needed in the monks' candies and potables.

## 4. Granaries

Harvested grain and other produce are stored in these buildings. Cocoa and coffee are kept here in small barrels.

## 5. Animal Pens

The brothers maintain numerous domestic animals: cows and goats for milk, sheep for wool and mutton, and pigs for pork and bacon. The animals are kept in pens close by. The good monks have great fondness for their animals, and have been known to weep openly when a favorite lamb or pig is taken away for slaughter.

## 6. Stables

The dray horses and riding horses used by the monks are kept here, tended by young acolytes. The PCs' horses can be stabled here without cost.

## 7. Outside Kitchens

These extensive buildings house facilities used for the production and storage of the food consumed by the monks, as well as that sold to outside buyers. The monks' most famous products include breads, sweet rolls, candied fruit, and divinity—a fluffy white confection made from sugar and egg whites, often flavored with nuts. Recently, as cocoa beans from Maztica became available in Faerûn, the monks began to produce chocolate fudge, which is now all the rage in many noble circles. The monks are also agents for coffee beans imported from Durpar, which have acquired a small but devoted following.

## 8. Distillery

This round building contains wine presses where grapes are stemmed, crushed, and rendered into juice. The juice is then combined with yeast and fermented in large vats. Red wines are made from juice, skins, and seeds, while white wines come from the juice alone. Once fermented, the wine is racked and aged in oak barrels before bottling.

Beer, ale, and other potables are also made here, from wheat, hops, fruit, and other produce grown at the monastery.

## 9. Bath House

The monks perform their daily ablutions in this stone structure. The building includes individual bathing chambers, as well as a sauna of sufficient size to accommodate a dozen individuals.

## 10. Entry Hall

Entry into the Great House itself is through this short hallway, its walls lined with bas-reliefs depicting the goddess Chauntea in her various roles as mother, teacher, protector, and defender of the innocent.

## 11. Kitchen

The monks dine on surprisingly rich fare. In fact, this is seen as one of the greatest advantages of serving in the Great Mother's House. Meals are prepared by monks known throughout the region for their culinary skill.

## 12. Pantry

Various supplies required for meal preparation are stored here in barrels, casks, jars, bottles, and sacks. Hams, sausages, and other preserved meats hang from hooks on the ceiling. Coffee and cocoa are stored here in large jars. (DMs should note this last fact, as it will be important later in the adventure.)

## 13. Great Hall

Meals and formal events take place in this vaulted chamber full of long tables and benches. The abbot and his staff eat at the high table at one end of the room. Statues of Chauntea and various saints occupy niches spaced around the room.



#### 14. Scriptorium

This room features tall, leaded windows designed to admit maximum light to aid the transcription and creation of illuminated manuscripts. The room is full of writing desks and cabinets containing inkwells, pens, parchments, and vellum. It is occupied by a Black Monk impersonating the master scribe, and several subordinates pretending to transcribe manuscripts.

#### 15. Library

The documents created in the scriptorium are either stored here or shipped off to other Chauntean monasteries. The library contains several thousand documents, ranging from simple correspondence to multi-volume histories of the order, its founders, and its heroes. A Black Monk has replaced the normal librarian, and is not wholly familiar with the documents in the room.

#### 16. Abbot's Quarters

The abbot is given somewhat roomier quarters than other monks due to his greater responsibilities, but his level of comfort and luxury is no greater. These rooms contain the pallet where the abbot sleeps, a small table with two rough chairs, a writing desk, a closet for ceremonial robes, and cabinets for personal effects. This room is used when the abbot requires private meetings with visitors. Nayal is currently impersonating the abbot, but spends most of his time escorting the PCs, or unobtrusively keeping an eye on them.

#### 17. Monks' Quarters

Ordinary monks live in small cells with a single pallet, table, chair, and chamber pot. They spend their off hours here contemplating humanity's relationship to Mother Chauntea, reading histories of the order, and considering the worthy examples set by the order's founders and heroes.

#### 18. Chapel

An alabaster statue of Mother Chauntea dominates this domed chamber. In this manifestation, she is portrayed as a mature, motherly woman with her arms held out in a comforting manner. The room is lined with benches. At one end is a pulpit from which the abbot delivers sermons during the ceremonies, which take place each day at dawn and dusk.

#### 19. Guest Quarters

The PCs are housed here, and these chambers include all necessary facilities for the whole party. The Chauntean monks recognize that outsiders often have a greater taste for luxury than they do themselves, so these rooms are quite comfortably furnished and decorated. The PCs sleep in bunks with feather mattresses and ample blankets. The room includes comfortable chairs and two tables of imported hardwood, attractively carved. The windows are narrow, designed as arrow slits, but they give a pleasant view of the surrounding countryside.

#### 20. Wine Cellar

The monastery's lower level is accessible only through a heavy oaken door, doublelocked on the outside, barred from the inside, and *wizard locked* for added security.

Despite the unusual degree of security accorded to the door, once a person gets inside the cellar, nothing seems unusual. The walls are covered with wine racks nearly full of bottles. A secret door gives access to the cells beyond.

#### 21. Cells

The imprisoned monks are held in these cells. They are guarded by five Black Monks, chosen by the DM from the list above.

The brothers are still alive, although they have been marked for sacrifice to the Black Monks' evil deities once Marco Volo has been captured. If liberated, the monks will help the PCs drive the usurpers from the monastery. Use the following statistics for the imprisoned monks, and adjust their numbers as desired.

Brothers (1st-level monks): Int Average; AL CG; AC 10; MV 12; HD 1; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (improvised weapon); SZ M; ML 13

Abbot Simon (8th-level priest): Int High; AL CG; AC 10; MV 12; HD 8; hp 32; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (improvised weapon); SZ M; ML 15





## A Doubtful Feast

After the PCs have been given time to rest and refresh themselves, a young acolyte arrives, summoning the adventurers to dinner. Once they enter the Great Hall, read the following.

The hall is brightly lit by candles and torches, and filled with noise and revelry. The monks certainly seem to enjoy their meals, drinking wine and ale, singing and joking raucously, feasting on ham, pheasant, and beef.

"Welcome, friends!" bellows Abbot Nayal, who has forsaken the high table to feast with his brothers in the main hall. "Tonight is a special night—we are celebrating an outstanding grape harvest! Join us!"

PCs who join the feast are served many kinds of dishes—chicken, roast beef, pork, sausages, fruits and vegetables, and much else besides. All the dishes are of excellent savor and presentation. The characters are offered juices, ale, wine, and other good drinks

(but not coffee—although the DM should not make a point of this). Everything has been subtly drugged to make the characters sleep soundly later.

The DM should be careful not to arouse the suspicions of the players, and to run the feast as an opportunity to engage in an extensive role playing encounter. Let the monks ask the PCs about their adventures, and have the characters describe their exploits. Let the monks request that the PCs join in singing happy songs, sharing jokes, or offering tidbits of valuable information. All the while, DMs should note how much of the feast each character consumes. Those characters who eat or drink more than others will have a commensurably more difficult time later.

The exception to all this is Marcus himself, who sits quietly, picking at his food. If questioned about his behavior, he only says that he isn't feeling well—nothing serious enough to need attention, but he just isn't very hungry. For the DM's information, he has been quite depressed about matters, and has begun to suspect that his old life has come back to haunt him. Marcus has been shamed by the PCs' acts on his behalf, and is unhappy that he cannot share the joy and revelry





around him. He is determined to make it up to the PCs, and has even begun to think about coming clean and confessing his true identity. See the following section for more details on Marcus's actions after the feast.

At length, the revelry winds down, and Nayal confides to the PCs that the monks get up early in the morning to perform their dawn rituals. Inform the players that some of the PCs are beginning to feel tired (for those who ate well, the drugs are beginning to work). Suggest that it is time for them also to bed down for the night.

### Later That Night...

Certain events will definitely take place during the night, but the details of other incidents—and even whether they occur at all—can vary greatly. The entries below are intended to provide the DM with general guidelines to the consequences of different player decisions. Flexibility and adaptability are to be encouraged in responding to the players' promptings, but the DM will need to keep the thrust of the action focused on the main plot.

The food and drink served to the party has all been drugged with a slow-acting soporific that gradually puts the PCs to sleep. The monks considered simply poisoning all the characters, but they wanted Marcus taken alive and could not be sure of delivering a fatal dose only to the PCs. Furthermore, they knew that most deadly poisons were too easy for experienced individuals to detect. Finally—as if any other reasons were required—Separ is a somewhat demented sadist, and he wanted the evil pleasure of bashing the characters personally.

Each character needs to save vs. poison, with a penalty based upon the amount of food and drink he or she consumed during the feast. If the character consumed large amounts (i.e., four or more drinks, an entire chicken, two or three joints of beef, etc.), the penalty is -6. If the character partook of an average, moderate amount (two or three drinks, half a chicken, a joint of beef, etc.) the required penalty is -4. If consumption of the comestibles was light (one or fewer drinks, a drumstick, a few vegetables, etc.), the penalty is -2. The DM should consider rolling for the PCs, rather than arousing the players' suspicions by asking them to make the roll individually.

Those characters who fail their saving throws fall

asleep quickly once the drug sets in. They have enough time to disrobe, but will soon fall unconscious. They will not be allowed a roll to awaken on their own when the Black Monks' "hit squad" enters the room.

If the party assigns any of its members to stand on watch, these individuals must also make saving throws, but the DM should allow the controlling players to do so. If the roll is failed, characters on watch will find it very difficult to remain awake despite their best efforts. As always, if a player can offer a justifiable and well-thought-out explanation to the contrary, the DM should modify the penalty to allow for the circumstances described.

### Marcus Makes His Move

Characters who did not eat or drink, or who ate or drank very little, will not need to make saving throws. This includes Marcus, who is nervous about matters and suspects that the monks are up to something. At the beginning, his suspicions are simply a reflection of the brooding self-reproach he has been struggling with. He feels guilty that the PCs risk their lives for him, share his hardships, and yet he is keeping secrets from them. His reasoning is misdirected, but his suspicions about the monks will prove justified nevertheless.

When the party has retired to their quarters, Marcus tries to settle down like everyone else. After a short while, it becomes evident that he is too restless to sleep, so he decides to slip out of the room to explore the monastery. If any conscious characters are on watch, Marcus confides his belief that "something is strange here," and suggests that they explore together. If PCs on watch have passed out, or if all the PCs are asleep, Marcus attempts to awaken them. When he proves unable to do so, he will know something is definitely amiss.

Marcus's experience as a bard and his life in the intrigue-ridden Wands family has given him a good knowledge of poisons and their antidotes. He observed the monks drinking coffee earlier, and knows it can counteract certain sleeping drugs. With this in mind, he dons his rapier and dagger and hurriedly slips out of the room. He will return later, at an opportune moment.

If a PC accompanies Marcus, the young man will explain his reasoning and urge his companion to follow his lead. It will be up to the DM, then, to time their return appropriately.





## Attack of The Mad Monks

Nayal and the monks wait a couple of hours to make certain the PCs are deeply asleep, then enter the room with murderous intent. If the door is locked or barred, have the monks enter through a secret door which the PCs “conveniently” missed earlier.

The monks are looking for Marcus, whom they want to take alive. However, they do not realize he is not in the room for several moments after they come in.

Nayal and Separ lead the attackers, accompanied by two ordinary Black Monks per PC, with levels chosen by the DM from the statistics above. The monks are armed with cudgels, and expect to simply bludgeon the PCs to death. Characters who ate or drank little must undergo only one round of attack before they can fight, and they incur no penalties. Drugged characters must undergo 1d4+1 rounds of attacks before they can wake enough defend themselves. Once they have been awakened, these characters will be lethargic, and have an attack penalty equal to their saving throw penalty vs poison. The DM may also give the monks a bonus to hit the drugged characters equal to the penalty (*i.e.*, a -2 penalty to the PC equals a +2 bonus for all attacks by the monks).

As most of the characters will probably be drugged, and will be in sleeping attire (that is to say, AC 10), the party is likely to be in trouble—which is as it should be at this stage. If the PCs seem to be winning, more monks arrive to reinforce Nayal’s hit team. When things seem blackest for the party, unexpected help arrives—to the probable astonishment of the characters—in the person of Marco Volo.

## Marcus To The Rescue

Marcus is returning with a small bag of coffee beans when he sees the monks attacking the drugged characters. He casts two *sleep* spells at the monks, draws his weapons, and wades in.

Some PCs may be forced to save against the sleep spells, but the DM should assume that most of the monks failed their saves, leaving Separ and Nayal suddenly outnumbered. These two will immediately retreat, along with any other monks who saved successfully. Marcus will rush into the room and slam the door.

At this point, conscious characters should be

tying up or dispatching sleeping monks. Marcus will hold out the bag of coffee beans, urging any drugged characters to chew them. The beans will counteract the effects of the monks’ poison (a fact the characters might do well to remember in future adventures). Within a few rounds, the party should be back to full strength.

In the interim, of course, Nayal and Separ are mobilizing reinforcements for an all-out attack. However, what turn of events takes place next is up to the players: they could attempt to flee the monastery and be forced to fight their way out; they may fortify the room to fight off the Black Monks’ attacks; or they may deduce that the “real” Chauntean monks have been spirited away, and search the monastery in an attempt to set the imprisoned brothers free.

Because the characters may take any of a variety of routes to escape from the monastery, details of the subsequent action are up to the DM. Use the map on page 13 to keep track of the action in the monastery. The party may capture one or more of the monks alive. If interrogated, the monks begin by shouting invocations to their dead gods. Soon enough, they will talk about an unknown benefactor of the order who has offered a sizable reward for the capture of one Volothamp Geddarm. The monks have been told that Volothamp is presently traveling under the name of “Marco Volo.” This is all they know—further interrogation will produce nothing more. PCs who are familiar with the city of Waterdeep will know the usual rumors about Volothamp, and they should wonder at the monks’ “confusion” over the two identities.

Only Nayal and Separ know Sabbar is the one offering the reward, and the DM should not allow either of them to be captured. If the characters learn the story about Volothamp, Marco begins to suspect that Sabbar is onto him, and that his ruse has backfired. He does not admit the whole truth to the party until later, however.

If the PCs escape from the monastery without setting the imprisoned brothers free, the DM may decide that the Black Monks kill their prisoners, then frame the adventurers for the crime. This will make their life in Cormyr even more complex, with ramifications to be determined by the DM.



# Chapter Two

*In which, having escaped from the wicked schemes of the Black Monks, our doughty band encounters savage gnolls and officious bureaucrats, though it is difficult to determine which group is the more terrifying. In a stroke of good fortune, our characters meet Heino's Woodland Troupe, a band of traveling singers, dancers, acrobats, comedians, and tragedians, who help extricate them from a difficult situation. Several of Marcus Wands's secrets are revealed. Heino, a good-hearted gnome and a gracious host, shares his secret recipe for roast wild rabbit.*



**T**he next stretch of the journey takes the party from Berdusk to Asbravn, then to Iriaebor and Easting. From this point, the route is up to the players. If they plan to enter Cormyr from the east, through the Storm Horns, they will want to take the High Road to Proskur. They may wish to travel up the Tun River Valley, bypassing Cormyr altogether. If so, the DM should inform them that rains have made the terrain marshy and almost completely impassable. If the party wishes to take a short ferry trip across the Lake of Dragons, they will have to take the Trader's Road to Priapurl, Elversult, and then to either Ilipur or Pros. In this case, the party will make port in Suzail, where Encounter C will take place.

The events in this chapter take place regardless of the route taken by the party, or even if the players decide to take a completely different route. They are listed in order, with guidelines for where they should take place, keyed to the route map. The DM should feel free to add to these encounters or modify the existing ones.

## A. GNOLL ATTACK

*(on the Dusk Road between Asbravn and Iriaebor)*

**M**erchants and travelers on the road may warn the PCs of gnoll bands preying on the unwary. In the early evening, just as the party considers turning in for the night, a group of gnolls attacks from ambush. The attack is preceded by a flight of arrows, then the gnolls and their flind leader, Grralix, swarm from hiding.

**Grralix, Flind Leader:** Int Average; AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; HD 3+3; hp 24; THAC0 17 (+ 1 due to flindbar); #AT 2; Dmg ,104 (flindbar); SA Disarm; SZ M; ML 12

**Gnolls (12):** Int Low; AL CE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 2; hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SZ L; ML 11

This encounter will go a bit differently from most monster bashes, however, since Grralix considers himself something of a sophisticate.

After combat has gone on several rounds, Grralix suddenly breaks off and



speaks in common in a surprisingly erudite fashion about something the party is carrying. It could be an article of clothing (“Heavens! Is that silk?”), a weapon (“Sorry to interrupt, but do you realize your axe is a magnificent bit of dwarven craftsmanship?”), some of their cargo (“Half a moment! Is that a bottle of Arabellan ‘66?”), or anything in a similar vein. He orders his gnolls to stop fighting and offers to leave in exchange for the item. If the PCs agree, Grralix is as good as his word and goes happily, thanking the party for its generosity and commenting favorably on their good taste. If they refuse, Grralix shrugs; the battle begins anew.

## B. Marcus Confesses

*(in Iriaebor or Easting)*

Since the start of the journey, Marcus’s devil-may-care facade has slowly been eroding. Seeing his companions’ skill and bravery, and their willingness to defend him even though they are not fond of him, has made Marcus feel both guilty and uncertain. The fight with the monks convinced him that someone wants him dead, or worse. If a monk was persuaded to talk, he now suspects who that someone is. Marcus realizes he needs all the friends he can get.

Along the road, Marcus finally decides to come clean—to a degree, at any rate. If the players are a canny lot, this “revelation” may be nothing new, and the DM should improvise appropriately. Read or paraphrase the following.

Marcus looks at you with a nervous, distressed expression. “I have a confession to make,” he says finally. “My name isn’t Marco Volo. It’s Marcus Wands. I’m the nephew of Maskar Wands of Waterdeep. For the past few years I’ve wandered Faerûn, trying to ignore the fact that I’m a Wands. Now, I think that someone wants me dead. Someone who thinks that I’m Volothamp Geddarm.”

He sighs and continues. “I think my misspent past has caught up with me, and I seem to have dragged you into my mess. That has, however, been the story of my life so far.”

Marcus is not certain enough of the party to admit to the theft of the Dragonking’s Eye. When asked if he knows of any specific enemies, he still claims ignorance, saying that he needs more information before he can know for sure.

If the party decides to come clean themselves, and admit that they knew all along, Marcus will be upset at first, then realize that his uncle was again looking out for his best interests. After Philip the Bard finds Sabbar’s warrant, later in this adventure, the identity of Marcus’s enemy will be obvious to all.

## C. A Skeptical Official

*(Suzail or Tyrluk)*

Cormyr’s civil servants are known for their efficiency and thoroughness. Word has preceded the party of an infamous thief, known as “Volothamp,” “Marcus,” or “Marco,” and his band of cutthroats, who are responsible for several major acts of larceny, the sacking of a Chauntean monastery, and the possible murder of its monks. Fortunately for the party, details of their appearance are sketchy, but they are enough to arouse the suspicion of all good law-abiding Cormyrean border officials.

When the party arrives in Cormyr, they will enter Tyrluk if they are traveling by land, Suzail if by sea. At the border, they will immediately have to submit to an inspection at the customs house. Read the following paragraphs.

The customs officer is a reedy, sharp-nosed man in a purple and gold tunic. He looks as if he has eaten something very sour indeed.

“Well,” he begins, “have you anything to declare?”

The purpose of this encounter is to give the PCs a bureaucratic run-around, a battle in which their swords and spells will prove worse than useless. Effective role playing is a must.

The party has several options. If they ask exactly what constitutes “goods to be declared,” the official will sigh



heavily and launch into the following recitation, running his words together and scarcely stopping for breath.

“Items to be declared,” he says with a withering gaze, “are those goods, products, items, objects, plants, animals, individuals, and other sundries which may tend to endanger the subjects, nobles, officials, or general peace of the nation of Cormyr, or those items whose value is such that their possessors expect considerable profit or gain from the act of transporting them within the sovereign borders of the nation of Cormyr, said profit being considered a service provided by the citizens of Cormyr and government of good King Azoun IV, gods grant him good health and long life, and as such subject to normal taxes, tariffs, and fees, as deemed appropriate by His Majesty’s border officials and nobles, or any item deemed subject to taxes, tariffs, liens, fees, et cetera, by said duly designated officials.”

If the PCs decide to declare anything, the official makes them fill out numerous parchment forms

describing the items, their number, value, and whether the PCs intend to sell or trade them.

If the PCs try to slip anything out, the official orders a number of guards to search the characters and their possessions. Possibly the guards will find Maskar Wands’s scroll tube containing his letter to Lord Mourngrim and the *wand of wonder*. As this is obviously an official document, the Cormyreans will not open the tube, but it will certainly arouse their suspicions. If the tube is found, Marcus will see it and ask about the Wands family seal, eventually forcing the party to admit that they are working for his uncle. (Again, this knowledge may have previously been established, and the DM will have to adapt the role playing to the situation.)

The party will also be grilled on its itinerary in Cormyr, since the official finds the adventurers “pretty suspicious.” In the course of the exchange, it comes clear he thinks the party may be planning to overthrow the government, import political tracts, or possibly even write fiction, all of which he considers dangerously radical.

The official will eventually take up a parchment and quill pen and scratch out a painstakingly accurate



bill of lading, including a tariff, amounting to 27 gp, 9 sp, and 6 cp. If the PCs pay this amount, he will allow them to proceed. He will also send word via *crystal ball* to the Purple Dragons, and suggest they investigate the PCs and their intentions.

## D. A Victim of Cruelty

(outside Suzail or Tyrluk)

As the party leaves their first destination, they come upon the following situation.

On the road outside town you see a single gnome fleeing from several humans. They pelt the gnome with stones and shout at him: "Go back where you came from!" "Get out of our town, gnome!" and similar epithets.

The party will probably intervene, but if they do not, Marcus demands they do so. If the PCs still refuse, Marcus spurs his horse forward and rides into the midst of the angry people. If the party attacks, the humans flee after a single combat round.

Attackers (0-level humans): Int Average; AL N; AC 10; MV 12; HD 1; hp 2; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (rocks and improvised weapons); SZ M; ML 9

When the party attacks, the gnome slips off into the underbrush, and runs away before the party can manage to talk with him. The party will probably grumble about the gnome's lack of gratitude, and then proceed down the road.

The gnome is Zan, apprentice to Heino (see *Cast of Characters*); he will show up again in the following encounter. Heino's Woodland Troupe is traveling somewhat behind the party. If any characters look back along their route, they will see Heino's wagons behind them on the road, but too far off to identify.

## E. The Purple Dragons Strike

(anywhere)

After receiving a report about a suspicious band of "thugs and ruffians" led by "Marco Volo," the suspicious official in Encounter C has sent word to the Purple Dragons about the adventurers' whereabouts. As the party approaches a small settlement, they see the following.

Up ahead you see a squad of horsemen. They are armored in mail and wear tabards bearing the purple dragon of Cormyr.

"Halt, in the name of King Azoun!" cries the lead rider. "We are the king's Purple Dragons and speak with his voice! You are wanted for questioning!"

The party can stand, flee, or prepare for a fight. If they flee, Purple Dragons on foot appear behind them, blocking the road.

If they stand or fight, the Purple Dragons approach and the officer warns them to put up their weapons or face arrest. Try to build some tension before the situation degenerates into actual combat: if the party charges or attacks before Heino arrives, allow them to fight and possibly wound some of the Dragons, but don't let any of them die. The last thing the party needs is more criminal charges against them at this point.

If the party allows the Dragons to approach, the officer will ask everyone for names, where they've been, and if they are familiar with the Chauntean monastery at Berdusk, or several thefts, none of which the party knows of. As the interrogation continues, the officer grows ever more convinced that the party must be guilty of something; he just isn't sure what, yet. Under his relentless probing, the party should start to sweat.

At this point, read the following.

From behind you hear a hearty shout. "There you are! We've been looking everywhere for you!"

When you look, you see a small caravan of wagons drawn by dray horses drawing closer. Human



guards clad in armor walk alongside the gaily painted wagons, and numerous gnomes riding on ponies accompany the caravan. One of the gnomes, you notice, is the one you saved from the stone-throwing humans. The speaker is a bright-eyed, bearded gnome dressed in bright colors. He spurs his pony forward and speaks to the leader of the Purple Dragons.

"Don't listen to these fools, captain!" he cries. "They're with us. They probably told you they were simple travelers. I think it's because they were embarrassed at being separated from us back in Wheloon."

The Purple Dragon commander looks confused and a bit disappointed. "They're with you?" he asks. "And just who are you?"

The gnome leaps from the saddle and bows with an elaborate flourish. "Heino is my name—Heino the Conjuror, leader of Heino's Woodland Troupe. We are a band of traveling players—singers of songs, dancers of dances, performers of histories, tragedies, comedies, comic tragedies, tragic comedies, opera, operetta, and all sundry associated entertainments. We are jugglers, acrobats, conjurers, epic poets—"

The Dragon commander raises a hand. "I see," he says. "And these..." he pauses, scanning you with a dubious expression "...individuals are part of your troupe?"

Heino nods. "For several months now—guards, assistants, all-around handymen. Not that I've been too pleased with their work, but they are my employees." He rummages in his pony's saddlebags and withdraws a vellum document covered with crabbed writing and set with impressive-looking seals. "Observe—they are listed in our travelers' manifest." The officer squints at the document, his lips moving as he tries to read it. "Well..." he says, "it seems to be in order..."

"Very well then," says Heino, snatching the vellum back and folding it up. He fumbles in his purse and withdraws a handful of coins. "We are terribly sorry for the inconvenience, captain," he says, handing the coins over to the stunned Dragon commander. "Perhaps this will help make amends for my employees' blunders."

Heino turns to you. "Now get on the wagon, my malingering friends. Somebody, take those horses for them. I've plenty of work for you."

Unless the characters are complete fools—not entirely impossible—they will get on board the wagons. If not, Marcus urges them to do so. If they continue to refuse, the Purple Dragon commander looks suspicious and suggests they join their "friends." Eventually, the characters will be persuaded to join Heino and his players.

## On The Road with Heino

Once the characters are on board the wagons, the Purple Dragons depart, though not without a few dark backward glances. Now the PCs can get acquainted with Heino and his people.

Heino explains that Zan told him of the party's assistance, and that the troupe was trying to catch up so that Heino and Zan together could thank the PCs personally. When he saw the adventurers having trouble with the Purple Dragons, Heino decided to intervene on their behalf. Heino doesn't tell the party that he checked them out with *know alignment* spells to make sure they were the "right" kind of people.

The characters may tell Heino of their situation if they choose, or they may make up some suitable cover story. In either case, Heino tells them that his troupe is on its way to a command performance for Lord Mourngrym of Shadowdale, although they will be stopping nightly to give performances all along the way. Since their destinations are identical, Heino suggests that the adventurers travel with him to avoid renewed suspicion from the Purple Dragons, whose eyes are everywhere.

How the rest of the adventure unfolds depends on whether the PCs accept Heino's offer. If they cannot be persuaded to accompany the troupe, allow them to travel toward Shadowdale on their own, with suitable encounters along the way. The confrontation with Felibarr Blacklance takes place at the end of the adventure, as normal.

Assuming that the PCs accompany Heino, they will camp with the troupe that night and dine on Heino's specialty: roast wild rabbit with shallots and basil.





## Chapter Three

*In which our heroes, now in the company of Heino and his noble players, travel across Cormyr, avoiding the unwelcome attentions of the Purple Dragons and performing for an appreciative public. The wares of various inns and taverns are sampled, and some prove better than others.*

**T**his chapter proceeds in a less linear manner than the other parts of the adventure. The PCs accompany Heino's band as it performs in various locations throughout Cormyr.

A series of encounters occurs within the framework of the troupe's performances; these are described in general terms below. The DM should flesh-out those encounters he or she decides to run, and play them in any order that seems appropriate. The DM can freely add to or subtract from the material given, change particulars, or completely ignore specific incidents. However, at least some of the situations should definitely be played out, particularly the discovery that Sabbar has put out a contract on Marcus. The locations where events take place will depend on the party's route of travel, which can be determined by the party, or by the DM acting in the person of Heino the gnome. Map #3 (page 26) provides the setting.

### Performances

**I**nns, taverns, and public houses abound throughout Cormyr, as do amphitheaters, carnivals, feast halls, and the homes of nobles or wealthy merchants who are willing to pay for the services of traveling minstrels and players. All these venues are suitable locations for itinerant performers to put on an evening's show.

Heino and his band make their living by performing in such places. While the characters accompany the troupe, they can assist at these performances, or even join in by performing themselves if they have appropriate talents. Marcus himself will sing and play for some of the crowds and even come up with a few decent tunes.

The DM will find useful guidelines for running these performances in Chapter Eight of *The Complete Bard's Handbook*. Here may be found information on determining a show's location, crowd size, relative success of performances, and likely income.

The *Cormyr* adventure supplement provides details on many of the land's cities, including maps and information on each settlement's individual character and society. This product is particularly useful to the DM, since it provides information and guidelines about Cormyr's major towns and cities and the reception the troupe is likely to receive in each.

In some cases, simply having the PCs watch the antics of Heino's troupe could be entertaining. Heino himself introduces each act with great flourish





and ceremony: “. . .And now, lords and ladies, one of the finest performers in all of Faerún. . . a singer whose skill and passion reduced the emperor of Kara Tur to tears... whose songs are legendary even to the elven minstrels of far Ever-meet...” and so on. As master of ceremonies, Heino performs simple illusions, but never allows his performances to eclipse those of his troupe.

Heino’s performers engage in their specialties. Philip the Bard sings epic tales of love and war; Ina juggles balls, daggers, and random objects given by the crowd, and to finish, juggles blindfolded. Dalyor and Ralnor execute amazing tricks of bow shooting, and Zan does his own conjuring and illusion, but has been known to overestimate his abilities on occasion. Starlight the sprite wows crowds with complex aerobatics, weaving intricate patterns and knots in the air, often carrying torches, or leaving glowing trails of *faerie fire* cast on her by Heino. Ulwe escapes from fetters, chains, bags, locked chests, and similar devices, and Grax the half-orc throws knives. Late nights, Darna engages in somewhat risqué shows after younger audience members are asked to leave. Other troupe members, such as the gnomish Pyramidists, engage in wrestling matches and similar entertainments.

Besides these “variety” acts, the troupe runs its repertoire of plays, using an eclectic selection of props, costumes, and sets. The plays include comedies, often featuring rather raw humor; tragedies that end with everyone dead; and a few interesting histories that, while entertaining, do not present a remotely accurate picture of the past. These last include “The Romance of Tristan and Robyn,” the story of the Moonshae Ffolke and their war against The Beast and other foes; “The Death of King Zaor,” about the assassination of the King of Evermeet and his Queen’s sorrow; “Drizzt’s Saga,” about the famous drow renegade; and many others.

If they are so inclined, the PCs may participate at these performances, assisting with music or conjuring, singing in the chorus, taking secondary roles in plays, acting as targets for knife throwing, and so on. As noted, they may even stage shows with themselves as a main act. The particulars are up to the DM, who can mix and match these performances to achieve the maximum enjoyment for all the players.

### **The Crowd Gets Nasty**

The audience inexplicably turns ugly and pelts the performers with food, mugs of ale, and other refuse. The PCs may help Heino’s troupe escape the ugly reaction, or just wade in and start brawling. Bards and more reasonable characters may earn experience points by defusing the situation without violence.

### **Intolerance**

Race hatred again rears its ugly head as anti-gnomish agitators appear at a show and start shouting epithets and demanding the gnomes (as usual) “go back where they belong.” The PCs might resort to violence to help Heino’s people defend themselves, or make use of their eloquence to humiliate the bigots, turn the crowd against the hecklers, or force them to leave.

The half-orc Grax might be another target of prejudice, with locals railing against the “orcish scum” and possibly even engaging in acts of violence. As described in *Cast of Characters*, Grax is a pacifistic and sensitive individual who would rather flee than fight, so the adventurers may find themselves having to defend him.

### **An Amorous Patron**

A PC or troupe member such as Darna is performing when an inebriated patron is overwhelmed by amorous instincts and makes a rather forward advance. If a PC steps in to escort the patron out, or otherwise assists a troupe member, he or she will have made a friend. If things go well, romance might ensue.

### **A Friendly Crowd**

The crowd is exceptionally generous and showers the performers with twice the usual income. The only problem lies in their over-enthusiastic demands for “one more encore” stretching far into the night.

### **Noble Patron**

A friendly noble is impressed by the troupe and invites them to a private party at his or her estate. This may result in more income, or it might just be a dull evening entertaining bored nobles. In any event, the noble is a potential patron and friend for the PCs to meet again some time in the future.



### A Greedy Employer

The innkeeper or patron demands a cut of the troupe's proceeds, and insists on charging them heavily for any food and drink consumed.

### Zan Gets in Trouble

Heino's apprentice, Zan, attempts a spell beyond his ability and ends up casting a spell that damages something or starts a fire; or he creates a frightening illusion that panics the crowd.

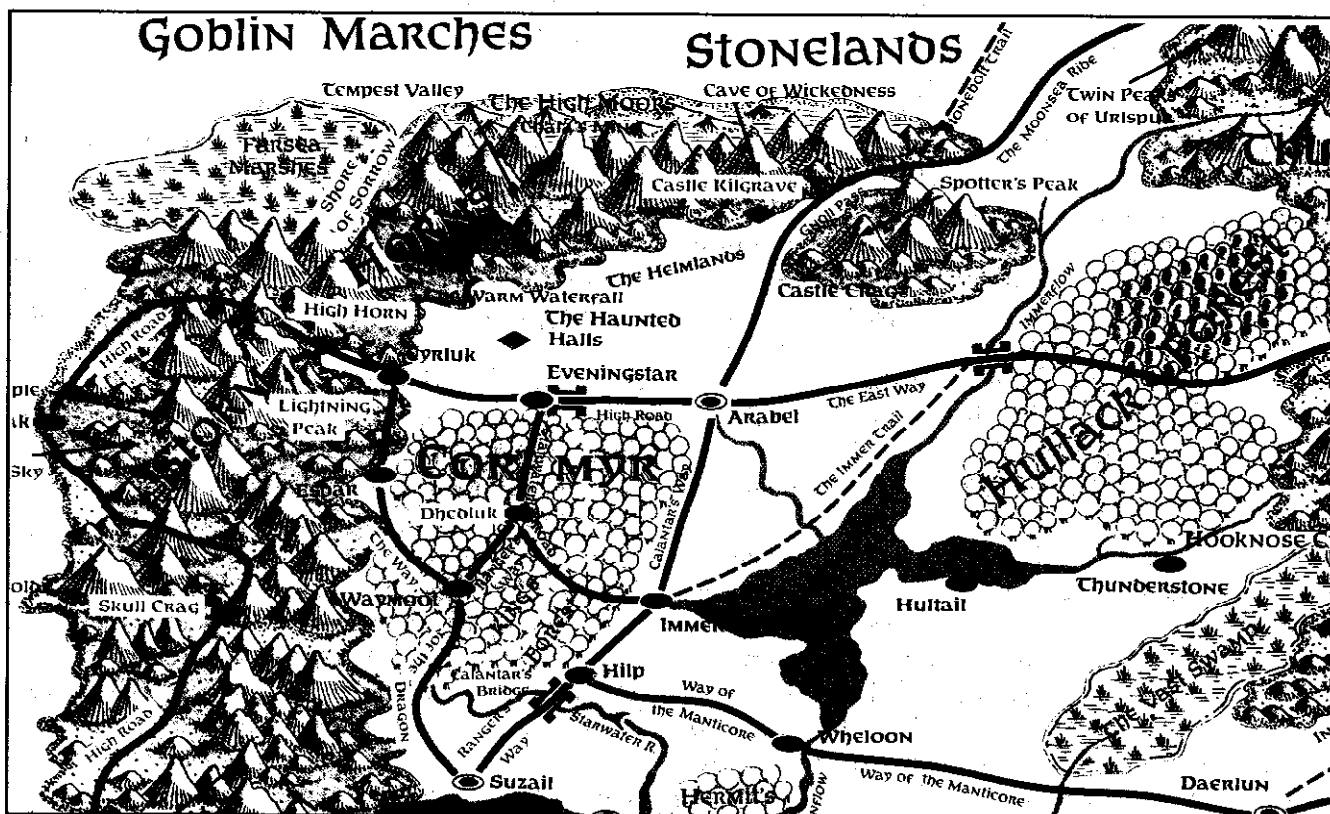
### Brushes with The Law

The Purple Dragons are still on the lookout for "Marco Volo" and his "accomplices." At venues throughout Cormyr, squads of Dragons may appear, nosing around, asking leading questions, and interrogating anyone and everyone. These incidents are mainly intended to make the PCs nervous. However, the Dragons will not detect them unless they are completely incompetent in their efforts to remain in concealment.

### The Hand of Sabbar

Sabbar and the party's other pursuers have not forgotten them. The wily wizard and his accomplice, Felibarr, have contacts all across Cormyr, and Sabbar's quite sizable reward has attracted many other thugs and cutthroats. Even the Zhentarim have gotten wind of the big reward, and have taken an interest.

Whatever the cause, another assassin shows up, intent on taking Marcus dead or alive. The assassin's identity is up to the DM—it might be a known character such as Eregul or Flame from the *FORGOTTEN REALMS® Campaign Setting*; Mourn the drow from *Elves of Evermeet*, or it can be someone drawn up by the DM. This assassin should be good enough to seriously threaten the group. He or she may try to dispose of Marcus subtly—gaining his confidence, then slipping him poisoned wine—or may simply sneak into Marcus's room to slide a knife between his ribs. If captured, the assassin will simply say that someone offered a great deal of money for Marcus's death or capture. No more can be determined, regardless of pressure applied—assassins are notoriously close-mouthed.





## A Sprite in Love

Starlight the sprite has been away from her people for quite some time, and lacks for companionship. One of the male PCs takes her fancy, but she realizes that his size presents a problem. Starlight obtains an amount of a *potion of diminution* sufficient to reduce the PC to her size. If the PC seems interested, Starlight asks him to consume the potion; if he is reluctant, she is not above slipping it into a drink. Either way, the PC is reduced in size for 7+1d4 turns, leaving Starlight free to engage in whatever romantic pursuits she can persuade him to.

Alternatively, Starlight might turn the tables and take a *potion of giant growth*, leaving her the same size as the object of her affection. Whatever she chooses, Starlight remains infatuated with the PC for quite some time, and could periodically show up during future adventures.

## Wedding of Doom

A nobleman or wealthy merchant hires the troupe to perform at his daughter's wedding. The pay is good, and the noble is friendly and outgoing. Unfortunately, things begin to deteriorate.

The DM may create as many disasters as desired—imagine a wedding where everything goes wrong. Possible incidents include:

- The bride hates the groom. It is a political marriage with no real affection, and she spends all her time trying to get out of it, even going so far as to claim that she is actually in love with one of the PCs.
- A rival for the bride's affections arrives with a band of bravos and challenges the groom to a duel. The PCs and performers get caught in the resulting brawl.
- The wedding party imbibes too deeply and a fight breaks out between the guests.
- The nobleman is a cheapskate, deducting "expenses" from the troupe's originally fair pay.
- Starlight performs her aerial torch routine and accidentally sets the hall on fire.

- A skittish guest catches sight of Grax and starts screaming "Orc attack!" causing a commotion and possible riot.
- The groom grows inebriated and makes a pass at Darna or a female PC, causing a conflict with the groom's father.
- The Purple Dragons show up looking for Marcus and the PCs.

## A Dire Notice

This encounter should be the last of those in Cormyr, and will result in the band's immediate departure for the Dale Lands. It takes place in or near northern Cormyr, so that Heino's troupe can leave the country quickly.

Heino has not been idle or ignorant of the party's plight. He has set his best operative, Philip the Bard, to look into things. After exhaustive and dangerous research, Philip has managed to obtain a copy of Sabbar's contract for Marcus.

One evening, as the troupe camps for the night, Zan approaches the characters and tells them that Heino requests their presence in his caravan. When they arrive, read the following.

The interior of Heino's caravan is dim, crowded with costumes, props, and junk. Heino sits at a table with Philip the Bard, their faces illuminated by a guttering candle.

"Welcome," Heino says, his voice more serious than you have ever heard. "I'm afraid we have bad news. Please sit."

You settle in at the table, and Zan passes around a bottle of wine.

"Philip," says Heino, "please read the document you found."

Philip, looking every bit as grim as Heino sounds, unrolls a scroll and begins to read.

"Attention freelance adventurers, bounty hunters, and investigators. Be it known that the criminal Volothamp Geddarm, known by his aliases "Marco Volo" and "Marcus Wands," has



gravely offended the most honorable mage Sabbar, to such an extent that the aforementioned mage seeks redress. Be it further known that Sabbar hereby offers the amount of 10,000..."

Philip breaks off. "Here, the amount of 10,000 has been crossed out and 20,000 written in," he says, then continues. "Twenty thousand Waterdhavian dragons for the capture or death of Volo-thamp, and the delivery of his person or mortal remains to the wizard Sabbar or his agents."

Philip pauses again. "There is an addendum written in a different hand," he says. "It reads, 'The so-called "Marco Volo" is traveling with a company of wandering minstrels led by one known as Heino the Gnome.'"

Heino speaks quietly. "I think it incumbent upon us," he says, "to leave Cormyr immediately. Philip, tell the others. We'll take the Stonebolt Trail north and avoid Tilverton." He looks at you. "Don't worry. We'll straighten this all out in Shadowdale."

The camp erupts in a flurry of activity as the troupe members prepare to leave. Marcus will react badly to the news, and stares blankly if the PCs question him about the situation. Some hours later, as the troupe travels along the Stonebolt Trail, Marcus finally confesses fully. When he does so, read or paraphrase the following.

"I thought I was the consummate rogue," Marcus says sadly. "I wanted to roam free, living as a thief, singing for noblemen, seducing beautiful women, and becoming famous across the continent. Gods, but I was a fool.

"About a year ago, I learned that a wizard named Sabbar had reappeared in Faerûn after being absent many years. After greasing a few palms, I found the location of a manse he rented outside Selgaunt. I broke in and grabbed something—some kind of wand—that I thought looked valuable. Then a kind of gargoyle thing, a guardian of Sabbar's, came after me, and I ran.

"I escaped, but I was scared. I thought Sabbar would know who I was and come after me. So I wrote a letter telling Sabbar it was Volo-thamp

Geddarm who had stolen the wand. I know most wizards hate Volo since he tried to publish their secrets a few years ago. Gods, I'm sorry, but I was in a panic...

"I used a concealment spell from a scroll I stole from my uncle, and hid the wand in the Spiderhaunt Woods, south of Shadowdale. I thought I'd come back after things had cooled down, then sell the wand to someone.

"Months went by, and no one came after me. I started to think I was safe after all. When you people offered me this job, I jumped at it, figuring to dump you at the Spiderhaunts and get the wand."

Marcus sighs heavily. "Now it seems my whole clever scheme has blown up in my face. Yes, Sabbar thinks Volo-thamp stole the wand—that much I succeeded in." He grits his teeth. "But he thinks that *I'm* Volo-thamp! It must be that idiotic pseudonym I use. I picked it because it sounded like Geddarm's nickname— I thought women would be more interested in me that way..."

He makes a fist. "My uncle is right, I'm a worthless wastrel. I never care about anyone but myself. But you've helped me and fought for me... What have I done? I got you in trouble, cost my uncle a fortune, endangered Heino and his friends. Chauntea's hands! I'm even responsible for those monks..."

Marcus looks miserable, as if all the sympathy in the world could not raise the dark cloud from his heart.

"What do we do now?" he asks quietly. "What do we do?"

What indeed? The troupe continues down the road toward the Dales, and the final chapter of *Journey*.



# Chapter Four

*What travails beset our heroes! Marcus Wands, the full enormity of his deeds made manifest, is inconsolable, and our doughty travelers must discover a solution to his dilemma. With the end of their journey in sight, however, the adventurers and their friends must contend with yet another deadly trap and—hopefully—rid the world of the wickedness of Felibarr Blacklance. Food and drink are spare, but satisfying.*

**T**he party leaves Cormyr without incident, under cover of darkness, and the way to Shadowdale seems clear. However, Sabbar still has a contract on Marcus, and the increased reward has brought out still more assassins and other evil-doers. Before they can rest, the PCs must contend with an old enemy: the wizard Felibarr Blacklance.

## Felibarr on the Trail

The evil Felibarr Blacklance has not been idle since his last meeting with the adventurers. He lost track of them when they defeated his agents near the Way Inn, but he has been diligently searching for them ever since.

His growing anger and frustration have driven Felibarr to demand that Sabbar raise his reward from 15,000 to 30,000 gold pieces. With this incentive, Felibarr redoubled his efforts. Rumors finally reached his ears of a group matching the party's description accompanying a band of traveling minstrels in Cormyr.

Further investigations have disclosed the troupe's route. With a reinforced band of followers, Felibarr is now hot on the trail. Learning that Heino's troupe is heading to Shadowdale, Felibarr originally set up an ambush on the Moonsea Ride. When scouts reported that Heino was taking the Stonebolt Trail, he relocated his ambush to intercept the adventurers deep in the Stonelands Wilderness.

The PCs will surely be on guard for attack, but Felibarr plans with subtlety. The Stonebolt Trail is much rougher than the more-traveled Moonsea Ride, and it will take the party three to five days to reach Shadow Gap, from which they can see the end of their journey. In the foothills of the Thunder Peaks, Felibarr and his allies appear.

In the distance stand the mighty Thunder Peaks, touched here and there with snow. An icy wind sweeps down from the mountains, reaching cold fingers beneath cloaks and hoods; gray clouds threaten rain. Two dark figures emerge from near a rocky outcropping ahead; each is armed with a longbow. As they draw near, you see they are orcs or half-orcs, armored in dark ring mail. "Hold!" shouts one. "We request parlay!"





If the party stops to talk, read the following. If they attack, go immediately to *The Reckoning*.

You glimpse other figures behind the rocks nearby. You can't tell whether they are orcs, humans, or other humanoids. Then you hear a slow *clip-clop* of hooves, and a horse walks forward. Mounted on its back is the hateful Felibarr Blacklance.

Surprisingly, he smiles; but it is a smile carved from ice. "Greetings!" he declares. "I was afraid that we would not see each other again. Our last meeting was so stimulating, I had to find you, to offer my congratulations."

He leaps lightly from the saddle. "I'm offering you parlay because I have no overwhelming desire to kill you. Not that I wouldn't find it enjoyable, but it would divert me from my true purpose." He pauses and fixes Marcus with a stern gaze. "You are in the company of a certain individual who calls himself 'Marco Volo.' You may be interested to know that his real name is Marcus Wands, and he is one of the most spoiled, arrogant young noblemen in Waterdeep. I'm told that he also calls himself 'Volothamp Geddarm,' and he has caused certain powerful individuals a great deal of trouble.

"You see," he purrs, inspecting his fingernails with an affected air of detachment, "he took something. Something that didn't belong to him. You're protecting a common, filthy thief. Are you really any better than him?"

Felibarr rakes you with a disdainful gaze. "You think I'm evil? I'm finishing the Waterdeep watch's job. I could kill you all and no one would blame me. But I'm a reasonable man, despite appearances. Turn Volo—or whatever his name is—over to me. It's worth 5,000 gold in whatever denominations you wish. Give him to me and go on your way."

He smiles again. "I'm sure you see it my way, friends. What do you say? Turn the little thief over to me and make some money."

If the PCs turn Marcus over to Felibarr, the adventure ends right here and you can forget running *Marco Volo—Arrival*. Heino and his troupe will be horrified by the characters' cowardly behavior, and Maskar Wands will take a personal interest in making the

party pay for its deed. In all likelihood, however, the characters trust Felibarr about as far as they can throw Heino's wagon—rightly so, since Blacklance has no intention of paying the PCs once he has Marcus.

If the characters do the sensible thing—that is to say, if they reject Felibarr's duplicitous offer—read the following aloud.

Felibarr throws back his heads and laughs. "As I hoped," he says. "Thieves do tend to stick together. I've been looking forward to this—there's been a reckoning due ever since we fought in Waterdeep. Well, to battle, my friends. I'll enjoy looting your bodies."

## The Reckoning

The fight with Felibarr's private army is likely to be a nasty one, since both Blacklance and the PCs now have allies: Felibarr leads the mercenaries and his evil companions; and Heino's Woodland Troupe will stand by the PCs. Retreat is not an option, since Heino's wagons and riders block the road. Trying to turn the wagons around would make a complete mess of things, allowing Felibarr to attack with impunity.

Heino's troupe, loyal to the last, will fight alongside the PCs. Some of Felibarr's minions will fight Heino's people, with the action taking place in the background—the DM can just tell the players how that part of the fight is going.

Of course, Felibarr is interested in Marcus and the characters. This part of the fight should be played out in detail, pitting Felibarr and the following forces against the PCs.

### Orc Mercenaries

Felibarr has hired about 30 orc and half-orc mercenaries. Half of these will fight the PCs, while the other half will fight Heino's forces.

**Orc Mercenaries (30):** Int Average; AL LE; AC 6; MV 9; HD 1; hp 6; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 (broad sword) or 1-6 (longbow); SZ M; ML 12



### Evil Humans

Some of Felibarr's human companions have joined him on this mission, hoping for a cut of the profits and some plunder. The PCs will have to fight several individuals, all of whom are mounted. The DM should choose from the following, as suited to challenge the PCs' party.

**Nosk (6th-Level Fighter):** Int Low; AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 6; hp 48; THAC0 15 (+3 due to weapon); #AT 1; Dmg 1-8+3 (*broad sword* +3) or 1-6 (*longbow*); SZ M; ML 15

Nosk is an evil mercenary who has worked with Felibarr on several occasions. He is broke and needs the money, so he fights fiercely.

**Khaza (5th-Level Fighter):** Int Average; AL LE; AC 5 (*chain mail* -2); MV 12; HD 5; hp 30; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8 (*long sword*), 1-6 (*light horse lance*) or 1-4 (*crossbow*); SZ M; ML 16

Khaza is a former desert warrior from Anauroch. She is a skilled rider, capable of shooting her crossbow without penalty from horseback. She is merciless and enjoys tormenting her prey with hope of escape before finishing them off.

**Druhzalar (6th-Level Wizard):** Int Genius; AL CN (E); AC 8 (*bracers of AC 8*); MV 12; HD 6; hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 2; Dmg 1-6 (*staff*); SZ M; ML 15; Spells: *magic missile* (x3), *sleep*, *fog cloud*, *Melf's acid arrow*, *fireball*, *hold person*

A renegade wizard who worked with the scholars of Candlekeep, Druhzalar was disgraced for assaulting a young scribe. Today, he is an alcoholic who takes what work he can get. Felibarr knows that he can be relied upon to remain sober only long enough to carry out any required tasks.

**Maglad (5th-Level Wizard):** Int Exceptional; AL LE; AC 10; MV 12; HD 5; hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (*dagger*); SZ M; ML 14;







Spells: *magic missile* (x2), *sleep*, *phantasmal force*, *improved phantasmal force*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *lightning bolt*

Maglad is an associate of Sabbar, sent to help Felibarr pursue Marcus. He is cold and calculating, but never pointlessly cruel, preferring to dispatch his opponents and get on with business. He will urge Felibarr to eliminate the PCs as swiftly as possible. He is practical and pragmatic, and will surrender if things look hopeless. He will bargain for his life by offering to tell what he knows about Sabbar, including the fact that the item stolen by Marcus was a powerful extraplanar artifact known as the Dragonking's Eye.

**Voruna (6th-Level Priest):** Int Average; AL LE; AC 5 (scale armor and shield); MV 12; HD 6; hp 33; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (scourge); SZ M; ML 13; Spells: *cause light wounds*, *curse*, *fear*, *hold person*; *spiritual hammer*, *trip*, *call lightning*, *summon insects*

Voruna serves Loviatar, Maiden of Pain, and now works with Felibarr solely to generate agony among her goddess's foes. She plans to donate her cut of the proceeds to her temple. Her means of inflicting pain are quite methodical—Loviatar is most pleased if victims suffer before they die. She uses her *pain touch* ability if the opportunity arises, but prefers to stand off and cast *cause light wounds* spells at her foes. The DM may determine that cloudy weather prevails enough for Voruna to use her *call lightning* spell. Like many priests of Loviatar, she has a high tolerance for pain, and will not be discouraged by serious wounds. She can endure any amount of interrogation without revealing information.

**Skarr (8th-Level Thief):** Int High; AL CE; AC 7; MV 12; HD 8; hp 30; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (rapier or longbow); SZ M; ML 15

Skarr is a recent addition to Felibarr's grim band, having joined in Tilverton after hearing of money to be made. Felibarr doesn't trust him, with good reason, for Skarr plans on stealing anything he can and making his escape. He will fight well, however.

**Rau'Triel Luen (Drow, 10th-Level Wizard):** Int Genius; AL CE; AC 1 (*cloak of protection* +5, *ring of protection* +4, -1 due to Dexterity); MV 12; HD 10; hp 26; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6+3 (*staff of striking*); SZ M; ML 17; Spells: *magic missile* (x2), *shield*, *spider climb*, *blindness*, *darkness* (15' radius), *invisibility*, *web*, *fly*, *gust of wind*, *monster summoning I*, *fear*, *ice storm*, *cloud-kill*, *teleport*

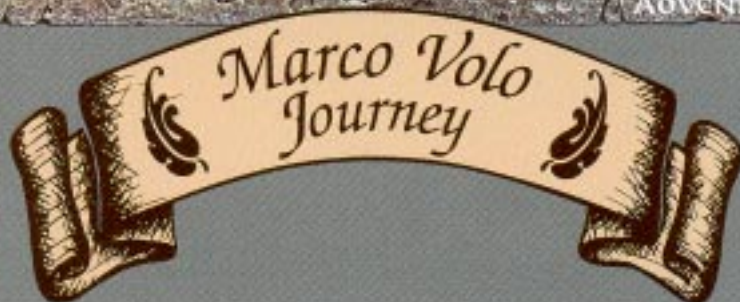
One of Felibarr's several female "admirers," the drow wizard Rau'Triel Luen, has also joined his company in the simple hope of causing a little mayhem. If Felibarr is slain, and Rau'Triel escapes (she will keep her *teleport* spell in reserve for such eventualities), she will swear vengeance against the PCs and may, if the DM wishes, show up in future adventures as a continuing adversary.

## The Aftermath

After the battle, it is likely that Felibarr Blacklance will be no more. Even if he escapes, he knows the reward isn't worth the trouble and disappears from the adventure.

Felibarr's camp is not far from the battle site. There the adventurers find weapons, clothing, and armor, and a chest containing the gold with which Felibarr would pay his troops. The chest is *wizard locked*, and contains 4,500 gp, 6,000 sp and 20 gems (1 x 1,000 gp; 4 x 500 gp; 10 x 100 gp and 5 x 50 gp). The stones were intended as bonuses for exceptional service.

Finally, the way to Shadowdale is clear. Shareal will suggest that the PCs rest here, and she will administer first aid and *healing*. Heino has a small number (as determined by the DM) of *potions of healing*. The entire sordid affair will be concluded in the final volume of the trilogy, *Marco Volo – Arrival*, in which Marcus leads the PCs to the hiding place of the Dragonking's Eye. There he will find, to his dismay, that the artifact has a mind of its own, and also that the evil Sabbar has finally taken a personal role in the whole matter. The unfairly-vilified Volothamp Geddarm, and several other interested parties, also put in their respective appearances.



by ANTHONY PRYOR

**M**arco Volo—*Journey* is the second volume of the *Marco Volo* trilogy, designed for four to eight player characters of 6th–8th level. This free-wheeling adventure began in Waterdeep as the characters set out on an intrigue-laden journey to Shadowdale. Accompanying them is Marcus Wands (also known as “Marco Volo”), a bothersome but likable little rogue.

After leaving the Way Inn, the party heads for the Chauntean Monastery near Berdusk, where they have been promised safe shelter. Arriving at the monastery, all seems pastoral and pleasant... but of course, things are never quite that simple.

After escaping from the monastery, the PCs run afoul of King Azoun's Purple Dragons on the lookout for the infamous thief, Marco Volo. Only the timely intervention of a band of wandering entertainers enables the party to continue on its way.

While on the road with Heino's Woodland Troupe, the characters learn the joys of being in a traveling repertory company, performing for a different audience each night. In the course of the adventure, the PCs also learn more about Marcus and his secrets—some of his secrets, anyway. There's still the matter of the mysterious letter, and that powerful artifact from another plane, the *Dragonking's Eye*.

The adventure ends with Shadowdale in sight not to be reached, however, without a final confrontation with the notorious mage-assassin Felibarr Blacklance.

This volume of the *Marco Volo* trilogy offers DMs the opportunity to run unusual encounters, and it calls for considerable role playing from all. Player characters cannot easily rely on their swords and spells to get them out of the brawls and misunderstandings that arise. What results is a dramatic but picaresque enterprise as the adventure continues!

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