



Falsely Accused

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By Daniel Lewis

A One-Round Adventure for the *Legends of the Shining Jewel* Campaign

Two Legionnaires stand accused of a dozen murders, and the evidence supports it. But you're the only ones who still feel like something's wrong. And of course the truth isn't easy or clear-cut...where would be the fun in that?

A 1-round adventure for heroes level 2 - 10.

This module is Part 2 of the "Agents of the State" series
Part 1 is 'Ride-Along'
Part 3 is "
Characters may not play the modules out of order

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WELCOME TO LSJ!

This is a *Legends of the Shining Jewel* campaign adventure. It is written to be played in a standard four-hour convention time slot. Some of the text in this adventure is in ***bold italics***. This text is for the players to hear, although you are certainly free to paraphrase or summarize the text if you feel it is necessary.

LSJ GM EMPOWERMENT CLAUSE

The coordinators of the campaign empower GMs to make changes to the module as necessary to accommodate any unforeseen actions taken by the PCs. If the players find another way to deal with the module, they should be successful and appropriately rewarded. The GM may also invent new NPCs as needed to populate the city of Amthydor, which is not completely detailed due to practical limitations. If the party is having trouble dealing with an encounter, feel free to do what is necessary to assist the PCs to succeed. Do NOT save the PCs if their failure is a result of their own ill-advised actions or lack of forethought. Softening the blow from a bad set of rolls or simple bad luck is one thing, but stupid actions deserve what they get.

CALCULATING ATL (AVERAGE TABLE LEVEL) AND THE POWER OF PCS

Add up the levels of all characters at the table (plus cohorts and entourages) and any animals that will take part in combat that are not granted by class features (such as familiars, animal companions or bonded mounts). Divide this total by 6, regardless of how many player characters are at the table. This gives you the Average Table Level (ATL) for running combats.

Not all parties are created equal. Some level 1 parties can handle anything the GM can throw at them and some level 3 parties are relatively weak for their levels. If the GM finds that the party at the table is really not up to the challenge of the tier, he should adjust the encounters DOWN for that party. This is particularly important if the party has a broad mix of experience levels, is lacking clerics and paladins who can heal, or is a "role-playing" rather than "battle-ready" party. The encounters should be a worthy challenge, not an impossible task or a slaughter fest. Regardless of what the instructions say, the GM should let common sense rule the day (and the module)

LIFESTYLE IN LSJ

Player Characters have to spend money on many things during downtime: food, rent, repairs on weapons and armor and other daily expenses. In the LSJ Campaign this is reflected in Lifestyle Costs, which are paid at the start of every LSJ adventure. See page 147 of the *LSJ Campaign Guide*. If this is a player's first time playing LSJ and an introduction module, he is not to be charged lifestyle. This is an encouragement for him to keep playing.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

With the Diamond Legion so badly devastated by the devil invasion, they turned to the city's adventurers to shore up their numbers and help with critical tasks. One such task was to escort the ambassador from D'Gar, one Governor Cecil Dumont, during his visit to Amthydor about 2 months ago.

During this assignment, the PCs had worked with Sergeant Harriet "Hack" Ackerman and her partner, Corporal Sarah "Slash" Lashton, of the Diamond Legion's diplomatic corps. The two women proved themselves skilled warriors and talented leaders, well respected by their commander, Captain Malcolm Boulderfist, but strangely shunned by many of their fellow Legionnaires.

Dumont took a poor view of the two valkyries, as he did with most women and also with any non-humans, layering verbal abuse and complaints on them despite their (and the PCs') exceptional behavior during the mission. Sadly, a mob of Amthydor citizens, despising D'Gar and all it stands for (mostly slavery and raiding), managed to draw Dumont's blood, and he called off the escort and declared their job a failure.

Dumont has come to exact his revenge against Hack and Slash, and also to weaken Amthydor's confidence in the remainders of the Diamond Legion. By carefully inserting spies over the last several weeks, and buying off Legionnaires that already didn't like Hack and Slash, Dumont has framed them for the murders of multiple visiting D'Garran citizens.

The "victims" were actually two rival bands of mercenaries that Dumont paid to fight each other, and he used his first-hand knowledge of the pair's gear and mannerisms to fake the rest of the evidence. The deception was actually quite successful, and a short investigation found Hack and Slash guilty and sentenced to death.

But Captain Boulderfist smells a set-up, and wants the PCs to investigate further. He's been given a direct order to drop the issue, as King Torestyn and High Warrior Vestra would rather lose two Legionnaires than antagonize D'Gar, so he's off the ranch on this one.

The PCs face an uphill battle as they conduct an unsanctioned investigation, with other surly, or even hostile, Legionnaires as their only sources of info.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Introduction: The PCs are contacted by Captain Boulderfist to hire them for the job.

Encounter 1: The PCs meet with Malcolm Boulderfist in secret, and learn about how Hack and Slash have been found guilty, and how he wants them to investigate further.

Encounter 2: The PCs meet with the Legionnaires who conducted the first investigation, Sergeant Anise Herndon and Corporal Doug Simmons. Their efforts had been prematurely halted before they found very much.

Encounter 3: The PCs meet with Dinah Limoray, the priestess of Hyperion that did most of the examinations on the victims during the second investigation.

Encounter 4: The PCs meet with Butch Stonebones, the sorcerer who did the magical investigation during the second investigation, and who found the supposed confession letter.

Encounter 5: The PCs catch up to the cart on the north road and examine the victims' bodies for clues, finding some evidence that could help Hack and Slash's case.

Encounter 6: The PCs can try to talk to Hack and Slash in jail, but they won't get much.

Encounter 7: The PCs can meet with Malcolm Boulderfist again to present the evidence they've found so far, and try to get Hack and Slash acquitted.

Encounter 8: The traitors in the Legion, Doug Simmons and his buddies, try to kill the PCs before they can expose Dumont's plan to frame Hack and Slash for the murders.

Conclusion A: The PCs succeed, and Sergeant Ackerman and Corporal Lashton are saved.

Conclusion B: The PCs didn't find all of the possible clues before going back, and the re-trial is inconclusive.

Conclusion C: The PCs blew their cover and got reported, causing their investigation to fail and Hack and Slash to be executed.

INTRODUCTION

This adventure is set 3 months after the invasion of Baramamiuht and his army of devils. The city is beginning to see some rebuilding, but there's a ways to go yet.

The last few months have been difficult, that's for certain, and progress on the reconstruction has been slow, but there is progress. Amthydor's shattered skyline may take years to recover, and will never truly be the same, but at least now most of the rubble is gone, and people are finally starting to get back to something like a normal life.

It hasn't been quite the same for the city's adventurers, though. With so much of the kingdom's wealth and resources going into trying to put everything back together after the devil invasion, the heroes who once commanded princely sums for dangerous missions have found themselves shoulder-to-shoulder with the day laborers, carrying rocks and counting their silvers.

But amidst the drudgery, one thing remains constant: the time-honored tradition of being surprised by one of the city's ninja-trained messenger children carrying a scroll tube with a job offer. The young redheaded girl couldn't be more than 12, but carries herself with an air of authority as she steps out of a nearby shadow and presses the message tube into your hands.

With her face deadly serious she speaks no words, putting her finger to her lips to "shush" you and shaking her head "no", refusing any attempt at a tip, or even a 'thank you', before melding back into the shadows. Perplexed, and maybe slightly disturbed, you open the tube and read the note inside, which was obviously written with great haste and little care.

"I need your help to save our friends. No contracts. No Legion. No League. No Quorum. No anyone. Meet me outside the temple of Destine tonight. I'll probably be late."

It is signed simply with "Malcolm".

A Linguistics check at DC ATL+20 can identify the handwriting of Captain Malcolm Boulderfist, even though it's smudged and smeared from how quickly he was writing.

There's no way to be sure about the exact time of the meeting, but a Knowledge (local) check at DC 15 would know that by 11 PM or so, the temples district is usually pretty well deserted, even from priests.

When the PCs are ready, Go To Encounter 1.

ENCOUNTER 1

Meeting Malcolm Boulderfist outside the temple of Destine at *some time* during the night can be handled however the PCs would like.

Let them make some skill checks, or whatever they please, but nobody is going to stop them or spy on them (not yet, anyway).

Once everyone is satisfied with how they've arrived for the meeting, proceed with the boxed text.

There can be some time at the end for questions.

You've set yourself up and waited well into the night, carefully watching as everyone else gradually filtered out of the commons area of the Temples District. But you're not truly alone...it seems several others have also been watching and waiting, and they carry themselves as adventurers as well.

The PCs can meet and introduce themselves here

With only the cryptic note to guide you, there's no telling when exactly you're supposed to meet Malcolm, so you're left to just watch and wait, hopeful that this isn't some sort of trap. Finally, around 1 AM and just before you were ready to give up, you see a figure approaching out of the darkness.

Captain Malcolm Boulderfist of the Diamond Legion is nearly unrecognizable thanks to an actually fairly effective disguise. His uniform has been replaced by blacksmith's leathers, and his hooded cloak and oversized eyepatch all but obscures a clean-shaven face with a pair of criss-crossing scars over his nose.

Looking around one last time, and apparently satisfied with what he sees (or didn't see), he quickly motions for you all to join him at a park bench beneath a broken street lamp, in an area of even deeper shadows. As you gather 'round, he removes a previously-invisible bowler hat from his head and lowers his cloak, his visage instantly returning to the familiar face you met in the Embassy District a few weeks ago...but far sadder.

His voice is gruff and low, as if he's barely keeping his emotions in check,

"My friends...I'm sorry I had to ask to meet you this way. If the King or High Warrior knew what I was doing, well...let's just say that insubordination isn't being looked on too kindly right now.

"I...I wish..." his voice trails off for a moment, and he gives a huge <sigh> and pinches the bridge of his nose before continuing,

"You probably haven't heard yet, but there was a mass-murder outside the Embassy District 3 days ago, nearly 2 dozen victims. The Diamond Legion

kept it quiet because the victims were visitors from D'Gar under our favorite ambassador, Cecil Dumont...and because the prime suspects were Sergeant Ackerman and Corporal Lashton.

"King Torestyn and High Warrior Vestra ordered an immediate investigation, and of course I set my best remaining Legionnaires on it, since it was my jurisdiction. But apparently Dumont went the diplomatic route, for once, and insisted that my investigation be shut down because it would have been "biased".

"They agreed, and my soldiers were sent packing and replaced. The...uh..."investigation" lasted all of 1 day, and found evidence implicating the Sergeant and Corporal.

"But it's *garbage*, I know it is.

"I can feel it in my *bones*. Hack and Slash are model soldiers, and damn fine people...there's *no way* they did this. This entire thing is a sham. Even underwater it stinks of a setup.

"The whole thing went to trial *this morning*, but Dumont insisted that I be kept out, since I would've been 'a distraction'. I had hoped that, even without me there, the truth would win out, but...it didn't. Sergeant Ackerman and Corporal Lashton will be hanged for treason and murder in 7 days. Treason and murder they *didn't commit!*"

Captain Boulderfist's voice catches in his throat and he leans forward, his face in his hands, breathing heavily. It takes a minute for him to regain his composure,

"I can't let them die like this...I *can't*. But I've been given a direct order not to investigate, and I'm sure that I'm being watched.

"I need *you* to uncover the truth about this. There's nobody else I can ask. Please. Please help me. Please help *them*."

Assuming the PCs say 'Yes!...

Malcolm looks genuinely relieved at your answer, and hurriedly continues,

"Thank you, my friends. I hope you have better luck than I did in uncovering the truth. Let me share with you what I know so far.

"First off, thank Galvandt, I don't believe that the King or High Warrior are in on this. I think they're just catering to D'Gar so that we don't have an incident. I think they've been fooled by Dumont. He's the one who's *really* behind this, I'm sure of it.

"He hated Hack and Slash, and he's enough of a petty man-baby to try and go after them directly, after the last time he was here. I...I have to admit that I probably set them up for this, in the long run. I was the one who assigned them to guard Dumont,

it was *my* fault that he interacted with them so much in the first place."

He takes a deep breath, shakes his head, and continues,

"Nevermind that, I'll beat myself up later. You, though...you'll want to talk to the soldiers I initially put on the investigation, Sergeant Anise Herndon and Corporal Doug Simmons.

"But...BUT, *for the love of all the gods*, do not let them know you're investigating. Just...act concerned about Hack and Slash, and ask your questions *very carefully*. They saw you with them before, they won't think it's strange.

"And you'll probably want to *carefully* talk to the team that led the follow-up "investigation", Dinah Limoray and Butch Stonebones. Dinah is an elven priestess of Hyperion, Butch is a sky elf mage who likes to get drunk.

"Illudra smiled on me with that one, actually, Butch is...an old friend. You'll want to talk to him alone, with the gloves off.

"Lastly, the victims. This was my favorite part of this whole mess... Dumont claimed rights on their remains, as D'Garra citizens, and had all the bodies returned to D'Gar after an examination that, so I'm told, lasted about 5 minutes.

"But here's the best bit: the caravan to take the bodies only left yesterday evening, and was loaded down with trade goods, so they'll be moving slowly. It should be easy for you to overtake them on the north road and conduct a *proper* examination.

"I'm betting somewhere in all this, you'll find the evidence we need to clear Hack and Slash. You adventurers are good like that...always finding what the bad guys want to keep hidden.

"Just...again, just be *really careful* how you ask your questions. If anyone gets tipped off that you're trying to re-do the investigation, they'll likely give you the boot, throw out everything you found, and then Hack and Slash will be doomed for sure."

Captain Boulderfist looks up quickly, scans the area for a moment, then dons his cloak and magic hat, putting the fake face back on.

"We shouldn't stay out here long. If we're spotted together, the jig may be up. But if you have any quick questions, now's the time to ask."

Captain Boulderfist can answer a few questions before he'll insist that he has to go, and leave the PCs to conduct their investigation.

A **Knowledge (Local)** check at DC ATL+15, or a **Knowledge (geography)** check at DC ATL+5, can identify additional information about D'Gar:

- It is a rugged country, known for producing little in the way of its own manufacturing
- Most of D'Gar's trade comes from raw materials, or goods they have secured in "other ways"
- D'Gar makes heavy use of slave labor, especially in dangerous jobs like mining and mercenary work
- D'Gar is a very militant nation: army service is mandatory for men and encouraged for women
- *Game-mechanically*, most residents of D'Gar are Lawful Evil, or something close

☛ 'How much?'

Captain Boulderfist gives a quiet laugh and looks down at his hands,

"You know, normally I'd offer some rebuke about payment, but you're right. I'm way out of line on this one, and you will be, too. It wouldn't be right for me to ask you to do that for free.

"I only have my own money to use on this one, but for the group of you...if you can clear Hack and Slash's names, I think I could do (ATL x 15) gold each. Look at it this way...that's about 8 times what my Legionnaires make for a week's work."

☛ 'Where do we find these people?'

Captain Boulderfist furrows his brow,

"Oh, right, sorry...it's easy to forget that what's obvious to me isn't to you..."

"You'll probably find Sergeant Herndon and Corporal Simmons in our headquarters at the Embassy District. I'll probably be there also, but obviously we can't talk about any of...*this*...in that area.

"Dinah Limoray will likely be at the temple of Hyperion, but I wouldn't know when. My understanding is that she's a mid-level acolyte, so they might keep odd hours.

"You'll find Butch Stonebones in any one of the city's dive bars, most likely. For someone who can't hold his liquor at all, he sure likes to go drinking. I don't know, maybe his low tolerance means he has more fun for less coin. Start with the Rusty Nail...the Dauntless Dolphin doesn't allow him in anymore, so the Nail is your next best bet.

"Oh, and...uh...if I were you, I'd avoid approaching any of these people outside their place of business...except Butch, obviously. But yeah, if you just came up to them on the street, or at home,

or something like that, it'd feel out-of-place and kind of suspicious. But they'd expect to have people coming to talk to them about work *while* they're at work, you know?

☛ 'You mentioned talking to Butch with "the gloves off...", what do you mean?'

Captain Boulderfist gives a smirk, the first sign of a happy face you've seen from him this whole time,

"Eh...Butch bruises in a stiff wind. And he's not part of the League...couldn't keep up with their rules. So if he doesn't answer your questions right away, just give him a good smack – from *me* – and he'll open right up, I'm sure."

☛ 'How about Dinah Limoray, how should we approach talking to her?'

Malcolm grimaces and shakes his head,

"Eugh...yeah, that's gonna be tricky. Dinah's not an idiot...If she thinks that you're trying to overturn her investigation, she'll probably put two and two together, and it'll fall back on me.

"I'm not worried about myself, mind you, but *you* would likely be punished for "interfering with an investigation", or whatever, and you probably don't want that. Plus they'd inevitably end up throwing out whatever you'd found, and Hack and Slash would be doomed."

☛ 'What about Sergeant Herndon and Corporal Simmons, how should we approach them?'

Captain Boulderfist nods thoughtfully,

"Yeah, you'll probably have the easiest time getting some information out of them, but I don't know how much they'll have that'll be useful, since they were kicked off the investigation before it was finished.

"Just approach them like you'd heard a rumor about the Sergeant and Corporal – which you *did* – and act like you're concerned and looking for info. They've dealt with adventurers before, we all have, so they probably won't think twice about it.

"Just don't be *too* obvious, you know?"

☛ 'Where are Hack and Slash now?'

Captain Boulderfist points towards a section of the outer walls that hosts extra guard towers,

"In high-security lockup right now. Reserved for only the most violent scum..."

*He shakes his head sorrowfully,
"They don't belong there, not at all..."*

- If the PCs want to head out the north gate and try to find the D'Garran caravan, **GO TO Encounter 5**
- If the PCs want to try to visit Hack and Slash in the lockup, **GO TO Encounter 6**

☞ **'Could we talk to Hack and Slash?'**

*Malcolm raises his eyebrows,
"You know, I never thought of that..."*

"When Harriet and Sarah were charged they were taken away from my precinct, I wasn't allowed to see them...I guess the High Warrior was concerned that it would've affected my investigation. She's *wrong*, but that's not the point. The procedures exist for a reason.

"My entire time in the Legion, the high-security pen was never part of my job, I never gave it a second thought. I actually don't even know if they let people talk to prisoners there.

"I don't know, maybe it's worth a shot?"

When the PCs are done asking questions, use this boxed text:

With your immediate curiosity satisfied, Captain Boulderfist gives you a solemn nod,

"Once you have an update, find me in my office and tell me that you "want to discuss the Jaderspur issue". Nobody in the office will know what you mean, and it'll be easy for me to deflect their questions.

"Although...uh...you might want to be sure that you've found everything you can before you try that particular trick, though. A fake excuse like that is only going to work once; if you came in multiple times for a fake meeting, someone in the precinct is bound to catch on, and I'd rather not risk that.

"Good luck, my friends...I hope you find what we need, or two innocent people will hang, and the city will be all the worse for the loss."

He quickly shuffles off into the shadows, leaving your group alone in the darkened streets.

- If the PCs want to go do the Embassy District to talk to Sergeant Anise Herndon and Corporal Doug Simmons, **GO TO Encounter 2**
- If the PCs want to go do the temple of Hyperion to talk to Dinah Limoray, **GO TO Encounter 3**
- If the PCs want to try to find Butch Stonebones in the dive bars, **GO TO Encounter 4**

ENCOUNTER 2

During normal business hours the Embassy District is much as you remember it, neat and orderly, with Legionnaires in impeccable uniforms and precise manners. An unmistakably dour mood hangs in the air, though, as one might expect from a division where two of its members' heads are on the block.

With everyone's names and ranks clearly displayed it's easy to locate the two Legionnaires that Captain Boulderfist asked you to find. Sergeant Anise Herndon is a middle-aged halfling woman with curly brown hair that runs halfway down her back, a stern face, and piercing blue eyes that seem to instantly judge everything and everyone around her.

She's currently delegating daily tasks to the junior Legionnaires in a no-nonsense voice, but her posture betrays her bored mindset: this is routine and they all know it. It would be a simple matter to approach her after she's done giving her orders and the underlings scurry off to their assigned tasks.

Corporal Doug Simmons is manning the far end of the front desk, greeting visitors to the district and filling out paperwork. A fair-skinned human man in his early twenties, Corporal Simmons is a bit lightly-framed for most human male soldiers, and his attitude towards his work seems to be a little on the dull and slow side.

Though he clearly has no shortage of paperwork to deal with, you're fairly sure that you could stand in line for a short while, then approach him like the other guests and speak with no interruptions, thanks to the short privacy walls separating the workstations at the front desk.

The PCs have 2 options here:

- They can talk to Simmons alone
- They can talk to Herndon alone

They won't really be able to catch them both together, as Herndon will always have more orders to give, and Simmons always has more paperwork to do.

The PCs' approach very much matters, and once they choose one way to go about it, the other ways become impossible.

- If the PCs want to talk to Sergeant Anise Herndon, **GO TO Encounter 2A**
- If the PCs want to talk to Corporal Doug Simmons, **GO TO Encounter 2B**

ENCOUNTER 2A

Let the PCs roleplay approaching Sergeant Herndon however they please, as nobody is going to interfere. Paraphrase the beginning of the boxed text if you need to, but you shouldn't need to very much.

After a few minutes doling out instructions, Sergeant Herndon's minions rush off to their assigned tasks and she is left momentarily alone. Seizing the opportunity, you approach her as unobtrusively as possible in an active, open workspace.

As you draw near she looks you up and down with a knowing eye,

"Hmm, adventurers, huh? If you're looking for work you'd have to talk to Captain Boulderfist, though I doubt we'd have much for you at the moment. Or did you need me for something?"

"Well?...speak up, I don't have all day."

This is where things get interesting, and the *manner* in which the PCs talk to Sergeant Herndon is most important.

They will want to ask their questions very carefully, and beat-around-the-bush about *why* they're asking their questions.

For simplicity: as long as the PCs are intending to be discreet, have them make a **Bluff** check against DC ATL+5.

- On a **Success**, they've managed to ask their question, or give *their* answer to *her* question, in such a way that Sergeant Herndon doesn't become any more suspicious.
- If they **Fail the 1st time**, the DC of the next check goes up by +5.
- If they **Fail a 2nd time**, the DC goes up by another +5, and use the boxed text below labelled "Sergeant Herndon Is Suspicious"
- If they **Fail a 3rd time**, Sergeant Herndon automatically reports them for their interference, **Go To Conclusion C**

Obviously the questions won't be precisely what the PCs say, since they'll be roleplaying trying to keep things quiet...just use whichever question/response seems closest to what was said.

☛ 'How did you know Sergeant Ackerman and Corporal Lashton?'

PCs must make the Bluff check (see above)

Sergeant Herndon gives you a small smirk,

"The Legion, as you might imagine, is a bit of a 'boys' club'...most of the women in uniform know each other. Harriet and Sarah have been a...team...for as long as I can remember.

"They're both excellent fighters, but they had a knack for negotiation and talking people down, so that they wouldn't need to fight. That's how they ended up in the diplomatic corps."

☛ 'Wait...what was that little pause about...when you said they were "a team"?'

Her smile fades, replaced with a nervous stammer that seems uncharacteristic of her,

"It's...uh...it's nothing. Don't worry about it."

A Sense Motive check at DC ATL+10 will show that it is definitely *not* 'nothing'...

If the PCs want to press the issue, they can make a Diplomacy check at DC ATL+15 to get the following reply:

☛ 'What? It's definitely *not* just 'nothing'. What did you mean?'

Her face goes deadly serious as she looks around to make sure that you're momentarily alone, then lowers her voice conspiratorially,

"There's been talk...gossip, really...amongst the NCOs and junior officers recently. Some seem to think that the reason Hack and Slash are only a 2-woman team is because they're "unlucky"...from what happened during the devil invasion.

"But that's not the truth. That's just the excuse that they give.

"The *real* reason they think they're unlucky is because...Hack and Slash are *sly*."

☛ "'Sly"? What do you mean, like they're sneaky?'

Sergeant Herndon's keeps her voice low,

"What? No. I mean they're *sly*...for each other.

"They...they *fancy* each other. Like a...like a husband fancies his wife.

"Most Legionnaires don't care, or even *know*. We're all wearing the same uniform and we all bleed the same color.

"But it apparently bothers some others. Bothers them enough to spread nasty rumors about 'bad luck', and so on.

"Could be what made this investigation stick so easily, could be *not*...I don't know.

"But enough about that. It's none of my business, and frankly, it's none of theirs or *yours*. What those two do on their own time is their own concern.

"They're not breaking any laws or hurting anyone, and it's never affected their job performance, so far as I know, so I say 'who cares'. Now...change the subject or let me get back to work, please and thanks."

☛ 'So...what happened with Hack and Slash?'

PCs must make the Bluff check (see above)

Sergeant Herndon shakes her head sadly and looks at the floor for a moment before answering,

"It's a damn shame, is what it is. Never served with finer soldiers, only to have them do...*this*.

"I never would've believed they had it in them. I still don't. But...they were found guilty, so I guess that's that.

"It's funny, though... This was the very first time I'd ever heard of either of them showing any kind of...I don't know...blind rage, or revenge violence, I guess?

"I mean, they were fighters, obviously, everyone in uniform is, but I'd never heard of either of them losing their cool, not even when the devils were here. To think that they'd just...snap, and kill so many people in the street, it's just...really weird, and sad."

☛ 'So they didn't have a history of excessive violence or losing control?'

PCs must make the Bluff check (see above)

She stares off to one corner for a moment, lost in thought, obviously wracking her memory,

"No, not that I ever heard of, and I make it a point to keep track of the trouble-makers. It makes it easier to stay on top of the resulting paperwork."

☛ 'What did you and Corporal Simmons find out in your investigation?'

PCs must make the Bluff check (see above)

She furrows her brow,

"Not a lot, I'm afraid. We'd barely had time to secure the crime scene before the Captain told us

we'd been put off the case and our 'replacements' showed up.

"I did notice that, for the number of victims, there was barely any blood on the ground. I don't know, it could mean nothing, but Sergeant Ackerman and Corporal Lashton favored heavy blades, and there's usually a lot of blood spray with longswords and the like."

"But if I were you, I wouldn't go poking around in something that's got the High Warrior's attention, you know? I get it, you're just worried about Ackerman and Lashton, and that's fine as long as that's all it is, that's all I'm saying."

Have the PCs make a **Bluff** or **Diplomacy** check at **DC ATL+5** to get their conversation back on track, before continuing.

🗨️ **'Do you think they really did it?'**

Sergeant Herndon shakes her head,

"It's not my place to second-guess the courts. If we start doing that, the law breaks down."

The PCs can attempt a **Diplomacy** check at **DC ATL+10** to get more of an answer:

She sighs heavily, and shakes her head again,

"No, I think this is all some kind of mix-up. But I have no proof, and the Captain's made it clear that we're not to interfere. I think it's a damn shame, but that's where we are.

"I have to support the rule of law...even if I don't always like what the magistrates have to say. And that's *all* I'll say about that.

"It's a nasty situation, and one that I'm keen to get past, if it's all the same to you."

Once the PCs are Done Asking Questions

The PCs may try to cajole additional information out of Sergeant Herndon, but the truth is that she just *doesn't know* anything else.

Try as they might, the PCs *cannot* convince Herndon to intervene with their investigation. She's very by-the-book, and Captain Boulderfist already passed on the message that the entire Embassy District precinct is to stay out of the situation.

You thank the Sergeant for her time and leave as efficiently as you can. She doesn't seem to bother you any further, instead returning to her duties directing the junior Legionnaires of their responsibilities for the day.

Sergeant Herndon Is Suspicious

If the PCs are not careful about how they talk to Sergeant Herndon, she may start to suspect what they're up to, without actually confirming just yet.

Use the following boxed text before continuing with whatever conversation they were already having.

Remember that any more failures on the Bluff checks will cause the PCs to fail the module (see above).

Sergeant Herndon eyes you all warily, looking your group up-and-down, then quickly glancing at Captain Boulderfist's office,

"You all are asking an awful lot of questions about an investigation that's already been concluded and went to trial... And Captain Boulderfist already informed us that the High Warrior doesn't want anyone else involved, since the case is closed.

"I guess maybe you didn't get that message? I mean, I'm not saying that that's what's happening, I'm not one to make assumptions.

- If the PCs want to go do the temple of Hyperion to talk to Dinah Limoray, **GO TO Encounter 3**
- If the PCs want to try to find Butch Stonebones in the dive bars, **GO TO Encounter 4**
- If the PCs want to head out the north gate and try to find the D'Garran caravan, **GO TO Encounter 5**
- If the PCs want to try to visit Hack and Slash in the lockup, **GO TO Encounter 6**
- If the PCs want to go to Captain Boulderfist to present their evidence so far, **GO TO Encounter 7**

ENCOUNTER 2B

You only have to wait in the short line for a few minutes before Corporal Doug Simmons' desk is available and you can make your way over to him. As you approach, he looks like he's about to start some sort of rehearsed greeting, but then stops himself and nods at you,

"Hmm, we don't get adventurers here very often. What can I do for you all today?"

His desk is separated from the others by short privacy walls, so as long as you all keep your voices down, nobody should hear or interrupt you.

This is where things get interesting, and the *manner* in which the PCs talk to Corporal Simmons is most important.

They will want to ask their questions very carefully, and beat-around-the-bush about *why* they're asking their questions.

For simplicity: as long as the PCs are intending to be discreet, have them make a **Bluff** check against DC ATL+5.

- On a **Success**, they've managed to ask their question, or give *their* answer to *her* question, in such a way that Corporal Simmons doesn't become any more suspicious.
- If they **Fail the 1st time**, the DC of the next check goes up by +5.
- If they **Fail a 2nd time**, the DC goes up by another +5, and use the boxed text below labelled "Corporal Simmons Is Suspicious"
- If they **Fail a 3rd time**, Corporal Simmons automatically reports them for their interference, **Go To Conclusion C**

Obviously the questions won't be precisely what the PCs say, since they'll be roleplaying trying to keep things quiet...just use whichever question/response seems closest to what was said.

☛ **'How did you know Sergeant Ackerman and Corporal Lashton?'**

PCs must make the Bluff check (see above)

Corporal Simmons waves his hand dismissively,
"Eh, I barely did. We didn't work together, and the one time I tried to get better acquainted, they made it clear that they weren't...uh...interested..."

like that. Come to find out later I shouldn't have bothered, given...*their condition*."

- ☛ **'Wait...what do you mean 'their condition'?'**
- ☛ **'What do you mean...'off the market'?**
- ☛ **'What do you mean...'weren't interested'?'**

He rolls his eyes,,

"Uh, well...you didn't hear it from me, but...apparently they don't want *any* men around, because they're *sly*. Shame, that...bet if they'd had a good man to watch out for trouble they wouldn't have ended up how they were.

"I guess the guys in the alley didn't take the hint, you know what I mean?"

- ☛ **'Uh, no, we don't know what you mean.**
- ☛ **'What do you mean they're "sly", like they're sneaky?'**

Simmons gives an exasperated huff,

"No, I mean they're *sly*. For each other. They...they don't fancy *men* because they're too busy with *each other*.

"It's a damn waste, is what it is. They're both *fine*. But I guess it doesn't matter now, right?"

"Hey...uh...let's talk about something else, ok? It's a bit of a sore subject, and they *are* still Legionnaires, *on death row*...uh...yeah...change the subject, eh?"

☛ **'So...what happened with Hack and Slash?'**

PCs must make the Bluff check (see above)

Corporal Simmons shakes his head, disdain and scorn evident in his voice,

"Kind of a shame, that. Despite their... condition...they were still okay Legionnaires.

"I never would've thought they had it in them. But I guess it's always the ones you least expect, right?"

"Strange, though... I never heard of them losing their temper like that before. And another thing...like, two women against almost 20 men, and they *still* managed to kill them all? I don't know, that sounds a little far-fetched to me."

☛ 'What did you and Sergeant Herndon find out in your investigation?'

PCs must make the Bluff check (see above)

He furrows his brow,

"Not much, really. We'd barely had time to secure the crime scene before the Captain told us we were fired 'replacements' showed up. New record, even for me, heh. I'm...I'm kidding.

"But yeah, pile of bodies, all super dead. I mean, I guess *that* bit was a little weird...like, Ackerman and Lashton didn't used to fight with people much, and it seemed like they always took prisoners, rather than not.

"And yet, we didn't hear about the fight from a survivor, you know? We only found out because a messenger kid ran across the corpses. Poor kid freaked *way* out. When he grows up he's going to end up being either a serial killer or an adventurer, heh heh."

☛ 'Do you think they really did it?'

Corporal Simmons nods,

"Yeah, actually, I do. They were the only ones on patrol in the area the day the bodies were discovered. And adventurers don't just wander around suburban neighborhoods, 3 blocks from a Legion headquarters building, leaving piles of bodies in the street.

"Besides adventurers, who wouldn't have ever *been* there, who, other than a Legionnaire, would be able to take down so many guys at once? I mean, yeah, Ackerman and Lashton are just two women, but they *are* Legionnaires.

"And the court found them guilty, so...what else do you want me to say? It's a damn shame...I mean, they were *already* off the market, being how they were, but it still looks bad on the uniform, right?"

The PCs can attempt a **Sense Motive** check at **DC ATL+15** to detect that Simmons is actually quite satisfied with the verdict against Hack and Slash, as if he's satisfied that he "called it".

Regardless of anything the PCs say, he won't elaborate, and if they press the issue, he'll have them thrown out of the building.

Corporal Simmons Is Suspicious

If the PCs are not careful about how they talk to Corporal Simmons, he may start to suspect what they're up to, without actually confirming just yet.

Use the following boxed text before continuing with whatever conversation they were already having.

Remember that any more failures on the Bluff checks will cause the PCs to fail the module (see above).

Corporal Simmons eyes you all suspiciously, looking your group up-and-down, then quickly glancing at Captain Boulderfist's office,

"You all seem *awfully* interested in something that's already been decided, you know that? If I didn't know better, I'd almost think you were up to something with the case. The case that's been *closed*, I would remind you.

"The Captain already told us that the High Warrior put everyone off of this, once it went to trial. And if I were you, I wouldn't mess with something the High Warrior's already taken an interest in.

"But hey, I get it...you're just worried about Ackerman and Lashton. Hey, that's great of you, but they did this to themselves, alright. Just...drop it, you know?"

Have the PCs make a **Bluff** or **Diplomacy** check at **DC ATL+5** to get their conversation back on track, before continuing.

Once the PCs are Done Asking Questions

The PCs may try to cajole additional information out of Corporal Simmons, but the truth is that he just *doesn't know* anything else.

Try as they might, the PCs *cannot* convince Simmons to intervene with their investigation. He's already done his part, and really has no interest in crossing the Captain or the High Warrior.

You thank the Corporal for his time and get out of everyone's way so the line can keep moving. He doesn't seem to bother you any further, instead returning to his small mountain of paperwork and the next person in line.

➤ If the PCs want to go do the temple of Hyperion to talk to Dinah Limoray, **GO TO Encounter 3**

- If the PCs want to try to find Butch Stonebones in the dive bars, **GO TO Encounter 4**
- If the PCs want to head out the north gate and try to find the D'Garran caravan, **GO TO Encounter 5**
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- If the PCs want to go to Captain Boulderfist to present their evidence so far, **GO TO Encounter 7**

ENCOUNTER 3

The temple to Hyperion is a grandiose and magnificently-appointed affair, as one would expect from the god of the nobles. Though not quite as ostentatious as the temple to Lucor, god of wealth, the structure boasts comparable architecture and adornment, while retaining an air of quiet grace, rather than gaudy spectacle.

Acolytes and priests bustle about the area, intent on whatever business they have, but a senior priestess approaches you as you enter, her rich silk robes spotless and her voice clear and confident,

"Hello there, adventurers. Oh, don't look so surprised, we know who you all are. My name is Maria Luttrell, how can I be of help today?"

When the PCs explain why they're here:

"Oh, I see... I'm sorry, priestess Limoray is in the library, but she asked not to be disturbed. I think the investigation, and the trial, took quite a toll on her. She was required to testify, you see.

"I'm told the whole affair went rather quickly, but still... So many people dead, it's such a shame."

The PCs can attempt a **Diplomacy** check at **DC ATL+10** to convince the priestess that it's *very important* that they be allowed to see Dinah.

If they **Fail**, they'll be asked to leave, but they could try coming back later, basically re-playing this whole scene (paraphrase the boxed text to have them met by a different acolyte).

If they **Succeed**, use the boxed text below:

Priestess Luttrell carefully considers your words, then nods,

"Alright, I suppose you're right, it does sound very important. Please follow me, I'll escort you to the library, and when you're finished any of our acolytes can show you the way out."

She leads you down a few winding corridors, well away from the bustle and noise of the main temple, to a secluded area with well-oiled doors and even thicker carpeting. The library is well-appointed but, being devoted mostly to the tracking of noble families and deeds, it lacks the depth or breadth of knowledge one might find at the League of Thaumaturgical Studies or the temples of Destine or Emerys.

Maria searches around a bit before spotting Dinah and leading you over. Dinah is a older-middle-aged elven woman, her hair having a few wisps of platinum, but her face only lightly creased.

She is absent-mindedly flipping through a book of lineages from the last century, clearly lost in thought and not actually interested in the book at all. Maria gently breaks her reverie, introduces your group, and then quietly excuses herself.

It takes Dinah a moment to fully focus on you, but when she does her voice is calm, but a little sad,

"So you're here about the Sergeant and Corporal, are you? Ugh...nasty business, that. I'm sorry, I was...trying to put it out of my mind.

"It's such a shame when the loyal turn against their home. And in such brutal fashion, too. I wish I'd never seen any of it.

"I assume that you're here conducting your own investigation, then?"

At your surprised expressions, Dinah holds a hand up to stop you and gives a small chuckle,

"No, don't worry, I'm not offended. And since the High Warrior specifically asked the Legion to stay out of it after the investigation Mr. Stonebones and I conducted, I can only assume you're here...what's the phrase..."off the record"?

"It's alright, I won't say anything to anyone. I must admit, the entire thing felt a little...off...to me anyway, it's probably just as well that some adventurers are looking into it. You lot always did have a knack for finding those last few bits of missing information, you know?

"Go ahead, ask your questions, I'll answer as best I can. But I would request that you be quick about it, I'm anxious to put the whole mess out of my mind."

☛ 'How did you and Butch Stonebones get assigned to the investigation?'

Dinah shrugs,

"I'm not sure, exactly, but I expect it had something to do with workload. My understanding is that most of the League of Thaumaturgical Studies is occupied with rebuilding the city and reinforcing our defenses, while most of the Quorum of Faith is occupied tending to the city's people and cleaning up after the devils.

"I've no idea why High Warrior Vestra didn't leave it in the hands of the Diamond Legion. Perhaps she felt they were already over-taxed and needed outside help.

"As fate had it, I had only just returned from a trip to Jadenspur, so I didn't have any pressing responsibilities, and I expect something similar was true for Mr. Stonebones. As to why King Torestyn

looked to the temple of Hyperion...I don't know. Perhaps because the accuser was a diplomat, which is something like a noble.

"I suppose it doesn't matter much, in the end I did my job and Mr. Stonebones...um...helped, I suppose. It wasn't our place to interpret what we found, just to report it, and that's what we did."

☛ 'You make it sound like Butch Stonebones didn't really do much to help.'

Dinah sighs,

"I suppose I'm being a little unfair, but I *also* think he could've put in a little more effort than he did. Then again, I don't really know anything about arcane magic, so maybe there just wasn't anything else to even find, you know?

"Not every mystery has some deep, magical explanation, after all. Sometimes everything is just as it looks."

The PCs can attempt a **Sense Motive** check at DC ATL+5 to realize that Dinah Limoray is being honest about that. She figures that Butch Stonebones didn't find any kind of magical explanation for the carnage because there wasn't one to be found.

☛ 'What, exactly, *did* the two of you find?'

Dinah looks off to one side, combing her memory,

"19 bodies, all of them human males. Their clothes and general appearance marked them as likely not Amthydoran natives...but I'm afraid I'm not very well traveled, so I didn't realize where they were from at first.

"According to the one who brought the charges, Governor Cecil Dumont, they were all D'Garran natives visiting the city, so I took his word on that. They looked like they'd been killed quite violently, and all at basically the same time, but Mr. Stonebones was sure that it wasn't with magic.

"They were all armed with clubs, quarterstaves, and maces. Their wounds were quite grisly, with numerous broken bones, caved-in skulls, and bodies nearly turned purple with bruises.

"Interestingly, it seems they didn't fight back very well against their attackers, because I used the *blood biography* spell on all the blood I found, but it all belonged to the victims.

"What was *even more strange* was that their faces seemed to have been mutilated, with their tongues cut out and their lower jaws severed. I

assumed that whoever performed such savagery was concerned about the *speak with dead* spell.

"All in all, what it meant to me was that those poor men had been killed by someone, or multiple someones, that were very skilled in combat, and also very knowledgeable about our usual investigative techniques.

"The accuser, ambassador Dumont, claimed that a pair of Legionnaires were the culprits, Sergeant Harriet Ackerman and Corporal Sarah Lashton. The records showed that they were the only ones on patrol in that area during the time when the *blood biography* said the victims had died.

"Furthermore, he claimed first-hand knowledge of these Legionnaires' dislike of the nation of D'Gar. It was determined that a pair of Legionnaires would have the necessary skill and equipment to defeat a pack of travelers without losing their own blood, and would know of the city's investigative process enough to prepare against it.

"When I testified, I only answered to *exactly what I'd seen*, no conjecture on my part, which is how everyone should be, I think. During the trial, Mr. Stonebones presented as evidence what seemed to be a letter of intent, that he claimed to have magically tracked back to the Sergeant and Corporal's home.

"I didn't actually see Mr. Stonebones find the letter but, as I said before, I don't know anything about arcane magic, so I trusted his expertise, as did the court. The evidence came together and found the Sergeant and Corporal guilty."

☛ 'We had heard that your investigation "only lasted 5 minutes", is that true?'

Dinah furrows her brow in frustration,

"That's a bit of an exaggeration, I think, but I will admit that it didn't take long to find everything we thought we would find. It was probably closer to about 2 hours...but still, yes, it did go rather quickly.

"Mr. Stonebones didn't take long at all to be sure that magic wasn't at fault for the slaughter, then he began following the magical trail that he said led to the letter of intent that he'd found.

"Likewise it didn't take long for me to examine the bodies and cast my magic, and there wasn't much to find after that. Nobody in the area had seen or heard anything, as that neighborhood was not heavily occupied.

"Funny, though, I didn't get to examine the bodies for very long. After I presented my initial

findings Governor Dumont immediately insisted that the bodies be turned over to him to be sent home for a proper burial in D'Gar. I'll be perfectly honest, I've never heard of the D'Garrans showing that kind of solidarity to each other, but his request was granted and the victims were all boxed up before I'd even had time to wash my hands.

"I suppose I was a bit surprised at how rapidly the case was brought to trial and decided, but if I had to guess, the King and High Warrior were especially anxious to bring the situation to a close to try and avoid a diplomatic incident with D'Gar. It would look very bad if a bunch of visiting D'Garrans were slaughtered by some of the city's defense forces, and then the city dragged its feet on finding and punishing those responsible."

☛ 'Do you know where we can find Butch Stonebones?'

Dinah rolls her eyes,

"From what I've heard, he frequents some of the...less reputable...drinking establishments in the city. Why one of his talents doesn't find a better means to relax is beyond me, but it's none of my business.

"I'm sorry, I'm not familiar with such places, but...pardon me for saying so, but I believe that adventurers such as yourselves typically are? I'm not sure, but perhaps you *already know* where to look, if you'll pardon the phrase."

The PCs can attempt a **Knowledge (local)** check at DC ATL+10 to know that one of the most popular dive bars in the city is the Rusty Nail, in the Port District.

☛ 'Do you think Hack and Slash really did it?'

Dinah is quiet for a long time, looking down at her book but clearly not actually reading it, before finally looking up at you,

"Not really, no. The whole thing just seems...off somehow. I mean, yes the evidence did make sense, in the manner it was presented. And the letter of intent that Mr. Stonebones found was rather damning, but...still, something just felt...off.

"I don't know, I can't put my finger on it, but despite everything we found, it still doesn't sound...*right*, you know? Legionnaires are not the sort of people to just murder groups of strangers in the street, and then mutilate the bodies.

“And what was such a large collection of D’Garran travelers doing in that area all at the same time, anyway? I mean, it’s not my business, but still, doesn’t that just seem a little strange, all the same?”

“And I can’t bring myself to ask Hyperion about it...that just feels *even more* wrong, somehow. But the court saw the evidence, and delivered their verdict, and that’s all there is to it.

“For what it’s worth, though, if you’re going to keep going with your own investigation, I would personally appreciate it if you really dug deep. If it turns out that what we found actually was true, and the Sergeant and Corporal really *are* guilty, then...well, at least I would know that I got it right.

“And if turns out that they’re actually innocent, then I can tell you that I would be *glad* to be wrong.”

The PCs won’t get anything else useful out of Dinah Limoray because she just doesn’t have anything else useful to say.

They can feel free to **Sense Motive** on anything she said, but their rolls don’t matter because she’s been completely truthful this whole time.

- If the PCs want to go do the Embassy District to talk to Sergeant Anise Herndon and Corporal Doug Simmons, **GO TO Encounter 2**
- If the PCs want to try to find Butch Stonebones in the dive bars, **GO TO Encounter 4**
- If the PCs want to head out the north gate and try to find the D’Garran caravan, **GO TO Encounter 5**
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- If the PCs want to go to Captain Boulderfist to present their evidence so far, **GO TO Encounter 7**

ENCOUNTER 4

There are several ways the PCs can locate Butch Stonebones:

- A **Diplomacy** check at **DC ATL+10** to Gather Information can find him at the Rusty Nail, in the Port District
- A **Knowledge (local)** check at **DC ATL+10** will reveal the best places to look, and eventually lead them to him, at the Rusty Nail
- A **Perception** check at **DC ATL+10** will spot him slouching into the Rusty Nail just as they approach the bar

In any case, when the PCs succeed in finding him, use this boxed text:

Searching the city’s various seedy establishments and dive bars is neither difficult nor confusing for adventurers, and you quickly find yourself at the Rusty Nail. The place isn’t ‘run down’ so much as it is ‘nearly annihilated’, but somehow it’s still standing.

Broken or missing windows, graffiti, poor illumination, and a thick, heavy atmosphere of body odor, the sea, low-quality food, and even-lower-quality alcohol gives the entire place a real sense of charm. It’s not hard to spot Butch Stonebones at the bar, being the only sky elf in the building, and a rather scrawny-looking one at that.

You speak his name and he whirls around in surprise, nearly falling out of his chair. When he sees your group has come to confront him, he utters a startled sound that’s something between a yell and a belch, and tries to bolt for the door.

For the sheer amusement of it, you let him go for a bit, as his lurching, uncoordinated steps make pursuing him child’s play. To his credit (and your relief), he does manage to stumble out the door, but trips on his own shoelaces right outside, sending him sprawling as you casually walk over and pick him up.

Captain Boulderfist wasn’t lying when he said that Butch would bruise in a stiff wind, either. Even though he’s clearly a full-grown adult, you’d estimate that he weighs no more than 70 pounds, which is disturbingly light, even for a sky elf.

Butch has no body fat or muscle mass to speak of, and his trip from the bar’s door to the ground outside has left a frankly disturbing number of small cuts and abrasions all over his body.

His thin, pointed face and sharp eyes are wild with panic as you face him, as he seems to have confused you for some kind of attackers,

“Hey! Hey...hey, (hic!) no, man! I didn’t do nuthin’ man! We ain’t got a problem here, man, no problem (hic!) at all!

“Hey, what do ya want, man? I’m just a guy havin’ a (hic!) drink after a long two days, man.”

The PCs could physically move Butch to wherever they please, really, he’s probably lighter than their gear and backpacks.

But they shouldn’t need to, as the area has very few passers-by, and the other bar patrons are paying no attention whatsoever.

Regardless of what the first question they ask Butch is, he will reply with the following:

Butch struggles uselessly against you, shaking his head vigorously in denial,

“Hey, man, I ain’t got nuthin’ to say (hic!) to you! I ain’t broke no laws or nothin’. I ain’t tellin’ you nothin’...nothin’ about nothin’.”

At this point, the PCs should probably remember that Malcolm Boulderfist told them to “give Butch a smack – from me”. If they don’t a **Wisdom** check or an **Intelligence** check at **DC 5** should remind them.

Once they give Butch a good smack (they don’t need to actually do any damage), he’ll change his tune significantly:

Butch reels from your unrelenting onslaught, and almost seems to sober up, clutching at where you struck him even as he meets your gaze,

“OW! Ow! Son of a... Stop, man, stop! I’ll talk, I’ll talk! Geez... I’ll talk, what do ya wanna know?”

☛ **‘Butch, tell us about the investigation, what did you and Dinah Limoray find?’**

Butch looks crestfallen, and stares at his feet for a while before answering,

“Aw, man, why do ya wanna talk about that mess, man? I needed the money, man, and the Legion said they was payin’ for a magic ‘vestigation. So I says ‘sure, I need the money’ and I put my name in the hat. (hic!)

“It was a damn slaughter...worst I’ve seen in a long time, and I been around a while. Somethin’ like 20 men, all piled in a heap, dead as doornails. Beat to a pulp, every one of ‘em. And their tongues and

jaws was cut out...ewww! Ewww! Who does that, man? (hic!)

“There wasn’t...(hic!)...there wasn’t any magic on the bodies. But there was this magic trail, like a...like a...like a path, made of footprints, goin’ away from the scene.

“So I followed it, ‘cuz duh... Went to this private house in the next district over. Small place, nicely done up, little garden in the front, oil paitin’ of these two nice-lookin’ ladies in the living room...

“Door was unlocked, trail went inside, so I just...I dunno, I figured it was okay, so I just went in. Trail led to this, like...stool, just sat there in the hallway. Had a paper on it, same magic as the footprints-trail.”

Butch shudders, even though his robes are mostly clean and the sun is shining, so he’s not cold,

“It was a letter. A confession, to the murders. Oh man, that was nasty. I tell you what, I grabbed it and hit *dimension door* to get out.

“That was the killer’s house, man! I didn’t wanna stay there one more instant! (hic!)

“So I brought it...I brought it...*right back* to the Legion. Didn’t even go to see Dinah again. Figured she had her hands full with the corpses, and I...I didn’t want to hold on to that letter. No, sir.

“Then they had the trial, and I said my peace, and I showed ‘em the letter and that was that.” (hic!)

The PCs can attempt a **Sense Motive** check at **DC ATL+5** to determine that Butch is lying about *exactly* what he did with the letter.

☛ **‘Butch...what did you really do with the letter?’**

Butch looks terrified for a moment, then his demeanor quickly breaks, and he almost starts crying as he stammers,

“Aww, man, I’m sorry, man! I’m sorry! I...I made a copy of the letter before I turned it in! Magic, like. Perfect duplicate, I swear, man! Swear on my mom’s wings, totally perfect copy!

“I...I thought, maybe...maybe I could catch ‘em before the Legion did. You know, maybe get a capture reward, plus the pay for doin’ the investigation.

“I know, man, I know it was greedy. I’m sorry, man! Hey, hey look, man, hey...if I give you the letter, can ya do a guy a solid and not tell the Legion, man?

“They’d be mad as hornets, and it turned out that it didn’t hurt nuthin’, man, so it doesn’t matter,

right? Right? Here...here it is. Don't tell the Legion, man, okay?"

Butch pulls a satchel out of the folds of his robe and takes out a scroll tube and passes it to you.

The PCs can attempt a **Linguistics** check at **DC ATL+25** to identify that the letter doesn't match Sergeant Ackerman's or Corporal Lashton's handwriting.

The PCs can also attempt a **Sense Motive** check at **DC ATL+5** to realize that *now* Butch is being truthful about the letter.

Despite his amusing presentation, Butch doesn't have any more information of relevance, and he's not much of a threat.

The PCs can turn him in if they want to, but most probably won't bother, and it doesn't make any difference.

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ENCOUNTER 5

The PCs likely have some quick means of travel, but even if they don't, renting trained horses is easy enough, at the cost of 1 gp per day.

The north gate in the outer walls has become a truly imposing sight. With the rebuilt walls being nearly 20 feet thick and 40 feet tall, and the gates double-thick, fire-hardened, and iron-bound, with an accompanying portcullis, the city's defensive line feels almost impenetrable. It's just a shame the devils didn't try to come through the walls and gates...

The foot, horse, and wagon traffic through the gate is thick and slow, clogged with travelers and merchants taking advantage of the city's significant economic flux, both good and bad. None of the guards pay any mind to a band of adventurers heading out, as they are far more concerned with verifying identifications and inspecting crates for contraband.

The road northward is well-traveled, but the sheer number of divergent paths leading to different destinations means that any single given area of the road is actually fairly clear. The way towards D'Gar is clearly marked, but is far less abused, as traffic between Amthydor and D'Gar is, understandably, fairly light.

You make good time, and by the next morning the fresh, deep-cut tracks of a heavily-laden wagon become apparent amongst the scattered hoof- and foot-prints of travelers long past.

The PCs can make a **Survival** check at **DC ATL+10** to determine that the wagon is likely less than a day ahead of them.

If anyone has the **Scent** ability, they can make a **Perception** check or another **Survival** check, both at **DC ATL+15** to determine that the wagon is carrying dead bodies.

With little additional effort, you finally manage to catch up with the cart, as it's the only other thing on this road right now. The driver is the only person present, and the cart is loaded down with dozens of long, narrow boxes about the size of coffins, plus several dozen other smaller crates.

When you confront the driver, an elderly human man with a bushy mustache and an oversized hat, he immediately stops the cart and puts his hands up in surrender.

“Hey now, I don’t want any trouble. Name’s Frank deMarle. This cart’s loaded down with leathers, and dead bodies goin’ home to be buried proper. Ain’t nothin’ on here worth dyin’ for.”

The PCs can interrogate the driver, and he won’t resist. He really only knows 1 relevant detail, and honestly it’s more interesting than useful, but they can find it out if they like.

☛ **‘We need to examine the bodies...’**

Frank shrugs and points to the coffin-sized boxes, “Uh...okay, boss, whatever you say. They’re the big, coffin-lookin’ ones.”

Frank’s directions are not terribly necessary, as you open the boxes to discover the very ripe corpses of 19 human men, ranging in age from about their mid-20s to maybe their mid-40s.

Their features and general appearances are similar to Governor Dumont and his aides, and Frank the driver, making it very likely that all of these men are also natives of D’Gar.

Their bodies have only just started to decompose, but the most obvious injuries are the complete removal of their tongues and lower jaws. A closer inspection may yield more information.

The PCs can attempt a number of checks:

- A **Heal** check at **DC ATL+10** will show that the men were all killed exclusively with blunt-force trauma. All wounds were from bludgeoning weapons, there were no slashing or piercing wounds (compound fractures, contusions, internal bleeding)
- An **Intelligence** check at **DC 10** will recall that Hack and Slash exclusively used longswords, daggers, and longbows. They didn’t even carry bludgeoning weapons
- A **Heal** check at **DC ATL+15** will show that their tongues and jaws were removed several hours after they were dead, possibly even a full day later. The blood around the mouth wounds was already dried and stiffened (the technical term is “lividity”), and there was no bleeding at all, unlike the sites around their various compound fractures, which bled profusely
- A **Perception** check at **DC ATL+15** will find that roughly half of the men have matching tattoos on

the insides of their arms, while the other half have a different set of matching tattoos

- A **Knowledge (local)** check at **DC ATL+25** can identify the tattoos as marks of mercenary bands native to D’Gar, the Hawk-Bats and the Ratsnakes
- A **Survival** check at **DC ATL+10** will show that the men were all equipped for combat, not travel, as their armor was custom-fitted, but their gear had very little in the way of provisions or field survival equipment

•

☛ **‘Frank...where did you get these bodies from?’**

Frank’s eyes go wide and his body goes stiff from terror, as he seems to have assumed that you’re implying that he killed all these men,

“Oh, oh no, no no no no no! I didn’t kill anybody, I swear! Look at these hands! These are wagon-driver’s hands, not murderer’s hands!

“It wasn’t like that at all! 2 days ago I was loadin’ the wagon up, gettin’ ready to head home, and this guy came up to me. Real clean and proper, didn’t look like the sort to have a pile of bodies to be moved.

“But, sure enough, he says he’s got nearly 20 men that died, all D’Garran, and he wants ‘em sent home for last rites, and proper burials, and all that. I ain’t never heard of such a thing, and I ain’t never carried remains before, but he paid me triple for a trip I was already gonna take, I wasn’t gonna say ‘no’!

“So that night he brings ‘em in, him and some porters he hired, we load ‘em up and I headed out. Said he wanted ‘em delivered to his estate, I guess he was gonna deal with ‘em himself.”

☛ **‘And who was this man, exactly?’**

Frank squints his eyes, wracking his memory,

“Eh, sorry, his face isn’t real clear. It wasn’t really that memorable, you know? Uh, I guess sort of square-ish, brown hair, brown eyes, didn’t have any scars or anything.

“Said his name was...uh...shoot...uh...oh right, Barry. Barry Thestiffs. Funny name, but his coin was real, so I wasn’t gonna say nothin’.

“Weird guy all around, really. Obviously a moneyed individual...never carried a box, or

ENCOUNTER 6

touched anything. Even refused to shake hands, just tossed me my coin from the back of his horse and then rode off.

“Like I said, I didn’t think much of it. The coin was good, and it was a trip I was already takin’, so it was an easy call. Speaking of which...uh...are you going to let me finish, or...is this situation not gonna end well for me?”

An **Intelligence** check at **DC 10** can remember that this description does not match Dumont at all. He had blond hair, blue eyes, kind of a round face, and didn’t seem to mind making physical contact with people.

There’s really nothing else for the PCs to discover here, and likely no reasonable way (or desire) to bring the bodies back to Amthydor.

It wouldn’t matter anyway, as they’ve already found everything of value, and bringing them back to the city would just be a waste of effort.

When the PCs are ready to return to the city, use this text:

The ride back to Amthydor is significantly easier, as you don’t have to keep on the lookout for a random cart full of dead bodies this time. Also there’s a sense of urgency, as Hack and Slash’s time is ticking away while you cover the wilderness miles as quickly as you can.

You can only hope that your testimony about your inspection of the bodies will be enough, as there won’t be time to try again. You arrive at the city a day later and the guards let you pass with minimal fuss, again more focused on the carts than the adventurers.

- If the PCs want to go do the Embassy District to talk to Sergeant Anise Herndon and Corporal Doug Simmons, **GO TO Encounter 2**
- If the PCs want to go do the temple of Hyperion to talk to Dinah Limoray, **GO TO Encounter 3**
- If the PCs want to try to find Butch Stonebones in the dive bars, **GO TO Encounter 4**
- If the PCs want to try to visit Hack and Slash in the lockup, **GO TO Encounter 6**
- If the PCs want to go to Captain Boulderfist to present their evidence so far, **GO TO Encounter 7**

Finding the high-security lockup built into the side of the mountain along the north wall is not difficult, but getting access definitely is. Normally reserved for only the most violent and irredeemable criminals, the facility has been painstakingly designed to be magically and physically inescapable, and visitors from outside the corps of correctional officers are strictly controlled and monitored.

A series of 3 guard stations are set into successive locked, reinforced, adamantine doors and dwarven-grade masonry walls. The entire facility is protected from magical invasion or escape via a series of interlocking antimagic fields, walls of force, and dimensional anchors, and has spellcasters on-hand at all times in case someone finds a way past anyway.

Initially, none of the guard stations will let you pass, especially with all of your gear equipped.

The PCs will need to make **3 Diplomacy** checks, **in a row**, at increasing DCs, in order to convince the guards to let them in.

Failing even one of these checks will prevent them from going any further, and they’ll have no choice but to abandon the effort and turn back.

If the PCs try to keep their equipment, all of the DCs go up by +40.

The **First** guard station requires a **Diplomacy** check at **DC ATL+15**.

PCs must surrender all armor, weapons, wands, potions, and spell scrolls here.

If they try to keep any of it, the Diplomacy check DC goes up by +40.

If they try to *hide* any of it, they can make a **Sleight of Hand** check at **DC ATL+15**, otherwise it is automatically confiscated.

The **Second** guard station requires a **Diplomacy** check at **DC ATL+20**.

PCs must surrender *all* other magical and mundane items (including holy symbols and spellbooks), but may keep their clothes.

If they try to keep any of it, the Diplomacy check DC goes up by +40.

If they try to *hide* any of it, they can make a **Sleight of Hand** check at **DC ATL+20**, otherwise it is automatically confiscated.

The **Third** guard stations requires a **Diplomacy** check at **DC ATL+25**.

PCs must surrender absolutely everything remaining, including their clothes, and change into prison-issued jumpsuits.

Spellcasters, and anyone else with any kind of spell, spell-like, supernatural, or magical abilities of any kind must put on a magical bracelet that puts out a continuous *antimagic field* effect. Everyone has to wear one, even if everyone stays within 10' of everyone else.

If they try to keep any of it, the Diplomacy check DC goes up by +40.

If they try to *hide* any of it, they can make a **Sleight of Hand** check at **DC ATL+25**, otherwise it is automatically confiscated.

If the PCs somehow manage to get through all of that (honestly, they're probably not supposed to), they're still going to be disappointed, as Hack and Slash are not permitted any visitors.

They were originally housed in the same cell, since space is at a premium in such an extreme facility. But, overcome by their situation and desperate for any kind of comfort whatsoever, they somehow found the urge to make love.

But fraternization (the family-friendly way to refer to fornication) is strictly prohibited in the prison, and they were caught the second or third time they tried and split into separate cells in solitary confinement as punishment.

Prisoners in solitary are absolutely prohibited from seeing visitors of any kind, even priests. But the guards can still be questioned, if the PCs think of it.

Once the PCs pass all these Diplomacy checks in a row, use this boxed text:

After everything you went through in order to get through the guard stations, you'd think they'd finally let you see Sergeant Ackerman and Corporal Lashton...but you'd be wrong. The guards inform you that the two have been moved to separate cells in solitary confinement after they were caught violating the rules, and prisoners in solitary are not permitted visitors of any kind, even priests.

The PCs do not need to make any more checks to question the guards, but there's not much the guards know that will be useful anyway.

The guards are gruff, no-nonsense folk, well suited to the difficult task of guarding dangerous prisoners.

☛ 'What can you tell us about Sergeant Ackerman and Corporal Lashton?'

☛ 'What kind of prisoners have they been?'

☛ 'Have they said anything important?'

The guards look at each other for confirmation before one of them speaks up,

"Not a lot to tell, really. Most of the inmates we get here are the really bad kind of scum, the ones who *know* they're guilty and are bizarrely proud of it.

"These two, though... They never really argued, never showed any of the usual attitude we get from the severely deranged.

"All of the prisoners we get tend to rant on and on the whole time they're here about how 'they're innocent', but we only ever heard it *once* from Ackerman and Lashton, right when they were brought in.

"After that they stayed quiet, didn't say a word to anyone except each other. Since they've been in solitary they haven't spoken at all.

"It almost kinda creeps me out, to be honest. Like I said, most of the scum we get in here is...well, to be perfectly honest...they're *obviously* guilty, and they almost wear it like a badge.

"But these two...I don't know. Something feels a little strange. Like...like, maybe, just *maybe*, this *one* time, they might actually have been serious when they said they were framed. *Maybe*.

"Then again, I'm probably just goin' soft. I'm due for R&R time anyway, that's probably all this feeling is..."

☛ 'Wait...what rule(s) did they violate in here?'

The guards exchange a few awkward glances, before one of them clears his throat and explains,

"We thought they'd be okay being housed in the same cell, you know, since space is at a premium in this facility. We were wrong about that.

"They were caught...uh...goin' at each other. With their pants off."

The guard nervously clears his throat again, then steadies himself by falling back on protocol,

"Fraternization within the prison is strictly prohibited. They were moved to separate cells in solitary as punishment. They're to stay there until their sentences are carried out."

The guards all nod to each other, seemingly satisfied with their own answer.

The PCs can attempt a **Sense Motive** check at **DC ATL+10** to determine that the guards are being truthful, but that the situation had made them feel very uncomfortable.

There's no way to tell which of the guards actually caught them...in the act...and likely no way to determine their true reaction anyway. But a detail like that isn't relevant to this story anyway, so don't worry about it.

Once the PCs are Done Asking Questions

The PCs may try to cajole additional information out of the guards, but they really *don't know* anything else useful.

When the PCs are ready to continue, use this boxed text:

The visit to the prison seems to have been a bust, as you didn't even get to talk to Hack and Slash. Or was it?...

Try as you might, you can't get the guard's phrasing out of your head...

These hardened, disciplined guardsmen deal with incarcerated murders and traitors all day, constantly hearing them proclaim their innocence or make excuses for their behavior. And amidst this barrage of claims, the guards never once falter in their conviction that the prisoners sent to them do, in fact, belong there.

Except for Sergeant Ackerman and Corporal Lashton. With them, somehow, their one single claim of innocence rang clearer to the guards than any continuous barrage of excuses from any number of other prisoners ever has before.

It could be nothing...or it could be that these guards are so well attuned that they're picking up the single shred of truth that they've heard in their entire prison's pile of lies.

You make your way back to the city proper, hastily recovering and equipping all of your gear as you leave the prison. You don't know what the next step of your investigation will bring to you, but you do know that cruising around the city unprepared is a bad idea for adventurers.

- If the PCs want to try to find Butch Stonebones in the dive bars, **GO TO Encounter 4**
- If the PCs want to head out the north gate and try to find the D'Garran caravan, **GO TO Encounter 5**
- If the PCs want to go to Captain Boulderfist to present their evidence so far, **GO TO Encounter 7**

➤ If the PCs want to go do the Embassy District to talk to Sergeant Anise Herndon and Corporal Doug Simmons, **GO TO Encounter 2**

➤ If the PCs want to go do the temple of Hyperion to talk to Dinah Limoray, **GO TO Encounter 3**

ENCOUNTER 7

Technically the PCs could come back to Captain Boulderfist any time they wanted to, but they'll really want to hit all of the other Encounters first.

If they haven't, have them make a **Wisdom** check and/or an **Intelligence** check, both at **DC 10**, whichever they need in order to pass.

Success will remind them that Malcolm advised them to find every bit of evidence they could before coming back to him, which should be enough of a clue to tell them to go to the rest of the Encounters first before coming to this one.

Once they do this encounter, they'll be led to Encounter 8 directly, with no other options to go back.

It's sort of like in those big, epic video games, where you're about to go on the last mission, and the game warns you to "wrap up any of your other business before starting this mission".

Once the PCs are ready, use this boxed text:

Your return trip to the Embassy District precinct of the Diamond Legion is tense, but you do your best to keep your cool and make it look like you're on routine business. Nonetheless, the Legionnaires at the front stop you and inquire as to your business, and especially as to why you feel the need to bother the Captain...

The PCs have the opportunity to role-play their delivery of the secret phrase here, that "they're here to discuss the Jaderspur issue". They can ham it up with a **Bluff** check at **DC ATL+5** if they want, but there's really no need.

There isn't anything to stop the PCs here, it's just a chance for them to act clever.

As long as they say the pass-phrase, or something close to it, the Legionnaires will let them see Captain Boulderfist.

When you tell the Legionnaires that you're here "to discuss the Jaderspur issue" with Captain Boulderfist, they will nod politely and point you to his office, mentioning that he'd told them to expect you for that very reason.

You find Captain Malcolm Boulderfist in his office, busily shuffling papers from files to drawers, to his desk, and back to the files again; it takes little

effort to tell that he's just trying to look busy, and his nervousness is palpable as you file into his office and close the door.

He looks up at you expectantly, his face creased with worry,

"Well, how goes...it? Tell me you found something we can use..."

The PCs can role-play their explanations however they choose here, but Captain Boulderfist will respond to various key pieces of information with the following boxed text:

☛ **'Sergeant Herndon suggested that the victims' wounds didn't match Hack and Slash's favored weapons...'**

Malcolm looks a little disappointed,

"Hmm...that's interesting, but I'm not sure how helpful it will be. Every Legionnaire is trained on many weapons, it wouldn't be a stretch for them to pick up one they don't normally carry and fight with it just fine."

☛ **'Sergeant Herndon said that she'd never heard of Hack or Slash losing their cool, or going overboard with the violence'**

He nods,

"Yeah, that part's true. They were always very level-headed. Unfortunately, they didn't really take the word of character witnesses the first time around, so I'm not sure about trying it again."

☛ **'Sergeant Herndon seemed to imply that Hack and Slash might have had rumors circulated about them because they're sly (gay)'**

For the first time since you've known him, Captain Boulderfist looks genuinely disgusted,

"Unbelievable. I can't understand how we can have people that fight, bleed, and die alongside each other and still get butthurt about that.

"Yes, I know that Hack and Slash are sly, I've known since I first met them. But I don't care, and never have. They are damn fine soldiers and excellent people.

"Unless they're violating the law, or it affects their work performance, their choice of who they share their bed with, and how, is their own business, nobody else's. I can't believe we'd still have some that would be so bothered by that...that they'd resort

to spreading rumors, or discriminating against them.

"Ugh...when this is all over I'll *have words* with those involved, and make sure this is dealt with for good. But for now, let's just focus on dealing with the criminal charges."

☛ 'Corporal Simmons thought it was strange that there weren't any escaped victims, or survivors'

He nods,

"Yeah, that's also weird. Ackerman and Lashton used to pride themselves on taking prisoners, even going so far as to use their own medkits to stabilize them."

☛ 'Corporal Simmons almost seemed to imply that Hack and Slash...deserved this for "not having a man around" (for being gay)'

Captain Boulderfist gets red in the face,

"Oh, for love of... Freakin' Simmons... No filter, or any damn *sense* on that one..."

"How in Galvandt's name he ended up in the Diplomatic corps, or how he *stays* here, is anyone's guess. What an *arse*...how *dare* he suggest that..."

"*Rrrggh*...when this is done with I'm going to have a *heart-to-heart* with Simmons. That sort of attitude is *completely unacceptable* in my command."

"Just so we're clear: *NO*, I do not accept any of my soldiers...or *anyone*, really...giving Hack and Slash grief over how they choose to spend their intimate time. Unless it breaks the law, or affects their jobs, it's none of our damned business."

"Freakin' Simmons...that guy...*rrrgghh*..."

☛ 'Dinah Limoray, the Hyperion priestess, found blood *only* from the victims, not their attackers'

Malcolm furrows his brow,

"That's strange... With such a huge fight, how would their attackers not have taken any hits at all?"

"I mean, sure, Hack and Slash are good fighters, but...against so many opponents at once, I doubt even Lord Bob is *that* good to not take even a single hit."

☛ 'Dinah Limoray, the Hyperion priestess, found that their tongues and jaws were removed, probably to prevent *speak with dead* spells'

Malcom nods,

"Yeah, that's what I'd say, too. Eww... I've never heard of *any* Legionnaires mutilating dead bodies, especially not Hack and Slash. That doesn't fit with them at all."

☛ 'Dinah Limoray said that Dumont had the victims' bodies taken away before she'd barely had any time to examine them'

Malcolm lays the sarcasm on thick,

"Oh yeah, that's not suspicious *at all*. Nope...totally normal for a murder victim to be whisked away to get buried in another country before it's even cold or the priests have had any time to look at it."

☛ 'Butch Stonebones said there wasn't any magic on the bodies'

He shrugs,

"Yeah, I wouldn't have expected there to be. Not much to say about that, I'm afraid."

☛ 'Butch Stonebones kept a copy of their "confession" letter'

Malcolm nearly falls out of his chair in surprise,

"What?! I...I didn't even know there *was* a confession letter! I wasn't allowed in the courtroom, I didn't see any of the evidence. Let me see that!"

He snatches the letter and reads it over multiple times, mouthing the words to himself. But rather than defeated, his expression becomes confused,

"This doesn't make any sense. I don't mean, like...'*I want to believe they're innocent, so a confession is bad*'..."

"I mean, as in... This letter doesn't match either of their handwriting. And neither of them ever talked, or wrote, like this at all, it's completely the wrong sort of tone and vocabulary."

"And no Legionnaire *ever* signs anything with their rank...that's an official rule from the High Warrior, our ranks change over time, and it can lead to legal disputes on signed documents."

"This...this letter must have been some kind of fake, or a plant. There's *way* too many inconsistencies, I have no idea how it got admitted as evidence in the first place, but any decent linguist should be able to see that."

"I'll send word to Nasrin Jix at the Cryptographer's Union in the League. He owes the

Legion a favor and there's nobody better at sniffing out forgeries and fakes."

☛ 'We examined the bodies, and found that their tongues and jaws had been cut out *a long time after they were killed*'

He nods slowly,

"Ugh...that mutilation business again...nasty. But you're right, that *is* very strange. If they intended to do that, they would've done it right away, rather than risking coming back to the scene hours, or even a full day, later.

"If the mutilation was done long after the bodies were dead, then it very likely wasn't the original killer who did it. Granted, that doesn't say anything about Hack and Slash not being the original killers, but it *does* seem to indicate that there's at least someone else involved.

"Not that turning their murder conviction into a conspiracy really helps, but it does muddy the water a bit more."

☛ 'Half of the victims had matching tattoos, the other half had different matching tattoos'

Malcolm looks genuinely confused,

"Hmm...well that's certainly interesting, but I'm not sure I see how it would help. So the victims were part of two clubs, or groups...I don't know...it's a nifty fact, but it doesn't do much to help Hack and Slash."

☛ 'The victims' tattoos were from mercenary bands that are native to D'Gar'

Malcolm looks surprised,

"What? What would they be doing all the way out here, then? Ugh, this just gets stranger and stranger.

"Unfortunately, it doesn't say anything about Hack and Slash. Just because their victims knew each other, that doesn't prove or disprove anything."

☛ 'The victims were equipped for combat, not travel'

Malcolm shrugs,

"That's a little strange, but unfortunately it doesn't prove much. Then again, if they were

supposedly all just 'travelers' from D'Gar, why weren't they prepared for travelling?

"And if they were just 'travelers', why *were* they so well equipped for combat, especially inside the city walls? It's mostly circumstantial, but it is rather suspicious."

☛ 'The man carting the bodies was paid to do so by "Barry Thestiffs" '

Malcolm feigns surprise,

"You don't say? Someone asked a cart driver to help them hide evidence, and they did so with a fake name? There's a huge surprise.

"*Barry Thestiffs*, though? Really? 'Bury the stiffs' ... Really? That's the best he could do? I'm honestly a little disappointed in our mysterious conspirator."

Once the PCs have presented all of their available evidence, use this boxed text:

Captain Boulderfist sighs heavily, considering everything you've found, then slowly rises to his feet and begins pacing around the remaining space of his office.

"Well, a lot of it is circumstantial, and most of it just...*confuses*...everything that's happened so far. But. BUT. I *do* think it's more than enough to *at least* cast the court's decision into doubt and get Hack and Slash a stay of execution for a re-trial, and maybe give us more time to find the truth.

"There's no time to waste... We're going to go and see High Warrior Vestra *right now*. I still have a few favors I can call in, I can get us into her office with no notice, but I'll need you there as the direct witnesses. Come on..."

Captain Boulderfist secures the note and a few trinkets from his desk, then hurries towards the men's armory. You can hear him telling his Legionnaires to hold down the fort while he is seeing the High Warrior on time-sensitive business.

Most of the Legionnaires seem to take this turn of events in stride, as if rushing off in the middle of the workday to have an unplanned meeting with the highest-ranking member of the entire Diamond Legion is normal. You catch glimpses of Sergeant Herndon and Corporal Simmons, though, who both exchange worried glances, then quickly wrap up whatever they were working on and disappear into other areas of the building.

ENCOUNTER 8

Try as you might, the Legionnaires won't let you wander around their area after them, as much of their work is of a sensitive nature. Before you even have time to argue, Captain Boulderfist returns, now in his formal dress uniform and saber, and he rounds you up and bustles you out the door, making haste towards the Castle District a few blocks away.

The PCs can attempt a **Sense Motive** check at DC ATL+15 on Herndon's and Simmons' reactions.

Success will reveal that the two Legionnaires have likely put two and two together and figured out that their earlier work with the first investigation may be about to come under severe judgment.

If the PCs voice this concern to Captain Boulderfist, he will dismiss their concerns with a wave of his hand, assuring them that he won't allow them to be punished just because you all had more of a chance to conduct a better investigation than they did.

It wasn't their fault that they were replaced almost immediately, and despite Simmons' less-than-stellar attitude, Malcolm won't punish him for following the High Warrior's orders.

➤ GO TO Encounter 8

Why...oh why, did you ever assume that something as simple as hustling down the street could go smoothly? No, of course not, everything's got to have needless and potentially lethal complications.

In this case, though, it takes the form of Corporal Doug Simmons leading a group of mounted mercenaries running you down on a side street just a few blocks from the Embassy District precinct. He sneers at you as he draws his weapon,

"You were supposed to leave this alone...sir. Now my friends and I are going to have to shut you, and these adventurers, up for good. I'm sure our...mutual friend won't mind a few more Legionnaires taking the fall for another string of awkward murders."

Simmons and his lackeys jump to the attack!

ROLL FOR INITIATIVE

- See appendix A for the enemies' stats.
- See appendix B for Malcolm Boulderfist's stats.
- Simmons and his cronies will absolutely fight to the death, being well aware of the penalty for treason
- If Simmons is somehow disabled, in an attempt to question him, he will instead swallow an arsenic tablet as soon as he's able to talk
- None of his cronies have any useful information, but each of them was a D'Garran mercenary hiding in the city, so they were willing to fight to the death against the hated Diamond Legion

With your attackers dispatched, Malcolm Boulderfist looks on in sheer disbelief,

"What the...? How...? Why, Simmons...WHY?"

There's no getting answers out of the corpses, and no time to waste for speak with dead. Captain Boulderfist urges you to simply leave them where they lay, grabbing a passing (and hopefully loyal) Legionnaire and directing them to secure the scene until you get back from the High Warrior's office.

Even though Hack and Slash aren't set to be executed for a little while yet, he presses on, anxious to present his evidence without wasting another moment.

Go To Conclusion A

Conclusion A

The PCs hit *every* Encounter successfully.

As fate would have it, securing Simmons' corpse didn't turn out to be necessary. Captain Boulderfist bursts into High Warrior Vestra's office, dragging you all along, and demanding that he be allowed to present your findings.

Initially you thought the High Warrior would have the Captain gutted on the spot for his disrespect, but Ardent Vestra is no fool, and instead let Malcolm proceed. After his initial outburst, he calmed down significantly and laid out your findings as clearly and thoroughly as he could, drawing on his diplomatic expertise to make his explanations ring clear.

After nearly two hours, High Warrior Vestra finally spoke, announcing, to your surprise and his relief, that she absolutely believed him and you, and that the evidence you'd found cast significant doubt on the original verdict against Sergeant Ackerman and Corporal Lashton. She explained that the outcome had never sat well with her, but she'd done what she thought she needed to do in order to prevent an incident with D'Gar.

But in the face of so many pieces that just didn't add up, she couldn't, in good conscience, keep Hack and Slash on the block. Some frenzied messages, and a lengthy and rather awkward meeting with King Torestyn later, Sergeant Ackerman and Corporal Lashton are removed from death row and placed in confinement under Captain Boulderfist's precinct.

The next day, a formal investigation into Simmons' betrayal leads to the discovery of a note and a pile of D'Garran coins that were well-hidden in his home. The note indicates that an unknown benefactor had been watching you pursue your investigation, and had paid Simmons, in coin and promises of future favors, to make sure you didn't uncover the truth about the murders.

With this new evidence, it gradually becomes clear that some third party had intended to frame Sergeant Ackerman and Corporal Lashton for the murders, and had spent considerable resources to try and cover it up. The two women are finally released on probation, and they and Captain Boulderfist couldn't be happier.

Rewards:

- TBD

Conclusion B

The PCs did *not* visit every Encounter.

As it turns out, securing Simmons' corpse wasn't very necessary. But maybe digging up all of the additional evidence at your disposal would have been.

Captain Boulderfist bursts into High Warrior Vestra's office, dragging you all along, and demanding that he be allowed to present your findings.

Initially you thought the High Warrior would have the Captain gutted on the spot for his disrespect, but Ardent Vestra is no fool, and instead let Malcolm proceed. After his initial outburst, he calmed down significantly and laid out your findings as clearly and thoroughly as he could, drawing on his diplomatic expertise to make his explanations ring clear.

After nearly two hours, High Warrior Vestra finally spoke, announcing that while some of the evidence you found may have been interesting, it was far from conclusive. She makes it clear that relations between Amthydor and D'Gar are incredibly strained at the moment, and that the King can ill afford to anger them by bungling an investigation into the murder of their citizens while on Amthydoran soil.

Still, she admits, what little you did find casts some small amount of doubt on the findings of the court. Despite Captain Boulderfist's outburst, and your frankly lazy investigative efforts, she is willing to bring the new evidence back to the court for consideration.

The waiting is the worst part, as days pass while the magistrates review your findings, but finally they pass their new judgment: Sergeant Ackerman and Corporal Lashton cannot be proven beyond doubt to be guilty, nor can they be shown without doubt to be innocent.

Harriet and Sarah will remain imprisoned indefinitely, until such time that new evidence should come to light so as to determine their fate with finality. Captain Boulderfist is disappointed, but still thankful for your efforts, as you have at least spared Hack and Slash from execution.

He says that he'll keep you apprised if there are any changes, and hopes that some additional legwork, maybe on his own time, will dig up the necessary information to get them cleared for good.

Rewards:

- TBD

Conclusion C

The PCs somehow blew their cover, and someone reported them up the chain of command of the Diamond Legion, spoiling their investigation.

THUS ENDS "FALSELY ACCUSED"

TIME UNIT COST: 10 TU

Your lack of discretion will be your own doom, someday. But today, it was someone else's.

Due to your poor handling of the investigation, your interference was revealed to the authorities and your efforts were shut down. At his wits' end, Captain Boulderfist desperately tries to stall the hangman's noose, but to no avail.

With no other admissible evidence to support the case for Sergeant Ackerman and Corporal Lashton, the court's verdict stands, and the two women are executed at dawn. The scene is dour, and the assembled crowd subdued; at times a public execution can be a cause for at least light applause, as the world does away with some of its filth. But not today.

High Warrior Vestra personally oversees the grisly affair, taking no pleasure in the act, and being sad that it came to this. Captain Boulderfist is beside himself with grief, adamant that he's failed his soldiers and his uniform.

You don't know if you'll ever see him again, and your time working with the Diamond Legion's diplomatic corps is likely at an end.

Rewards:

- None

EXPERIENCE POINT SUMMARY

Total the XP earned from the following:

	ATL 3	ATL 5	ATL 7	ATL 9	ATL 11
Module Experience	700	900	1500	2300	4500
The PCs visit <u>all</u> of the Encounters	100	200	200	300	400
The PCs did <u>not</u> blow their cover while investigating	100	200	200	300	400
Roleplaying XP Bonus	100	200	200	300	400
Maximum Possible XP	1000	1500	2100	3200	5700

Experience earned is based on the Average Table Level (ATL), and no PC received experience greater than the ATL at which the adventure was run. However, the maximum experience a specific PC can earn is also limited to the next higher ATL above his "personal ATL" level (his character level rounded up to the nearest odd number). For example: a 3rd level PC plays at the same table with high-level players and the group comes out to be an ATL 9. The maximum amount of experience the 3rd level PC can earn would be based on ATL 5, but a 6th level PC (personal ATL 7) would earn XP based on ATL 9. With such a disparaging range of experience earned from 1st all the way to 19th levels, this is the only way to make sure that low-level PCs don't earn experience too quickly.

TREASURE SUMMARY

Treasure earned (other than gold) is based on the PCs Average Table Level that experience was earned at, not the Average Table Level (ATL) at which the PC played. See example under experience for further explanation.

TBD

TBD

Appendix A - Simmons and his Minions (Encounter 8)

ATL 3

1 per PC + 1 more

N Human Fighter 3
Initiative +3 **Space/Reach** 5 ft./5 ft.
AC 18 **Touch** 13 **FF** 15 (+4 armor, +1 shield, +3 Dex)
HP 30 (3d10 + 6 + 3 favored) **Speed** 30 ft. ^u
Fort +6 **Ref** +5 **Will** +2^π
SQ None **DR** No **SR** No **Immune** No
Attacks:
crowd control Shortswords +7/+7 (1d6+4^z *non-lethal*, 19-20x2) or
crowd control arrows Longbow +7 (1d8 *non-lethal*, 20x3)
Str 18° **Dex** 16 **Con** 14 **Int** 10 **Wis** 10 **Cha** 9
Base Atk +3 **CMB** +8 **CMD** 20
Feats Double Slice^z, Two-Weapon Fighting, 2-Weapon Defense*, Skill Focus (Stealth), Weap. Focus (Shortsword)^B
Gear Chain Shirt, *crowd control* Shortswords (2), Longbow (20 *crowd control* arrows), *Potion of Bless*, *Potion of Resistance*, *Potion of Cure Light Wounds*
Skills: Heal +2, Intimidate +6, Perception +3, Stealth +7
Special Abilities Bravery +1^π, Armor Training 1^u

Crowd Control weapons always deal non-lethal damage, but they do not carry the usual -4 attack penalty.

These weapons were introduced once before as certed items in " 'X' Does Not Mark The Spot", and now they're back.

These thugs are equipped with *crowd control* weapons and extra healing potions because they are not trying to kill Dumont, they just want to beat him up and run him out of town.

They should still prove dangerous enough to incapacitate unwary players, though.

ATL 5

1 per PC + 1 more

N Human Fighter 4
Initiative +3 **Space/Reach** 5 ft./5 ft.
AC 21 **Touch** 14 **FF** 17 (+5 armor, +1 shield, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 natural)
HP 47 (4d10 + 15 + 4 favored) **Speed** 30 ft. ^u
Fort +7 **Ref** +5 **Will** +2^π
SQ None **DR** No **SR** No **Immune** No
Attacks:
crowd control Shortswords +9/+9 (1d6+5^z *non-lethal*, 19-20x2) or
crowd control arrows Longbow +8 (1d8 *non-lethal*, 20x3)
Str 18° **Dex** 17 **Con** 14 **Int** 10 **Wis** 10 **Cha** 9
Base Atk +4 **CMB** +9 **CMD** 21
Feats Dodge, Double Slice^z, Two-Weapon Fighting, 2-Weapon Defense*, Skill Focus (Stealth), Weap. Focus (Shortsword)^B
Gear Scale Mail, *crowd control* Shortswords (2), Longbow (20 *crowd control* arrows), *Potion of Aid*, *Potion of Resistance*, *Potion of Barkskin* +1, *Oil of Magic Weapon* +1 (-2), *Potion of Cure Light Wounds*
Skills: Heal +3, Intimidate +7, Perception +4, Stealth +6
Special Abilities Bravery +1^π, Armor Training 1^u

Crowd Control weapons always deal non-lethal damage, but they do not carry the usual -4 attack penalty.

These weapons were introduced once before as certed items in " 'X' Does Not Mark The Spot", and now they're back.

These thugs are equipped with *crowd control* weapons and extra healing potions because they are not trying to kill Dumont, they just want to beat him up and run him out of town.

They should still prove dangerous enough to incapacitate unwary players, though.

ATL 7**1 per PC + 1 more**

N Human Fighter 6

Initiative +7**Space/Reach** 5 ft./5 ft.**AC** 23 **Touch** 14 **FF** 19 (+6 armor, +1 shield, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural)**HP** 60 (6d10 + 12 + 6 favored)**Speed** 30 ft. ^u**Fort** +11 **Ref** +9 **Will** +6^π**SQ** None**DR** No**SR** No**Immune** No**Attacks:***crowd control* Shortswords +15/+15/+10/+10 (1d6+10 non-lethal, 19-20x2) or*crowd control arrows* Longbow +12 (1d8 non-lethal, 20x3)**Str** 18° **Dex** 17 **Con** 14 **Int** 10 **Wis** 10 **Cha** 9**Base Atk** +6 **CMB** +15 **CMD** 23**Feats** Dodge, Double Slice[¥], Imp. Initiative, Imp. Two-Weapon Fighting, Two-Weapon Fighting, 2-Weapon Defense*, Skill Focus (Stealth), Weap. Focus (Shortsword)^B**Gear** Scale Mail, *crowd control* Shortswords (2), Longbow (20 *crowd control* arrows), *Potion of Heroism*, *Potion of Wrathful Mantle* +2, *Potion of Barkskin* +2, *Oil of Magic Weapon* +2 (2), *Oil of Magic Vestment* +1, *Potion of Resist Energy*, *Potion of Cure Light Wounds* (2)**Skills:** Heal +5, Intimidate +11, Perception +8, Stealth +10**Special Abilities** Bravery +2^π, Armor Training 1^u, Weapon Training 1 (Light blades)

Crowd Control weapons always deal non-lethal damage, but they do not carry the usual -4 attack penalty.

These weapons were introduced once before as certed items in " 'X' Does Not Mark The Spot", and now they're back.

These thugs are equipped with *crowd control* weapons and extra healing potions because they are not trying to kill Dumont, they just want to beat him up and run him out of town.

They should still prove dangerous enough to incapacitate unwary players, though.

ATL 9**1 per PC + 1 more**

N Human Fighter 8

Initiative +10**Space/Reach** 5 ft./5 ft.**AC** 27 **Touch** 16 **FF** 21 (+8 armor, +1 shield, +5 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural)**HP** 80 (8d10 + 16 + 8 favored)**Speed** 30 ft. ^u**Fort** +12 **Ref** +12 **Will** +6^π**SQ** None**DR** No**SR** No**Immune** No**Attacks:***crowd control* Shortswords +19/+19/+14/+14 (1d6+11 non-lethal, 19-20x2) or*crowd control arrows* Longbow +16 (1d8+1 non-lethal, 20x3)**Str** 18° **Dex** 22* **Con** 14 **Int** 10 **Wis** 10 **Cha** 9**Base Atk** +8 **CMB** +17 **CMD** 28**Feats** Dodge, Double Slice[¥], Mobility, Greater Weapon Focus (Shortsword), Imp. Initiative, Imp. Two-Weapon Fighting, Two-Weapon Fighting, 2-Weapon Defense*, Skill Focus (Stealth), Weap. Focus (Shortsword)^B**Gear** Breastplate, *crowd control* Shortswords (2), Longbow (20 *crowd control* arrows), *Potion of Heroism*, *Potion of Wrathful Mantle* +2, *Potion of Barkskin* +2, *Oil of Magic Weapon* +2 (2), *Oil of Magic Vestment* +2, *Potion of Divine Favor* +1, *Potion of Cat's Grace*, *Potion of See Invisibility*, *Potion of Resist Energy*, *Potion of Cure Moderate Wounds* (2)**Skills:** Heal +7, Intimidate +12, Perception +9, Stealth +15**Special Abilities** Bravery +2^π, Armor Training 2^u, Weapon Training 1 (Light blades)

Crowd Control weapons always deal non-lethal damage, but they do not carry the usual -4 attack penalty.

These weapons were introduced once before as certed items in " 'X' Does Not Mark The Spot", and now they're back.

These thugs are equipped with *crowd control* weapons and extra healing potions because they are not trying to kill Dumont, they just want to beat him up and run him out of town.

They should still prove dangerous enough to incapacitate unwary players, though.

Appendix B - Allied NPCs

All ATLS

Diamond Legion Sergeant Harriet "Hack" Ackerman
 NG Human Fighter 6
Initiative +8 **Space/Reach** 5 ft./5 ft.
AC 25 **T** 13 **FF** 22 (+7 armor, +4 shield, +2 Dex, +1 natural, +1 dodge)
HP 60 (6d10 + 18 + 6 favored) **Speed** 30 ft.^u
Fortitude +9 **Reflex** +6 **Will** +4^π
SQ None **DR** No **SR** No **Immune** No
Attacks:
 +2 *Longsword*, +15/+10 (1d8+10^z, 19-20x2) or
 +1 *Longbow*, +9/+4 (1d8+1, 20x3)
Str 21 **Dex** 14 **Con** 14 **Int** 10 **Wis** 10 **Cha** 10
Base Attack +6 **CMB** +14 **CMD** 24
Feats Dodge^B, Shield Focus^B, Improved Initiative^B,
 Toughness*, Weapon Focus (Longsword), Weapon Spec.
 (Longsword)^B, Vital Strike^z, Wary
Gear *Breastplate +1*, *Heavy Steel Shield +1*, *Longsword +2*,
Longbow +1 (20 arrows), *Cloak of Resistance +2*, *Amulet of*
Natural Armor +1, *Potion of Resist Energy*, *Potion of See*
Invisibility, *Potion of Cure Moderate Wounds (2)*
Skills: Acrobatics +4, Intimidate +9, Perception +8
Spec. Abilities Bravery +2^π, Armor Training 1^u, Weapon
 Training (Heavy Blades +1)

'Ambassador' from D'Gar Governor Cecil Dumont
 LE Human Aristocrat 8
Initiative +2 **Space/Reach** 5 ft./5 ft.
AC 13 **T** 13 **FF** 10 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge)
HP 68 (8d8 + 16) **Speed** 30 ft.
Fortitude +9 **Reflex** +5 **Will** +4
SQ None **DR** No **SR** No **Immune** No
Attacks:
 +2 *Dagger*, +10/+5 (1d4+2, 19-20x2)
Str 10 **Dex** 14 **Con** 14 **Int** 16 **Wis** 16 **Cha** 16
Base Atk +6 **CMB** +6 **CMD** 18
Feats Dodge, Deceitful, Skill Focus (Bluff), Skill Focus
 (Intimidate), Weapon Finesse
Gear Fine noble's clothes, *Dagger +2*, *Belt of Physical Might*
 +4 (*Dex*, *Con*),
Skills Bluff +19, Diplomacy +14, Disguise +19, Intimidate
 +17, Knowledge (Local) +14, Perception +14, Ride +13,
 Sense Motive +14
Special Abilities None

Diamond Legion Corporal Sarah "Slash" Lashton
 NG Human Fighter 4 / Barbarian 2
Initiative +8 **Space/Reach** 5 ft./5 ft.
AC 25 **T** 13 **FF** 22 (+7 armor, +4 shield, +2 Dex, +1 natural, +1 dodge)
HP 92 (2d12 + 4d10 + 36 + 4 favored) **Speed** 40 ft.^u
Fortitude +13 **Reflex** +4 **Will** +2^π
SQ None **DR** No **SR** No **Immune** No
Attacks:
 +2 *Longsword*, +12/+7 (1d8+7, 19-20x2) or
 +1 *Longbow*, +8/+3 (1d8+1, 20x3)
Str 16 **Dex** 14 **Con** 21 **Int** 12 **Wis** 10 **Cha** 10
Base Attack +6 **CMB** +12 **CMD** 21
Feats Dodge^B, Shield Focus^B, Improved Initiative^B,
 Toughness*, Weapon Focus (Longsword), Weapon Spec.
 (Longsword)^B, Wary
Gear *Breastplate +1*, *Heavy Steel Shield +1*, *Longsword +2*,
Longbow +1 (20 arrows), *Belt of Mighty Constitution +2*,
Cloak of Resistance +1, *Amulet of Natural Armor +1*, *Potion*
of Resist Energy, *Potion of See Invisibility*, *Potion of Cure*
Moderate Wounds (2)
Skills: Acrobatics +4, Diplomacy +6, Intimidate +9,
 Perception +8
Spec. Abilities Bravery +1^π, Armor Training 1^u, Fast
 Movement, Rage (10 rounds/day), Uncanny Dodge, Rage
 Power (Intimidating Glare)

CRITICAL EVENT SUMMARY
FALSELY ACCUSED

Convention: _____

Date: _____

Do Not Return After Aug 2018

Author's Email Address: danielilewis1983@gmail.com

1. Did the PCs try to negotiate for additional pay? Yes No
2. Briefly describe how they reacted to the tomato-throwing man in Encounter 3: _____

3. How did the PCs react to Dumont's very bad attitude (the whole time)? _____

4. Did the PCs try and get to know Dumont's attendants in Encounter 4? Yes No
5. Did the PCs talk to Hack and Slash about the other Legionnaires' treatment of them? Yes No
If 'Yes', briefly describe when and how: _____

6. Did the PCs stay for the night in Encounter 4? Yes No
If 'Yes', briefly describe how they dealt with the attackers: _____

7. How did the PCs deal with the street vendor scuffle in Encounter 5? _____

8. How did the PCs react to Dumont's treatment of the messenger girl in Encounter 6? _____

9. How did the PCs react to Dumont's treatment of the "working girls" in Encounter 6? _____

10. Did the PCs try to defend Dumont against the mob in Encounter 7? Yes No
If 'Yes', briefly describe how: _____

11. Did the PCs act or speak rudely or disrespectfully to Dumont? Yes No
If 'Yes', briefly describe how, and whether you gave them Conclusion C for it: _____

12. Did the PCs get Conclusion B or C? Yes No If 'Yes', describe which, and how, in as much detail as possible: _____

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