

VOLO'S WATERDEEP ENCHIRIDION

A VISITOR'S GUIDE TO THE CITY'S SPLENDORS



By **Volothamp Geddarm**

Under the generous patronage of the Lords Melshimber

Published by Tym Waterdeep Limited in association with the Fellowship of Innkeepers and the Fellowship of Carters and Coachmen

I, Volothamp Geddarm, verily attest to the veracity of the words printed herein. "Set your course by the truth and you shall never be lost, no matter how far you wander." I coined this well-worn adage myself years ago, and it has served me well in all my travels.*

*Consider any antinomy, jactitation, mendacity, obloquy, pasquinade, parapraxis, traducement, or similar found in this document to be corrigendum.

Address all claims of such to:

Abricade Fellswop, Solicitor
17 Mulgomir's Way, Castle Ward
Waterdeep

VOLO'S WATERDEEP ENCHIRIDION

Welcome, Traveler! You have in your hands the foremost and most up-to-date guide to the city — smiled over by none other than its Open Lord, Lady Laeral Silverhand. This chapbook will serve you well until my seminal work on the subject, *Volo's Guide to Waterdeep* — sadly long out of print, but now a tome prized by collectors — can be updated and printed anew. Ask any broadsheet seller, innkeeper, shopkeeper, tavern owner, or bookseller if they'll soon have copies of the new edition for sale!

ENTERING WATERDEEP

Likely you have already arrived in Waterdeep and borne witness to some of its many wonders. But in case this pamphlet has found its way beneath your worthy eyes in anticipation of your visit, due to the commendable efforts of some friend or family member who loves you dearly, I shall explain briefly the circumstances of entry.

You will have traveled through lands claimed and controlled by the Lords of Waterdeep long before you see its walls. If you've come from the south by the Trade Way, you'll have met the City Guard at their post at Zundbridge. From the north by way of the Long Road, you'll have passed under their watchful eyes at the town of Rassalantar. And whether by land or sea, you'll likely also have been spotted by the Griffon Cavalry — even if you have not spotted them.

Worry not. Waterdeep is a welcoming city, and you have nothing to fear from these guardians unless you lead a rampaging army of orcs, a horde of gnolls, or similar. They don't even require a toll be paid. (Beware any City Guard who demands a toll, and report the incident to a magister of Waterdeep at your earliest convenience.)

If you travel in a large caravan or on a ship, you will be required to register with a magister at the gate at which you arrived or with the harbor magister. Magisters can easily be recognized by the black robes they wear (and, in fact, are commonly called "black robes" as a result) and the City Guard force that always accompanies them. Be aware that magisters can pass a sentence without a trial. It behooves you to treat them with proper respect.

If you travel overland in a small party or alone, you aren't required to register with a magister unless your stay extends beyond a tenday. At that point, you must register with a magister either at the harbor, the gates, or the city courts. Discovery of your failure to do so can result in a fine or forced labor. Of course, registration subjects you to monthly taxation. But as a truculent old acquaintance from the Dales once told me, "The sheep gives the shepherd its fleece or there'll be mutton for dinner." That is, the magisters will get you either way, so you might as well register up front.

That said, many canny visitors with business for a month or a season betimes avail themselves of the hospitality of inns in Undercliff, the pleasant farmland east of the city proper. The less well-off often find accommodation in the Field Ward. Because neither are official wards of the city, they aren't subject to taxation. Note, however, that because both these areas have yet to be formally accepted as wards of the city, they don't benefit from the securities of Guild Law or the protection of the Watch. If you choose to follow this path, be on your guard. Fools rush in where auditors fear to tread.

Regardless of what size party you arrive with or by what means, if you arrive by night or in winter, expect to register. In winter and at night the gates are shut. Ships aren't expected at night or as a regular occurrence after the first frost of the coming season, and are often met at docking by a magister — or by a contingent of the Guard who will hold travelers aboard until a magister can be summoned.

None of these rules apply to the city's least used gate, the West Gate. This smaller gate opens onto the Mud Flats — a mucky beach used by clam diggers, shore fishers, and those brave enough to bathe in the cold waves. Those who make a living through fishing with nets or traps also use this gate, keeping their small boats on the beach to avoid docking fees. Locals register with the Guard as they exit and as they enter. No magister is stationed at the gate, but no new arrivals to Waterdeep are accepted here.

If you approach by air, expect a vigorous pursuit by and confrontation with the Griffon Cavalry. Only specially licensed individuals and mounts can fly over Waterdeep. It is best to land well outside the city and approach on foot.

YOUR ARRIVAL IN THE CITY

The splendors that await you in Waterdeep are legendary. Each of the city's wards is detailed in this work, telling you what to expect depending on where you are, as well as what thrilling things you might see and do. Before that, however, there are the small matters of knowing something of the history of the place you visit, and of understanding how to comport yourself in the Sword Coast's grandest metropolis.

A LONG HISTORY (IN BRIEF)

“There shall come a time when our city and its deepwater bay shall grow in fame and fortune across many realms and many worlds. Folk shall know of Waterdeep, our City of Splendors, and sing its praises. I have seen it thus, and I endeavor to make it true.”

— *Ahghairon, the first Open Lord of Waterdeep, circa 1032 DR*

People have inhabited the plateau upon which Waterdeep stands for longer than human histories record. But as is the way across the dangerous North, civilization at the foot of Mount Waterdeep has crested and ebbed in great waves. Elf scholars assure me that it was once the site of Aelinthaldaar, the capital of their ancient empire of Illefarn. So it was already a glorious place when a dwarf prospector named Melair discovered mithral beneath the mountain. In agreement with the Illefarni, Melair called kith and kin to mine under the mountain and in the plateau, and thus Clan Melairkyn came to rule below as the Illefarni did above.

But this fruitful alliance lasted less than the lifetime of a dwarf, for the emperor of the elves — what they call a “coronal” — commanded that all leave in the Retreat, that great exodus of elves from Faerûn to their mystical isle of Evermeet. Not all elves agreed with this edict, and many were determined to stay. Well, what emperor has ever willingly allowed another to sit in his throne? The coronal had all of Aelinthaldaar razed by magic, and the remaining elves splintered into separate kingdoms. The Melairkyn, of course, saw this as a breaking of their bargain, and never again did they deal with elves. Instead, they tunneled ever deeper under the mountain, never to be heard from again.

So it was that the humans who came to the deepwater harbor found it empty and suitable for their own purposes. For more than a thousand years, folk lived and traded at the site of what would become Waterdeep, but their identities remain a mystery — with a curious exception. We know that at some point during this period, the wizard Halaster Blackcloak built his tower at the base of Mount Waterdeep and came to rule the lands around — until he, like the Melairkyn, vanished under the mountain.

Various warlords later claimed the plateau’s harbor as their own, but it was one known as Nimoar who is best remembered. *A History of Waterdeep: Age One, The Rise of the Warlord* records how Nimoar raised a wooden stockade to protect the settlement around the harbor, claiming rule over the town that by then was being called “Nimoar’s Hold, the Town of Waters Deep.”

War between orcs and elves in lands farther north drove hordes of trolls south to claw at the fledgling city, and amid this danger, Nimoar died of old age. Many bloody struggles unfolded between local folk and trolls, until the magic of a youth named Ahghairon turned the fortunes of war against the “everlasting ones,” which were destroyed or scattered. Ahghairon improved slowly in skill and power with the passage of the years, until he became a great mage. He is said to have discovered a supply of potions of longevity, or learned the art of making such, for he lived on and on, still physically in his prime for decade after decade.

A History of Waterdeep: Age Two, The Lords’ Rule Begins records that in the year 1032 DR, Ahghairon (then in his 112th winter) argued with Raurlor, who was then Warlord of Waterdeep. Raurlor wanted to use Waterdeep’s acquired wealth and strength of arms to create a northern empire. Ahghairon defied him before all the people, and Raurlor ordered the mage to be chained. But when Ahghairon magically turned aside all who sought to lay hands on him, Raurlor struck at the mage with his own sword. Ahghairon then rose into the air, just out of reach, and used his magic to transmute Raurlor’s blade into a hissing serpent. When the serpent struck Raurlor, he died in full view of his shocked followers.

Ahghairon then gathered the leaders of Waterdeep’s armies and powerful families. While runners sought to bring them to the castle, flames roared and crackled in the empty warlord’s throne at Ahghairon’s bidding, so that none could sit there. Then, when the gathered host of worthies met in the audience chamber, the wizard seated himself on the flaming throne. Immediately the fires died away, leaving both the throne and Ahghairon unharmed.

From this seat — the very one on which the Open Lord sits to this day — Ahghairon decreed how the city would be governed. While he would sit as lord openly, a council of other lords of nearly equal power would rule with him. But the identity of those other lords would be hidden even from each other, thus preventing any of them from being approached and influenced by bribe or threat. So it was that Ahghairon established Waterdeep’s system of governance.

Ahghairon was instrumental in establishing many of Waterdeep’s other institutions, such as its black-robed magisters, its Griffon Cavalry, and the city’s many guilds. The first Open Lord ruled wisely for over two centuries before the magic sustaining his health failed. He now lies entombed in his tower, which you can still see standing in the courtyard of the Palace of Waterdeep. Beware that you don’t approach too close, however, lest you stumble into the invisible barrier — a “force cage,” I am told — that surrounds the tower.

Within that barrier lie additional protective wards, as demonstrated by the floating bones of the last person who tried to defy them. The name of this poor soul has been lost to time, but the miscreant was likely a wizard who sought to steal the magic treasures that had been entombed with their former owner. Now they hang in the air beyond the invisible force cage in rough semblance of their natural position, occasionally displaced temporarily by strong winds or mischievous children with long sticks.

Ahghairon's wise rule is celebrated on the first day of Eleasis, which has come to be known as Ahghairon's Day. For more about this day, see "City Celebrations."

Many significant events stand out in Waterdeep's history. But none have had so great an effect on daily life than the three apocalyptic periods known as the Time of Troubles, the Spellplague, and the Sundering — the most recent (and hopefully final). On all these occasions, the actions of gods at war with one another led to the loss or the twisting of magic in the world. During the Time of Troubles, Waterdeep stood at the center of events. But the effects of the more recent crises can still be seen in the city today, even though they occurred a great distance from where Waterdeep stands.

When the gods walked among mortals during the Time of Troubles, they were cast down to the world by the mysterious Overgod Ao in 1358 DR. Until then, none but the gods had known of Ao's existence, and since then, we have learned little more. As all know, the crisis began with the theft of the *Tablets of Fate* by the vile and ambitious gods Bane and Myrkul, later joined by Bhaal. These mystic artifacts supposedly determine the extent of the gods' power, and dictate how they use that power. As punishment for this affront, Ao cast down the gods (or the ones that humans worshiped, at any rate) and then demanded that they return the tablets to him.

But Ao was not omniscient, it seems, nor overly wise. The gods didn't seek out the tablets, and thus it was left to mortal heroes to sort out the mess. They did so, their efforts culminating in Waterdeep. It was on the slopes of Mount Waterdeep that Ao was last seen, when he granted godhood to the human heroes Kelemvor, Midnight (who became Mystra), and Cyric.

It is no surprise, then, that Waterdeep has since attracted a steady stream of pilgrims who worship Midnight at Mystra's temple and pay homage to Kelemvor in the City of the Dead. It might surprise you, though, to learn that Waterdavians had a short-lived penchant for worshiping Ao. The Cynosure — that great marble-pillared structure on the edge of the Market, now rented out for private and public events — was built as a temple to Ao. But his worship fell from favor when all prayers to him went unanswered, and folk realized they had no idea what he stood for or who he was. You can visit the Cynosure to see sculptures and paintings of all the major participants and events in the Time of Troubles. Entrance is free to the public on any day when no event (such as a meeting of guilds, a noble's coming-of-age ball, or some such) is scheduled.

In the Year of Blue Fire (1385 DR), the Spellplague gripped the world. None knew it at the time, but it has since been divined that Cyric's long hatred for Mystra boiled over and led to his murder of the goddess of magic. I was absent from the world at this time — indisposed by the force of an *imprisonment* spell. Elminster has since explained the events to me, but I must confess that much of what he said made little sense. It was a long lecture having something to do with stars, "crystal spheres," and "demiplanar reality mirrors." Suffice it to say, parts of our world switched with parts of another one, and magic was again disrupted.

During this period, the powerful magical fields that protect and affect Waterdeep became unstable. This led to the disastrous activation of most of Waterdeep's amazing walking statues during an earthquake. In the years before, the walking statues were often hidden on the Ethereal Plane, to be called forth only in times of great peril. Many in the city doubted that such massive, sapient constructs were even real, let alone that they guarded the city invisibly. The Spellplague confirmed their existence for all to see, though, and each carved a swath of destruction through Waterdeep before it was stopped. Now the walking statues stand about the city in various states of readiness or disarray — one of the most obvious of Waterdeep's so-called splendors.

After the Spellplague came the Sundering. Elf scholars insist on calling it the Second Sundering, asserting that the creation of Evermeet thousands of years ago was a similar happening. Regardless of the name you give it, the event that unfolded beginning in 1482 DR was the result of another world — called Abeir, I am told — passing again into our own. The gods were once more cast into the mortal realm, this time embodied in mortal beings known as Chosen. The old troublemaker Ao seems to be the cause of it all, though why he chose to cast down the gods was a matter of dispute even among those entities while they were with us.

Apparently, all of this was foreseen by Waterdeep's legendary wizard Khelben Arunsun, and it was only through his wisdom and the efforts of Elminster, Laeral Silverhand — now the Open Lord of Waterdeep — and a handful of others that the world was saved. According to Elminster, Ao remade the *Tablets of Fate* as a result, restoring the divine order and separating Abeir from Toril. But take that as you may. According to that roguish longbeard, he saves the world without anyone noticing every other month or so.



The Sea Maidens Faire parade

SURVIVING IN THE CITY

Waterdeep is, by and large, the most civilized city on the Sword Coast. Yet civilized doesn't mean safe, nor does it mean easy to navigate. Many day-to-day elements of life in Waterdeep that residents take for granted are, to new arrivals, a bevy of wonders and dangers not seen in any other settlement within a thousand miles. Here's what you need to know to survive your first few hours in the city. Mark this section for frequent reference!

THE CODE LEGAL

Waterdeep is no village led by hidebound hierarchs or petty fiefdom ruled by the whim of a warlord. It is a city of laws molded by Tyr's spirit of justice. As a rule, you can trust members of the City Watch to do their duty diligently, and you can expect that the city's magisters will be fair. If you have cause to come before the Masked Lords or the Open Lord herself, rest assured that if your cause be just, justice will be done. If, however, you find yourself in the wrong, know that though it might take time to weigh that wrong on Tyr's scales, his hammer will fall — and it will be wielded by Waterdeep with a vengeance.

Unlike in less civilized settlements, punishment for crimes in Waterdeep isn't typically used as public entertainment. Scheduled executions occur behind the high walls of Castle Waterdeep, and floggings are carried out in the watch post nearest the sentencing. The Watch makes every effort to take individuals into custody quietly, so as not to disrupt other citizens. Those bystanders generally return the favor by giving altercations between criminals and the Watch a wide berth.

Waterdeep has a complex library of law and custom set by precedent, the main body of which can be read in the Code Legal. This document is available in multiple languages at the Palace of Waterdeep, and (in the Common tongue) provided on request by the magisters at the gates and in the harbor. Be aware that the Code Legal provides only an outline of typical sentences for various offenses, and magisters have broad discretion when meting out justice as they see fit. Any Masked Lord can overturn a magister's ruling, but there's rarely a Masked Lord around when you need one.



ARMS, ARMOR, AND COMBAT

Individuals accustomed to the rough-and-tumble life in much of the North are often surprised by the fact that Waterdavians go about unarmed and unarmored. Yet Waterdeep doesn't have any law that forbids carrying weapons or armor. Instead, it has a culture of civility that makes such behavior unnecessary.

Dueling has long been illegal in Waterdeep, as has any sort of act involving assault. Individuals caught brawling by the Watch will all be arrested and judged regardless of who started the fracas, or why. (The tavern brawls that typically break out under the influence of too much drink will often be overlooked by the Watch, as long as the proprietor doesn't seek payment for damages and no one is significantly injured.) Sport fighting, such as boxing or wrestling, is legal only if it occurs in a location registered with the city for that purpose. Additionally, any blade more than one foot in length is subject to an extra tax whenever it is sold, which helps to explain why Waterdavians prefer to carry knives and knuckledusters for self-defense.

Businesses and individuals do employ armed guards, but except for nobles or foreign envoys, few people travel about the city with such protection. As such, the sight of armed and armored individuals walking the streets who aren't in the livery of the city or one of its noble houses inspires caution in most Waterdavians. Folk assume that you wouldn't bother lugging around such equipment unless you either intend violence or expect that it might soon be visited upon you.

CITY WATCH

The first soldiers you see in service to the city will be the members of the City Guard who patrol the roads leading to Waterdeep, watch the walls, guard civic structures, and protect magisters. Waterdeep's streets, however, are policed by an altogether different force: the City Watch. The similarity of their names often confuses newcomers, so I offer this handy mnemonic: "The Guard guards the walls while the Watch watches all."

You can recognize any member of the City Watch by the uniform: a green-and-goldenrod doublet and a tall steel helmet. Each typically carries a long truncheon, a dagger, and a buckler. Because most citizens in Waterdeep don't bear weapons, these tools prove a more than ample deterrent to criminal activity. Members of the Watch typically don't carry crossbows or other weapons to attack at range, but running from the Watch — though it may be a time-honored tradition for local miscreants — rarely works out for newcomers to the city. I guarantee that all members of the Watch know the streets they patrol and that area's residents better than you do, even if you stay in Waterdeep for ten seasons.

The City Watch has watch posts throughout the city. These stations are often off the main thoroughfares, tucked away in small courtyards or at cross streets. A watch post can be recognized by the green-and-gold lantern outside it, lit even during the day with a *continual flame* spell. A watch post serves as an organizational headquarters and armory. Anyone who wishes to report a crime may do so at a watch post in the event a Watch constable can't be found elsewhere. A watch post typically contains a few holding cells where people arrested for crimes can be detained until they're marched to a courthouse jail before standing trial.

Small squads head out from the watch posts on daily and nightly rounds of the city streets, or on special assignments involving protection or investigation. A mere pair of Watch operatives might discreetly patrol in the Castle Ward; in contrast, squads of eight walk the Dock Ward, increasing to as many as a dozen at night. If Watch members spot trouble they can't handle, they blow shrill tin whistles to summon more of their members — an act that alerts nearby citizens as well.

City Watch members follow a strict code of conduct that makes them one of the most trusted police forces aside from paladin-patrolled Elturgard. As long as you don't engage in unlawful behavior, you can expect to be left untroubled by the Watch.

THE WATCHFUL ORDER OF MAGISTS AND PROTECTORS

Expect to be questioned at the gate, or when you register with a magister, regarding your ability to cast arcane magic. Wizards, sorcerers, and other arcane spellcasters who intend to stay in Waterdeep for any length of time are required to register with the city, and will be strongly encouraged to join the Watchful Order of Magists and Protectors, headed by the Blackstaff.

Members of the Watchful Order are expected to render service to the city when called upon, acting as temporary members of the City Watch or City Guard. Their expertise often helps investigators determine whether magic was used to commit a crime in the city. Members can also expect to be tapped for assistance during and after fires, natural events that cause multiple casualties, or other nonmagical disasters.

Members of the Watchful Order form a more or less sociable association in the city, working together to keep an eye on any spellcasters who opt not to join their guild. Any havoc caused by a spellcaster in Waterdeep risks drawing the wrath of the Lords of Waterdeep — so it behooves the Watchful Order to watch all its members.

WATCH TALK

Members of the City Watch employ a sort of slang in dealing with the public. As a visitor, it behooves you to know what they mean.

“What befalls?” means “Someone tell me what's going on here.”

“Hold!” means “Don't move a muscle.”

“Down arms!” means “Drop your weapons.”

“Talk truth!” means “Answer me” or “Tell the whole story.”

“Robes” references the black robes — in other words, one of the magisters. “Do we need robes here?” or something similar should be taken as a threat.

COINAGE

As should be expected of any city of standing, Waterdeep mints its own coins. All taxes, fines, and guild fees must be paid either in Waterdavian coin or the currency of any member settlement of the Lords' Alliance. Though no law requires you to pay for goods or services in Waterdavian coin, the drudgery of weighing foreign currency and checking its purity prompts many retailers and operators of swift-exchange businesses — including drays and hire-coaches — not to accept anything but coins minted in Waterdeep.

Though you can trade your coinage for Waterdeep currency with anyone willing to do so, the exchequers at the Palace of Waterdeep make exchanges with no associated fee. The queue there can be quite long, necessitating that you make an appointment — often a day or more in advance. For a swifter transaction, I recommend any member of the Guild of Trusted Pewterers and Casters, or of the Jewelers' Guild. Both have the most reliable scales and abide by guild-wide rates of exchange.

Be sure to exchange taols and harbor moons before leaving the city, as their value greatly diminishes elsewhere!

TAXES AND FEES

As established in the first year of the reign of the previous Open Lord, Dagult Neverember, Waterdeep collects a monthly tax from all who live within its official wards. The tax is 1 shard per person above the age of ten years, and is collected door-to-door by patrols of the City Guard on the last day of each month.

Individuals who so desire can pay a single dragon in tax and receive a writ exempting them for twelve months, but the writ must be produced every month when the Guard calls, or a new payment is required. If the Guard knocks at a door and receives no answer, a notice of lien with an estimation of tax is affixed to the door. The debt must be dealt with before the next month ends, with payment to be made to any magister.

Those who have no fixed residence can still be taxed if they are confronted in any building, be it an inn or an outhouse. So if you're out and around on the last day of the month, you'll no doubt experience "taxing traffic" as the streets become clogged with people trying to avoid the collectors.

Waterdeep also raises revenue by charging other fees, such as the following:

- 1 nib/day rental of a stall in the Market
- 1 shard per conviction by a magister
- 1 dragon conveyance leaving the city, empty or full
- 5 dragons per ship touching dock in Waterdeep

In times of trouble, direct taxes can also be imposed:

- A **fire tax** (usually 1 dragon per household), levied whenever a fire destroys a large portion of the city
- A **wall tax** or harbor tax (usually 1 dragon per household) raised to directly pay for needed repairs or expansions
- A **lance** tax raised to provide a payroll for mercenaries hired by the city when required (usually 1 shard per household each tenday until the Lords repeal the tax)

COINS OF WATERDEEP

HERE ARE IMAGES OF THE CITY'S COINS, WHICH AREN'T TO SCALE.



NIB
COPPER COIN ABOUT THE SIZE OF A THUMBNAIL (1 NIB = 1 COMMON COPPER COIN)

SHARD
SILVER COIN, SLIGHTLY SMALLER THAN THE NIB (1 SHARD = 10 NIBS)



TAOL
BRASS COIN, ABOUT TWO INCHES SQUARE WITH A HOLE LARGE ENOUGH FOR A NIB TO FIT IN (1 TAOL = 200 NIBS)

DRAGON
GOLD COIN, HALF AGAIN AS LARGE AS A NIB (1 DRAGON = 100 NIBS)



SUN
PLATINUM COIN, TWICE AS LARGE AS A NIB (1 SUN = 1,000 NIBS)



HARBOR MOON
PLATINUM CRESCENT INSET WITH ELECTRUM, ABOUT THREE INCHES LONG WITH A HOLE LARGE ENOUGH FOR A NIB TO FIT IN (1 HARBOR MOON = 5,000 NIBS)

GETTING ABOUT

Perambulating is the superior manner of experiencing the city and all its splendors. But if you've come with your own conveyance, the weather is inclement, or some other reason drives you to use the roads, the following are facts you need to know.

TRAFFIC AND TRAVEL

Waterdeep is a city of broad boulevards that thrum with traffic. All day and well into the night, a bewildering melee of wagons, carts, horse and pony riders, carriages, buggies, hire-coaches, and Waterdeep's signature towering drays (further discussed below) surges through its major thoroughfares. Fortunately, most roads are flanked by paved sidewalks that give pedestrians plenty of space, and most of the widest roads have raised dividers that allow an individual crossing a street a safe space to step out of the fray and wait for traffic to pass.

The city's centuries-old layout dictates its traffic patterns today. Waterdeep lies on a plateau adjacent to a long mountain that shields much of it from the sea. In the southern third of the city, where the land slopes up from the harbor, the High Road and the Way of the Dragon are the two main south–north roads. These converge both at the Waymoot near the southern gate, and in the heart of the Trades Ward where the city is at its narrowest — bounded by Castle Waterdeep, high on a spur of the mountain, and the walls of the City of the Dead. The conjoined boulevard then splits to the north, continuing as the High Road, and to the west as a boulevard called Waterdeep Way, heading toward the Palace of Waterdeep (not to be confused with Waterdeep Castle, which it passes hard by). In the middle of the city, six boulevards run north from Waterdeep Way, where they meet the road that encircles the Market. On the other side of the Market, five boulevards continue north.

The aforementioned boulevards, along with the Street of the Singing Dolphin in the Sea Ward, are the major arteries of the city. Hire-coaches and drays can be most frequently found on those streets, and traffic is at its most hectic there. Most other roads in the city run east to west, but regardless of their direction, traffic elsewhere is generally less hectic and thus safer to cross.

STREET SIGNS

Thanks to the Scriveners', Scribes', and Clerks' Guild, Waterdeep has a remarkable custom of labeling its streets, and even many of its alleyways and courts. The method of identification varies by ward and neighborhood (including brass plates, carvings in stone, and stencil-painted wooden signs), but street names are typically displayed on the corners of buildings at intersections, roughly a dozen feet above ground. The name of the road you travel on will be on the wall nearest, while the name of the crossing road will be around the corner. Simply ingenious!

LANDMARKS

Proud Mount Waterdeep provides a useful landmark for general orientation. It stands stark across the skyline to the west, its far slopes dropping right into the sea. A spur of the mountain juts inland, and atop the easternmost point of this spur stands Castle Waterdeep. If you can see these landmarks, it's relatively easy to orient yourself. The mountain peak looms over the southern third of the city near the port in the south. The City of the Dead lies opposite the northern ridge of Mount Waterdeep, which descends down to the Field of Triumph, the city's great coliseum.

One of Waterdeep's titanic walking statues, no longer mobile, offers another way to orient yourself on a local scale. At nine stories tall, twice the height of any buildings nearby, the Honorable Knight stands guard in a block of buildings between Snail Street and the Way of the Dragon. Positioned as it is nigh the place where four wards meet, you can use it to judge where you stand. If it is south and west of your position, you are in the Trades Ward. North and west? The Southern Ward. South and east? The Castle Ward. North and east? You're in the Dock Ward.

THE UNFLAPPABLE WATERDAVIAN

Natives of the City of Splendors are notoriously slow to take offense. A Waterdavian plainly states their feelings as a warning, so that one is apt to hear "I don't find that amusing, friend," said pleasantly before real anger is shown. Some visitors misinterpret such behavior as cowardice or ignorance ("He was too stupid to realize I insulted him!"). For those who act on such misjudgments, however, surprise and regret are the usual results.

Most Waterdavians are also slow to take fright unless facing magic or monsters. A swaggering warrior threatening them is quite likely to be stared at calmly, or even sneered at. "The only mortals that Waterdavians fear are a few unstable wizards and the Lords," Durnan often says to those who are surprised by the nonchalance of the Yawning Portal's regulars concerning the open entrance to Undermountain in their midst. "And only when they've incurred the wrath of said persons themselves."



TRAFFIC WARDENS

During particularly heavy traffic and at congested areas such as the great oval road around the Market, you might see a member of the City Watch serving as a traffic warden. Traffic wardens signal with small blue hand flags for traffic to proceed, and with yellow flags for traffic to hold. A traffic warden can often be heard blowing a whistle. When you hear it, look to the warden to see if you are being signaled. Failure to take care might result not only in accident but also arrest.

DRAYS

These towering vehicles are, I believe, unique to Waterdeep. Invented by exiles from Lantan in the last century, a dray is a long, glassed-in carriage with bench seating that provides additional open-air bench seating on its roof. The driver sits at the level of the roof seating, providing a vantage point to see over other traffic and make eye contact with other dray drivers. You can enter this contraption through the back whenever it stops or slows down enough to make mounting the rear step safe.

A fare taker stands at the back of the lower seating area to take your coin (typically 2 to 4 nibs). You can choose to ride inside or ascend the spiral stairway at the rear to ride atop the vehicle. Most drays run on the main north–south boulevards, but some circle the Market, and a few run along the smaller east–west roads in rough areas. Be warned that when the demand for drays is high — during rain or snow, or to get to or from an event at the Field of Triumph — conditions become crowded and perfect for pickpockets.

HIRE-COACHES

If you desire to travel in relative comfort and be the master of your destination, simply give a spirited wave and shout to any hire-coach driver who has no passengers. Each of these handsome, two-wheeled black coaches comfortably seats two travelers (perhaps four if you're quite slim and very well acquainted), who ride facing the road ahead. The hire-coach's driver sits high and to the rear of the carriage, manipulating the horses by means of long reins and a short whip on a rod. The fare must be agreed upon and paid before the journey, but only rarely will the cost exceed a half-dozen shards.

CARRIAGES

The well-to-do — or those who want to ride in luxury during a day out — can hire a full carriage, many of which are as finely outfitted as those owned by the nobility. Up to eight can take such a ride in silken comfort. Prices and services vary, but generally you agree to rent the carriage, the services of the driver, and any attendant servants or guards for a full day.

TRAVEL IN WINTER

The folk of Waterdeep often remain indoors in the colder months, particularly when it rains or snows. The flow of trade and travelers into the city slows to a trickle during winter, and as a result, traffic diminishes and drays and hire-coaches become more scarce. Fortunately, the Fellowship of Carters and Coachmen works with the Wheelwrights' Guild and the Wagon-makers' and Coach Builders' Guild to convert the drays and hire-coaches that do operate into sledges, so that some are available even in the worst weather.

NOBILITY

While you might encounter dwarf diplomats from Gauntlgrym, satraps of Amn, duchesses of Tethyr, or thanes of the Northlanders in Waterdeep, the nobles you really need to know about are the city's own. Seventy-eight noble family lines are found here, many of which can trace their lineage back to the city's founding. Books have been written about individual families — histories of their accomplishments and how they fit into the webs of wealth and patronage that govern nobles' activities — so it is beyond the scope of a pamphlet this size to attempt to describe their particulars. I can, however, endeavor to equip you with the tools to recognize nobility and to interact with the higher class.

SPOTTING A NOBLE

Nobility in Waterdeep are granted the right to bear arms. In the legal code of the city, this means not merely the ability to carry a weapon, but the right to retain up to seventy equipped soldiers. These soldiers always wear a house's colors and the house's "arms of grace" — a heraldic device often borne on a shield, worn as a cloak pin, or affixed to a helmet. Others throughout the city, even foreign dignitaries, are permitted to retain only up to sixteen armed warriors, and laws against impersonating those in the employ of the nobility mean that other mercenaries and bodyguards most often dress plainly, so as not to be mistaken for the retinue of a noble. So your first clue that you might be in the company of a noble is the sight of a large number of armed and uniformed soldiers.

Many nobles, particularly younger ones seeking entertainment, travel without an entourage of guards or only in the company of other nobles. In this case, you'll know you're in the presence of nobility because of the deference others give them. Follow suit, and you should be fine.

Above all, be polite. Always address a known noble as "Lord" or "Lady." A short bow or a nod of the head to acknowledge a noble upon each meeting and parting is customary. Obsequiousness and servility is something all Waterdavians scorn, but you should also beware of acting in an overly familiar, boastful, or disrespectful way when in the presence of any noble. Though this sort of behavior isn't a crime, and laws against dueling prevent a noble from initiating a direct armed confrontation, the noble families of Waterdeep have immense power in the city, often in unexpected quarters. Many have influence in nations as distant as Calimshan and Cormyr. Be assured that any slighting of a noble will not be forgotten or easily forgiven.

If you're not certain whether someone is a noble, address the gentleman as "Saer" or the gentlewoman as "Goodwoman." Neither will give offense, and generally a noble will politely correct you as to their actual title.

A WONDROUS PEOPLE

Whenever you find yourself in a bustling city, you're likely to spot a wonderful variety of folk. You hear words in languages utterly foreign to you, and you smell dishes both delectable and strange. Waterdeep is the ultimate city of such delights, and before long, the alien thing becomes familiar to you, and the stranger becomes your friend.

The people of Waterdeep are among the greatest of its splendors. Fashion, comportment, love — these things are practiced with an art and a zest in the city uncommon elsewhere. Visit a festhall or festival and see for yourself! And don't miss the cross-dressing performers who regale audiences with humor and song. Fabulous — that word doesn't begin to describe it, especially when they enhance the merriment with magic.

The city is also a haven for those who define for themselves what it means to be a man or a woman, those who transcend gender as the gods do, and those who redefine entirely who they are. What confidence! I never tire of witnessing it. I have seen folk in Waterdeep whose lives are more magical than the marvels possible with spells.

NOBLES AND PATRONAGE

Nobles in Waterdeep are patrons of and investors in all manner of businesses in the city and abroad, as well as the many expressions of the arts. They spend coin to fund celebrations, contests at the Field of Triumph, upkeep at the city's temples and shrines, civic projects, guild events, and charitable actions such as burial of the unknown dead. Their motives are manifold, but their actions — no matter the reason — earn them loyalty and high regard from those who benefit from their largesse.

Seeking patronage from a noble without having been introduced to that person is considered an insult, so you must first befriend someone in a noble's employ or circle of influence. Doing so is no guarantee of ultimate success; much time and coin can be wasted trying to curry favor with an acquaintance of a noble who turns out to be unscrupulous or of little help for some other reason. My advice is to do something deserving of attention, whatever your vocation, and someone from the noble families of Waterdeep will eventually show an interest.

KNOW A NOBLE'S BUSINESS

In the words of that quarrelsome acquaintance of mine from the Dales, "Before you strut your stuff in the chickens' preening circle, get to know the other cocks first." This colorful aphorism applies well to the affairs of nobility, because when you have interaction with a noble, you are at the same time dealing with one's entire family — as well as a network of business associates and allies. That situation can put you in a troublesome spot if you are unaware of the noble's connections.

GUILDS AND GUILD LAW

No aspect of life in Waterdeep goes untouched by at least one of its more than forty guilds. Virtually every profession has an associated guild, and there's hardly a citizen of the city who doesn't belong to one or more guilds, or doesn't work for someone who does. As a visitor to Waterdeep, you need to know this, lest you run afoul of "Guild Law." Guild Law isn't technically in the legal code of Waterdeep, but guilds are mentioned in the oldest surviving legal documents — penned by Ahghairon himself — and the rules of Guild Law are respected by wise city folk.

Guilds take their laws seriously, as do members of the City Watch and the magisters. If you flout a guild's traditions, you can expect not only public scorn but also a visit from enforcers of the law. In addition, many guilds have their own codes of accusation, trial, and punishment, such as:

- A member of the Bakers' Guild who sells bread baked in the wrong shape will be drenched with water and coated in his own flour.
- Heckling a member of the Jesters' Guild will result in the offending party being jeered at in public by no less than four guild members for a period of four days.
- Any ship that unloads its cargo without due observance or aid by the Guild of Watermen shall have its cargo seized or thrown into the harbor.

Many guilds have codes that entwine each other, complicating matters even more for the outsider. In Neverwinter, if you want to construct a building, you simply purchase the land and hire workers to build it. In Waterdeep, the Surveyors', Map-, and Chart-makers' Guild must first be consulted upon designation of the plat, then brought in to draw or approve the construction plan. The Cellarers' and Plumbers' Guild must then clear and prepare the site, only after which will you be able to hire members of the Carpenters', Roofers', and Plaisterers' Guild to erect the structure.

Moreover, the work will not be complete until members of the Guild of Fine Carvers and the Guild of Stonecutters, Masons, Potters, and Tile-makers design and craft any decorative elements of wood, stone, or ceramics, and after the Most Careful Order of Skilled Smiths and Metalforgers has manufactured and installed any door hinges. If the building is to be connected to the sewers or a city water supply, the Cellarers' and Plumbers' Guild must be called upon again to do that work. Want glazed windows installed? For that, you need to hire members of the Guild of Glassblowers, Glaziers, and Spectacle-makers.

If you do business in the city as anything other than a purchaser of goods and services, I strongly advise you to seek out a local solicitor and pay to be guided through the process. No guild of solicitors exists, so be sure your choice comes highly recommended by individuals you can trust. To learn the peculiarities of any guild's rules, consult someone on duty at the guild headquarters or ask a senior guild member.

All that said, working at a guild-related profession without being a member of that guild isn't illegal. Guild members have no lawful recourse to interfere in the business of someone who chooses to not join the organization. But if you practice a trade or operate a business without becoming a member of the appropriate guild, word spreads, and you'll find that your coin isn't good for purchasing the goods or services of anyone who is a guild member. Since that group includes virtually everyone who sells the necessities of life or offers shelter for a fee, the benefits of joining a guild swiftly become apparent to those who procrastinate in this regard.

Waterdeep at Night



THE WARDS OF WATERDEEP

Newcomers to the city of Waterdeep are often confused by the importance that Waterdavians give to wards. In other cities, such as Baldur's Gate and Neverwinter, districts are bounded by rivers or walls. But in Waterdeep, one can traverse from ward to ward by crossing a street — a fact that offers the drivers of hire-coaches some amusement when an ignorant tourist requests a ride to an adjacent ward.

Each ward has its own history, legends, and traditions based around who lived there in the past, famous or infamous events, and the uncanny things that continue to occur. For example, children (and even some adults) hop on one foot when crossing Asmagh's Alley in the Castle Ward. Why? Well, Asmagh was an apothecary who poisoned many patients, then buried them upright beneath the alley under cover of night. He was discovered, and some say that as many as eighty bodies were subsequently pulled up from holes under the alley's wide flagstones. Though this happened over a century ago, children passing through the alley still sing a song: "Hop for the hollows, hop for the dead, hop on the flagstones, hop on their heads." As you stroll down Warrior's Way or the Street of Silver, listen for the children's delighted screams and go give it a try.

These shared stories and traditions impart to each ward a different culture, just as much as distinctions of class and wealth. Yet nothing drives residents to identify with their wards as much as festivals and sport. Nearly every race and parade in the city features a competition between wards as part of the festivities. On such days, homes and businesses fly the colors of their wards, trot out their mascots, and sing rousing songs that celebrate where they live. If you stay in the city for even a month, you're sure to see some version of this display of civic spirit.

SPEAK LIKE A NATIVE

The many idioms and slang expressions of Waterdavians would take a whole book to explore, but here I explain a few that might otherwise mystify.

"DABBLER BUT NO MASTER" AND "NO MASTERY BLAZING FORTH"

These idioms trace their origin to Ahghairon, who early on in his studies of magic humbly said, "I am no wizard. I am a dabbler but no master of magic; it seems no mastery burns within me." Both now serve as expressions of false modesty applied to any skill or craft, not just magic use.

"SHARPJAWS," "FASTFISTS," "BULLYBLADES," AND "ALLEYBLADES"

Those who boast of martial skill but who shrink from violence or lack real ability are "sharpjaws." In sharp contrast are Waterdeep's "fastfists" (any lout easily provoked to violence), "bullyblades" (battle-hardened mercenaries hired as muscle), and "alleyblades" (muggers and thieves)

SPEAK LIKE A NATIVE (cont.)

"LONGRIDE" AND "LAST RIDE"

To a caravan merchant, a drover, or a farmer from the lands around Waterdeep, as well as any Waterdavian who rides for sport, recreation, hunting, or falconry, the late afternoon is "longride," and dusk is "last ride."

"WHICH THE GREATER THIEF?"

Tuezaera Hollowhand was a famous "lone cat" thief of Waterdeep in the 1200s DR, who disappeared suddenly and is thought to have come to a violent end. She once robbed a wizard and wrote this on his wall with a fingertip dipped in his favorite red wine: "I take things. You take freedom with your spells. Which of us is the greater thief?"

Waterdavians now use this phrase in argument with one another over all kinds of matters when comparing wrongs done.

"DOTH THY MIRROR CRACK?" OR "HURL BUT THINK NOT?" OR "TAKE BUT NOT COUNT COST? BE NOTHING, THEN!"

Laeral Silverhand, then the Lady Mage of Waterdeep when she was married to Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun, once publicly rebuked an overambitious wizard of the Watchful Order of Magists and Protectors thusly: "If I hurl spells but think not of consequences, I am nothing. If I take lives but count not the cost, I am nothing. If I steal in the night and see not the faces of the devastated come the next morning, I am nothing. If I make decrees like a ruler but undertake none of the other responsibilities of the throne, I am nothing. And if I do all these things in the name of the Watchful Order, I am less than nothing. Doth thy mirror crack?"

These scornful words are remembered and used almost daily in Waterdeep even a century later.

SEA WARD

The Sea Ward stands proud on the high ground above Mount Waterdeep's sunset shadow. The rich and the powerful (or those who wish you to think such of them, and can afford the rent) reside or run their businesses here. When the warlords and pirates of early Waters Deep gained enough gold, they built fortresses on what used to be fields of grass tousled by sea wind. You can still see the remains of some of those old castles incorporated into the palatial homes of the noble families that dwell in the Sea Ward. For the best all-around view of the glittering homes enshrouded by garden walls, go to where Diamond Street and Delzorin Street cross, nigh to Mystra's House of Wonder, and simply spin in a circle.

Blue and gold are the Sea Ward's colors in competitions, and the ward's mascot is the sea lion — a fanciful combination of fish and feline. There's a persistent but patently false legend that the famous Lion Gate at the Field of Triumph is the gaping maw of a sea lion. The architectural designs for the gates show this to be false, however, and they can be viewed in the Map House — the guildhall of the Surveyors', Map-, and Chart-makers' Guild in the Castle Ward.

Must-see locations in the Sea Ward begin, of course, with the Field of Triumph, but just across the street is the no less remarkable House of Heroes — the largest temple in the city. Dedicated to Tempus, its many grand halls celebrate the city's champions of both battle and sport. The winners of ward competitions are paraded here after their victories, often carried on shoulders or passed from hand to hand over the heads of a crowd. It is a sight you shouldn't miss.

You should also visit the House of Wonder. This is surely the most splendid temple dedicated to the gods of magic — with Mystra foremost among them, of course — in all the world. Although your eye will be drawn to its ornate towers, brilliant mosaics, and magical displays, look also for the humble violets growing amid the ostentation. These delicate flowers were Ahghairon's favorite, and they are planted about the temple in memory of him.

Two other temples in the ward are as impressive, but in different ways. The beautiful House of the Moon has the tallest tower of any temple in the city, rising some seventy-five feet above the street. At its top, priests of Selûne bask in the light of the moon in all seasons. The House of Inspired Hands, dedicated to Gond, presents an altogether less peaceful experience. Here, all the great innovative minds of the city invent and experiment, attempting to create everything from flying machines to stronger door hinges. But don't expect a museum of marvels such as can be found in Baldur's Gate. At this site, "worship is work," as anyone at the temple is liable to tell you.

If you're looking for some good fortune, you should surely visit the Tower of Luck, a temple complex dedicated to Tymora. The "tower" in question is actually a many-pillared atrium ingeniously roofed over with glass. Beneath the roof, a bronze sculpture of a diminutive Tymora, depicted as a laughing young girl, appears to be leaping from the very top of an astounding fountain. To pay your respects and make a wish, you come around to the fountain on a walkway and toss your coin to Tymora. Managing to land it in her outstretched hand is a sure sign of her favor.

If you need to refresh yourself during your travels, or perhaps to primp before an important meeting or a night out, visit Sune's faithful at the Temple of Beauty. Its marbled public baths and mirrored salons are open from before dawn to after dusk. There's no fee for these services, or for the advice and aid of the temple's many pleasant attendants, but donations are encouraged.

Two parks in the Sea Ward might also be worth your time. The Shrines to Nature, just a block away from the Tower of Luck, are resplendent gardens dedicated to nature gods like Mielikki and Silvanus. The park is closed to all except residents of the Sea Ward. Yet from beyond the iron fence that surrounds it, you can catch glimpses of the superb shrines, statues, and fountains within. The Heroes' Garden is the only green space in the city that is open to the public besides the City of the Dead, but it is tucked away so far to the north in the Sea Ward that it gets few visitors — which is a pity, since the fine statuary in this lush garden portrays many of the figures important to the city's history.

I hesitate to mention a last location in the Sea Ward, and I will not reveal where to find it, for reasons that will soon become apparent. There is a house in the Sea Ward without windows or doors. You can't see it from the street, and those who live near it will not speak of it to others. You'll know you are near it when you see blue tiles on the streets and walls leading into an alley that passes under the surrounding buildings. At night, these tiles glimmer dimly with the blue light of foxfire. More than one route leads into the Blue Alley, as this place is known, but there are precious few ways out. Most who enter don't come back. If you see blue tiles, turn around and walk away before it is too late.



Swift Justice

NORTH WARD

Nobles aplenty live in the North Ward, but the character of this ward is more peaceful than that of the Sea Ward. Though it has taverns and shops to suit a variety of tastes, the tenor of the area tends toward reserved and polite. Most streets are lined with row houses inhabited by the families of prosperous people of business, investing, and civic service. They are each wealthy enough to employ a servant or two, or they endeavor to appear as such.

For the best experience in the North Ward, go there just before dawn, buy a broadsheet, and settle in at a café with a view of the street. Watch as the ward comes quietly to life around you. At first, it will be so silent that you'll be able to hear the resident a street over who opens her sash for fresh air and clears her throat. Then the birdsong will begin, and shortly thereafter, you'll hear and then see the drays arriving with servants. These aren't the live-in staff used by noble houses, but people hired to come and work for a day. Most of them come from less affluent parts of the city, arriving with the tools of their trade and outfitted in their customary garb: launderers and cooks in white, chimney sweeps and housecleaners in black, valets and child-minders in gray, gardeners in green, and tutors in blue.

As these servants spread out to knock on doors and begin their work, the residents of the ward take their exits, parting fondly with spouses and children, their footsteps tramping along the sidewalks or taking them into rattling hire-coaches. In the span of just an hour, the North Ward comes to noisy life and then settles again into quiescence, until later in the day when the process reverses itself, as residents return from work and servants leave.

The liveliest, and perhaps the loveliest, part of the ward is the Cliffwatch. Here, the plateau upon which Waterdeep sits features cliffs so steep and high that the city wall is interrupted to either side of them. Some of the most lavish residences and most luxurious taverns and inns of Waterdeep stand along this space, boasting terraces and balconies that allow one to take in the beautiful sight of the countryside to the east. Yet you need not pay their high prices, for a public walkway along the cliff's edge offers pedestrians ample opportunity to enjoy the view.

The North Ward's colors are green and orange, and its mascot is the gentle white dove, depicted in flight. Many North Ward homes have dovecotes on their roofs, and the great flocks of the birds that circle over the city at dawn and dusk are a delight to behold.

MAJOR TEMPLES OF WATERDEEP

Deity or Deities	Temple Name	Location
All deities	Holyhands House	North Ward
All elven deities	Temple of the Seldarine	Castle Ward
Gond	House of Inspired Hands	Sea Ward
Helm	Helm's Hall	Southern Ward
Ilmater	Hospice of St. Laupsenn	North Ward
Lathander	Spires of the Morning	Castle Ward
Mielikki, Silvanus	Shrines of Nature	Sea Ward
Mystra	House of Wonder	Sea Ward
Oghma	Font of Knowledge	Castle Ward
Selûne	Tower of the Moon	Sea Ward
Sune, Sharess	Temple of Beauty	Sea Ward
Tempus	House of Heroes	Sea Ward
Tymora	Tower of Luck	Castle Ward
Tyr	Halls of Justice	Castle Ward
Umberlee	The Queenspire	Beach

CASTLE WARD

The Castle Ward is the heart and mind of Waterdeep, if not its soul. It houses the city's military forces, courts, government, and the Market — the largest market square of any city in the North. It encompasses the City Navy's docks in the Great Harbor and all of Mount Waterdeep, and it is home to six walking statues, numerous temples, and many other landmarks.

Castle Waterdeep stands above the city on a great bluff that extends out from the mountain, its towers soaring hundreds of feet into the sky. It surprises many to learn that this isn't where Waterdeep's rulers reside, nor from where the city is governed. The castle was and is a redoubt of last defense should the city be attacked, but for well over a century, the ruler of Waterdeep has occupied the Palace of Waterdeep — also known as Piergeiron's Palace, and still called that by elderly and long-lived citizens (including many elves).

Though not quite as large as the castle, the palace is far more comfortable and lavishly decorated, with many halls used by government officials, guildmasters, and nobles for meetings and court proceedings. If you have reason to be invited (not compelled, I should hope!) to meet with the Masked Lords or the Open Lord of Waterdeep, it will likely take place in the audience chamber of the palace. There, you can witness the ancient and humble throne that Ahghairon first sat upon so long ago.



The stately, clean, and well-defended Castle Ward

Many other buildings in the ward are given over to city business, including several courts for magisters and the barracks of the City Guard. So many of the ward's structures are offices and meeting halls for business owners, solicitors, publishers, and the like that the Castle Ward has the smallest resident population of all the wards.

Many landmarks of interest are found in this ward aside from the six walking statues (discussed later in this chapbook). You could hardly see them all in a day, but the following are highly recommended.

Blackstaff Tower is a squat black blot in the otherwise pretty ward. Humble though the edifice might be, looking at the place for too long can give you a queasy feeling and the sense that you are being watched — almost as if the tower itself has turned an unseen and wrathful eye upon you. Perhaps you think this fanciful. Well, go and try it yourself!

On the opposite end of the mountain, close to the Naval Harbor, stands Mirt's Mansion. Once a fortress-like and glowering tower, it has been upgraded with more delicate fashions of architecture since the return of its long-absent owner.

Mirt has quite a history with Durnan, the proprietor of the Yawning Portal. Together they descended into "the Well," as the entrance to Undermountain was known in olden days. Waterdeep used to throw criminals in the Well, leaving them to die horribly in Undermountain's dungeons. Durnan and Mirt entered the dungeons of their own free will — and not only that, but returned laden with treasures. Both used magic to extend their lives, but they eventually parted ways. Mirt kept on with a life of adventure, while Durnan built the tavern called the Yawning Portal over the Well and now, almost two centuries later, charges coin to descend into it. Not a bad way to part fools from their money!

The glorious Spires of the Morning, dedicated to Lathander, is one of Waterdeep's most beautiful temples. But it is rivaled in this ward by the Temple of the Seldarine, dedicated to all the elf gods. The journey through Mount Melody Walk, a tunnel cut through Mount Waterdeep, to New Olamn's academy of music and other arts is a wondrous daytime excursion. The Market offers a wild array of sights, smells, and sounds in which folk might lose themselves for a tenday. The Font of Knowledge is a temple to Oghma, yes, but also the city's largest public library. Titles written throughout the ages can be viewed here — under the watchful eyes of the temple's priests. In short (if I can claim this section of the enchiridion to be such), the Castle Ward offers far too many splendors to list them all here.

The Castle Ward's colors are blue and purple, and its mascot is a griffon, typically depicted in gold. These borrow colors from the city's flag and reference the Griffon Cavalry, of course. Champions for the ward often come from among the ranks of the Guard, the Navy, or the Cavalry. Although such competitors have often have the advantage in races and competitions, their crowds of rabidly cheering fans are naturally much smaller than those of other wards.

TRADES WARD

Shopping, shopping, shopping galore! Or eating, eating, eating! Or drinking, drinking, drinking! Or lavish accommodations, or fine art, or legendary parties! The Market in the Castle Ward is the largest market square in the city, but the Trades Ward is like a market town in itself — and is easily thrice the Market's size.

This ward bustles day and night with activity, both on the street and on balcony walkways that run the length of blocks and are sometimes layered five stories high. Shop signs appear to leap out from buildings, whose sides are plastered with advertisements all vying for the attention of the eye. Glove shops, shoe shops, jewelry stores, perfumeries, flower shops, cake shops, taverns, cafés, tea shops, inns, row houses, boarding schools, offices, dance academies, grocers, pottery stores, armor vendors — as long as it's not illegal, you can find it in the Trades Ward. But if you are looking for something illegal, the Trades Ward is likely the place to get that too. Do not do so too loudly, though. The City Watch has a heavy presence in this ward, in the form of both open patrols and officers working out of uniform.

As befits a place of so much business, many guilds have their halls in this ward. Of particular note is the House of Light, the hall of the Guild of Chandlers and Lamplighters. Outside the building, a wagon-sized mound of wax with hundreds of wicks is kept lit day and night, while being continually built up with adhered candles. Inside, the best works of the guild are put on display and sold, including not just candles of various colors, lamps, and chandeliers, but elaborate waxwork constructions that depict all sorts of subjects from personages of note, to dragons, to complex and abstract lattices — all represented as fantastical candles.

Magic users should be wary in the Court of the White Bull. Long ago, this plaza was a grazing area for livestock, including an albino calf that was born here. The calf's owner built the White Bull Tavern, which thrived on the spot for years and gave the area its name. You'll not find the tavern now, though. It vanished, utterly destroyed during an infamous spell battle between the archmage Thongalar the Mighty and the evil mage Shile Rauretilar and his apprentices. In the storm of magic that touched down here, Shile and his apprentices all perished and the fabric of the Weave was rent, such that Azuth, god of wizards, was forced to appear and set things right. He is said to have stitched reality and the Weave back together, but a wrinkle in the fabric remains. To this day, magic brought to bear in the Court of the White Bull sometimes goes awry, and the use of magic items and spells is forbidden in the area.

The Trades Ward uses green and purple as its colors, and its mascot is the mimic. This tradition supposedly arose because when mascots were first chosen, the Trades Ward took a chest of gold as its own — and was roundly mocked by citizens of other wards for not picking a creature. Now, every four years, the ward reveals a new object for its mascot, declaring it to be the mimic. The nature of the object is subject to much speculation and rumor until its unveiling. For months afterward, the object becomes the source of practical jokes in Waterdeep. Rock gnomes and wizards cause illusory mouths to lunge from real versions of the object, artisans craft beautiful fakes out of cake or paper that are easily crushed when assumed to be real, and so on. As of the writing of this enchiridion, the current mimic is a tankard.

SOUTHERN WARD

It is called the Southern Ward, not the South Ward. Waterdavians are peculiar about this, and if you insist on referring to it as the South Ward, expect to be corrected or thought a fool. The name derives not merely from its southerly location in the city, but from the southerners who settled in this district as the city grew. Today, the ward still hosts most of the traveling merchants who visit the city, and is made up of many enclaves, blocks, and streets primarily occupied by citizens who trace their ancestry to other realms.

One can indulge in the finest halfling food here, enjoy the best singers of Calishite music, and examine the most stunning works of dwarven crafting — but the first challenge is finding where these treats are housed. The Southern Ward has long been a district of laborers catering to travelers, so its folk have adopted the architectural custom of building homes and businesses above stables or around inn yards, near to where wagon trains are housed.

Residents of the Southern Ward take pride in their legacy as overland travelers and hardworking folk, so it should be no surprise that the ward's mascot is the mule. On their competition flags, a pugnacious mule in rampant pose stands on a field of red and white — colors said to represent the blood and tears the people of the Southern Ward have shed during their labors.

Not a landmark as such, but surely a sight that must be seen, is the Moon Sphere. This isn't a structure but an event that occurs during every full moon, when a glowing, spherical field of blue light appears in the square known as the Dancing Court. Any creatures that enter the sphere find that they can fly about inside it just by willing themselves to do so. For centuries, Waterdavians have used these supernatural events to develop a unique flying style of dance — but amateur enthusiasts aren't welcome, except on certain daylight appearances of the full moon.

Even when the full moon isn't out, the Dancing Court is worth visiting because of the adjacent festhall, the Jade Dancer. During appearances of the Moon Sphere, people sometimes daringly leap into the field of magic from the balconies of this three-story tavern, dance hall, and inn. But the festhall takes its name from a peculiar dancer within it rather than those in the court outside. The "Jade Dancer" is an eight-foot-tall jade statue of a woman that magically animates and dances for patrons — and on occasion serves as a bouncer. Elminster has informed me that despite its dexterity and seemingly fragile beauty, the Jade Dancer is as puissant as a stone golem. So enjoy the show, but don't get too rowdy.

DOCK WARD

The Dock Ward was long considered the most dangerous district in the city, but the Field Ward has since taken that title. I don't doubt the residents of the Dock Ward are glad of it, for in some respects this area has never truly deserved its bad reputation.

Yes, aside from the Field Ward, this is the area where most of Waterdeep's poor reside. Yes, it is home to some of the least literate people in the city. Yes, most of its taverns are inhabited by habitual drinkers, and far too many inns charge by the hour. But all must concede this: the residents of the Dock Ward often work the hardest while living under the harshest conditions.

Warehouses, poorhouses, and tenements dominate much of the area. Streets are steep throughout, and few have space alongside for pedestrians. Wandering through the ward can be a bewildering journey without a guide. Except in the immediate vicinity of the piers, shop signs and advertising of any kind are rare, and warehouses and other businesses often have no sign at all. You either know where you are going and have reason to be there — or you are lost, and a likely mark for pickpockets or worse.

Streetlamps don't fare well in the Dock Ward. Their candles, oils, and glass are too regularly stolen or smashed. The Guild of Chandlers and Lamplighters makes a halfhearted attempt to repair the streetlamps at the start of each season, but for most of the year, locals are forced to carry their own light when traveling these streets at night.

The colors of the Dock Ward are burgundy and orange, and its mascot is a swordfish that has always been depicted as green for reasons lost to time. The folk of the Dock Ward take competition seriously, and they frequently draft their champions from the rough-and-tumble sailors who come to the city. (Some say they draft pirates, but that is pure slander.) Frequent complaints arise that these women and men are more citizens of the sea than of the Dock Ward itself. But if they register with a magister and pay taxes, they are as welcome to compete as any long-term resident of Waterdeep.

CITY OF THE DEAD

I could write a book about the City of the Dead. It is such a fascinating place, filled with so much history and so many stories. But alas, there would be few buyers for Volo's Guide to the City of the Dead, since it would be of interest mainly to Waterdavians — and the topic is one about which they are already intimately knowledgeable.

The City of the Dead is no drab cemetery. It is a great park of grassy hills, tended flower beds, artfully placed clusters of trees and bushes, beautiful sculptures, astounding architecture, and gravel paths that wend intriguingly through it all. Long ago, Waterdavians largely abandoned the practice of burying their dead, instead entombing them in mausoleums. For centuries, the major mausoleums here have each been connected to an extradimensional space where the dead are taken, mourned, and interred.

Those who can afford it memorialize the departed with sculptures, making the City of the Dead an open-air museum that features some of the most stunning, haunting, mournful, and downright eerie statues ever crafted in marble or bronze. Nobles and wealthy merchants have competed to erect the grandest markers for their dead, leading to a wide variety of styles and concepts created by artists at the height of their skills.

One of the cemetery's most impressive attractions is the Warriors' Monument. This intricate, sixty-foot-high sculpture depicts a circle of women and men striking down trolls, orcs, hobgoblins, bugbears, and barbarians, all of which are falling backward and outward around the warriors. Above all of them, a flying griffon rider spears a skeletal knight whose breastplate bears the symbol of Myrkul, god of the dead. But this statue is also a fountain, and the wounds on these combatants gush water! Don't try to imagine it — just go see it. And see it as Waterdavians do: pack a midday feast, have a picnic, and then take a stroll through the beauty of the place.



City of the Dead

OUTSIDE THE CITY PROPER

There's more to the city of Waterdeep than just the wards within its walls. If you have need to visit the environs of the city, here's what you'll need to know.

FIELD WARD

This district was once a caravan yard between Waterdeep's two northernmost walls, kept free of settlement to serve as a killing field in times of war. As refugees from various calamities settled there after not being allowed into the city's wealthy northern neighborhoods, the area has grown up into a lawless town of its own.

Though not an official ward of the city, the Field Ward is commonly referred to as one. The Watch doesn't patrol this area, however, and many crimes go uninvestigated. The City Guard oversees the Field Ward from the walls around it, but its members get involved only when folk moving into or out of the city are threatened.

The area is a muddy mess, populated by the poorest people and those who take advantage of those folks' desperation. It has no sewer system and isn't served by the Dungswepers' Guild — a fact that will be quite evident to your nose if you venture here. I don't recommend that you spend any more time here than it takes to pass through from one gate to the next.

The Guild of Butchers operates several slaughterhouses, smokehouses, and leather-making facilities in the area — noisome operations that have been pushed out of the city proper. A word to the wise: being friendly with a burly fellow who is good with a knife is one of your best defenses in the Field Ward. The other place you might solicit aid is Endshift Tavern, a popular stop for off-duty members of the City Guard, situated on the corner of Endshift Street and the Breezeway. Though the guards might not be inclined to assist you, your status as a visitor to Waterdeep technically obliges them to help you reach the city proper in safety.

THE WONDERS OF THE WAYMOOT

The place where the High Road and the Way of the Dragon meet in the south of the city is called the Waymoot. At the center of the crossroads, a high signpost stands with hanging arrows pointing toward the harbor and each of the city gates. Created by the Watchful Order of Magists and Protectors and funded by local merchants, the signpost magically directs travelers to well-known distant locations when the names of those locations are spoken into a crystal on the post. The magic of the Waymoot writes the destination onto the proper arrow of the signpost and indicates its distance from Waterdeep in miles. Folk are thereby sent out of the harbor or the appropriate gate leading north, east, or south, depending on their destination. Unfortunately for newcomers, the Waymoot is of no use whatsoever in finding locations within Waterdeep. You will, however, find a number of enterprising individuals near the crossroads who take advantage of this fact to offer their services as city guides. Though some reputable members of this cadre will guide you true for a fair fee, plenty of citizens with nothing to lose or gain by doing so will also readily set you on the right course if you're simply polite

UNDERCLIFF

This area of rolling grassland and small wooded areas east of the city is a rural community focused on farming and animal husbandry, and which caters to travelers. It is also the site of a large and well-protected training camp for the City Guard, and a prison farm run by the City Watch (called Amendsfarm) where those convicted of minor offenses work off their debt to the city. Many gnomes and halflings live in this region, and most buildings are built to reflect their stature.

Two noble families have estates in Undercliff. The Amcathra estate is used for the housing and final training of horses bred in the town of Amphail, many of which are sold to the City Guard. The Hothemer noble house has an estate where its members conduct business in overland trade — beyond the reach of Waterdeep's auditors.

If you visit this area, I recommend the Snobeedle Orchard and Meadery, owned and run by the Snobeedle halflings. They have a delightful drinking hall and a shop sized for larger patrons, and you can pick your own fruit when it is in season.

UNDERMOUNTAIN

Tales of this legendary dungeon below Waterdeep are told well by many in the city, but I'll provide you with the basic truths here.

Beneath the plateau of Waterdeep lies the largest and deepest dungeon in the world. It sprawls out under the city, said to plunge as many as twenty levels deep. The Melairkyn dwarves first excavated the tunnels that would become Undermountain, and the drow are said to have dug their own tunnels up from below. All were claimed, altered, and expanded by the mad wizard Halaster and his apprentices — who are believed to dwell in the dungeons to this day. What drove them deep into the earth remains a mystery, but Undermountain's allure is a siren song that still draws many. If you want to see adventurers descend into the depths, or perhaps glimpse some returning with wondrous treasures, visit the Yawning Portal in the Castle Ward.

THE CITY'S SPLENDORS

A description of each of the features that cause Waterdeep to be called the City of Splendors would require a library's worth of paper. This chapbook can't hope to encompass them all, no matter its author's expertise with a quill. However, I shall endeavor to enlighten you about several sights that have not been mentioned earlier, and to expand upon some previously covered.

AMENITIES

You'll find no city on the Sword Coast or in all the North half as civilized as Waterdeep. It's not just the law of the land that makes this so, but also the comforts that life here provides.

In most other towns and cities, you'll start with an early-morning stumble on the stairs as you carry your night soil down to deposit it outside. But in Waterdeep, many buildings are connected directly to the sewers. Public facilities for those out and about can be found all around the Market and the Field of Triumph, and near the largest city squares. In places without ready access to sewers or public outhouses, members of the Dungsweepers' Guild make multiple rounds each day, collecting urine and excrement separately — for use in industry and agriculture, respectively. Take comfort that in Waterdeep, you'll always find a pot to piss in.

Also notice how clean the streets are kept. This upkeep is due in large part to the hard work of the Dungsweepers' Guild. Dungsweepers can be seen working their brooms and carts at every hour of the day — and for a few hours after dark — all over the city, removing not just animal dung but other refuse. This service is free to all, paid for by taxes rendered to the city — although an egregious amount of trash left for pickup does result in a separate bill from the guild.

Another amenity soon appreciated by visitors is Waterdeep's water system. With public fountains and wells all about the city, clean water is plentiful. Many buildings have pumps of their own to draw water from the local supply, and some even possess taps that pour out water with the twist of a knob. This convenience is made possible by the inventiveness of the Gondar, the industry of the Cellarers' and Plumbers' Guild, and the magic that Waterdeep inherited from the Illefarni elves.

Waterdeep is also a city of light. *Continual flame* spells illuminate many signs and streetlamps in the wealthier parts of the city. Elsewhere, the Guild of Chandlers and Lamplighters keeps the streets lit (excepting the Field Ward and the most dangerous areas of the Dock Ward). Not only that, but hundreds of *driftglobes* bob about the City of the Dead at night, departing to float over the rest of the city each morning. Such is not typical behavior for *driftglobes*, I assure you!

Lastly, no city in the world is as literate as Waterdeep. Oghma's priests from the Font of Knowledge offer free instruction in reading to all who desire it, and the city has over thirty publishers of broadsheets in addition to chapbook printers and book publishers. Large paper advertisements are plastered onto alley walls, and smaller ones are passed out by those hired by businesses to trumpet their services. Printed menus can be found posted in the windows of most eateries and are handed out to those who dine within. Admittedly, you'll see less reading material in the Dock Ward and the Field Ward, but this fact is notable only because of its preponderance elsewhere.

THE GRIFFON CAVALRY

Waterdeep doesn't have the fabled flying ships of Halruaa, but it does deploy an aerial defense force. Brave warriors of the City Guard light out from the Peaktop Aerie atop Mount Waterdeep, riding fearsome griffons that have been bred and trained for that purpose. Each of the riders is equipped with a *ring of feather falling* — not merely to prevent death from mishap, but to allow them to perform stunning feats of aerial acrobatics.

In both martial displays and in real battles against flying threats such as manticores, harpies, and outlaw wizards, the griffon riders actually leap off their mounts into the open air! For a breath-stealing moment, they fall like stones, closing in on their targets at incredible speed. Their opponents rarely see the death blow, distracted as they are by other mounted griffon riders. When they are past the danger, the free-falling riders then suddenly halt in the air, drifting like feathers until their griffon companions swoop in and they regain their saddles. Working in concert with one another in this fashion, members of the Griffon Cavalry can rapidly eliminate any threat to the city — and even catch the body of the offender before it hits the rooftops below.

Riders of the Griffon Cavalry are trained to stay above the rooftops, not because they fear crashing into towers and weather vanes, but because the smell of so much horseflesh in the streets below can sometimes drive their griffons into a frenzy.

Griffon Cavalry on Patrol



THE WALKING STATUES

Over a century ago, just one of these eight behemoth statues stood visible at the northern foot of Mount Waterdeep, on a bluff called Gull Leap. Ninety feet tall, it resembled a bald human staring out to sea. Later events (discussed below) caused it to be transformed into the statue known today as the Sahuagin Humbled.

When the Spellplague gripped Waterdeep in 1385 DR, six more walking statues suddenly appeared in the city, wandering to wreak havoc even as the Sahuagin Humbled remained motionless. The authorities and citizens of Waterdeep succeeded in stopping three of these new statues, breaking the Swordmaiden and the Hawk Man, and sinking the God Catcher into the street up to its waist. Then all the statues mysteriously stopped their rampage just as quickly as they had begun it. Tsarra Chaadren, the Blackstaff at the time, couldn't command them to return to their former hiding places on the Ethereal Plane. Consequently, the city repaired itself and built up around them. Much later, in 1479 DR, the eighth statue — the Griffon — emerged from the Ethereal Plane to defend Ahghairon's Tower against intrusion. It roosted there for a time before flying to its current position near Peaktop Aerie on Mount Waterdeep. Once more, this activity seemed to be outside the Blackstaff's control. Thankfully, all the walking statues have been dormant for well over a decade now, serving only as beautiful, cyclopean reminders of Waterdeep's might.

THE GOD CATCHER

This is perhaps the most famous walking statue in the city, thanks to its dramatic pose, its nearness to the Market, and the self-evident magic of its existence. The statue is of a well-muscled but impassive male human with its left leg sunk to the hip in the street, the result of a spell cast by the Blackstaff at the time of its rampage. Its left hand and right foot press against the ground as if it is trying to pull itself out. Its right arm is raised skyward, and above its open palm floats a sphere of stone. Its gaze looks up toward the sphere, and the pattern of bird droppings around its eyes gives it the appearance of weeping.

All about the statue, climbing up its chest and on its knee and shoulders, is a tenement that carries the name "the God Catcher." The tenement's landlord is Aundra Blackcloak, an unsociable sorcerer who is rarely seen in the city except when she alights from the door carved in the floating sphere, which serves as her home. On the rare occasions when she wants to meet with city folk (typically to purchase odd substances for magical purposes), she appears unannounced on balconies or rooftops after dark. Her dealings are polite, though, and she pays fair coin. She never confides in anyone or talks about her own doings — and if anyone but she has ever seen the inside of her spherical home, they've said nothing publicly about it.

THE GRIFFON

The walking statue called the Griffon is shaped like the beast for which it is named. Though it stands on all four legs, its back is fully twenty feet off the ground, making it a mount fit for a storm giant. Although it has shown itself to be capable of flight, with the granite feathers of its wings spreading like a bird's, the Griffon now merely stands in a regal pose near Peaktop Aerie atop Mount Waterdeep, looking to the southeast over the Dock Ward. Newcomers sometimes assume it to be a monument to Waterdeep's Griffon Cavalry, but Waterdavians know better.

THE SAHUAGIN HUMBLED

For years, the only visible walking statue of Waterdeep was known simply as "the walking statue." It stood at the foot of Mount Waterdeep near the head of Julthoon Street. Then, after its critical role in defending the city against an invasion of sahuagin in 1370 DR, Khelben Blackstaff reshaped the statue into a sahuagin. It now bows low toward the House of Heroes on bended knee — a gesture of obeisance to the city, and an acknowledgment of the sacrifice of all who fought for the city in that war.

THE GREAT DRUNKARD

This walking statue stopped its rampage as it approached the Market, then fell backward and sat upon a building. When it settled, its arms fell limp at its sides and its head tilted forward onto its chest, giving the impression that it had fallen asleep. The statue's huge stone battleaxe still stands nearby, its haft angled upright and its blade half buried in the cobbles. The rubble of the crushed building was long ago rebuilt into a broad stone stair (with railings and a ramp that drunkards are often rolled down) that ascends from the cobbles to the statue's lap. That lap now holds a two-story tavern also built from the rubble, called Gralkyn's Tankard. The unconscious pose of the statue and the tavern in its lap made the name of the Great Drunkard a natural fit.

THE LADY DREAMING

This fair lady caused much chaos when she was active. The statue has the appearance of a female elf, whose hair and clothing appeared to flow naturally as it walked through the city during the Spellplague. When the walking statues stopped, this one toppled onto its side, taking on the appearance of a titanic sculpture of a noble lady asleep in her garden.

THE HONORABLE KNIGHT

The Honorable Knight is a statue of a male warrior in plate armor with a shield and longsword. When the walking statues stopped, it bowed to those opposing it, straightened, sheathed its sword, and doffed its shield, setting it point down on the ground and upright by its side. It then ceased motion in this position, facing southwest toward the harbor, and looking for all the world like a castle guard standing at ease. The pose it assumed led to its naming, and it is viewed with respect by the citizens of the southerly wards.

THE HAWK MAN

This statue looks like a winged, hawk-headed being, and thus locals call it the Hawk Man. I can reveal that in fact it bears much resemblance to an aarakocra, one of the bird-people said to live in the Star Mounts in the High Forest. The statue's wings are folded tightly against its back and have never unfurled, leaving its flight capability uncertain. It was brought low during its rampage across the city, and now it tilts decidedly toward the northeast due to a missing right foot — long ago broken up for building rubble, along with its right arm. Its left arm is extended out toward the north, palm forward as if in a gesture to say, "Stop."

The body has been hollowed out and turned into a tower shared by several wealthy tenants, which is officially known as Sparaunt Tower after its owner. The statue's left hand extends over a courtyard to the north, wherein lies the entrance of a tunnel carved through the arm. Visitors and residents can ring a bell in the courtyard, whereupon a door guard acknowledges the ringer and lowers a rope ladder for tenants and expected guests (or a rope chair that is drawn up for guests who are infirm or laden with heavy items).

THE SWORDMAIDEN

This statue appears virtually identical to the Honorable Knight, except for its female form and open-faced helm. It was felled during the Spellplague after causing much chaos and slaughter. The residents of Waterdeep's North Ward funneled much of their frustrated and dismayed reaction to its rampage into dismantling the statue, parts of which can now be found all over the North Ward, either incorporated into buildings or as bits of freestanding sculpture.

The head of the Swordmaiden sits in a stand of tall trees in the center of the block of the North Ward bounded by Hassantyr's Street, Tarsar's Street, Whaelgond Way, and Ussilbran Street. The center of its jaw and mouth have been replaced by a door, which leads into the shop known as Thort's Findings. Undevvur Thort is a wizened ex-adventurer who leans on a cane (which some locals insist is more than just a cane). He lives in the small shop, whose many levels, staircases, and landings fill the hollowed-out interior of the head, and which is crammed with oddments sold to Thort by adventurers and other travelers. These items bear little placards in Thort's beautiful, flowing handwriting that identify them (or at least provide speculation as to their origin and purpose). Nobles and wealthy merchants who desire props for themed revels often rent some of Thort's wares as decoration — and many sages, alchemists, and wizards visit him regularly in search of potentially useful items.

The Sahuagin Humbled looming over the House of Heroes



INFAMOUS ALLEYS

Waterdeep has as many alleys as Baldur's Gate has cats, and each has a name and a story. Here are a few that you might wish to see — or should know to avoid.

Ruid's Stroll

This short avenue from Caravan Court to the Trollwall in the Southern Ward is haunted by the hooded ghost of the mage Ruid, whose touch causes deathly chills to those he meets on foggy nights. All attempts to banish or turn the spirit have failed. Those who brave its unearthly approach and allow Ruid to pass through them learn a secret truth about someone or something in their life — if they survive.

Brindul Alley

This is the lair of the Hand that Sings, a magical phantasm of a hand with a mouth in its palm. The hand is said to snatch valuables it fancies — especially magical ones — when it encounters them, and to occasionally attack folk in the darkness, strangling them or tripping them into fatal falls. Most often, though, it takes no notice of those who don't bother or follow it, eerily singing fragments of old Sword Coast ballads and love songs as it drifts through the night.

Manycats Alley

This passage crosses two city blocks and winds through the interior of a third, running between and (for the most part) parallel to Julthoon Street and Traders' Way in the North Ward. It is, unsurprisingly, home to many cats that feed on scraps from the surrounding butchers' shops, but it is also known for the many carved stone heads of people and animals that adorn the alley's buildings. Individuals who have walked the alley alone report that some of the heads whispered cryptic messages to them.

Gondwatch Lane

Found at the southern entrance to the House of Inspired Hands in the Sea Ward, this alley serves as the testing ground for inventions considered too dangerous to operate inside the temple. The locals are generally unconcerned about the risks, though, and stand watching while food vendors circulate among them.

Pharra's Alley

This alley in the Sea Ward is named after the first leader of the House of Wonder, but is more infamous for its Circle of Skulls. This infrequent and unpredictable haunting takes the form of seven floating skulls, which hover in a circle and argue with one another in whispered tones about events in the city. If they are interrupted, their reaction reportedly varies from being helpful to engaging in murderous spell-slinging.

Three Daggers Alley

This alley in the Dock Ward suffers from a magical curse that causes three daggers to appear out of thin air and attack passersby. The daggers swoop and fly about, making multiple attempts at murder before vanishing again. This magical effect, the result of a spell cast by a long-dead wizard, has resisted all attempts to dispel it. Some locals boast of how many times they've crossed the alley and lived to tell of it, but the appearance of the daggers is entirely a matter of chance, and unpredictable. So take my advice and don't test Tymora's favor.

CITY CELEBRATIONS

At many times of year, hardly a tenday can pass in Waterdeep without the staging of some rite, race, or rousing ceremony of civic pride. Here I briefly summarize the most widely celebrated events on the calendar, from the first of Hammer to the last of Nightal.

HAMMER 1: WINTERSHIELD

Marking the start of the new year, this observance is a widely recognized day off work, when folk sip warmed ciders and broths (often laced with herbs for health and to bring on visions) and stay inside. They tell tales of what interested them or was important in the year just done, and discuss what they intend to do or should deal with — or things that everyone “should keep a hawk’s clear eye on” — in the year ahead.

Such talk inevitably leads to discussions of politics, wars, and the intentions of rulers. Maps are usually consulted, and it’s widely considered lucky to possess and examine a map on Wintershield. Map sales are brisk in the tenday preceding this holiday.

ALTURIAK 14: THE GRAND REVEL

Led by the clergy of Sune, Sharess, and Lliira, the Grand Revel is a day of dancing, music, and the consumption of sweet treats of all kinds, from chocolate to red firemint candies. Although some of the dancing is wanton and performed for show, large-scale ring dances in the street for all ages are also popular. All the dancing ends at dusk, after which bards and minstrels perform at “love feasts” for families. Couples — or those desiring to become couples — slip away together to kiss, exchange promises, and trade small tokens of affection (often rings blessed by clergy with prayers of faithfulness). Even if you have no paramour, indulge a little in the dance and food of this fine tradition. The night might be cold, but your heart will be warmed.

CHES 1: RHYESTERTIDE

This holiday is named in honor of Lathander’s first prophet, Rhyester, a young blind boy who was cured of that blindness by the dawn’s light on this day more than seven centuries ago. That holy event occurred in the vicinity of Silverymoon, but Lathander has long had a much larger temple in Waterdeep, and a following to match. Each of the faithful dons bright garb of sunrise hues and keeps one eye covered until the next dawn in honor of Rhyester. If you want to feel like a local, catch the eye of any celebrant you see and wink. Fine friendships have grown from far less.

CHES 19: FEY DAY

The veil between this world and the faerie realm of the Feywild is thought to be weak on this day. Though this phenomenon provokes caution in rural areas (with folk avoiding woodlands, putting offerings of food on doorsteps, and the like), it is an occasion of much drinking, singing, and dancing in Waterdeep. The wealthy host elaborate masked balls, while poorer folk don costumes of their own make and travel door to door, gaining brief entry into the celebrations in exchange for performing a song or a short play.

All adopt the guises of fey beings and the supposed rulers of the Feywild, such as Queen Titania, Oberon, and Hyrsam, the Prince of Fools. Those inclined to remain sullen in the face of such frivolity had best stay home, for celebrants do their utmost to evoke a smile from those they meet.

CHES 21–30: FLEETSWAKE

This festival celebrates the sea, maritime trade, and the gods of the sea, navigation, and weather. It spans the last tenday of Ches, and includes a series of boat races, the Shipwrights’ Ball at the Shipwrights’ House, and guild-sponsored galas at the Copper Cup festhall. According to custom, the winners of the various competitions don’t keep their trophies and earnings, but deliver them to the priests of Umberlee at the Queenspire, her temple on the beach by the east entrance to the Great Harbor, at the conclusion of the festival.

The last two days of Fleetswake are the occasion of the Fair Seas Festival. During this time, there is much feasting on seafood, the harbor is strewn with flower petals, and City Guards go from tavern to tavern collecting offerings for Umberlee. Collection boxes also appear at large festival gatherings. Upon sunset of the final day, the collected coin is placed in chests and dumped into the deepest part of the harbor.

This festival has existed in a number of forms since the first trade-meets occurred here more than two millennia ago, and an uncountable amount of wealth remains sunken in what has long been known as Umberlee’s Cache. The area is closely watched by merfolk guardians, whose standing orders are to kill anyone attempting to disturb it. Rumors abound that the chests have magical protections; one story tells of thieves who stole some of the collection years ago and tried to leave the city under false pretenses, only to see a squall spring up as soon as their ship left the harbor. A huge wave shaped like a hand swept the thieves overboard, but spared the ship and its crew.

TARSAHK 1–10: WAUKEENTIDE

This festival has long gathered a number of older holidays under one name, stretching those celebrations into a holiday season that lasts a tenday. Among the rituals in homage to the goddess of wealth and trade are these:

Caravance (Tarsahk 1). This gift-giving holiday commemorates the traditional arrival of the first caravans of the season into the city. Many parents hide gifts for their offspring in their homes, telling the children that they were left by Old Carvas — a mythical peddler who arrived with the first caravan to reach Waterdeep, his wagon loaded down with toys for children to enjoy.

Goldenight (Tarsahk 5). This festival celebrates coin and gold, with many businesses staying open all night, offering midnight sales and other promotions. Some celebrants and customers decorate themselves with gold dust and wear coins as jewelry.

Guildsmeet (Tarsahk 7). On this holiday, guild members gather in their halls for the announcement of new policies and a celebration of business concluded for the year. These gatherings culminate in a gala festival and dance sponsored by several guilds, which lasts from dusk till dawn and overruns the Market, the Cynosure, the Field of Triumph, and all areas in between.

Leiruin (Tarsahk 10). In times long past, Waukeen caught Leira, the goddess of illusions and deception, attempting to cheat her in a deal, and buried her under a mountain of molten gold as punishment. A commemoration of that event, Leiruin is the day for guild members to pay their annual dues and for guildmasters to meet with the Lords of Waterdeep and renew their charters for another year.

MIRTUL 6–9: THE PLOWING AND RUNNING

Rural areas around the city observe this holiday in the traditional sense of shared activities of plowing fields and moving (or “running”) livestock. But within the city, the holiday is celebrated with a series of races. Foot, horse, and chariot races are run through courses in each ward, and the winners from each ward compete at the Field of Triumph. If you really want to see the wards come to life, this is the time. Pick your favorite, wear its colors, and cheer alongside its residents. Better yet, if you’re of an adventuresome bent, register in your favored ward and compete! Who knows? Your name or visage might soon have a place in the House of Heroes.

KYTHORN 1: TROLLTIDE

On this day commemorating Waterdeep’s victory in the Second Trollwar, children run through the city acting like trolls, banging on doors and growling, from highsun till dusk. Home and shop owners are expected to give the children candy, fruits, or small items. Those who give no treat can expect to become the target of a trick at sundown. This mischief typically takes the form of “troll scratchings” at doors and windows. Those with more malicious intent sing screechingly in the wee hours, and hurl raw eggs at windows, signs, and the heads of those who try to stop them. Have some candy on hand or some sweet rolls, and all will be calm where you live.

KYTHORN 14: GUILDHALL DAY

This day is a time of trade fairs. Most shops are closed, and street sales are suspended for all but walking food peddlers. Guildhall Day celebrates the fruits of everyone’s labor with revelations of new products, innovations, fashions, and signage extolling the extent and quality of guild members’ services and wares. These offerings usually take the form of glittering displays, but guilds sometimes also sponsor brief plays or other hired entertainments (jugglers, singers, magic shows put on by hedge wizards and professional raconteurs) at which prizes or free samples are distributed. Many guilds try to recruit during this time. Guildhall Day is an excellent time to browse the city’s merchandise — and it doesn’t matter if you can’t afford what you see, because you can’t buy it that day anyway.

KYTHORN 20: DRAGONDOWN

This day in Kythorn is celebrated with bonfires and rituals to “tame” or “drive down” dragons. In Waterdeep, the celebrations take the form of parades that center around effigies built of wood and cloth and filled with straw. Each effigy is named and has a traditional depiction, for it represents one of a handful of dragons the city has faced in its history. After being paraded to a square near where the dragon was defeated or driven off, the enormous effigy is burned.

The height of the celebration comes when the effigy of Kistarianth the Red is burned on the slopes of Mount Waterdeep. A dracolich version of Kistarianth is then carried up the slopes and burned as well. These proceedings symbolize the defeat of Kistarianth first by the paladin Athar, and again decades later by his son, Piergeiron. Tradition dictates that the winners of the races run during the Plowing and Running take the role of the dragons’ slayers, with the champion of the chariot race representing Athar and the champion of the horse race playing Piergeiron.

FLAMERULE 1: FOUNDERS’ DAY

This day commemorates the birth of the city. The Field of Triumph is the site of illusory displays that chronicle the history of Waterdeep, as well as martial exhibitions by the Guard and other worthies. Many festhalls sponsor Founders’ Day costume contests, with prizes going to those who wear the best recreations of the garb of historical personages.

Once banned as frivolous and distracting, the practice of veiling Castle Waterdeep with an illusion has been reinstated. Several mages come together to produce the effect, which seemingly transforms the castle into the ancient log fortress of Nimoar. The illusion typically lasts from midday to sunset (unless someone has the audacity and magical might to dispel it) and is regarded as a stunning work of magical art.

FLAMERULE 3–5: SORNYN

Sornyn is a festival of both Waukeen and Lathander, and is used for planning business, making treaties and agreements, and receiving envoys from unknown lands and traditional foes. Much wine is drunk over this three-day occasion when, as the saying goes, “My enemy is like family to me.” If you are a newcomer to the city, this time is an excellent opportunity for you to engage with new partners in business or to gain financial support for some endeavor. My agreement to write Volo’s Guide to Waterdeep was signed on a warm Sornyn evening many years ago, so who knows where your own initiative will take you?

FLAMERULE 7: LLIIRA'S NIGHT

Originally a celebration held only in Waterdeep, this holiday has since spread up and down the Sword Coast. It has received a recent boost in popularity from the custom started in Baldur's Gate of lighting celebratory smokepowder fireworks — all purchased from Felogyr's Fireworks of that city, and utilized only by the City Guard, of course. This nightlong festival honors the Lady of Joy with dances and balls throughout the city. Pink beverages, ranging from healthy juices to deadly strong intoxicants, are imbibed. The boom and crackle of smokepowder explosions go off all night long, so you might as well stay up with the locals and enjoy the show.

ELEASIS 1: AHGHAIRON'S DAY

Many small rituals are held throughout this day, dedicated to honoring the first Open Lord. The Lords of Waterdeep toast Ahghairon and the Watchful Order, and guildmasters toast the Lords in Ahghairon's name. Commoners leave violets (Ahghairon's favorite flower) around Ahghairon's Tower, on his statue in the City of the Dead, and atop the altars of the House of Wonder. Bards perform songs in honor of the wizard all over the city. The Open Lord visits taverns and inns throughout Waterdeep to wish the people well — giving short speeches, offering toasts to Ahghairon's memory, buying rounds of drinks, or paying for meals or accommodation. Needless to say, establishments of those sorts are generally full throughout the day.

ELEINT 21: BRIGHTSWORDS

On this day, the City Guard, the City Navy, and the City Watch — all in glittering array — conduct parades, give demonstrations of martial skill, and stage mock battles. Those desiring to join their ranks are given a chance to demonstrate their prowess, usually with wooden practice weapons in contests against veteran soldiers. Makers and vendors of weapons sell their wares openly in the markets, experts who can hurl or juggle weapons show off their skills, and the wards compete in wrestling and boxing matches. The most anticipated part of the day is when horses are cleared from the Field of Triumph and the surrounding streets so that the Griffon Cavalry can perform aerial displays over the crowds in the stadium. Members of the Watchful Order present the cavalry with illusory foes to fight, allowing the griffon riders to engage in thrilling battles as the people watch.

MARPENOTH 3: DAY OF WONDERS

The imaginative inventions of the Gondar are revealed on this day and paraded through the city. These devices range from something as humble as new cabinet hinges to massive mechanical constructs that walk or roll about. Failure is the paramour of invention, though, meaning it is a rare year when there isn't some notable disruption of the celebration. The flying chair of Marchell was one such recent oddity — a device that worked marvelously on the way up but was incapable of descending. Marchell was rescued by the Griffon Cavalry, but his flying chair drifted away and was never seen again.

Day of Wonders



MARPENOTH 7: STONESHAR

Stoneshar is an all-faiths day during which folk strive not to be idle. Even children at play are encouraged to dig holes, build sand castles, or construct crude models.

Waterdavians consider Stoneshar the best day of the year to begin construction of a building, either by digging out a cellar or laying a foundation. The common wisdom is that folk who undertake new projects on Stoneshar can expect blessings upon their works in the coming year, whereas individuals who do nothing constructive on this day can expect all manner of misfortune to rain down on them in the year ahead.

MARPENOTH 10: REIGN OF MISRULE

Swift on the heels of Stoneshar comes the Reign of Misrule. This day honors Beshaba, goddess of misfortune. People of the city are expected to break trust, belie oaths, and disobey the normal order — as long as no laws are actually broken and no rift is made that can't be later bridged. During the Reign of Misrule, nobles serve meals to their servants, children take control of schools, priests give worship to their god's foes, and any who wish to may participate in a guild's trade. Pranks are played by and on many, from simple tricks to those requiring elaborate planning. Sundown brings an end to the festivities, and most folk spend much of the night cleaning and reordering things for the following day. Many visitors decline to participate, but doing so often inspires misfortune rather than avoiding it. For fear of catching the bad luck of cynics, citizens do their best to avoid talking to anyone known to not have played along, or dealing with them in any way until Gods' Day.

MARPENOTH 15: GODS' DAY

This holiday observes the anniversary of the end of the Godswar in 1358 DR, when the gods of Faerûn returned to the heavens. Private shrines are brought out into the open, and many people wear holy symbols of their favored deities. A Gods' Day tradition in Waterdeep strictly limits the use of magic, in remembrance of the wild magic wrought during the Time of Troubles. Though not outlawed fully, spellcasting is allowable only in self-defense or in cases of extreme need.

At night, this holiday becomes solemn and serious, as many Waterdavians offer prayers in thanks for the lives they have under their gods. The Griffon Cavalry sets up an immense bonfire at the peak of Mount Waterdeep, honoring the fallen and the risen gods Myrkul, Cyric, Kelemvor, Mystra, Helm, and Ao who appeared here. In thanks for their defense during Myrkul's invasion and the resulting fires that raged through the Southern, Dock, and Castle Wards, Gods' Day is also a semiofficial "Be Kind to the Guard and Watch Day" in Waterdeep. Feel free to participate by handing out small gifts and kind words, but be aware that any gift of greater value than a few nibs might be interpreted as a bribe.

MARPENOTH 30: LIAR'S NIGHT

This holy day pays tribute to Leira and Mask. To placate those deities and ward away their attention, folk of all walks of life don masks and costumes (magical or mundane) to disguise themselves and play at being other than what they are. Commonly seen mask styles include the black mask symbol of Mask and the mirror face of the priests of Leira. But there are no bounds on the disguise you don, and the more elaborate and outlandish it is, the more celebrated the wearer.

The festivities begin in the evening, when people place candles in hollowed-out gourds or pumpkins carved with faces. Each pumpkin represents a person donning a mask, while the light inside represents the truth of the soul. For as long as the candle remains lit, lies told and embarrassing things done don't sully a person's reputation, so celebrations often descend briefly into anarchic hedonism.

Misfortune is said to come to anyone who returns to their pumpkin after celebrating to find it unlit, so buy a candle of good quality and put your gourd beyond reach of the wind. Intentionally blowing out someone else's candle or smashing someone else's pumpkin is taboo, and risks the wrath of both gods — yet it does occur.

Tricks and pranks of all kinds are common on this night, and folk expect lies and foolishness. Pickpockets are rife on this day, so few carry much coin with them, having secreted it away somewhere the previous evening. Instead, people fill their pockets and belt pouches with candies. Traditionally, a pickpocket is meant to take the candy and leave a token in return (a tiny toy, a colorful paper folded into a shape, or the like), but this has changed over the years into adults exchanging candies among themselves and simply giving candy to children who ask for it.

By custom, no deals are made nor contracts signed on Liar's Night, because no one trusts that parties will abide by them. Illusionists and stage magicians (whether through magical or practical abilities) make the rounds to entertain private parties (having been paid in advance the previous day) or to perform in public spaces, in the hopes that a good show will earn them a meal, and perhaps a place at a private party in the future.

UKTAR: SELÛNE'S HALLOWING

On whatever night in Uktar the moon is fullest, Waterdavians celebrate Selûne's Hallowing. The goddess is the focus of worship throughout the full phase, of course, but the major ceremony on this night is a parade of worshipers leaving the House of the Moon at moonrise and moving down to the harbor, where the high priestess wields the Wand of the Four Moons in a ceremony blessing all navigators. This holy relic is said to be the mace wielded by Selûne in her first battle against Shar, and again in a fight with her sister during the Time of Troubles. It miraculously appeared in Waterdeep after the Godswar, and has since been the focus of many divine signs. You can view it in the House of the Moon at other times of the year, but only from a well-guarded distance.

If you're lucky, you might see the Wand of the Four Moons weep. Droplets said to be the tears of Selûne manifest on the mace from time to time, and are collected by the priestesses for use in potions that can heal, cure lycanthropy, and be used as holy water.

UKTAR 20: LAST SHEAF

Sometimes called "The Small Feast," this day of residential feasting is held in celebration of the year's bounty. Small gifts (traditionally hand kegs of ale, jars of preserves, or smoked fish and meats) are exchanged among neighbors, and "last letters" are gathered for carriage by ship captains and caravan merchants — so called because they are the last to leave the city before travel becomes difficult. Of Waterdeep's many celebrations, this one is perhaps the most relaxed and relaxing. Plan to spend a little extra on good food and enjoy a meal with those nearest you, be they dearest hearts or the folk across the hall in the inn.

Nightal 11: Howldown In honor of Malar, members of the City Guard leave the city in groups on this day to hunt down known threats to farmers and travelers, including brigands, wolves, owlbears, ogres, and trolls that haunt the roads and wilderness. These hunts typically last no longer than a tenday. During the same span of time, the City Watch engages in its own rigorous hunt for malefactors within the city walls. If you've any reason to doubt your standing in the eyes of the law, avoid Waterdeep for at least a tenday after Howldown.

With no real hunting to do of their own, the children of Waterdeep spend Howldown engaging in mock hunts of adults dressed up as monsters, and play at the killing of these predators.

Nightal 20: Simril When dusk comes on this day, folk go outside to locate particular stars that were lucky for their ancestors, or that were associated with their own births. They then attempt to stay up through the night, celebrating outside with bonfires, song, and warmed drinks. Cloudy nights often draw larger crowds than clear ones, since glimpsing your star through the haze is thought to be a blessing from Tymora. Inside buildings, service folk keep roaring fires and engage in making food to keep celebrants fed throughout the long night and into morning of the next day. If you have no particular star of your own, you'll find many vendors of star maps willing to divine which is yours — based upon your place and date of birth — and to point you in the right direction for a shard or two.

PARTING WORDS

Well, gentle readers, you've reached the end of my enchiridion. If you've yet to arrive in the city, its splendors await you. If you're reading this within its walls, please set aside this chapbook to experience the city. You might even see an extraordinarily handsome author hard at work reviewing one of Waterdeep's drinking establishments. If you do so, I greet you in advance: "Well met! Autographs cost seven nibs."