

DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS LANKHMAR

GRAVE MATTERS

#9: A LEVEL 2 ADVENTURE
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AUTHORIZED BY THE
ESTATE OF FRITZ LEIBER



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A LEVEL 2
ADVENTURE

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the fantastic world of Nehwon, home to the crime-ridden metropolis of Lankhmar, the City of the Black Toga, and residence of its questionable heroes, Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser! Based on the legendary works of Fritz Leiber, DCC Lankhmar allows judges and players to experience their own adventures in Nehwon, ones to rival the tales of Fafhrd and Gray Mouser. If you've ever dreamed of dueling in the foggy alleys behind Cheap Street, negotiating with supernatural mentors for scraps of forgotten lore, or merely trying to survive one more night in the criminal underworld, DCC Lankhmar is for you!

Grave Matters in Lankhmar is a short adventure for DCC Lankhmar designed for a group of two to three 2nd-level PCs. Details are provided for scaling the adventure to accommodate larger groups as well. In the course of the adventure, the characters confront a small gang of smugglers operating out of an embalmer's business in one of Lankhmar's run-down neighborhoods. The PCs must infiltrate the smugglers' base of operations to recover a stolen sarcophagus containing an Overlord's mummy before it vanishes from the city limits.

While a plot and goal is provided for this adventure, the embalming house and the Grave Men smuggling ring can be utilized in a more free-form manner by the judge. The group and their hideout make the perfect adversaries the next time the PCs need to recover a stolen item of the judge's devising or their own choosing. Simply replace the Overlord's sarcophagus with the required item. Likewise, the Grave Men provide a useful service should the PCs need to move things in and out of the city unobserved and may become allies instead of opponents depending on the campaign and the party's actions.

BACKGROUND

Hrazamix Twelve-Fingers was a legendary thief in his day, a contender for the title of Guild Master according to some. It was said there was nothing Hrazamix couldn't steal. His greatest theft was the gilded sarcophagus of Overlord Quintifrax V, pilfered from the Crypt of Overlords beneath the Rainbow Palace. Hrazamix has long retired from the Thieves' Guild, allowed to depart with honors and respect due to his long career and his reputation for secrecy. The mummified body of the Overlord remained in his possession, a trophy to his skill and renown.

Last night, however, one of Hrazamix's many enemies sent freelance thieves to steal the mummy from Hrazamix's home. This enemy, Gorven of Tovilyis, intends to decorate his own home with the Overlord's corpse. The theft was also meant as a blow to the old thief's pride, and succeeded perfectly. The thieves left a mocking note in the sarcophagus' place, informing Hrazamix exactly who is responsible. Deprived of his favorite trophy and incensed that someone could steal it from his very home, Hrazamix wants the mummy back. He called in some favors and tracked the freelancers back to their lair, only to discover they had already delivered the purloined corpse into the hands of smugglers hired to deliver the sarcophagus outside of the city proper.

Unfortunately, this puts the former thief in a hard position. He knows the smugglers, a band called the Grave Men, has ties to the Thieves' Guild, and that a blow against them would be a blow against his former brethren. Calling in the city watch is also impossible, as they would confiscate the Overlord's sarcophagus and corpse, depriving Hrazamix of his trophy. What else is there to do but find some desperate adventurers to act on his behalf? With no known ties to himself, if these hired agents get captured, he has nothing to lose and a valuable sarcophagus to gain...

STARTING THE ADVENTURE



he PCs are approached by one of Hrazamix's servants, an elderly former member of the Slayers' Brotherhood named Faulkel. Despite approaching seventy winters of age, Faulkel is still spry and has a muscled body equal to a warrior half his age. Faulkel quickly gets down to business:

"I serve an important man who wishes to remain nameless and unknown. He nevertheless has immense wealth and commands respect in certain shadowy parts of our smoke-blighted city. Something of his has been stolen and is scheduled to be smuggled from the city within the next two days. He wants that something recovered before it can leave Lankhmar. If someone – say, a group of bravos such as yourselves – were to accomplish that, the reward would be [100 gold rilk per PC in the party]. Would you know anyone interested in performing such a task?"

Assuming the PCs agree to handle the task, Faulkel provides them with the following information:

- The smugglers use an embalmer's business in the Carousing Quarter as a front. They're known as the Grave Men and smuggle contraband in and out of the city using their funeral wagon, death cart, and even corpses.
- The object is a large, ancient sarcophagus crafted from black hardwood and bearing silver adornments. It contains a mummified corpse of great age. Neither the corpse nor the sarcophagus bear any form of enchantment or curse.
- The sarcophagus and corpse must be recovered before it leaves the city and the attention of the city watch cannot be aroused. These factors mean that the sarcophagus must be removed from the smugglers' base of operations before it leaves the premises.
- Stealth is advocated over outright violence. If violence is necessary, the employer would like fatalities kept to a minimum. Succeeding in retrieving the sarcophagus and the corpse without severely impacting the smuggling ring's ability to continue operations will result in an additional 100 gold rilk bonus to each party member.
- Once obtained, the sarcophagus should be brought to the Plaza of Dark Delights at the last tolling of the Great Bell of Aarth (about 10:00 PM).
- The party can utilize any means or plans to obtain the sarcophagus but no further aid or resources will be forthcoming. The sarcophagus must be retrieved by tomorrow night at the latest.

As a token of good will, Faulkel provides the PCs with 50 gold rilk as a down payment, hinting that accepting the money and failing to fulfill their obligations would be a poor decision. He then departs, leaving the party to pursue their own plans.

THE GRAVE MEN

The Grave Men are a smuggling ring that transports illicit or heavily-taxed goods in and out of the city. They move contraband daily, operating brazenly under the noses of the Lankhmar's city watch thanks to a cunning deception: the

Grave Men's front is a low-end embalmer's business that ostensibly serves Lankhmar's less fortunate residents.

Each day, the business' death carts and funeral wagons leave and return through the End Gate (a special civic stipulation allows funeral conveyances access to this otherwise wagon-restricted entrance). Hidden inside these vehicles are secret compartments, for the purpose of bearing contraband. The Grave Men then deliver or receive contraband in one of the many graveyards located outside the city walls. A healthy percentage goes to the Thieves' Guild, who sanctions the smuggling ring's operations and makes use of their services on a regular basis, free of charge.

THE EMBALMING HOUSE

The Grave Men bought out the embalming business' original owner a decade ago and have modified the building to meet their specialized needs. The smugglers still employ a number of actual embalmers, grave-diggers, and other practitioners of the funeral arts to maintain the ring's front. These employees are either unaware of the dealings that go on or are paid well enough to keep silent.

The business is a two-story wooden building situated on the corner of Cheap Street and Worm Court. It has a sharply-pitched roof covered with old slate tiles. Stout iron bars cover the building's first floor windows. A single door at the front of the building leads to the business' offices and meeting rooms where employees consult with grieving clients. A roofed-over and enclosed courtyard at the rear of the building is where the business' death cart and funeral wagons enter to collect their macabre cargo and illegal goods. A single weatherworn placard hangs on chains from a post above the front entrance. Written on the placard is "Brevak's Embalming and Funeral Arts."

GENERAL BUILDING FEATURES

The building is a drafty, timber and stucco structure. It has two stories, a large attic beneath a sharply-pitched roof, and a secret cellar. During daylight hours, the interior is well-lit, but at night only areas currently occupied are illuminated with thick candles and oil lamps. The entire building stinks of brine solution, decay, dust, and death.

Windows: The first-floor windows are barred and prevent even a child from squeezing through. Bending the bars requires a DC 20 Strength check. The bars can also be sawed through or chipped free from their housing, but doing so takes two turns and the appropriate tools. There is a 75% chance that the smugglers hear the noise and send 1d4 gang members to investigate. The second-floor windows are not barred but are covered by shutters during the evening. A DC 12 Strength check can break them open but have a 25% chance of attracting attention as above.

Locks: There are a number of locked doors and containers inside the building. All require either the appropriate key or a DC 10 Pick Lock check to open.

Employees: The embalming business employs six full-time

THE EMBALMING HOUSE



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