

HIGH CITY

BY

NIGHT

A RAGING SWAN PRESS MINI-EVENTURE



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HIGH CITY BY NIGHT

Languard is the Duchy of Ashlar's capital city. It is a vibrant, dynamic place full of opportunities, complications and adventures. So often, though, characters moving about the city experience none of this rich flavour—they simply arrive at their destination. Use the lists herein to add depth and flavour to your characters' exploits in Languard.

Designed specifically for you, the busy GM, this supplement enables you to effortlessly bring your characters' next urban adventure to life. This supplement is designed for use with *City Backdrop: Languard*, but can easily be used with virtually any town or city.

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WHAT'S A MINI-EVENTURE?

A mini-eventure is akin to a normal encounter, but does not (normally) feature violence or physical challenges. Instead, a mini-eventure focuses on the use of social skills and role-play to resolve the challenges, or events, therein. Most mini-eventures take place in an urban locale. Mini-eventures are an excellent change of pace and can be used as filler between adventures or as situations in which characters who have invested in social skills can shine. They are also perfect for players who enjoy role-playing.

USING THIS MINI-EVENTURE

This supplement provides everything you need to run a short, flavoursome eventure.

Use the lists herein to add depth and flavour to the characters' exploration of Languard. Use the entries as nothing more than local colour or as springboards to encounters, side quests or even full adventures. You can use this mini-eventure repeatedly, as long as you keep track of which entries you have previously used. Of course, some of the listed NPCs and locales could become staples of your campaign. Be sure to note the location of locales on your GM's city map and develop any your characters seem particularly interested in visiting again.

You can either plan events ahead of time or just "wing" the whole mini-eventure using the tables herein to facilitate play.



HIGH CITY

Set upon the Svart's northern bank, High City rises above the stink and muck of the rest of Languard by dint of a series of bluffs rising from the river's waters. Here dwell the great and the good (or perhaps just the wealthy) of Languard.

In High City, the streets are cleaner and broader, the houses are of stone and slate, and the folk are wealthier and healthier. The concentration of so much wealth and power should attract thieves and other ne'er-do-wells. However, given the large numbers of men-at-arms, bodyguards and other armed personages serving the folk dwelling here, it is a brave, stupid or superlatively skilled burglar who works in High City.

All Ashlar's noble families maintain townhouses in High City for when family members visit the city on business (or pleasure). Such places are staffed permanently by trusted servants and a small garrison of men-at-arms to discourage theft.

HIGH CITY BY NIGHT

At night, most of High City's shops and workshops close—although most will stay open if a client is wealthy enough. High City features many fine inns, taverns and eateries and most do a roaring trade once the sun goes down and the day's business is done.

FOLK OUT & ABOUT

While the characters are out and about they may encounter one or more folk of interest.

1. **Saara Otava** (N female human) hurries to meet her client—a wealthy, married merchant who tires of his wife. She wears a dark-hued cowled cloak. Beautiful, and in a hurry, she comes across as arrogant, but is really just—literally—running late. Saara has debts and desperately needs the fee from this assignation to meet them.
2. **Ukko Tammi** (LN male human fighter 3) wanders High City looking for his friends. Dressed scruffily in ill-fitting studded leather armour, he sticks out from the crowd. Friendly, but getting increasingly lost, he is looking for the Gold Cockatrice tavern. He asks the characters for directions, and if he discovers they are adventurers invites them for a drink.
3. **Yrjö Talvikki** (CN male human thief 3) sees himself as a lover not a fighter, when it comes to burglary and theft. Devastatingly charming, he ingratiates himself with a wealthy person before robbing them blind. Yrjö has an impressive tolerance for alcohol and often drinks his marks under the table before liberating them from their cumbersome wealth.
4. **Huaira Azakiarn** (N female half-elf wizard 5) seeks lodgings for the night. A snob and self-proclaimed food expert she will only stay and eat at the finest place in Languard. If the characters seem like the right sort, she asks them for their recommendations. If they seem to be rough and ready, she pointedly ignore them. Huaira is well-traveled, and an engaging conversationalist—if the person is worth her time.

5. **Suni Miela** (NE male human fighter 3) stalks the street in a foul mood. He has just been rejected by the lady he loves—she has discovered what an odious fellow he is—and he is looking for a drink. Suni is a charismatic conman dressed like a wealthy merchant. If the characters seem gullible he latches onto them—eventually asking them to invest in his business.
6. **Ventla Koveri** (LG female human paladin 1) breathlessly revels in all High City has to offer. Newly arrived from Tor Abbey she is giddy with excitement—she has never been in a city before—and seeks to experience everything the city has to offer. Her paladinhood could be in jeopardy, if she gets carried away. She introduces herself to any obvious paladin or good-aligned cleric in the group.

LOCALES OF INTEREST

High City features many notable and not-so-notable locales such as shops, workshops, private homes and the like.

1. **The Velvet Pillow:** Newly opened—and destined to shortly shut as vested interests work against the establishment—the Velvet Pillow is a high class brothel. Open at all hours, the nondescript building sees a steady trickle of wealthy clients. Two liveried guards wearing polished breastplates flank the doorway. They only admit “the right sort”.
2. **The Crystal Bottle:** Exclusively serving fine wine and expensive spirits, this sumptuous private tavern features many snug rooms perfect for discrete meetings. The Crystal Bottle operates a membership scheme; only those paying the 200 gp a year fees may drink here (although members may invite correctly attired guests inside). A network of secret passages riddles the inn and allow the duke's agents to spy on any supposedly private meetings held therein.
3. **Tapatora's:** This purveyor of fine clothes has operated from the same building for almost 300 year. The staff here are stuffy, pretentious and snobs. However, they tailor exceptional clothes for both men and women. For noble or particularly wealthy, clients they open late for private fittings. The prices at Tapatora's are outrageous.
4. **Tiaras and Torcs:** Magical lights blaze through the night from the windows of this fine jewellers. The lights show not only a selection of the jewellery available within, but the half-score armed warriors patrolling the premise. The shop is rumoured to enjoy magical protections.
5. **Katri Mieho's House:** Katri Mieho (LN middle-aged female fighter 5) serves as a broker between her clients and their adventurous hirelings. She has many contacts throughout the city. Wealthy clients desiring privacy, but needing the services of adventuring groups, hire her as an intermediary. Consequently, she often receives groups of visitors after dark.
6. **Montaja's Ironworks:** Established a century ago by a devout follower of Abarin (N greater god of industry and artifice) this large, semi-fortified building holds a ducal warrant for arms and armour. Its apprentices forge gear for Castle Languard's garrison while its master armourers and weaponsmiths craft exceptional weapons for Ashlar's nobility. Specialist workers currently work on Black Fire—the duke's new cannon.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

While the characters are out and about, one or more things from the list below may occur.

1. **Merchant Abroad:** A richly dressed woman—attended by a servant and two armed, vigilant bodyguards—imperiously walks the street. The woman exudes wealth and privilege.
2. **The Watch:** An eight-strong patrol of the watch marches along the street. They are vigilant, but mainly here to deter petty crimes—muggings, burglary and the like. Each watchman carries a whistle to summon reinforcements, in the event of serious trouble.
3. **Manure Shoveler:** Two men shovel horse manure into a nearby cart. They work quickly and industriously. The two could be nothing more than honest workers or they could be something more. Laukkanen's Collectors (location L7 on the City of Languard map) uses street cleaning as a cover to move stolen goods around the city; the two workers could be on their way to meet a wealthy client.
4. **Careless Riders:** Two men riding beautiful destriers canter along the street. The two wear fine suits of studded leather armour and their horses are similarly barded. The two are in high spirits—they have enjoyed their ride—and are clearly not paying much attention to pedestrians.
5. **Busy Street:** The seasonal weather is particularly agreeable, and many of High City's denizens are taking a turn in the evening air. Couples walk the street—many accompanied by servants or bodyguards—while groups of revellers make their way too and from their taverns of choice. The atmosphere is pleasant and relaxed.
6. **Merriment Aboard:** Sounds of laughter, drunken singing and general merriment reach the characters' ears. Moments later, a crowd of monied young folk—sons and daughters of wealthy merchants—fill the street. They are in irritatingly high spirits!

OPPORTUNITIES & COMPLICATIONS

Lucky adventurers can find opportunities almost anywhere. Unlucky adventurers can find complications almost anywhere.

1. **Lurker on the Scaffold:** Wooden scaffolding covers a fine building fronting onto the street. A nightwatchman snores gently on a chair by the house's front door. Perceptive characters spot a small figure creeping along the scaffolding by an upper window. (The figure might be a thief or could be a youth sneaking out to meet friends).
2. **The Watch Watching:** A patrol of the watch take an interest in the characters. Perhaps they just look shifty or one of the party vaguely resembles (or is) a known troublemaker. In any event, the patrol stops the characters and enquires (politely) after their business in High City.
3. **Sounds from Below:** Strange sounds emanate from below the street. This section of High City is well-served with sewers, and the characters have caught a snatch of sound of a band of sewer workers clearly a blockage (or effecting a repair).

Alternatively, the sounds could have been made by a band of thieves, a pack of wererats or something worse.

4. **Annoying Merchant:** Simo Kekko (LN male human) has pretensions of greatness and is wrapped up in his own importance. While deep in a slightly drunken conversation of great import with a friend he stumbles into the group. Of course, he is too important to apologise and becomes angry if the characters do not get out of his way.
5. **Help! Help!:** The characters hear the sounds of a scuffle in a nearby side street and ~someone calling for aid. This could be a rich merchant beating a servant, a (rare) mugging or something else entirely. Perhaps this is a good way for the characters to meet their next patron.
6. **Ornate Coach:** An ornate coach rattles along the street, drawn by two beautiful horses. A driver and two footman (really disguised bodyguards) are visible riding on the coach, but the cabin's curtains are drawn. As the coach comes alongside the characters it slows and comes to a halt. The door opens, and a hand beckons one of the characters inside.

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

Characters out and about may overhear or learn some of the rumours (which may or may not be true) below.

1. **Ancient Oaks:** The oaks on Abbey Road are ancient, and the home of nature spirits who were old when Languard was merely a village of crude wood huts. Damaging the oaks brings down their wrath on the perpetrators. Sometimes, lone folk go missing near the oaks.
2. **High Market:** Many of the most skilled and in-demand craftsfolk pitch stalls at High Market to showcase their creations. If you are looking for something special and expensive, High Market is likely the place to find it.
3. **Trouble in the Catacombs:** Things are not right in the catacombs below the Father's Hall. Rumour speak of tombs broken open and missing bodies. Some priests report feeling the malign presence of some unseen force lurking in the endless shadows of the place.
4. **Cannon:** Work has started at Montaja's Ironworks on another mighty cannon for Castle Languard's ramparts. This weapon is to be even more powerful than the duke's current cannons. Rumour has it, the duke is planning to mount cannons on one of his ships as well, but such an undertaking would be extremely expensive. Perhaps taxes will soon rise.
5. **Missing Thieves:** Thieves working in High City sometimes disappear without a trace. The watch aren't concerned about missing thieves in High City—and the general consensus is that bodyguards or clever traps do away with the thieves. Given the influence of the folk involved, no-one seems keen to investigate.
6. **Caves Under High City:** Caves riddle the ground under High City. Some are said to connect to Castle Languard's dungeons and—perhaps—even deeper locales. The watch maintain a small force (the Dark Wardens) to watch over the caves.

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