

Gray Matter

A Savage Worlds One Sheet for Drakonheim: City of Bones

Drakonheim's sewer system dates back to the golden age of the Cevali Empire, but like much of the city, what was once a marvel of engineering has long since crumbled into ruin. The sewers are now a breeding ground for all manner of vermin; few souls are brave or foolhardy enough to venture below the city, and fewer still manage to return. But sometimes, *things* emerge from the sewers with an agenda of their own.

Several brutal killings have occurred in and around Little Grendus during the past week, with witnesses describing the murderer as an animated corpse that acts with intelligence and cunning. The populace have taken to calling the creature the "Gray Man", and they want it destroyed, a sentiment encouraged by High Priest Borleen Nistal of the Temple of the Lifegiver.

Many blame the Gray Society for the recent rash of killings, either for failing to stop the rogue undead, or because they think the necromancers created it. Lady Saldor is doing her best to limit the damage to her organization's reputation, but each new killing raises the stakes. Whether it's their fault or not, this is clearly a matter for the Gray Society.

Interested Parties

The heroes are hired to track down and capture the Gray Man. Exactly who hires them is up to the Game Master, but the following five factions all want to have the creature captured rather than destroyed:

1. Gray Society: The necromancers think this may be a new type of undead, and want to study and learn about it. Norel Kalynn is particularly keen to question the creature, and will be very angry if it is destroyed.

2. Knights of the Eclipse: These fanatics believe the creature is a Gray Society experiment, and plan to air the society's dirty laundry in public by parading the creature through the city streets.

3. Baron Karlos Vasili: The baron wonders if the Gray Man could be an ancient vampire, driven insane through lack of blood, and he wishes to examine it.

4. Seekers of the First: The seekers believe the creature may be the guardian of an ancient treasure, and they want that treasure for themselves.

5. Boroff Emeraldeyes: Most of the killings took place in Little Grendus, and Boroff believes someone is targeting his business interests. He plans to question this so-called "Gray Man" personally.

If the Game Master wishes to make this adventure more of a challenge, the heroes might find themselves competing with groups employed by other factions.

Needle in a Haystack

The sewers are far too large to simply start exploring, instead the heroes need to pinpoint exactly which exit the Gray Man is using, then either track him down or set an ambush. This requires investigating the crime scenes and speaking to the witnesses.

If the players are stuck for ideas, suggest they talk to Thrandell Bloodaxe. The price will be high, but the information broker will be able to point them in the right direction.



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Trail of the Dead

There are six victims so far, most of them dwarves.

- Brothers Boerk and Goerk Copperfist were killed near the Temple of the Smith, while returning from a service. If questioned, head priest Oalf Silverstar is more than willing to share what he knows, fearing for the welfare of his congregation. Skilled investigators may also discover the brothers were secretly members of the three-quarters movement.

- Mikael Sandstone was apprenticed to Fel Bellows; nobody seems to know why his body was found near the Red Pier when he was already gainfully employed. Asking around might unearth the rumor he was found alongside a member of the Queen's Guard. The Queen of Beggars may be willing to confirm this rumor if the heroes can find her and make it worth her while.

- Jaek Defray, the only known human victim, was recently found dead at the Docks. The city watch don't know about this, as they refuse to patrol the area, but it's the current topic of conversation in the Knotted Vine tavern. Of course dead bodies aren't uncommon at the Docks, but this case was unusual in that Jaek hadn't been robbed. The one-eyed man who found Defray's body goes by the name of Eriven, and often hangs out at the Knotted Vine. Eriven claims to have found a full purse on the hacked up corpse. Jaek's only surviving relative is his cousin Bella; should the heroes speak to her, she seems sad but unsurprised, saying that she'd warned Jaek on multiple occasions about the danger of walking the streets at night.

- Hilde Ironheart was a close friend of Thea Brimstone. Thea suspects the killing may be retaliation from the Lord Mayor, using the cover of the Gray Man to target his critics, but she refuses to be intimidated – indeed, the killing spree has only hardened her resolve.



Clues and Witnesses

Here are some of the people the heroes may wish to speak to during their investigation:

- A rather inebriated dwarf who goes by the unusual nickname of "Rich & Cozy" has an interesting tale to tell. A couple of nights ago he was heading to a local tavern, where he was late for a meeting. Along the way he spotted Jaek Defray leaving Godrick Olsben's place of business, only hours before Jaek was found dead.

- If questioned directly, Godrick Olsben admits that he sold a magical trinket to Jaek Defray the same night he was murdered. If pressed for details, he describes it as an ancient gold pendant with a skull motif, that he'd bought from a goblin a week earlier. He explains that the pendant allows the wearer to see in the dark.

- Eriven can often be found drinking at the Knotted Vine. When plied with sufficient alcohol, he describes how he discovered and looted a corpse at the Docks. If pressed, he admits plucking out a gold tooth as well, but insists there was nothing else of value on the body. Is he lying? Did the Gray Man take the pendant? Or is there some other explanation?

- Thalia Copperhand, a dwarven bookbinder who lives near one of the murder scenes, eagerly describes how the Gray Man was wearing metal bracers with an intricate dragon design, similar to the style of armor forged at Bellows' Bellows.

- Should the heroes approach the goblins, Gozzy the Quiet admits the Gray Man has been terrorizing the sewers for weeks, and the goblins have learned to steer clear of him.

Confronting the Gray Man

Sooner or later the heroes will uncover enough clues to confront the Gray Man directly. But who is he, and what does he want? That is for the Game Master to decide, but here are some suggestions:

- A necromancer from the Gray Society has recently rediscovered a long-forgotten technique for creating intelligent undead. He's been conducting experiments on captives, but one of the test subjects escaped into the sewers. The Gray Man needs to feed on the living, and initially subsisted on goblins, but was forced to start hunting further afield after the goblins learned to keep out of his way.

- An ancient tomb in a connected cavern network was disturbed by goblin diggers from the Rat Kingdom, and the undead guardian now wanders the sewers looking for threats.

Or perhaps it wasn't a tomb, but a cache left from the Cevali Empire, or even a smuggler's store house. Maybe a greedy smuggler died in the caves decades ago while hiding his treasure, and his grave has recently been disturbed and looted, and now he is trying to recover what was stolen from him.

- The Gray Man is actually a living member of the Knights of the Eclipse, or perhaps an opportunist in disguise. He may hope to discredit the Gray Society, or the disguise could just be a cover for other activities, such as a smuggling operation, and the first victim might have been a witness who needed to be silenced. Perhaps the disguise worked far better than expected, and the killer sees it as an opportunity to deal with some of their rivals and enemies.

If the Gray Man is just a disguised human, his gang or organization will likely learn of the investigation, and may arrange an ambush of their own. However if he really is undead, use the stats listed below, and have him accompanied by 1-2 ghouls per player; these vile scavengers have recently started trailing in his wake.

☠ GRAY MAN

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d10+1*, Intimidation d10, Notice d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 12 (3)

Hindrances: Charnel Taint, Deathly Visage

Edges: Elan, First Strike, Great Luck, Steely Grip*

Gear: Great axe (Str+d10), ancient breastplate (+3)

Special Abilities

- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from Shaken; Immune to poison and disease; No additional damage from called shots.