

WATERDEEP: DRAGON HEIST

DRAGON SEASON



DM's Resources Waterdeep: Dragon Heist - Chapter 4: Dragon Season

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4: Dragon Season is the grand finale to **Waterdeep: Dragon Heist**. A frantic hunt for the *Stone of Golorr* through the streets of Waterdeep that culminates with the heroes delving into the Vault of Dragons. It's where the characters go from hopeful adventurers to legends of Waterdeep – or end up dead and forgotten in a locked vault.

There's a lot of ground to cover in Chapter 4. Both for the characters, but also for you, the DM. You have to orchestrate and manage a chain of encounters, make the party's delve into the vault entertaining, try to ensure that you end up with a challenging and satisfying resolution to the campaign, while also fitting in all the other great content of Waterdeep: Dragon Heist, like downtime, faction missions and the villains' lairs.

In this document we'll give you resources that'll help you handle the final stretch of the campaign, creating a fun and manageable experience for you and your players. It's strongly recommended that you read Chapter 4: Dragon Season before reading this document. And remember: all advice is optional. You know best what works at your table.

Choosing a Villain. First, we'll try to help you make the big decision: choosing a villain. Even if you've already chosen, it's not too late to change your mind.

Encounter Chains. Second, we'll take a closer look at each of the four encounter chains, evaluating each chain and giving suggestions to improving or enhancing individual encounters. You'll also find advice on how to change your season and putting together your own encounter chain.

Time for Downtime. Third, we'll go over the different ways you can create time for downtime before, during or after the encounter chains in Chapter 4, enabling your players to finish up faction missions, tend to their tavern or carouse around Waterdeep, as they look for the treasure.

The Vault of Dragons. Fourth, we'll delve into the Vault of Dragons, coming with suggestions on how to improve or change certain areas of the vault, as well as dealing with the dragon. You'll also find advice on how to handle the party's showdown with the villain's forces at the end of the chapter.

Chase Cheat Sheets. Last, you'll find cheat sheets complete with the rules for conducting both street and rooftop chases, both including a table for complications and a tracker for initiative and distance.

CHOOSING A VILLAIN

Maybe you've been putting it off – we know that we have! – or maybe you've already picked one, but haven't fully committed yet. Regardless, it's worth looking into: what villain best suits your campaign? There's four choices detailed in Waterdeep: Dragon Heist: Xanathar, the Cassalanter, Jarlaxle Baenre and Manshoon.

Which of the four you pick comes down to personal preference and events at the table, more than anything else. Even so, knowing what each villain brings to the table is good to know when you're deciding which one you want to use. Below we'll briefly discuss each villain, evaluating how they fit with the story, various character backgrounds, other factions and how they play out as a villain in chapter 4.

And don't worry, if you suddenly find yourself lured to another villain, it isn't too late to change your mind. Switching villain – and season – isn't that hard. You'll find more advice on how to do that in the 'Changing Seasons'-section on page 6.

XANATHAR

The big bad beholder crime lord, hiding deep underneath the city. The Xanathar is in many ways the obvious villain for the campaign. It's inherently evil and has been involved with the *Stone of Golorr* from the start. Matter of fact, the Xanathar is so involved, that its minions even guest star in several of the other encounter chains.

Speaking of encounter chains, the 'Spring Madness'-encounter chain is both simple and challenging, without being overly exciting. In short, it's not the most interesting encounter chain, but it does get the job done.

All in all, choosing the Xanathar is a somewhat 'safe' choice (although you might hesitate before calling a beholder safe!).

CASSALANTERS

The Cassalanter have an interesting story and present a tough moral dilemma. They're also deeply entrenched in Waterdeep's history and nobility, which might make them more interesting villains for characters who are either nobles or dislike nobles. In our opinion, the 'Hell of a Summer'-encounter chain does present some issues. It has a few cumbersome encounters, and it also hinges on the party getting themselves arrested. On the plus side, if you want the campaign to end with the party stealing the gold back from a villain's lair, the Cassalanter have probably the most entertaining premise for an end-of-campaign heist!

All in all, choosing the Cassalanter is a somewhat 'odd' choice – interesting villains with personal stories and a harder-to-pull-off encounter chain.

JARLAXLE

The mercenary leader is a charming, witty and daring swashbuckler. His winning personality and more benevolent motivation makes him easier than the other villains to handle for the party – they might be able to find common ground in the decision to hand the gold over to the city.

However, Jarlaxle is also the villain that is most likely to have a direct connection to the party, if any have joined Bregan D'aerthe. While conflicting loyalties can seem fun on paper, it requires mature and seasoned players to pull off at the table. Using Jarlaxle as the villain if characters have signed up with Bregan D'aerthe can also create some logical fallacies during the encounter chain (why would Jarlaxle try to steal the stone from his own agents?). On its own, the 'Maestro's Fall'-encounter chain is an interesting one, although probably not for everyone. But if you like something with a bit of deception and social intrigue, it's the one for you.

All in all, Jarlaxle is an entertaining villain – under the right conditions. He is, however, also entertaining as an ally, so you don't necessarily have to use him as the villain to get him involved in the story.

MANSHOON

Like the Xanathar, Manshoon seems like an obvious villain. He's involved with the story from the start, and he's a classic bad guy. He'll be an especially good fit if the characters have become invested with the Doom Raider Zhentarim, who have their own grudge against Manshoon.

The 'Winter Wizardry'-encounter chain is also, in our opinion, one of the stronger ones. It has many interesting encounters and a pretty smooth progression, that makes it relatively easy to run. It's without a doubt the hardest encounter chain combatwise, but luckily you can control that.

All in all, Manshoon is a pretty straight forward choice, like the Xanathar. Choosing between the two will often come down to personal preference.

ENCOUNTER CHAINS

The encounter chains are the meat of Chapter 4: Dragon Season. It's the thrilling hunt for the *Stone of Golorr* through the streets of Waterdeep, that ultimately leads to the Vault of Dragons. On the following pages, you'll find a quick overview of each encounter chain, comments about the chain as a whole, and suggestions on how enhance, change or handle individual encounters.

GENERAL ADVICE

When you're running an encounter chain – and considering which one to run – be mindful of your preferred outcome. While we certainly recommend that you allow anything to happen – if the characters mess up and let the villains get away, then let them get away – it's okay to stack the deck so you're likely to end with what you think is most interesting.

For example, if you want the party to have to steal the *Stone of Golorr* back from a villain's lair, it's good to factor that in when preparing the encounter chain. Make the chase scenes a bit harder or play NPCs in a more clever way. On the other hand, if you want the players to end up with the *Stone of Golorr* in the end, think about dialing back encounters.

Even if you don't have a preferred result, you likely do have an interest in showcasing as many of the fun encounters as possible. Consider what you'll do if the characters get their hand on the stone too soon. Is there an ambush encounter you can introduce? Does the *Stone of Golorr* call out to oozes and aberrations to free it from the adventurers' grasp?

SPRING MADNESS

- **A. Mistshore** – the party arrive at Grinda Garloth's residence, where they fight 12 **bandits**, **Noska Ur'gray** and a **merrow**. Grinda points them to her family crypt.
- **B. Mausoleum** – the party finds a key and are jumped by four **duergar**. They must then trace the key to a pair of graverobbers.
- **C. Converted Windmill** – the party finds Volkarr and Urlaster, who admit to working for a halfling necromancer named Losser, who now has the stone.
- **D. Cellar Complex** – the party will face two **skeletons**, three **kenku**, another **kenku** and a **gazer**, before another **kenku** slip away with the stone.
- **E. Street Chase** – the party chases a **kenku** through the streets toward an old tower.
- **F. Old Tower** – the party faces the **kenku** and three urchins, before they are ambushed by three **gazers**.
- **G. Alley** – the party is ambushed by eight **kobolds**, a **bugbear** and an **intellect devourer**.
- **H. Theater** – the party must bypass a theater owner and a **faerie dragon** to gain access to the vault.

(red = combat, orange = risk for combat, blue = chase).

ENCOUNTER NOTES

The 'Spring Madness'-encounter chain requires a bit of work, but isn't the hardest to pull off. If we compare it to some of the other chains it does contain a lot of combat, but only the first and last encounter should be dangerous on their own.

However, there isn't really anything that makes the encounter chain... special, like a particularly interesting encounter or creature, a challenging chase, or a puzzling scenario. Now, we're not saying that there has to be any of that, but the encounter chain can feel a bit less inspired than some of the other chains.

A. MISTSHORE

The Sellswords. If you want to make sure the party knows that they can counter-bribe the sellswords, you can have one of them exclaim "You better have that gold you promised, dwarf!" as they jump down to aid Noska Ur'gray.

The Gazer. Instead of simply allowing a passive Perception of 15 to discover the gazer immediately, you can choose to have it roll a Dexterity (Stealth) check (with advantage because of the weather) after each encounter in the chain. As long as it beats each character's passive Perception, it remains undiscovered.

E. STREET CHASE

A running kenku is not hard to catch – or kill – so there's a real chance that you'll have to use the 'another kenku appears and takes the stone'-trick more than once, which can feel a bit cheap. Instead, you can have the three urchins appear as the kenku goes down, one of them picking up the stone before running into the tower. You can then have another kenku (or the three gazers) dive into the tower ahead of the party. It's still a bit cheap, but feels more natural than another kenku coming out of the blue to pick it up.

G. ALLEY

If the characters are in possession of the *Stone of Golorr* when you spring this encounter, you don't have to change much here. But if a gazer has it, you might want to think about how you handle it – there's a real possibility that it manages to escape with the stone. To give the party a sporting chance, you can start the encounter at the northeastern alley entrance, have the **bugbear** and the **intellect devourer** hiding by the corner with the crates right across from L2, and have the gazer moving toward the sewer grate in the small, blind alleyway in the middle of the map. With only 30 feet of move speed (it uses its action on each turn to control the stone with its telekinetic ray) the characters should have a decent chance to catch it before it gets away.



HELL OF A SUMMER

- **A. Mausoleum** – the party enters a Cassalanter-mausoleum to find two dead cultists and Vaelle Lurval, who tells the party that cult fanatics has the stone.
- **B. Converted Windmill** – the party finds the two **cult fanatics** just before three **spined devils** fly away with the stone.
- **C. Rooftop Chase** – the party chases three **spined devils** into an alley.
- **D. Alley** – the party faces three **spined devils**, three **imps**, and possibly a **bearded devil**, before the **doppelganger** Willifort Crowelle makes off with the stone in a hire-coach.
- **E. Street Chase** – the party chases the **doppelganger** through the streets before the stone is eventually taken into the sewers by the three urchins.
- **F. Cellar Complex** – the party finds the *Stone of Golorr* under a **mimic**, before being arrested by the city watch.
- **G. Courthouse** – the party is arrested. The **doppelganger** might attempt to trick them or even turn 10 **guards** and two **veterans** against them. Eventually the party must either accept punishment or find another way out of jail.
- **H. Old Tower** – the party finds the vault in an old tower owned by Esvele Rosznar (**The Black Viper**), whom they must bargain with to gain access.

(red = combat, orange = risk for combat, blue = chase).

ENCOUNTER NOTES

Of all the encounter chains, this one feels the most... unpolished. Some of the encounters are a bit lackluster, other encounters are all over the place, and the expected actions of both NPC's and the characters aren't always logical. It's not that the chain is bad – there just seems to be a lot of loose ends, unanswered questions and overlooked possibilities.

A. MAUSOLEUM

This encounter is fine, albeit a little bland. If you want to spice it up a bit, you can have the door to the crypt be ajar and put Losser (the halfling **mage** from the 'Spring Madness'-encounter chain) and his two shovel-wielding underlings Volkarr Kibbens and Urlaster Ghann (**commoners**) inside.

Losser wants to kill the surviving cultist ("she's nearly dead anyway") while Volkarr is more hesitant ("I don't like this, Losser – didn't sign up for no killin'!"). The party must either fight them (the two dead cultists rise as **zombies** to aid Losser) or persuade Losser to leave the crypt peacefully (he'll try to convince them to at least let him keep the two dead cultist's corpses).

B. CONVERTED WINDMILL

It seems like very lucky timing that the **spined devils** arrive at the exact moment the party barges in through the door. To make it more believable, you can have the party overhear a discussion between the **cult fanatics** and the devils as they near the room: "How can we be sure that you remember to tell them that we found it? And that we killed the three fools, like the Lord and Lady asked?". As the party barges in, the fanatics hand over the stone to the devils, who quickly flee.

D. ALLEY

This encounter is a bit messy. There's up to eight foes with four different statblocks. To make things easier on yourself, you can replace the three **imps** with another **bearded devil**.

E. STREET CHASE

The speed of the hire-coach is not mentioned in the text for the encounter, but we'll assume that it moves 40 ft./round (the speed of a draft horse) while in the narrow alley, and 80 ft./round when the street chase begins and the horses have room to dash.

F. CELLAR COMPLEX

It seems a bit unambitious to only have a single **mimic** in this sprawling cellar complex. If you want to, you can beef up the encounter a bit. Perhaps the *Stone of Golorr* is creating oozes out of sewer muck to serve and protect it. First, have two of the children almost surrounded by three **gray oozes** (Monster Manual page 243) in B5 as the party arrives, screaming for help. The party must hurry to destroy the gray oozes before the children are hurt or killed.

Meanwhile, the *Stone of Golorr* has created an **adult oblex** (Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes page 218), who's eaten Nat's memories. The ooze is making a sulfurous impersonation of her in B7, who tries to convince the party it does not have the stone ("I had the stone, but it slipped out of my grasp. A devil took it and ran up to the streets!") when they arrive. Allow a character a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight or Perception) to see through the lies or to spot the strand of slime that connects the false nat to the oblex in B9A. If the party is falling for the ruse, you can also have one of the other children exclaim: "Hey, that's not Nat! It's one of the slimers!" After defeating the oblex, the party can find an unconscious Nat clutching the *Stone of Golorr* in B9A.

G. COURTHOUSE

This is probably the most problematic encounter of any in the entire chapter because it hinges on the party allowing themselves to be arrested. You risk either taking away player agency ('you're arrested, deal with it') or putting the characters into a corner where they'll do something very bad – like killing guards – to avoid being arrested.

If you want to prevent things from escalating, you can try a softer approach. The guards are still there when the party comes up from the sewers, but they don't move to arrest the party. Instead, have the Watch Sergeant ask nicely: "We've been told you were involved in the mess here in the South Ward today – involving devils and other evil beings. We'll need you to follow us down to the Courthouse and answer some questions. Don't worry, you're not under arrest, but we need to get to the bottom of this".

Hopefully the party follows peacefully, upon which they are asked to disarm themselves and are placed in the downstairs waiting room (H6) under the watchful eye of two **guards**. While they wait to speak with magister Umbero Zastro, the **doppelganger** has taken Hyustus Staget's appearance and approaches the characters. "It looks bad for you, I'm afraid. Looks like you're going to be locked up for a while. If you have anything on you that you don't want confiscated, I can keep an eye on it for you." If the party doesn't give up the stone or becomes suspicious of Hyustus, the doppelganger falls back and screams "Assault! They assaulted me! Subdue them!", causing the two guards to raise their batons against the unarmed characters, while the **doppelganger** looks for a chance to pilfer the stone from a character. As described in the book, the characters are forgiven for any damage done against the guards, if the doppelganger's identity is unveiled.

You can otherwise run the encounter as it is, but making these small changes will hopefully minimize the risk of total disaster – or players feeling robbed of their agency.

MAESTRO'S FALL

- **A. Alley** – the party comes face-to-face with an apple cart before discovering that Fenerus' home has been raided. They speak with **Jarlaxle** disguised as Laeral Silverhand, who sends them toward a Xanathar hideout.
- **B. Cellar Complex** – the party possibly faces two **goblins**, a **half-ogre**, four **duergar**, a **gazer**, seven **troglodytes** and a **gibbering moulder** before realizing the real stone isn't here.
- **C. Theater** – the party reconvenes with **Jarlaxle** now disguised as Rongquan Mystere, who points them to the courthouse where Fenerus sits jailed – he must know where the stone is.
- **D. Courthouse** – the party learns from Fenerus that the stone is hidden in an old tower on the docks.
- **E. Old Tower** – the party is attacked by a **drow gunslinger**, while two other **drow gunslingers** escape with the *Stone of Golorr*.
- **F. Rooftop Chase** – the party chases two **drow gunslingers** across the rooftops towards the docks.
- **G. Mistshore** – the party confronts the two **drow gunslingers**, who try to escape with the stone by jumping onto the back of a mechanical dragon turtle.
- **H. Converted Windmill** – the party must confront the bard **Kalain**, and possibly six **swarms of rats** and a **displacer beast**, to gain access to the vault.

(red = combat, orange = risk for combat, blue = chase).

OVERALL COMMENTS

The 'Maestro's Fall'-encounter chain requires a bit of work, but is easily one of the more interesting encounter chains if performed well. It has something for everyone – dungeon crawling, social encounters, interesting combat and a fun vault location. It also has a less frantic pace than most of the other encounter chains, giving the characters small breaks where they can stop to rest and think.

A. ALLEY

It's a fun little start here with a 'Sleepers'-reference, as the children come bumbling down the street with their stolen apple cart. It sets a fun scene and puts the party on their toes. However, it's a bit weird that that's everything there is – an apple cart, some blood on the floor, and that's that. You can easily pull the three **duergar** from area B7 of the **Cellar Complex** and have them ambush the party immediately after the apple cart runs through them.

Regarding Jarlaxle and his little masquerade, remember that you can have him pose as literally anyone: Vajra Safahr, Mirt, Hlam, anyone. So if there's an NPC in the book you think the players would respond better to or get more of a kick out of meeting, don't hesitate to use that character instead.

D. COURTHOUSE

This is a complicated task. The characters must get access to Fenerus and convince him to tell them where he hid the stone. Fenerus will only divulge the stone's location if he's freed. We are given some ideas to how the characters might complete this mission, but it's still somewhat of an open question, with lots of options and potential for trouble.

The two simplest solutions – speaking with Magister Barch or asking a faction for help – are well described in the chapter. You can make a good argument for other factions also being able to get Fenerus' released, or at least procure items that can help the party get the information from him (such as a scroll of *detect thoughts* or *charm person*).

The chapter also suggests that the characters can get themselves arrested, but unless they can magically coerce Fenerus, getting close won't get them the information they want, because the scoundrel demands to be released first.

Last, we have the most interesting option. Whether it is just to speak with Fenerus or to get him out, the party might try to sneak into the courthouse. It's actually not too hard of a task – only a clerk and two guards in H1 and two more guards in H8 stand between them and Fenerus.

If you want to, you can run the prison break like a skill challenge, either proposing the needed skill checks to the party and individual characters depending on their approach, or allowing them to devise their own plan (and needed skill checks) from scratch.

Here's how a skill challenge could work if using stealth:

- **Step 1. Gathering Information** – A character asks around (Investigation or Persuasion) among criminals and/or guards trying to learn the exact floorplan and positions of guards/clerks in the courthouse.
- **Step 2. Upstairs Waiting Room** – A character tries to distract (Deception or Performance) the guards and clerk in area H1. Another character tries to sneak (Stealth) past while the guards and clerk are distracted.
- **Step 3. Cell Block** – A character uses magic (like *sleep* or *hypnotic pattern*) to neutralize the two guards here.
- **Step 4. Fenerus** – A character convinces (any Charisma) Fenerus to follow them out, or uses magic (like *charm person*) to get him to tell the stone's location immediately.
- **Step 5. Get back out.** Repeat Step 2, requiring a Stealth check from Fenerus if he is with the characters.

And an example of how it would look using deception:

- **Step 1. Gathering Information** – A character asks around (Investigation or Persuasion) among criminals and/or guards, discovering the exact document needed for prisoner release and the identity of Guard Sergeant Abonaris who is responsible for carrying such orders.
- **Step 2. Upstairs Waiting Room** – A disguised character tries to deceive (Deception) the clerk, who also checks their documents (Forgery Kit).
- **Step 3. Cell Block** – While retrieving Fenerus from the cells, a disguised character must deceive (Deception) the guards here, who knows Watch Sergeant Abonaris well.
- **Step 4. Get Back Out** – Magister Branch has shown up at the front desk and asks questions of the disguised character (Deception and/or Forgery Kit).

You can adjust the difficulty of the operation yourself, but asking for five successful DC 13 checks to complete the task is a good starting point, allowing for magic or particularly good ideas to grant advantage or completely forgo the need for a check. If a character fails on a single check, it doesn't mean the entire operation is failed, but the character (or another character) must quickly make another check (either the same roll or a different roll that makes sense) to recover and avoid exposure. If three (or more, it's up to you) checks in total are failed, the characters have been discovered and must either work to extricate themselves from the situation (every guard in the courthouse coming to arrest them) or be arrested and face the punishment for the misdeeds they've committed (see the Code Legal and cross your fingers they didn't kill any guards along the way!).

WINTER WIZARDRY

- **A. Converted Windmill** – the stone is delivered to Thrakkus, a dragonborn butcher/**berserker**. He has send the stone with a meat delivery, which the characters can follow in the deep snow.
- **B. Alley** – the party follows the meat to a Zhent hideout, where they run into five **bugbears**, a **spy** and a **thug** and see the stone handed to Vevette Blackwater, who flees.
- **C. Rooftop Chase** – Vevette Blackwater flees across the icy rooftops until she ducks into a theater.
- **D. Theater** – Vevette Blackwater hands the stone off to the bard Agorn Fuoco and then flees into the streets.
- **E. Street Chase** – The party chases Vevette in the streets. If caught, Vevette surrenders. The party discovers, from her or the Harpers at the theater, that Agorn has the stone.
- **F. Mistshore** – the party finds Agorn, discovers he gave the stone to a priest of Bane and are attacked by nine **thugs**.
- **G. Old Tower** – the party retrieves the stone from the **priest**, Amath, her four **acolytes** and three **winged snakes**, just before **Manshoon's Simulacrum** appears.
- **H. Mausoleum** – the Vault of Dragons is hidden below Renae'r Neverember's family Mausoleum in the City of the Dead, guarded by a **treant**.

ENCOUNTER NOTES

Overall, the 'Winter Wizardry'-encounter chain is pretty good. It's not overly complex, it follows a pretty logic progression and it has some challenging and interesting combat encounters. In particular, encounter A, F and G are fun and thematic encounters that are well fleshed out. It is, however, likely one of the deadliest encounter chains.

B. ALLEY

How the party should interact with each of the three moving parts in this encounter (Cuttle's Meat Pies, the Zhentarim safe house and a band of bugbears) is a bit muddled. To clear things up, we suggest the following:

Butcher First. The characters arrive from the east and clearly see that the meatwagon has made a stop in front of Cuttle's Meat Pies (L2) and delivered *something*. When they inquire within, Cuttle airs her suspicions of the neighbors (and has a chance to react to the revelation that her meatpies are made of human meat!). She hasn't received any stone, however, but saw her neighbors getting some meat as well.

Yelling Bugbears. After speaking with Cuttle, the characters likely head for the Zhent safehouse (L1). On the way, they are accosted by the bugbears, who yell out stuff like "Zhent scum! We's gonna get yous! Where's yous take our dwarf?", as they mistake the party for Zhentarim mercenaries heading for the safe house.

Caught in the Act. The commotion brings out Avareen, who peers around the corner of L1 – so obvious that the party clearly sees her – before slipping away. When the party catches up to Avareen, she is handing over the stone to Vevette, who jumps up to the roof and begins her escape (this explains why the party arrives exactly as Vevette flees).

Picking up the Trail. If the party stays to fight the two Zhents and speak with Ott Steeltoes, any of the three can tell the party that Vevette was heading to the Brizzenbright Theater in the Trades Ward (in exchange for their lives and freedom). The party might also be able to simply follow Vevette's footprints on the roofs. Skip directly to encounter D.



C. ROOFTOP CHASE

With advantage against complications, continuous Dash actions, 66 hit points, and a blizzard limiting visibility, Vevette has all the tools she needs to get away. However, this might result in her getting away a bit too soon, in which case the campaign book suggests that the party can ask people along the way. It seems more logical that the party can find their way to the theater by following her footprints in the snow on the rooftops.

On the other hand, there's no backup to pick up the *Stone of Golorr* if Vevette is caught or killed. Even though that's not likely, it only takes a *hold person* or *web* spell to do the trick. If you're afraid of this happening, you can give her a *ring of free action* to make her immune to most such spells – and also present a nice treasure for the party if they catch her later in the encounter chain.

E. STREET CHASE

If the party can't get the truth from Vevette and don't think to return to the theater, have Remallia or one of her agents find the party on the street to tell them about the two Zhentarim agents who left in a hire-coach soon after Vevette fled.

F. MISTSHORE

This one is good. There's kids throwing snowballs and falling through ice, there's attempted matricide, and there's thugs who surround and accost the party. However, be aware that with pack tactics, nine thugs can easily be a deathly encounter. The book suggests using harpers or Grinda Garloth to level the playing field, but you can also use the kids if you want. Put Agorn's mother in one of the houseboats, and have the thugs stand on the harbor and the frozen water around the entrance as they come out. During the fight, an old, rusty loading crane suddenly comes crashing down on the ice, sending a number of thugs (you decide how many) into the frigid water. The kids tipped it over! Unfortunately, Jenks also fell in, and now the other kids are trying to pull him out, as described in the encounter.

G. OLD TOWER

This encounter is interesting – and possibly deadly. The party will find a priest, four acolytes and three flying snakes in the topmost floor of the tower. This qualifies as a hard encounter even before Manshoon's Simulacrum shows up. With him? Your party might be in trouble. We suggest that you allow the characters every chance to surprise the meditating and chanting cultists, and that you play the simulacrum in a way that is less likely to result in a TPK. You can have it focus on stealing the stone with spells like *misty step* or *mage hand*, while using spells like *bigby's hand*, *polymorph* and *wall of force* to control the party, instead of actively trying to kill them.

CHANGING SEASONS

While each villain is in some measure tied to their specific season, they are by no means set in stone. So don't fret if you've started in one season and find yourself eyeing another villain – it should be possible without too much work.

First off, if the current season in your campaign is close enough to the season you're changing to, you probably don't need to change much. Spring and autumn's weather effects (rain, wind, fog) can feasibly happen any time of the year, and you can also easily have summer heat in late spring or early autumn, and a winter blizzard in late autumn or early spring.

You'll likely only raise eyebrows if you tell your players that it's snowing in the middle of summer or that it's pushing 100 degrees in the dead of winter. Luckily, you don't have to do that. There's only a few places these weather effects are actually used in a way that impacts the encounter chain directly. Even switching summer to winter or vice versa is easily possible if you just change these small details:

- **Winter Wizardry, 1. Alley** – use mud instead of snow to explain how the party can follow the meat delivery wagon.
- **Winter Wizardry, 2. Mistshore** – The urchin throws a rotten apple instead, and Jenks simply falls into the harbor (he can't swim) instead of through the ice.
- **Hell of a Summer, 9. Cellar Complex** – instead of having the sewers be extra smelly because of the heat, you can just have them be extra smelly because it's an extra smelly part of the city.

Of course, the villains are also tied to specific holidays or seasonal events described in their individual chapters. If you intend to use these events, you can solve this by either moving the holiday (if your players aren't big on the Faerunian Calendar, they're unlikely to know) or change which holiday the event is tied to.

PLACING THE VAULT OF DRAGONS

Each of the four encounter chains has a different location for the vault. Since this location is completely disconnected from the rest of the chain, it's the easiest encounter to move from one chain to another, if there's another location you find more appealing. To summarize, the four options are:

- **Theater (Spring Madness).** The vault is in the Pink Plumph theater, owned by the widow Iokaste Daliano, who loves rubbing shoulders with the nobility more than she loves the arts. There's also Wishes, a demanding and nosy faerie dragon, but not much else.
- **Old Tower (Hell of a Summer).** The vault is underneath an old tower purchased by Esvele 'The Black Viper' Rosznar. While interacting with her could be interesting, there's not much else going on here.
- **Converted Windmill (Maestro's Fall).** The vault is underneath a windmill-turned-residence, where Dagult Neverember's old lover Kalain resides. To get to the vault, the party must defeat or appease the crazed, evil bard, who can bring her monster paintings to life.
- **Mausoleum (Winter Wizardry).** The vault is under the Brandarth mausoleum, guarded by a treant, and with some treasure, traps, and foes hidden inside. The characters must discover that Renaer Neverember is a Brandarth, if they want to amicably bypass the treant.

Looking at these four options, we find that the mausoleum and the converted windmill locations are the most fleshed out and 'whole' vault locations. They are connected to Dagult Neverember in a meaningful way (his wife's family crypt or his old lover's residence), and they have both guardians and treasure. While the Black Viper is an interesting actor to put into the mix, there's a thousand ways you can still do that even if you don't choose the old tower as the vault location.

If you want to switch the vault locations around, it's possible to do so without making too many other changes:

- The Theater can easily be used in the 'Hell of a Summer'-encounter chain, since that chain has no other theater encounter. While 'Maestro's Fall' and 'Winter Wizardry' does take the party to the theater, the map is unlikely to be used in either encounter (and thus recognized if used again), so it's not a big issue to use the theater again.
- The Old Tower is used in all four encounter chains, but since the vault location doesn't actually require the map, you can simply have The Black Viper own whatever tower or townhouse you decide to put the vault in.
- The Converted Windmill is probably the hardest to use if you want to preserve the 'freshness' of the map. However, since little of the converted windmill is actually used for the vault location, you can move the features (Kalain, the pictures, etc.) to an old, decrepit manor instead.
- The Mausoleum can easily be used with the 'Maestro's Fall'-encounter chain, since that chain has no other mausoleum encounter. And since neither of the two other encounter chains are likely to require the map, it won't be too jarring if you use it in those chains either.

CREATING YOUR OWN CHAIN

As suggested in the chapter, you can also remove, replace or create encounters to make an encounter chain you feel fits your table best. This should reflect what you think your players would like or how they've progressed in the campaign so far. It's not possible to cover all the ways you can do this, but below you'll find an example of how it could look.

- **A. Mausoleum (Summer)** – The Gralhunds had the stone delivered to the Cassalanter's crypt, where the party finds dead cultists as well as Losser and his underlings.
- **B. Converted Windmill (Summer)** – The characters arrive as three spined devils make away with the stone.
- **C. Rooftop Chase (Summer/Winter)** – When the characters are either close to catching or losing the spined devils, Vevette Blackwater takes the stone from the devils.
- **D. Theater (Winter)** – After a while, Vevette ducks into the theater and makes her delivery to Agorn and Amath, before fleeing again.
- **E. Street Chase (Winter)** – The party chases Vevette before eventually discovering that Agorn has the stone (he left on foot and not in a hire-coach).
- **F. Mistshore (Winter)** – The party catch Agorn in the middle of matricide, but before they can question him, the thugs show up. After some rounds of tense combat, the City Watch shows up. Agorn will try to give himself over, and the party either flees or are taken in for questioning (neatly giving them a layout of the courthouse).
- **G. Courthouse (Autumn)** – Agorn replaces Fenerus as the prisoner the party must work to free if they want to discover the stone's location.
- **H. Old Tower (Winter)** – The party must fight the banites and Manshoon's Simulacrum to get the stone.
- **I. Mausoleum (Winter)** – Back to the City of the Dead to find the vault is hidden under the Brandarth crypt.

TIME FOR DOWNTIME

One of the best things about Waterdeep: Dragon Heist is that the players are given a home base and the opportunity for downtime early. But after chapter 2 we're not given any more directions on how to sneak downtime into the campaign, even though there's likely still a bunch of faction missions and downtime endeavors that haven't been explored yet. Below you'll find advice on how to insert downtime before, during and after the encounter chains. A good tip is, that if you want the party to take downtime, make sure to present it as a valid option ('you can spend some downtime here if you want'), so your players are aware that pausing to do other stuff won't mess up their hunt for the cache of dragons.

BEFORE THE ENCOUNTER CHAIN

The first opportunity for downtime comes while the party is looking for the nimblewright and the *Stone of Golorr*. Below are a couple of time-consuming obstacles you can insert here.

BROKEN DETECTOR

This one requires some foresight – you might have to set it up at the end of chapter 3, such as during the fight in Gralhund Villa. The premise is simple – the nimblewright detector is broken, and must be repaired by Nim or one of Gond's priests first. This can take as long as you want it to.

HARD TO FIND

The Nimblewright is simply impossible to find – for a while. Maybe Lady Gralhund told the Nimblewright to hide outside the city for a tenday. Or maybe the characters are just unlucky. Just make sure to tell the party that the search only takes up a small portion of their time, thus allowing all characters to participate in the downtime or faction missions.

CODED MESSAGE

As described in the book, the party finds a note on the nimblewright after destroying it. But instead of a map with a big X on it, it's a coded message – a jumble of random numbers and letters. A character needs to spend five days of downtime and succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check to decipher the code. Alternatively, the party can deliver the code to the House of Inspired Hands who'll decipher it in a tenday (or however long you want).

BETWEEN ENCOUNTERS

In each of the four chains, we find an opportunity to insert some downtime – or at least give the players an opportunity to take downtime, if they want it.

SPRING MADNESS

While visiting a mausoleum in the chain's second encounter, the party finds a key – a clue to find the graverobbers who took the *Stone of Golorr*. In the campaign book, the party only needs to go to the Metal House of Wonders or any random locksmith, to find out who made the key. Since you're not given any more information – or any fleshed out NPCs – to make this endeavor more interesting, it's a prime candidate for downtime activity.

Simply tell the party that they can spend downtime researching who's made the key and where it belongs (it could be five days of research and a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check to discover that Elasptra Ulmarr made the key), giving them time to simultaneously pursue other downtime activities and/or faction missions.

HELL OF A SUMMER

In the 'Hell of a Summer'-encounter chain, three street urchins steal the stone from the doppelganger Willifort during a chase through the streets and take it into the sewers. The party is supposed to be able to follow immediately, but you can choose to make it harder for them – perhaps it takes not one, but three DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) checks to keep track of the children as they weave through the crowd.

If the party loses track of the urchins, they'll have to devote time to locate them. Asking around, keeping an eye out on the street and so on. This can be performed as a downtime activity (five days of asking around and a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check might discover the urchins' cellar hideout), once again giving the party some time off.

MAESTRO'S FALL

In the 'Maestro's Fall'-encounter chain the party is required to speak with Fenerus at the courthouse. This is a good place to insert some downtime, since the party will have to enact a plan or establish a meeting to reach the jailed Fenerus. In the book, the party can meet with a magister after only one day, or a faction might swiftly secure Fenerus an early release.

However, you can easily delay this process. The magister can't meet until next week. Or, Fenerus is in solitary confinement for attacking a guard, he won't have visitors for a tenday. Or, the faction contact can get him out, but the paperwork takes a while. Of course, the party might enact plans that don't take long – getting arrested or breaking into the courthouse. If so, we suggest that you roll with it and try to fit the downtime in at a later time.

WINTER WIZARDRY

The 'Winter Wizardry'-encounter chain is pretty fast – there's not much room for pause between the various encounters, because the stone is in constant movement. There is, however, a pretty good spot for downtime as the party comes to the very last encounter. The mausoleum is guarded by a **treant**, who will only allow passage to a descendant of the Brandarth family. In the book, this results in only a day or two of downtime at best, but you can easily delay the process.

Have the doors to the mausoleum be magically sealed, allowing only entry to a Brandarth. Also, make it harder to discover that Renaer Neverember is the descendant of Brandarth. Perhaps it takes five days, a tenday or even more to discover. Allow your players to pay someone at Oghma's Temple or a similar place to scour the records for them, if you want to free all of the party up to perform faction missions and other downtime activities.

AFTER THE ENCOUNTER CHAIN

This one is pretty simple. We're already assuming that the party will take *some* downtime here, because they'll be looking for three keys. You can, however, extend this downtime as long as you'd like. Perhaps it takes a tenday to pry the keys' location from the prideful *Stone of Golorr*. Or perhaps the keys change periodically and are only revealed to the aboleth at a specific date, so the party has to wait for the next full moon or winter solstice (or whatever), to learn which keys they need to find.

We'll delve deeper into the process of finding the right keys on the following page, when we take a closer look at the Vault of Dragons.

THE VAULT OF DRAGONS

Finally, we're at the finishing stretch: The Vault of Dragons, the place where the enormous stolen treasure of Dagult Neverember lies hidden, guarded by puzzles and a dragon!

Below we'll take a look at the Vault of Dragons, giving advice on how to handle the search for keys, ideas on how to enhance the vault itself, suggestions for the party's encounter with the gold dragon Aurinax, as well as some pointers on how to handle the party's final encounter with the campaign's villain, or the villain's henchmen.

OPENING THE VAULT OF DRAGONS

To open the Vault of Dragons, three unique keys are required. This is where you get to decide the pace. You can make the keys anything you want – and you can put them anywhere you want. There's plenty of interesting keys described in the chapter – from bronze dragon scales to a queen's gift – and you're always free to make up any key you want. But, if you've been looking to put the heist in **Waterdeep: Dragon Heist**, now is your chance. Some of the keys described in the chapter (such as a beholder's eyestalk or a severed drow hand) might lead your party into a villain's lair. To give you some more options to choose from, we've added a few more keys and made three examples for each lair:

XANATHAR'S LAIR

- An albino gazer (X13)
- A treasure of gold worth nothing to most but everything to one (X19)
- A beholder eyestalk

CASSALANTER VILLA

- An original performance of 'Your Beardy Face' (C3)
- A unholy symbol of Asmodeus (C6)
- A weapon forged to destroy evil (A4a)

SEA MAIDENS FAIRE

- A metallic unicorn (J17)
- A rare and exotic fungus from the underdark (J22)
- A keg of smokepowder (J27)

KOLAT TOWERS

- A statue of Duhlark Kolat (K10)
- A green flame brazier (E8)
- A tyrant's mask (E12)

You can also decide that learning the location of a key hidden in a villain's lair is more difficult than finding more mundane keys like adamantine or a drunken elf (this has the added benefit of giving the party a bit more downtime to play around with). Instead of 1 day and 5 gp, it costs 50 gp and takes 5 days to discover a key's location within a villain's lair with a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

On a success, the party acquires the location of the key in question, either from dusty old records, receipts of sale or credible witnesses, or from individuals within the villain's organization (underlings, henchmen and so on) or friendly factions who've spied on the villain's lairs. How precisely they learn the location of the key depends on what the key is, as well as how easy or hard you want to make the heist for your players.

Unfortunately, it is beyond the scope of this document to describe in detail how the party could pull off a heist on each of the villains' lairs, but we hope to cover this in a later release.



INSIDE THE VAULT OF DRAGONS

Here we'll take a closer look at the Vault of Dragons itself, offering advice on how to run it and advice on how to enhance your party's experience playing through it.

V2. ENTRANCE FOYER

It seems like a wasted opportunity to have 10 sets of false doors with no other purpose than wasting the party's time. If you want, you can use following 'Dwarven Door Riddle' here.

As the party enters this large hall, they find a riddle written in bold dwarvish runes on the pillar in the middle of the hall:

*Doors abound, doors all around.
Beyond is danger or treasure found,
Approach to answer, open to speak,
Our greatest love hides what you seek.*

Each of the 12 doors has a single dwarven rune on it. If a character opens a door carrying the wrong rune, they find only bare rock and suffer an adverse effect. Each door's rune and its consequence is listed on the 'Dwarven Door Riddle'-table, starting from the door on the bottom left of the chamber (next to V1. Vault Door) and moving clockwise around the foyer.



DWARVEN DOOR RIDDLE

Rune	Effect
Orc	An orc appears, attacking immediately
Wealth	All coin carried by the character turns to ash
Power	DC 15 Strength save or be thrown back 20 feet and take 3d8 bludgeoning damage
Kin	This is a dwarf's greatest love and leads to V3
Clan	This is also a dwarf's greatest love and also leads to V3
Mead	DC 15 Constitution save or take 2d8 poison damage and be poisoned for 1 hour
Child	DC 15 Intelligence save or take 2d8 psychic damage and intelligence reduced to 6 for 1 hour
Rock	DC 15 Dexterity save to dodge rocks tumbling out. 3d8 bludgeoning damage, half on success
Beard	All hair on the character's body falls off
Laugh	DC 15 Wisdom save or maniacally laugh for 1 minute, causing one level of exhaustion
Luck	DC 15 Charisma save or take 2d8 necrotic damage and be affected by <i>bane</i> spell for 1 hour
Song	The character is deafened by boisterous dwarven singing inside their head for 1 hour

You can allow a dwarven character an DC 10 Intelligence check to realize that kin and clan are the correct answers, if you want to, but the riddle shouldn't be too easy to solve regardless. And since the characters can always find the right door by trial and error or by climbing or flying up to the upper levels, it's not a big issue if they don't understand or can't solve the riddle the way they're meant to.

V4. HALL OF MORADIN

This is a minor detail, but including the need for a Strength check in a situation where there's no cause to hurry or consequence for failure isn't the best dungeon design. You can either forgo the need for a check and instead just explain that the door was hard to push open, or you can include a consequence for failing. For example, if a character tries to force the door open and fails, they gain a level of exhaustion that persists until they take a short rest and expend at least one hit dice. Remember to allow several characters to aid each other, either granting a single character advantage on their Strength check or pushing upon the door as a group check.

V6. HAMMER AND ANVIL

As with V4, you might want to add a consequence for failing an attempt to open the adamantine door to this room using only brute strength.

V7. DUMATHOIN'S SECRET

This riddle is fun, but also slightly vague for such an important riddle. To make it a bit easier to understand, you can place a large painting of a dwarf's face with closed eyes and mouth on the floor. This should make it more clear to the party that there is a secret door, which will open when they solve the riddle.

V9. MAIN VAULT

This is it. The end of the road. The characters are finally face-to-face with the 500,000 gold dragons they've been hearing about for days or even weeks. But how to get it?

TALKING WITH AURINAX

By the book, there's two ways the party can talk Aurinax into handing the treasure over. Either with deception, which requires that each character within sight succeeds on a Charisma (Deception) check against Aurinax +8 Wisdom (Insight) check. Not very likely. Or with diplomacy, which requires that a single character makes the right argument and succeeds on a DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check. Quite possible, but depending on the build-up, it could feel a bit anticlimactic to acquire the treasure with a single die roll.

Instead, you can choose to handle a discussion with Aurinax like a skill challenge. The party must succeed on five DC 15 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) checks before they fail on three, to make Aurinax hand over the treasure. A character makes a check whenever they present a persuasive lie or argument. Remember, when you handle the conversation as a skill challenge, a single failure doesn't mean that the dragon is suddenly unfriendly or has seen through all the party's lies. It just means it needs more answers from the party. Here's some questions Aurinax might ask:

- Who are you?
- Who sent you?
- Where is Dagult Neverember?
- Why should I give you the treasure?
- What will you do with the treasure?
- How do you know the gold was embezzled?
- Isn't the gold much safer with me?
- What will I do, if I'm not guarding the treasure?

FIGHTING AURINAX

If dialogue fails, it feels like the campaign book assumes the characters will simply turn around and leave without the treasure. As they probably should. But, knowing D&D-players, they're more likely to turn to every adventurer's bread and butter: combat! And a fight with a CR 17 **adult gold dragon** probably won't go well for the party, unless they've brought powerful allies with them. There's a big risk that the campaign ends with a handful of roasted adventurers or hanging heads and empty hands. Not very satisfying.

If you want to give the party a sporting chance, you can have Aurinax spend his first turn transforming into his dragon form. Meanwhile, the *dragonstaff of aghairon* clatters to the floor. A character that picks it up can instantly attune to it, gaining advantage against Aurinax' breath weapon, and the realization that they can use the staff to *command* Aurinax (Note: we can't find a DC for the *command* spell in the staff's description, but 20 is a good round number). If no one thinks to pick it up, you can have the *Stone of Golorr* convey the staff's importance to its wielder.

To further increase the party's chances, have Aurinax use his weakening breath instead of his fire breath, because he doesn't want to absolutely destroy the party and he fears melting his treasure. Together, these changes should at least give the party a chance to defeat the gold dragon in combat.

Alternatively, you can also send in faction reinforcements early. Resourceful and morally questionable factions like the Doom Raider Zhentarim or Bregan D'aerthe might have followed the party all the way to hidden cache, arriving just in time to help the party defeat Aurinax. If you do this, consider letting the players control the NPCs you send to their aid.

LEAVING THE VAULT OF DRAGONS

As the party makes to leave the vault, they'll face the forces of a villain waiting for them in **V2. Entrance Foyer** (unless the vault doors were closed, which is unlikely since only Aurinax has the password). Let's take a look at what awaits.

THE WAITING VILLAINS

It might be on purpose, but the balance of these encounters (and the aid the party might receive, which we'll cover in a moment) is all over the place. Let's take a look at what each villain brings to the table.

- **Xanathar**. The beholder sends **Noska Ur'gray** (CR 1/2), six **bugbears** (CR 1) and a **gazer** (CR 1/2), which is a decently difficult encounter. If the party has already killed Noska, he's replaced by **Nar'l Xibrindas** (CR 7) and a **grell** (CR 3), which makes the encounter deadly.
- **Cassalanter**. The nobles send three **cult fanatics** (CR 2) and three **cultists** (CR 1/8), which is not a very tough encounter. Adding in the **doppelganger** (CR 2) brings up the challenge a bit, but not by much.
- **Jarlaxle**. The mercenary leader (CR 15) shows up personally with three **drow gunslingers** (CR 4) in tow. If the party refuses Jarlaxle's offer and tries to stop him from getting the gold, they're likely to get annihilated.
- **Manshoon**. The wizard sends his **simulacrum** (CR 8), the **bard** Agorn (CR 2), the **swashbuckler** Vevette (CR 3) and three **thugs** (CR 1/2). Again, a very tough encounter.

While it's always hard to judge an encounter on paper, it's pretty clear that there's a big gap in difficulty between some of the encounters. This isn't necessarily a problem, but it's a good idea to be aware of, so you can make the necessary changes at the table.

Now, we can't tell you exactly what to change, because encounter difficulty is never a precise practice. You might be running for six players, or you might be running for two. And if the party comes limping out from a fight with Aurinax, even the Cassalanter's cultists begin to look scary. But if they're fresh and starving for a fight, they might be able to give Manshoon's forces a run for their money.

So, to find the encounter that is just enough of a challenge, but not a total party kill, you'll have to do some tweaking on your own. Here's some pointers for each villain.

- **Xanathar**. Use the 'weak' encounter if the party is low on resources and you don't intend to give them aid. Use the tougher encounter with Nar'l Xibrindas if the party is fresh or if you intend to have reinforcements show up.
- **Cassalanter**. Use the encounter as written if the party is low on resources, but consider sending two **barbed devils** or even **Victoro Cassalanter** along with the cultists if you want to up the challenge or create a need for reinforcements.
- **Jarlaxle Baenre**. Use the encounter as written, but have reinforcements ready to help if a fight breaks out and/or have Jarlaxle tell his gunslingers to hold off the party while he *levitates* up to find the entrance to the vault and whisk away the gold with his *portable hole*.
- **Manshoon**. Use the encounter as it is if the party is fresh or you have reinforcements ready, but consider removing both Agorn and Vevette if the party is badly hurt. Even then, you still might have to use reinforcements.

FACTION REINFORCEMENTS

Using faction reinforcements gives you a tool to balance the encounter on the fly. If the characters are doing good on their own, you can hold off on the reinforcements, but if things are going poorly, you can call in the cavalry. Just be aware that there's a big power difference in the aid provided. Some reinforcements are small armies in themselves (we're looking at you, Laeral Silverhand, with your *time stop* and your *spellfire*) while other factions won't be much help at all (gee, thanks for the rats, Emerald Enclave!).

Also keep in mind that it's not always fun to have powerful NPCs swoop in and save the day. Not for you – sitting behind the screen, rolling dice against yourself – and not for the players, who can feel that they're no longer the real heroes. There's two things you can consider doing to mitigate this.

First, only provide just enough aid to tip the fight in the party's favor. Don't bring in Laeral Silverhand to kill a couple of bugbears if Jalester Silvermane will do the trick. Second, you can allow the players to control some or all of the NPCs that arrive. Some groups like that, some don't, but it's a great way to free up the clutter on your side of the DM's screen while also making sure your players don't feel left out.

Now, if you have the luxury of being able to pick and choose from several factions, there's definitely some we find works better than others.

- **Bregan D'aerthe.** Sending Jarlaxle in (or just a few of his drow gunslingers, with the drow himself only arriving after danger has passed) is cool because it brings a new situation to the table, when he has his own plans for the gold afterwards.
- **Harpers.** This one is pretty middle of the road. Mirt is very strong, so you don't necessarily need to use the swashbucklers as well. It works particularly well if the party are friendly with Renaer, but didn't bring him into the vault (he ran for Mirt to make sure the party survived – and that they remembered to hand over the gold!)
- **Emerald Enclave.** As mentioned above, the Emerald Enclave's reinforcements are very meager. If you use this faction, consider sending in Melannor Fellbranch and a few beasts, such as bears, wolves or boars, instead.
- **Force Grey.** Meloon Wardragon is a fun character, so sending him in is a nice touch. It will fall a bit flat if you use him against the Xanathar (upon which he turns on the party), because the characters are likely to be very confused that he shows up just to attack them.
- **Zhentarim.** Using the Doom Raiders is an interesting choice. Both because they all have different and interesting statblocks (pretty nice for handing out to your players), but also because they turn the situation on its head afterwards when they go for the gold. It's also a nice touch if they help the party against the Zhentarim, with Skeemo's betrayal. Just be aware that the Doom Raiders are very strong, so you might want to beef up the villains if you use them as reinforcements.
- **Order of the Gauntlet.** Hlam is a force of nature, so only use him if you've made a really tough encounter for your players. You can consider using Savra Belabranta and a handful of knights if you want to give a little less help.
- **Lord's Alliance.** Using the Lord's Alliance is also not a bad idea, but you might want to consider not using Laeral. She'll make any combat trivial – Jalester Silvermane and a few veterans is likely to be enough help on their own.

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

So, we've gone over both the villain's encounter and the possible reinforcements. But how to bring it all together? Well, it depends on what end you'd prefer – and what your players would prefer.

If you've already done a heist on a villain's lair or you just can't wait to get to **Dungeon of the Mad Mage**, you might want to create the conditions for a quick wrap up. Choosing a strong final encounter, and then sending in reinforcements that'll ensure the gold is quickly handed over to the city (like Bregan D'aerthe, Harpers, Order of the Gauntlet, or the Lord's Alliance) is likely to make for a quick end to the campaign.

If, on the other hand, you want the party to really work for the gold and send them headfirst into a villain's lair, the job becomes a bit more complicated. You'll want to make sure the last encounter is strong enough to defeat the party – but you also don't want to kill them. So, you'll either need to send a villain that can get the gold without killing the party – Jarlaxle and Manshoon would have the magic required – or reinforcements that can whisk the party away at the last moment, like Vajra Safahr, or make a glorious final stand while the party escapes, like Hlam, Renaer, or Jalester Silvermane. Alternatively, you can have Aurinax be the reinforcement (if the party is on friendly terms with the dragon), arriving to help the party defeat the villain's forces, only to return to the vault proper to find that the gold is gone!

Of course, there's always the chance that you want the party to have the 500,000 gold dragons and all the trouble (for them and you) that comes with it. If that's the case, more power to you. There's definitely a whole campaign in there somewhere, orchestrating the party's escape from the authorities and the wrath of Laeral Silverhand or various villains. Unfortunately, covering these endless possibilities would be campaign book in itself.

OTHER RESOURCES

We hope we've been able to aid and inspire you already, but before you go, we also have a few resources for you to use at the table while running Chapter 4: Dragon Season. While we've made encounter sheets and DM's Cheat Sheets before, this chapter of Waterdeep: Dragon Heist is simply too extensive and sprawling for that. But we do have something!

CHASE CHEAT SHEETS

On the following pages you'll find two cheat sheets – one for the 'Street Chase'-encounter and one for the 'Rooftop Chase'-encounter. Each sheet has abbreviated rules for running a chase and a complete table of chase complications. There's also a small tracker for initiative, hit points, distance, that'll hopeful help you keep track of both prey and pursuers.

MAPS

While the DM's Guild does not allow our products to contain maps inspired by the official maps included in Waterdeep: Dragon Heist, you can always find any free content we release at ValeurRPG.com. We'll be continually releasing stuff for the campaign during the rest of 2018.

STREET CHASE SHEET

Init	Creature	Hit Points	Distance
			ft.
			ft.
			ft.
			ft.
			ft.
			ft.
			ft.
			ft.
			ft.
			ft.

GENERAL RULES

Dashing. Each creature can Dash 3 + Con Mod times. Each extra Dash requires the creature to make a DC 10 Con check.

No Opportunity Attacks. Creatures involved in the chase can't make opportunity attacks against each other.

AT THE END OF EACH TURN...

Con Check. Roll a DC 10 Con check if the character has dashed more times than 3 + Con Mod. Fail: one level of exhaustion (removed on short or long rest).

Chase Complications. Roll d20 for a chase complication that affects the next creature in the initiative order.

AT THE END OF EACH ROUND...

Getting Away. If the quarry is ever out of the lead pursuer's sight, it can make a Dexterity (Stealth) check against the passive Perception of the pursuers to escape. **Advantage** if it has many things to hide behind or if it is in a crowded or noisy area. **Disadvantage** if it has only few things to hide behind, if it is in an uncrowded or quiet area, or if the lead pursuer is a ranger or has proficiency in Survival.

WEATHER EFFECTS

Spring

Heavy Rain. Noon-midnight. Disadvantage on Perception checks. Visibility reduced to 60 feet.

Thick Fog. Midnight-noon. Disadvantage on Perception checks that rely on sight. Visibility reduced to 30 feet.

Summer

Autumn Wind. Disadvantage on ranged weapon attack rolls and Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing. The wind extinguishes open fires smaller than a torch flame.

Winter

Blizzard. Disadvantage on Perception checks. The wind extinguishes open fires smaller than a torch flame. Visibility reduced to 60 feet. Snow creates difficult terrain in areas not heavily trod.

STREET CHASE COMPLICATIONS

d20 Complication

1 A large obstacle such as a horse or cart blocks your way. Make a DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to get past the obstacle. On a failed check, the obstacle counts as 10 feet of difficult terrain.

2 A crowd blocks your way. Make a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check (your choice) to make your way through the crowd unimpeded. On a failed check, the crowd counts as 10 feet of difficult terrain.

3 A large stained-glass window or similar barrier blocks your path. Make a DC 10 Strength saving throw to smash through the barrier and keep going. On a failed save, you bounce off the barrier and fall prone.

4 A maze of barrels, crates, or similar obstacles stands in your way. Make a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Intelligence check (your choice) to navigate the maze. On a failed check, the maze counts as 10 feet of difficult terrain.

5 The ground beneath your feet is slippery with rain, spilled oil, or some other liquid. Make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, you fall prone.

6 You come upon a pack of dogs fighting over food. Make a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to get through the pack unimpeded. On a failed check, you are bitten and take 1d4 piercing damage, and the dogs count as 5 feet of difficult terrain.

7 You run into a brawl in progress. Make a DC 15 Strength (Athletics), Dexterity (Acrobatics), or Charisma (Intimidation) check (your choice) to get past the brawlers unimpeded. On a failed check, you take 2d4 bludgeoning damage, and the brawlers count as 10 feet of difficult terrain.

8 A beggar blocks your way. Make a DC 10 Strength (Athletics), Dexterity (Acrobatics), or Charisma (Intimidation) check (your choice) to slip past the beggar. You succeed automatically if you toss the beggar a coin. On a failed check, the beggar counts as 5 feet of difficult terrain.

9 An overzealous guard (see the Monster Manual for game statistics) mistakes you for someone else. If you move 20 feet or more on your turn, the guard makes an opportunity attack against you with a spear (+3 to hit; 1d6 + 1 piercing damage on a hit).

10 You are forced to make a sharp turn to avoid colliding with something impassable. Make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw to navigate the turn. On a failed save, you collide with something hard and take 1d4 bludgeoning damage.

11–20 No complication.

ROOFTOP CHASE SHEET

Init	Creature	Hit Points	Distance
			ft.
			ft.
			ft.
			ft.
			ft.
			ft.
			ft.
			ft.
			ft.
			ft.

GENERAL RULES

Dashing. Each creature can Dash 3 + Con Mod times. Each extra Dash requires the creature to make a DC 10 Con check.

No Opportunity Attacks. Creatures involved in the chase can't make opportunity attacks against each other.

AT THE END OF EACH TURN...

Con Check. Roll a DC 10 Con check if the character has dashed more times than 3 + Con Mod. Fail: one level of exhaustion (removed on short or long rest).

Chase Complications. Roll d20 for a chase complication that affects the next creature in the initiative order (doesn't affect flying creatures).

AT THE END OF EACH ROUND...

Getting Away. If the quarry is ever out of the lead pursuer's sight, it can make a Dexterity (Stealth) check against the passive Perception of the pursuers to escape. **Advantage** if it has many things to hide behind or if it is in a crowded or noisy area. **Disadvantage** if it has only few things to hide behind, if it is in an uncrowded or quiet area, or if the lead pursuer is a ranger or has proficiency in Survival.

WEATHER EFFECTS

Spring

Heavy Rain. Noon-midnight. Disadvantage on Perception checks. Visibility reduced to 60 feet.

Thick Fog. Midnight-noon. Disadvantage on Perception checks that rely on sight. Visibility reduced to 30 feet.

Summer

Autumn Wind. Disadvantage on ranged weapon attack rolls and Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing. The wind extinguishes open fires smaller than a torch flame.

Winter

Blizzard. Disadvantage on Perception checks. The wind extinguishes open fires smaller than a torch flame. Visibility reduced to 60 ft. Snow creates difficult terrain in areas not heavily trod.

ROOFTOP CHASE COMPLICATIONS

d20 Complication

You come to a 10-foot-wide gap between rooftops. You can jump over the gap if your Strength is 10 or higher (each foot you clear costs 1 foot of movement), and you must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or fall prone on the far rooftop. Or you can cross the gap using a 10-foot-long rope line that stretches between the two rooftops; each foot of rope line costs 2 feet of movement.

You come to a rooftop that's 10 feet higher than the one you're on. Make a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check. On a failed check, the height change counts as 10 feet of difficult terrain.

You come to a rooftop that's 10 feet lower than the one you're on. Make a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check to jump down safely. On a failed check, you take damage from the fall and land prone.

A roof is slippery. Make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, you fall prone.

You step on a rotten section of roof, and it collapses underneath you. Make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, you fall partway into the hole in the roof and become stuck. While stuck, you are prone and restrained. You can use an action on your turn to make a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check, ending the effect on a success.

Roof shingles or tiles give way as you step on them. Make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, you fall prone and slide 10 feet back.

A rooftop protuberance such as a chimney or weather vane gets in your way. Make a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. On a failed check, the obstacle counts as 5 feet of difficult terrain.

You startle a flock of birds nesting on the rooftop, and they flutter all around you. Make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the birds count as 10 feet of difficult terrain.

You trigger a glyph of warding spell placed on the roof to discourage burglars. Make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, you are targeted by a Tasha's hideous laughter spell, the effect of which lasts 1 minute.

Someone on the ground throws a rock, a snowball, or a similar projectile at you. Make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the attack deals no damage but distracts you and counts as 5 feet of difficult terrain.

11–20 No complication.

A VALEUR RPG DM's RESOURCE

This document was made with [GM Binder](#).

We hope you get some use out of this resource. If there's anything missing, let us know. Also, don't forget to leave a comment and a review – they're greatly appreciated.

A big thank you to everyone who purchased this product on the [DM's Guild](#). You are helping adventures become real and dreams come true. Our other work for Waterdeep: Dragon Heist includes:

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[Chapter 2: Trollskull Alley](#)

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