

CHAPTER VIII

DRAC'S END

THE EDGE OF THE JUNGLE

Freeport sits nestled against the remaining portion of the jungle of A'Val. At its northern edge, Drac's End lies where the mass of the city starts to lose out to the greenery that covers the rest of the island. Although the area to the north, immediately around the city, is clear-cut and patrolled by the Sea Lord's Guard, the threats of A'Val's interior keeps most people who can afford better housing away from this part of town. Of course, the number of people in Freeport who can't afford better housing is considerable, so Drac's End is home to some of the poorer elements of the city's population. Here, fresh-faced assistants from the Courts who can't afford anything better, laborers, and simple craftsfolk keep shabby rooms in rundown rooming houses. Families live in crowded tenements, where the smells of city life are palpable.

This doesn't mean Drac's End is a terribly dangerous place. Compared to Scurvytown, the streets here are a

veritable haven of civility. The people here may still be poor, but they are in large measure honest folk just trying to get by. The district also features an amazing variety of cultures and races from across the known world, from humans to azhar to dwarves and hobgoblins, all packed into the multitude of crowded dwellings. Foreigners fresh off the boat—those who have the sense to avoid Scurvytown, that is—often gravitate to Drac's End. The cheap rent and the presence of the Freeport Institute (the lone bastion of higher learning in town) also attract many students, increasing the district's diversity further.

The people of Drac's End live packed together here in slipshod buildings, fully realizing they are the barrier between Freeport and the rest of A'Val. Never was that fact more obvious than during the Great Green Fire, when Drac's End was ravaged for days by fire, smoke, and burning ash. Dozens of houses burned down, and many more were damaged and still bear the scars of the

"People here, you know, they don't have much money. But some things are more important than money. Some things you buy with loyalty, not gold. You can't steal those things. And if you try, loyalty might just hold you down and kick you in the side of head."

—Bill Sangapulatele

DRAC'S END

N SMALL TOWN

Corruption +0; **Crime** +1; **Economy** +3; **Law** -3; **Lore** -3; **Society** +3

Qualities academic, rumormongering citizens;
Disadvantages cursed (Salt Curse)

Danger +20

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government council

Population 1,850 (850 humans, 350 dwarves, 150 azhar, 100 hobgoblins, 400 other)

NOTABLE NPCS

Tent Town Mission Coordinator

Wills Shard (LN male human expert 6)

Indecipherable Scroll

Owner Professor Wilmina Gertz (NG female human wizard 13)

Tranquil Shark Master

Bill Sangapulatele (LN male human brawler 11)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 1,000;

Purchase Limit 5,000; **Spellcasting** 5th

Minor Items 3d4; **Medium Items** 1d6



TRANQUIL SHARK PROTECTION AGENCY

Freeport is a dangerous place, and everyone needs protection at some point. The oddly named Tranquil Shark Protection Agency exists to meet the security needs of Freeport's less affluent citizens. Headed by the smiling Bill Sangapulatele, the Tranquil Sharks use martial arts, community connections, and plain old common sense to defend their clients from assassins, debt collectors, and other enemies alike.

HISTORY

Hailing from islands far to the south, Sangapulatele worked for a time as a pirate but found it too bloody a calling for his tastes. He is a master of the Tranquil Shark fighting style, a martial art native to his homeland, which incorporates both armed and unarmed combat techniques and specializes in disarming and disabling enemies without killing. He came to Freeport about eight years ago and decided to stay, feeling that his skills could both support a good life for him and also make Freeport a better place. Over the years, the cheerful foreigner has become a valued member of the Drac's End community, beloved by both clients and neighbors; a number of locals have come to train under him and work for his agency.

The Tranquil Shark Protection Agency is very strict about its services. Sangapulatele explains to potential clients that his job is to protect them, not to intimidate or beat up their enemies. He usually has his guards work in two-person teams. An obvious bodyguard stays near the client, while a less conspicuous partner scouts around nearby for trouble.

flames—every resident knows someone who perished or was permanently injured by the fire. The disaster could well have reduced the entire district to ashes, but somehow it pulled through; if anything, the people of Drac's End became stronger for their ordeal.

There is a community here, one that looks after its own and fights back against threats both foreign and domestic, be they famine, poverty, the political machinations of the rich, or the beasts and supernatural forces that prowl the jungle (and sometimes the streets). Life in Drac's End is hard, but it's not all bad; most people here have hopes for a better future, whether their dreams are realistic or not. While they aren't exactly open-minded regarding other cultures, they are certainly more welcoming than the people of Scurvytown—or for that matter, those of Bloodsalt.

In fact, Drac's End is one of the few places in Freeport, and perhaps anywhere, in which people of almost any race can hope to find a new start. It is not uncommon to see goblins, orcs, and even trolls sauntering down the street here, and while they might not be welcomed in every home, they are at least tolerated. In fact, a growing number of hobgoblin tradesfolk and their families have fled the vicious ghetto of Bloodsalt and found some degree of welcome here.



- 1 - TENT TOWN
- 2 - FORTUNE TELLER AND CARD READER
- 3 - TENT TOWN MISSION
- 4 - PEON'S SHOP
- 5 - FREEPORT INSTITUTE
- 6 - THE GLUSTER
- 7 - INDECIPHERABLE SCROLL
- 8 - TRANQUIL SHARK PROTECTION AGENCY
- 9 - FANG AND GLAW
- 10 - DRAC'S ENDLESS ROBERS
- 11 - Grog POT
- 12 - MERMAID
- 13 - SCHOLAR'S QUILL
- 14 - SWORD AND ANCHOR
- 15 - FINNEGAN'S BOOKS
- 16 - TREACHEROUS PLOTS
- 17 - DEAD POETS
- 18 - MELTED POT
- 19 - LUCKY LADY
- 20 - BELLE'S WELL

Sangapulatele provides free hand-to-hand combat training to any locals who ask for it; such training is admittedly basic, but it's enough to help people defend themselves in a pinch. Anyone making trouble here may find the citizens surprisingly well trained in self-defense.

DESCRIPTION

The Tranquil Shark offices can be found in a two-story building near the Merchant District. A sign outside the

offices consists of a set of blunted shark's teeth embedded into a wooden shield. The neighborhood is very quiet, and strangers in this part of town may feel like many of the locals are watching them—because they *are*. The first floor of the agency is split between a combat training room and an office with a couple of writing tables that Sangapulatele and his scribe use. He meets prospective clients, or their agents, in the office. The upper floor is used as sleeping

LAW AND ORDER

The Watch has a precinct house in the middle of Drac's End, and a few dozen guardsmen patrol the district. A few of them are locals, born and bred in Drac's End, and they do their best to make Drac's End a safe place for their families and friends. The others are usually newcomers or transfers from other districts, though, who feel little or no affection for the cramped streets and poor faces of this neighborhood; they will take bribes, ignore their duties, or abuse their authority as they see fit.

Drac's End is the largest district in Freeport, in terms of area, and one of the biggest in terms of population; no matter how hard the Watch tries, they can't patrol every neighborhood all the time. For this reason, many citizens of Drac's End protect their own streets. While they are not brutal vigilantes like the Blackened Knot gang of Scurvytown, there are many "neighborhood watch" groups around the district who do their best to watch out for criminals and defend their families from robbers and thugs. Further, Bill Sangapulatele provides free combat training and low-cost weapons to many citizens of all races and backgrounds; anyone attempting to prey upon the "easy marks" of Drac's End may be in for a nasty surprise.

Very few buildings in Drac's End have locks at all. Most citizens bar their doors from the inside, while neighbors keep watch on each other's houses during the day. Most homes have no glass or bars on their windows, but the windows are so small or narrow that few thieves could enter that way.



quarters for Sangapulatele and his employees. He has roughly a dozen agents in his employ, both male and female; the majority of them are human, but he has agents and students of various races. All of the agents are natives of Drac's End and trained in the Tranquil Shark style.

KEY FIGURES

The following characters can be found at the Tranquil Shark Protection Agency.

BILL SANGAPULATELE

Bill Sangapulatele (*LG male human brawler 11*) is an imposing, big-shouldered man with the dark skin and broad features typical of southern islanders. He comes across as very calm and balanced. A master of many combat maneuvers, he does not believe in unwarranted aggression; he teaches his pupils to avoid fights when possible, or if necessary, to disarm and then disable

their opponents without doing lasting bodily harm. Sangapulatele is very generous, especially with friends, and even potential customers will often receive small trinkets and gifts from him or his students. If anything, he is almost too friendly and smiles constantly. He does not speak much, but when he does, he gets to the point quickly.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

The Tranquil Shark Agency provides protection and security services to the poorest citizens of Freeport, which sometimes means defying the richest citizens. The wealthy sometimes hurt Drac's End, whether through the political power games of the Captains' Council, the brutal amusements of the Rakeshames, or in any of a number of other ways. By standing up for the underdog, Bill Sangapulatele has made some powerful enemies, and now they want him out of the picture.

Can the Tranquil Shark Agency protect itself on the physical, social, and financial front all at once, or will Bill need the help of allies and neighbors?

"Shark stops moving, shark dies. Tranquil shark moves while not moving. That is secret of tranquil shark. Also hitting enemy very hard in side of head or in groin. That is other secret."

—Bill Sangapulatele