

The Conspiracy to Kill Dunlat Moran (1196)

In 1178, [Dunlat Moran](#) overthrows [Marl Larkland](#) and takes his position as one of Ehlíath's Crime Lords; the nobility is appropriately alarmed that a merchant class individual could overcome a fellow noble and the entrenched system and seize such power; the realization that control of the city is slipping further and further into the hands of the Crime Lords prompts elements of the local government to seek aid from the royal family; though no such aid is openly rendered, the Overseers begin a secret campaign to destabilize the Crime Lords and retake the city (the true motives for this operation are not actually political, but directly corresponding to the plans of [Eramis Dhorum](#)).

In 1195, their plans begin to take shape, as the power structures of Ehlíath begin to shift when [Haedn Callowhen](#) seizes control of the railways from [Brhen Athurley II](#), and immediately allies himself with Dunlat Moran, and thus indirectly with [Rhaze](#). These three have the potential to put an economic choke hold on the city's trade and production, unnerving the other Crime Lords (Athurley and [Cassian](#)) into more direct alliance. Both sides start quietly courting the neutral parties ([Draylock](#) and [the Wisp](#)) in anticipation of what essentially amounts to civil war in the streets.

[Lhash Morley](#) is concerned that such a conflict would greatly destabilize and weaken the Clag, leaving it vulnerable to other influences. Indeed, she is unaware of how accurate her instincts are, given that Dhorum's agent [Gaelyn Dauth](#) has partially engineered the entire situation to provide openings for the monarchy (and more importantly, the Overseers) to retake Ehlíath, by having [Vhíloth Rhenna](#) encourage Haedn's secession and alliance with Dunlat.

When Moran will not be swayed from his alliance, and indicates that he intends to use the sway it grants him as a foundation for greater ambitions, Lhash begins plotting to assassinate him. In doing so, a power vacuum would be created in the Trade District that Haedn would lack the strength to seize upon (the reverse would not work, as Dunlat might be able to take the Hub for himself if Callowhen was gone). In addition, Athurley would likely take the opportunity to focus on Haedn and re-conquering the rails, rather than trying to gain control of the docks, once again leaving the two points of economic leverage separate in ownership.

Rhaze is technically a wild card in this plan, but between losing a powerful ally and her primary reason to back Haedn in one fell swoop, she is less likely to become directly involved. Crucially, however, this is contingent on there being no chance of reprisal; if another Crime Lord—especially Athurley—is suspected of killing Dunlat, the event is far more likely to spark violent retaliation.

Therefore, the murder cannot be political.

To this end, Lhash chose an appropriate scapegoat; [Enford Larkland](#), operating as a contract lawyer under the pseudonym Ennic Lankr. Given that the Larkland family has cause to seek revenge for the events of 1178, his involvement would automatically sell a narrative unrelated to Ehlíath's power structure. Using her vast connections to engineer business opportunities and recommendations, she makes arrangements to have a local mining company hire Ennic and bring him to the Clag; ideally, he might prove willingly participate in their plan, but Lhash was prepared to use him regardless, as either way, he would not survive the encounter. [Lisl](#) is assigned to investigating Moran's security measures. From her initial reconnaissance, the plan develops as follows:

-Moran's primary protections against assassination are largely passive and preventive; first and foremost, he has incentivized his own survival by being a dependable, successful, and sane leader of the Trade District. Generally speaking, it is agreed that his continued control is far better than a power vacuum forming in his absence, or another, worse Lord taking over. This contributes to his secondary line of protection; his behavior leads his retinue to be very, very loyal, and none that could threaten his safety can be turned subtly. There are also many dangerous people who would take his death somewhat personally, including Rhaze and his brother [Jackdaw](#), who despite holding a less obvious position of power would prove a very dangerous enemy. Of those that would still seek to damage him or his plans, Moran preempts as many threats as possible through early detection, and use of a spy network to do so. Finally, he employs a strong degree of common sense, avoiding unnecessary risks, and keeping information about his own movements/activities as private as possible. Sometimes he even disguises himself to avoid recognition in general. All of this means that Lisl will need to be very careful when performing the legwork of the operation, or their intentions could be discovered.

-Staging the death in either the mining company's offices or Moran's offices will be the easiest way to involve Ennic, as he would be able to enter under the guise of a business meeting. However, it is highly unlikely he'll be able to enter such a situation while carrying a means of actually killing the Crime Lord, meaning that Lisl will need to find a way to infiltrate undetected. Human guards are typically outfitted with necessary chem to be good the job, such as Long Wake, Bloodwash, Night Eye, and other Stims. The locks will also be high quality, but anything can be picked, given the right tools and time.

-The office building is kept lit well enough for guards to see throughout the night, so approach will have to be from exterior windows; this means avoiding perimeter guards, which fortunately Lisl has the training to accomplish. The windows of the office, however, are equipped with electromagnetic alarms that sound if the circuit is completed, which inevitably occurs if the window opens. To bypass this measure, Lisl repeatedly activates one and hides without entering, until the alarm is deactivated on suspicion of being defective (to be repaired later), then enters the room and sabotages a different window alarm, such that it can always be entered without triggering the alarm circuit (by subtly covering the contact point with an insulator). At this point, she can come and go freely.

-This gives her access to Dunlat's files and, importantly, scheduling information. It also lets her see that he has measures against toxins, including antidotes, bloodwash, and filtration masks on hand at all times. He also employs two animal measures; a Rhannoc's Canary, and a dog, which are used to detect subtle airborne chemicals and unfamiliar scents respectively. (She also learns that he has contingencies against siege and major assault, including a panic room, stockpiles of provisions and armaments, fire suppressants, and secret Warren access.)

NEED TO WORK OUT DETAILS, BUT THE INITIAL PLAN RUNS AS FOLLOWS FOR IF THEY'RE IN DUNLAT'S OFFICE; OTHERWISE, SECURITY WILL BE EASIER TO HANDLE.

-Lisl will be waiting inside the office during the meeting; the dog can be tricked by acclimating it to her scent over long amounts of time, and/or tampering with its judgment using foxrub or other chem.

-Dunlat and Ennic will both die or be rendered unconscious, possibly from slow acting paralytic gas; appropriate injuries will be dealt to indicate a fight, and the two will fall from a window; this clears the room of toxic gas, if that's part of the plan.

-The bird can be killed to seem as though it was collateral damage in the fight. Alternatively, it could be killed a few days before hand, as if from natural causes.

-Afterwards, when Ennic's identity is investigated, they'll make sure the truth gets out.

Things initially go as planned, but Ennic Lankr draws Dunlat's attention by refusing a bribe to negotiate a contract in the Crime Lord's favor. To learn what makes the lawyer tick, Moran sends Ridley to get closer to him and investigate his intentions. Ridley, per his usual tactics, befriends the merchant. Though he learns that Ennic does indeed want to remain distant from Dunlat, he detects no hostility.

Lisl and Lhash misinterpret his behavior make a move to recruit Lankr; however, they overestimate his willingness to believe that they are not agents of Dunlat attempting to discern his intentions; when it becomes clear that they know his true identity, he flees, overcoming [Trang](#) using a [counteragent](#) and evading Lisl for long enough to reach Ridley, who he'd already been scheduled to meet with that night.

Ennic tells Ridley the truth, and his best guess as to the situation; that Dunlat learned who he really was and believes he is a threat; he is certain that the Crime Lord will kill him. Ridley decides to reveal his own secrets, and help him fake his death to escape the city—he will then claim to Dunlat that when Ridley reached the place they were to meet, he found Ennic Lankr dead in a nearby alley, dead from bleeding out and robbed, and that to cast off any possible blame, Ridley had to throw the body in the river and then go to Lankr's office at the Mining Company the next day to ask why he never showed up, indicating that he was as surprised as anyone that he'd gone missing.

This plan works. Dunlat accepts the explanation, as he—still entirely unaware of Lankr's true identity—has no reason to think more on the death of a smuggler. Ridley believes himself to have gotten away with the deception because they lined up the facts properly, and thinks that his friend doesn't suspect him of knowing who Lankr really was. However, this lie begins to eat at him, given that he wanted to re-establish trust with his friend and now feels he doesn't deserve it—this is weighed against a belief that Dunlat didn't tell him he had learned the truth and was planning to kill Lankr, leading him to feel justified enough not to confess. Meanwhile, Lhash and Lisl, hearing Ridley's story later on, believe their scapegoat to be dead as well, and must restructure their entire plan, aiming instead to have Moran's death appear to be an accidental.

(Ennic forges a new identity for himself, and goes on to become a ship's boatswain named Armand Leyland .)

Ridley's guilt continues to consume his subconscious; within the year, Jackdaw overhears Ridley confessing what really happened with Ennic aloud while high on Tar—in Ridley's head, he's confessing to [Dar](#). This is deeply alarming, but Jackdaw listens to the rest of Ridley's statement that the act was done with the certainty that Lankr wasn't a threat; he didn't want Ennic to be killed over a fight that he never wanted to be a part of and had no intention of participating in. He knows that Dunlat will have no such internal discord, and wrestles with whether to tell him anything. Ultimately, Jackdaw chooses to keep the matter entirely secret, never mentioning to Ridley what he overheard.

Time passes; using continued access to Dunlat's scheduling records via the sabotaged window access, Lhash and Lisl plan to cause a Doldrums cave in during a clandestine meeting with a smuggler. This requires them to source mining explosives and place them at key structural points, known by Lhash from her younger days. A spontaneous Doldrums collapse is entirely plausible, given the tunnels' history, and the Ghant flooding would likely wash away or disguise any evidence left by the bombs.

However, this plan is disrupted by the infrastructural improvements that Dunlat has made to the Warrens, including pumps to handle potential flooding. He sustains minor injuries from debris, but survives, and the scene is not contaminated or sealed by the Ghant's waters. Moran's spymaster begins investigating, and finds inconsistencies with the premise of the event being accidental; as a former scout in the military, the Spymaster recognizes the high explosives residue and begins looking for its source.

Upon hearing that the collapse may have been an assassination attempt, Jackdaw tells his brother that Ennic Lankr was really Enford Larkland and that he is still alive, fearing there may be a connection. Though he doesn't reveal that Ridley is responsible for this, Dunlat now knows the story of throwing Lankr's dead body in the river to be a lie. It doesn't help that Ridley had been absent from the crew dormitory during the event, for the entirely unrelated reason of getting high in the seclusion of his scrap. Dunlat sends Flitch to track down Ridley and bring him in for questioning, though does not reveal the specific reason why; Flitch, however, can conclude from proximity to recent events that the Crime Lord suspects his involvement with the explosion/assassination attempt. This notably doesn't match with Flitch's mental image of Ridley as a coward and pacifist, so he concludes that some other element—blackmail, or an error in judgment—must be at play, and decides to do some of his own interrogation/investigation once he finds his man.

The attempt to capture Ridley, however, is thwarted by [N](#), whose sense of guilt over inaction from previous events spurs her to act in defense of a stranger; he remains ignorant of why his friend and employer is suddenly hostile towards him, and answers are not generally forthcoming, as Jackdaw, Lhash, and Lisl all have their own reasons to keep quiet, and none of the Crime Lords want rumors of assassination attempts

to start spreading.

--During the Spymaster's investigation, he comes to close to the truth and is killed by Lisl

--During the events of the book, Lhash and Lisl deliberately mislead Ridley and N to cover up their involvement (and launch a second attempt?); Lhash feels increasingly guilty about deceiving the two, who she legitimately cares for, and Lisl eventually realizes that she has once again fallen into her old ways.

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