

## Special Detective Lisstree Serthalen

*Drow woman; 183 years old. Independent contractor employed by the Snakesford constabulary.*

*You dress in well-made, expensive silk clothing which blends well into the night sky and does not obstruct your movement.*

### Traits

- Average **strength** (d12)
- High **agility** (d8)
- Average **health** (d12)
- Average **knowledge of the world** (d12)
- High **perception** (d8)
- Dark vision

### Skills

- Alarming aptitude at close-quarters **stabbing** (d4)
- In-depth knowledge of **politics** (d8)
- A **terrifying** reputation as a ruthless killer (d8)
- An inability to **relate to people who aren't drow** (d30)

### Magical abilities

- Astonishing ability to **blink** short distances (d6)

*You have a licence which authorises you to use your ability in your duties as a police consultant.*

### Important equipment

- A plethora of **finely crafted daggers**.
- **Spectacles with dark lenses**, to use when out in daylight.

Life on the surface is far more dull than the cut and thrust of the underdark. For the moment, at least, dull is good. Things got a little too exciting for you after your last assassination job—it was a powerful matriarch, and her daughters bear decades-long grudges. You've been in semi-permanent exile in this smelly, sun-blasted backwater for longer than you might have liked—even after all this time, your eyes have still not adapted to the brightness—but this too shall pass. In the meantime, you have made the best of your situation by assisting the local constabulary with their most dangerous cases.

They usually call on your services when they have to deal with an incident in the drow quarter—their own grunts are laughably under-equipped to deal with drow magic users. Even the threat of a visit from you, however, is often enough to resolve an awkward situation without bloodshed—your reputation has preceded you. And if bloodshed is necessary. . . well, you are rather good at making sure that the blood which is shed does not belong to you.

You are fortunate enough to be gifted with a magical talent which complements and enhances your fighting ability: the power to transport yourself instantly across short distances. In the blink of an eye you can dodge a blow or leap behind an opponent—over the years you have developed a varied repertoire of moves.

You don't drag yourself down to the station just for any old case, of course. You don't want the locals to start taking you for granted. You are usually swayed by sufficiently high remuneration—resolving the grievances of lords and ladies is

usually a lucrative pursuit—but you are not above accepting a more modest payment if something about a case particularly catches your interest.

Take this temple arson, for instance. Ordinarily a religious turf war between elf-god zealots and elderly illithids wouldn't be your cup of tea, but Commander Rose came to see you in person to ask you to lead the investigation. He practically begged. It wasn't hard to figure out that this had very little to do with religion.

Osiric, Lord Foxfire—the city's spymaster—keeps this temple as some sort of bizarre personal project, and his council arch-enemy, Sumner, wants to use this opportunity to dig up some dirt on his foe. Both of them have been breathing down Rose's neck and making demands, and the poor chap quite wisely doesn't want to pick a side until he knows who's going to win. He's already let each of them select a member of the investigative team. Since you are a neutral party beyond his control, he can more plausibly distance himself from the whole thing by putting you in charge.

You find the city's politics quite diverting. Compared to underdark intrigue it is like a game for children, but it is the closest that you can get to feeling at home, and you can't let yourself get completely out of practice.

This Foxfire fellow is quite an interesting character: he was fathered by a yuan-ti nobleman. You recall that his mother Clarissa briefly eloped to the yuan-ti kingdom before returning with her infant son—his albinism was poorly received by the breeding-obsessed yuan-ti nobility. Upon her return she was shunned by her family for reasons which you frankly find incomprehensible. Young Osiric was a bright lad who eventually resurfaced in the civil service as an aide to the late Lord Chandler—who of course was the old spymaster.

You have it on good authority that Osiric's machinations brought about the coup that deposed the yuan-ti kingdom's Mad Emperor Zissarthaz, and this earned him his noble title. Some say that the emperor himself was his father, but you suspect that's an exaggeration for the sake of drama. To no-one's surprise he took over his mentor's position, although officially the council maintains the pretence that he's just an ordinary member.

Foxfire still despises the yuan-ti to the point of irrationality, and opposes them in the political arena at every opportunity. Someone else he despises is Edward, Lord Sumner—Clarissa's younger brother, who usurped her title after she was disinherited. In the underdark it would be unthinkable for a brother to supplant a sister, but here on the surface they are more egalitarian. Hilariously, this means that Sumner has tended to ally himself with the local yuan-ti in recent years, despite his family's earlier antipathy towards Clarissa's choice of consort. These humans are so funny—it's as if they can't remember what happened a mere fifty years ago.

You don't know what the attack on the temple has to do with all of this, but you think it will be interesting to look into it. You are certain that this will be an educational experience.

### Your fellow investigators

**Acolyte Velaro:** an illithid. You've been informed that one of the temple attackers was injured too badly to be given medical attention but was just alive enough to be used as a host for an illithid larva. This sounds like a terribly convenient coincidence which is almost certainly untrue, but who's going to split hairs over some thug? This creature may prove to be helpful in various ways. Foxfire has arranged for it to accompany the investigative team.

**Sergeant Ambrose Cartwright:** everyone at the station knows this Cartwright. He is good with people. You understand that this is an area in which you have no experience, since you have never seen the point of cultivating such a skill. At times when it may be more effective to wheedle information out of a suspect than to terrify them into compliance, this man may come in useful.

**Warrant Officer Zhushessash “Zed” Xashtli:** this yuan-ti is some sort of expert on forensics. Your paths have seldom intersected—they are usually holed up in some stinking lab dipping bits of corpse in chemicals to see what they will do. That part of an investigation usually takes place after you have gone home. This time, however, you may need their sort of expertise out in the field. You are reasonably certain that they are Sumner’s mole on the team—you wonder what their orders are.