The Shark Cult has become the fastest growing group in Lankhmar. They preach the “Way of Predation,” which they claim is the law of nature—one should take what one wants when one can. Incidents of violence and mayhem have erupted all over the city as new followers take the cult’s message to heart and prey on the weak.

Unknown to the authorities (or the player characters at this point), a cursed Simorgyan idol, called a “penate,” has also heightened tensions and acted as a catalyst for the Shark Cult’s message. The plot behind these actions is revealed in detail in the upcoming adventure A Night of Blood and Teeth. For now, the Game Master should simply emphasize the oppressive atmosphere of Lankhmar and goad on any feelings of anger present in the scoundrels or the nonplayer characters they encounter. Random meetings with old friends erupt into arguments over who paid for the last round, shopkeepers are quick to cheat their customers, and the agitated members of the city watch are eager for violence.

In short, Lankhmar is a powder keg, and a shark priest named Kuleg may be about to provide a spark.

A shark priest named Kuleg has been tasked with toppling the city’s various power-holders, including the Thieves’ Guild. It is as-yet too strong, but its partners Beggars’ Guild is not.

To incite the mob, Kuleg cornered a “blind” beggar named Tomas and exposed his fraud by berating him in front of a large crowd. At the height of the fervor, the clever priest tossed Tomas a dagger—which the “blind” beggar caught. Armed with this pretense, Kuleg and his mob marched on the master of the Beggars’ Guild.

Some of the mob are followers planted there to ensure the mob’s furor, but most are simple Lankhmarts angry at their lot in life and spurred on by the cursed Simorgyan penate. Kuleg doesn’t truly care about getting “justice” for the people by overthrowing the Guild Master—his task is to see how the powerful Thieves’ Guild and City Watch respond to the attack so he and his cronies can factor it into their larger schemes.

The Guild Master, Boris the Lame, is in his house on Cash Street when Kuleg and the mob arrives. A half-dozen Bloody Blades (perhaps some of the same men and women encountered in Grim Tidings) serve as his house guard but are greatly outnumbered by the hostile (and growing) crowd outside.

“The name is Hisvia. I work for the Thieves’ Guild. Our friend, the master of the Beggars’ Guild, is being...detained...by rabble roused by a priest of the Shark Cult. Boris has asked for help from those who have occasionally caught his attention, and you were my first stop.

He will pay 20 gold rilks to each of you if you will help him disperse—or otherwise ‘eliminate’—this threat before they do him bodily harm.”

Hisvia isn’t empowered to negotiate further. If the group says no she simply skulks off into the night to find aid elsewhere. At least for a while. She returns 30 minutes later with a new (and final) offer as she could find no other takers. This time the offer is forty gold rilks.
If the scoundrels pass again, hint that they might want to at least watch from a nearby vantage point and see what happens. They can then get involved if they like or just watch the carnage. Without their help, some of the Bloody Blades fall and some escape. Boris the Lame does not survive, however, and his house begins to burn. Neighbors rush frantically with water to douse the fire but are prevented by the greedy mobs. If the group continues to stay out of the affair, three square blocks burn to the ground and several dozen locals perish in the flames.

- Hisvia: Use the Bandit profile from *Lankhmar: City of Thieves*. Hisvia is a ratling and keeps a pet white rat under her cloak. It runs across her shoulders at times, creating a strange and unsettling bulge. If she talks long enough, it eventually pops its head out looking for treats or a head scratch.

**MOB RULE**

The mob consists of about 100 angry citizens of Lankhmar, whipped up by Kuleg and a few other supporters planted in the crowd. They’re split evenly between the front “courtyard” entrance and the back, where the guards have bolted the doors shut.

There’s no one way to save Boris here—the scoundrels can use whatever means works best for them. A few of the most likely are discussed below, followed by their statistics.

- **Fight:** There are six members of the Bloody Blades in Boris’ house, including their leader, Karstan. (If Karstan was slain in *Grim Tidings*, use another mercenary of your own creation.) Most of the crowd stays out of an actual fight with trained warriors, but Kuleg manages to rally 20+2d20 into combat.

- **Sneak Boris Out:** Stealthy types might use Stealth and a distraction to get Boris out. This residence is relatively new to the Guild Master and doesn’t have the customary secret doors or other exits yet. That leaves only the front or back door, windows, or roof. Kuleg has stationed four followers on the roofs of neighboring buildings to alert him should anyone attempt to use these exits, so these sentries must be taken out before the group can sneak their way out of the confrontation.

- **Take out Kuleg:** The heroes could slip into the crowd and attempt to assassinate or disable Kuleg. If the crowd sees this happen, however, their frenzy breaks and 2d20 of them attack immediately. Kuleg isn’t foolish enough to fall for a one-on-one fight or challenge. “Your strength is in your blade. Mine is in the power of the people!” he retorts.

- **Talk to the Crowd:** A group with a clever orator might be able to sway the mob. Salient points include preventing a gang war in Lankhmar, protecting the “weakest” of the offenders (the Beggars’ Guild), or the consequences likely to occur when the overlord’s troops or members of the Thieves’ Guild seek retribution. Use the Social Conflict rules to determine the results of the plea. Kuleg argues from the cult’s side, reminding the citizens that they’ve suffered too long under the corrupt and greedy guilds and now is their time for payback. Like the shark, they will “cut their teeth” on the weakest of their enemies—the isolated Boris—then move on to the larger threats.

- **Boris the Lame:** The Guild Master is terrified at being torn to pieces by the mob. He trusts the player characters more than the Bloody Blades unless given reason not to.

- **Bloody Blades (12):** Use the Bandit profile from *Lankhmar: City of Thieves*. Karstan is a Wild Card with Agility d8, Fighting d8, and the First Strike Edge. All are armed with short swords (Str+d6).

- **Kuleg:** The priest is eager but not suicidal. If he loses he retreats to fight another day.

- **The Mob:** Use the Beggar profile from *Lankhmar: City of Thieves*. There are about 100 present, but only 20+2d20 in a fight.

**KULEG THE SHARK PRIEST**

Kuleg revels in the mischief of the Shark Cult and is entirely devoted to its cause because it justifies and embraces his cruel streak. He’s sly and cunning when it comes to whipping up the crowd, goading them on over every provocation he can come up with.

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

**Skills:** Boating d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Spellcasting d8, Stealth d6, Swimming d8, Taunt d8

**Cha:** +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5 or 6 (spear); **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Vow (Major—Serve the Shark Cult)

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Sea Magic), Charismatic, Rapid Recovery, Sorcerer, Strong Caster

**Powers:** Beast friend (aquatic animals), blind, confusion, elemental manipulation, environmental protection, tempest.

**Gear:** Spear (Str+d6, Parry +1), mottled blue robe, components.

**BORIS THE LAME**

Boris is a heavy, older man with a club foot. He wears a simple brown robe to emphasize his poverty, though he’s anything but.

**Attributes:** Agility d4, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d4, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Stealth d4, Streetwise d10, Taunt d8

**Cha:** +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 6

**Hindrances:** Lame, Obese, Vengeful (Minor)

**Edges:** Rich, Luck

**Gear:** Dagger (Str+d4). Boris has about 1000 gold rilks on hand. The rest of his fortune is stashed around the city.

**AFTERMATH**

If the group fails and Boris is taken by the crowd, he’s torn to pieces and his house and several blocks around it burn. If they’re successful, Boris pays them as promised. If the operation went particularly smoothly, or Boris feels indebted for some reason, he also promises a one-time “favor” from the Beggars’ Guild whenever his rescuers ask for it.

**BUT THAT’S NOT ALL**

If you plan on playing *A Night of Blood and Teeth* there’s more to this tale. Whatever Boris’ fate or the outcome of the night’s activities, Hisvia returns to the group afterwards, playing with her pet rat as she contemplates how best to convey her message.

“There is some...debate...as to who leads the Thieves’ Guild at present. Those skulking traitors Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser have...upset the natural order. But for the moment, my mistress Skyllar runs the house. She has discovered certain information you may find useful. Or valuable. Or both. These...disruptions...in Lankhmar are not without purpose. Someone seeks to create a new order...and rule it. That might not surprise you. What might is that they have help from an artifact of ancient Simorgya. It was smuggled into the city by ship some time ago. Even those who brought it here did not escape its curse. Recover it for my mistress and you will be handsomely rewarded.”

Don’t start the negotiations yet. That part of the tale, and the terrors that follow, take place in *A Night of Blood and Teeth*. 