

The Servant

The person on the baron's doorstep was an extraordinary figure. Dressed in a livery of red and black, silver-buckled and with the most frighteningly tall yellow hair, he was quite the most distinctive person the baron ever recalled seeing. His face was very long and his cheekbones very high. His eyes were as blue and bright as his skin was pale and tight. He sketched an alarmingly deep and sweeping bow and spoke to the Baron in a quick, musical voice:

"My lord, it is given to me that you are in need of good servants the worthless ones that you in your great generosity employed having rewarded your noble but regrettably misplaced trust by deserting you when of all times they most ought to have shown loyalty. I most humbly and reluctantly now proffer myself as a better sort of servant and though far beneath the standard that someone of your evident quality should expect would in such a candidate's absence wish to be considered for aforesaid position."

The baron took a moment or two to unravel this. "Ah," he replied sadly, "I cannot employ you. It is true that I have no servants, but that is because I am destitute. I invested in many Westerley estates, now part of the Eldeen Reaches. I lost everything. My sons both dead in the war, my daughters already married off. I suppose the manor must be sold next. I have nothing."

The strange man seemed not at all unphased. Taking the baron by the arm in a most familiar manner, he led him out and gestured to the green hillsides around them. "What do you see, my lord?"

"Ah, fields," replied the Baron hesitantly?

"And," prompted his companion, twitching his lengthy pale fingers.

"Aundair," guessed the baron?

"Exactly," said the companion, as if no answer in his life had ever given him greater pleasure. "A nation seething with fury at the injustice done to her, to you, noble lord."

"Is it?"

"Why fully a third of her land was stolen from her by those "Eldeen" fiends. Do you think you are the only one who has lost things of value? Nay - there is much anger simmering here though perhaps none are as rightfully furious as yourself."

"I am?"

"Indeed, my lord, though your compassionate nature causes you to hide it. But what do you think would be the result if you came to court today and denounced the Queen for letting such a thing happen?"

"Denounce the Queen," he murmured in horror!

"Aye! Why fully two-thirds the court would support you. Surely the sight of one so noble, ruined, would disturb the nobility and rouse them to support you. I do believe that you would there receive many offers of assistance in escaping your plight."

"Would I?"

The stranger unhandled the baron momentarily in order to perform a graceful little jig.

"Baron Jamus," he continued in a squeaky feminine voice, "I Queen Aurala of Aundair, cannot see such a noble vassal of mine brought low by those traitorous farmers. You shall be recompensed."

"But I just denounced her," said the Baron.

"Once more you have hit the nail upon the very head, my Lord! In one stroke you became the symbol of all Aundair's discontent and wounded pride. Now she must defuse you."

"Defuse me?"

"With bribery, my lord. It is the surest way. Why co-incidentally, the court is meeting today to resolve a most thorny issue to do with the Eldeen Reaches - that of who shall be appointed Marshall of the Western front. It has been the source of much politicking amongst the nobility and whosoever the Queen appoints, she will anger some faction." He paused for a moment, head on one side, lips pursed. "Oh goodness me," he exclaimed, "would it not be the perfect solution to appoint you to the post of marshall. In one stroke, the Queen would provide you with a sinecure to keep you quiet, resolve infighting amongst the nobility and make herself look magnanimous. Why she would even congratulate herself on her guile."

"A sinecure," smiled the baron, "that would be fine."

"Two-thousand crowns per year for saying nothing and keeping out of trouble."

"Very fine," agreed the baron.

"But you are right, my lord - I can see you thinking already this is not enough."

"Uh,"

"So then you attack the Eldeen Reaches."

"I attack?"

"Glory, riches and a triumph for all Aundair; after preparing the forces of course."

"Of course,"

The strange man danced a few steps away from the baron and executed another of his alarming bows. "I can have your carriage prepared within the hour. We can go over your speech on the journey. So then, you will employ me as your servant," he asked?

The baron appeared crestfallen. "I have no money. I cannot afford even a maid."

"I am certain my lord, that we can reach an accommodation. What say you hire me for a year and a day, in return for, what shall we say, how about the smallest finger of your left hand?"

The baron stared at the servant, as if seeing him clearly for the first time. The servant stared back, his glittering blue eyes impenetrable.

"It seems a small price to pay," the baron murmured, slightly pale. "Indeed," replied his new servant, "what could you possibly lose?"

Tam Defano, Male Half-Fiend Changeling, Sorcerer 6, Fighter 2.

CR: 9; HD 2D10 + 6D4 + 24; hp 56; Init: +6; Spd 30 ft. (flight 30' average); AC 17 (11 flat-footed), touch 17; Base Atk / Grapple: +1/+0; Atk: Rapier +12 melee (1d6+5/18-20x2), Claw (1d4), Bite (1d6), Dart (ranged), 1d4(x2) + poison *; SA: Smite Good (1/day + 8 dmg), Darkness (3/day), Desecrate (1/day), Unholy Blight (1/day), Poison (3/day), Darkvision 60', Immunity to Poison, Resistance to Acid (10), Cold (10), electricity (10), Fire (10), DR 5/magic, SR 1, Minor Shapechange, Slippery Mind, AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref + 9, Will +4; Str 17 Dex 22 Con 16 Int 19 Wis 8 Cha 19 Skills and Feats: 60 (max = 9) Bluff 8 Concentration 6 Diplomacy 6 Disguise 8 Gather Information 7 Intimidate 6 Perform 3 Ride 2 Sense Motive 7 Spell Craft 7 Languages Common, Goblin, Elven Spells Daily: 6(0-level), 7, 6, 4 Feats: Weapon Finesse (Rapier), Weapon Focus (Rapier), Weapon Specialisation (Rapier), Persuasive, Combat Expertise. Spells Known: 7, 5, 3, 2 Detect Magic, Read Magic, Dancing Lights, Ghost Sound, Mage Hand, Message, Prestidigitation, Mage armour, Charm Person, Expeditious Retreat, Animate Rope, True Strike, Hypnotism, Fog Cloud, Detect Thoughts, Cat's Grace, Displace, Keen Edge,*

** Defano often uses poison on his weapons. If he has a moment to prepare he will pour a contact or Injury poison on his blade, typically either Deathblade (injury, DC 20, 1d6 Con / 2d6 Con) or Dragon Bile (Contact, DC26, 3d6 Strength / 0). He always carries several darts pre-coated with Deathblade.*

Image (common): An extraordinary looking individual, tall and thin with hair like a thistle and the colour of straw. His face is exceptionally long, his body the same though he moves with a rapid, birdlike precision. His bright blue eyes convey an intelligence far too developed for a servant. His wide lips are nearly always twisted into a half-mocking smile.

Typically, he is wearing a fanciful outfit, often of red and black silks with mithral lace. A sort of ceremonial bandolier of silvery pegs crosses his chest and he wears a fine rapier at his side.

Image (true): A palid demon, with milky white eyes and skin like an albino adder. Two curving horns crown his head and pale white membranous wings expand from his back, flexing idly. His body is agile looking and strong. His face is fiendish, but lacking in distinct features. creating a smooth repulsive

visage. His small mouth has red lips that part to reveal small needle-like teeth. There is an unearthly aura of evil about this one.

Role-playing: There are typically three basic personalities that Defano will use, though he is eager to use whatever is most suited to getting what he wants. Often, he plays the part of the deferential servant, blending into the background and only with close observation will it be noticed how often he prompts his master with suggestions or advice.

When he is free to do so, Defano adopts a wilder and more energetic demeanor, speaking quickly and with great cunning, ably keeping others off-balance. In this mood, there is never any guessing what he might do.

But closest to his true nature, such as he has one, is his cruel personality, in which he is capable of murder, torture and other acts of sadism. Perhaps being so practiced in deception, he finds it difficult to really engage with others. Sadism is a means by which he able to break through and feel something, if only by proxy.

Motivation: Defano enjoys deception. He also enjoys letting others overestimate him. Most of all, he has a basic impulse toward strife. Wherever he goes, he causes friction and if he can begin a riot or a raid or a war, then he is never happier. He likes to work through a proxy however, typically in the guise of serving them, all the while leading them to disaster. This is the greatest game to him.

Background: Defano was the result of a union between a Balor and a changeling woman of great ambition. Alas, the mother died in childbirth before she could see the monster she had borne. He was raised initially by a barbarian tribe in the Demon Wastes, but soon began to make his way in the world, sowing discord and violence wherever he passed. Now his abilities are mature and he has grown more ambitious in his desire to bring doom upon Khorvaire.