

MR. PORTER'S TOME OF SKULLDUGGERY



A collection of heists for characters who need some coin.



MR. PORTER'S Tome of Skullduggery

Dirty Deeds Done in the Dark

Below the fabled streets of Waterdeep, there are scoundrels who need a few jobs done in the dark. For every job to be done in the dark, there are skilled and desperate individuals who can do it. And for every job that needs a team, there is always a middleman, a broker, a go-between.

That man is Mr. Porter. These are his jobs.

A collection of short adventures for 1st – 7th level characters

by Benjamin Reece



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Introduction

You need some coin? Of course you need some coin. You're eating beet soup, light on the beet, in this pissbucket of a tavern, and I'm buying. So how about I get you some coin? All you gotta do is one small job. A favor, really. Easy as pie. Then you can start rolling in dragons.

—Mr. Porter

Sometimes, people in power need to get things done without getting caught doing those things. Sometimes, people in low places just need a solid blade in the dark to send the right message. Sometimes, a jealous merchant just wants someone to ruin a rival's day.

Whatever the job may be, there will always be a market for desperate and skilled individuals willing to risk the laws of Waterdeep in order to get things done. These individuals refer to each other as “duggers”, for the many types of skullduggery they get up to.

The History of Skullduggery

Duggers and their complex, paranoid social environment originally had their start in Skullport, the nebulous halfway city between Waterdeep and the Underdark. Factions constantly vying for power in that multi-level cauldron of criminality made certain skills extremely lucrative; and when the de facto rulers of your city are giant floating flaming skulls, failure and open conflict were death sentences.

Anonymity was equally valued in the Skullport skullduggery market; when the person hiring them could be a pirate, a slaver, or even a mind flayer, duggers who valued their longevity quickly learned not to ask too many questions about who wanted what or why. The only thing of importance was the location, the target, and the payment. Anything else was asking for trouble.

Mr. Porter

To facilitate this anonymity, a breed of intermediaries sprang up almost immediately. Keeping in line with the Skullport tradition of pithy nicknames, these faceless, smiling

middlemen were called “Porter”, or “The Porter”, but most commonly used the general, anonymizing name Mr. Porter.

Being more of a title than an actual name, Mr. Porter could refer to anyone offering a job. Male, female, dwarf, elf, drow, duergar, or even faceless shadowy terror in the back corner of the bar, they were all simply Mr. Porter. No need to meet with the person who actually wanted the job done; they might be able to identify you to the authorities, and you might be able to identify them.

Moving Up to Waterdeep

The first incursions of Duggers into Waterdeep were exclusively on business. Skullduggeries would take them up to sabotage magical rivals, delay shipments, assassinate troublesome adventurers, and so on. While the Waterdhavian guards were ever vigilant to this crime wave, they were frustrated by the honed skill of the duggers. When they finally caught a few of the miscreants, they were unable to uncover any leads other than a “Mr. Porter”, whose appearance and motives could shift from person to person even as they all sat under a *zone of truth*.

Almost as quickly as the duggers arrived, the movers and shakers of Waterdeep realized their potential. The Zhentarim were the quickest to adapt to this new way of doing business; no sense in ruining the already-shaky reputation of the Black Network when Mr. Porter was ready and eager to take the fall.

In fact, the adoption of skullduggery and all its trappings was so quick and so complete that many in the business assume that the Masked Lords of Waterdeep did not just turn a blind eye, but actively encouraged the development of duggers of their own.

Reading a Heist

Most skullduggeries offered by Mr. Porter follow a similar pattern: a Mr. Porter names a target, makes an offer, then shares whatever information they might know to their duggers.

Once the job is on, there are more moving parts than any one person could possibly know about, and so every job invariably comes with a tense twist or two. So long as the duggers can deal with that, they can make good their escape and get paid.

The Target

Mr. Porter's skullduggeries almost always involve the characters going where they're not allowed, retrieving something they shouldn't have, and bringing it back to Mr. Porter. What's more, they always have a time limit - usually enough to plan, never enough to dawdle.

The Payout

Mr. Porter typically has a payment in gold for the characters upon completion of their job, although on occasion he will offer other rewards such as magic items and quid pro quo.

The characters can often negotiate for a higher pay rate, and in fact Mr. Porter always underbids with the expectation that his duggers (the characters) will counteroffer.

Once a deal is decided and made, however, it is considered a grave insult to quit or renegotiate mid-job, no matter how distasteful the details turn out to be. Failing the job simply means not getting paid - quitting on the job often means being the target of a digger assassination.

The Layout

Mr. Porter can usually provide his duggers basic information about the target of his job, but he's also not about to do everything for the characters. More information about the floorplans, inhabitants, and general layout of

the job in question will be up to the characters to discover in the limited time they have to plan and prepare.

Obstacles

Nothing worth getting for Mr. Porter is ever easy to get. Once again, Mr. Porter will usually have some idea about the security and defenses that await the characters, but as always expects the characters to use their skills and experience to bypass guards, locks, and other defenses.

Twists & Turns

Mr. Porter, as knowledgeable as he is, cannot know everything. Rich nobles falsify blueprints to sneak in traps and hidden passages. Surprise inspections and visitors can pop in at the exact worst time. Sometimes, another Mr. Porter has a different group of duggers on the same job, and skullduggery explodes into competition and desperate violence - after all, only one group can steal a unique piece of jewelry or art.

These unforeseen complications are just part of skullduggery. Duggers are hired based on their skills and ability to get the job done no matter what goes wrong. Just because the captain of the watch and his honor guard are visiting his noble friend doesn't mean the job is off, it just means the duggers have to be even more careful.

The Escape

New duggers relax once they have the prize in hand and are on the way out. Veterans go on even higher alert until cash is in hand and Mr. Porter is out of sight. Screwing up the exit is the easiest way to get caught and killed, and even the payoff may not be safe - sometimes Mr. Porter is told that his duggers know too much and have to be eliminated.

Betrayal this extreme is rare, however. Mr. Porter almost always pays out what he promised - no more, no less.

A Spot of Payback

A friend of mine left a little present for me in one of the private rooms at Lailana's House of Comfort. Except he isn't really a friend, and it's more like 500 dragons he owes me. I need someone to get it, and get a message to him: Don't be late next time.

—Mr. Porter

"A Spot of Payback" is a 1-2 hour adventure for characters of 1st – 3rd level.



The Target

Mr. Porter is concerned that his "friend" will leave town early the next morning. The characters are to make their move that night.

Mr. Porter isn't overly concerned how they convince his friend, "J", to cough up the payment, only that they return with at least 500 gp or something of equal value. He knows his "friend" has a room on the third floor, but he doesn't know which one.

Mr. Porter is not forthcoming about the identity of his "friend", although a character that succeeds a DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check can get him to admit that his "friend" is quite a formidable fighter.

The Payout

Mr. Porter is willing to pay the characters 10 percent of whatever they can retrieve from his missing payment, or up to 20 percent with if a character succeeds a DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check.

The Layout

Lailana's House of Comfort is a three-story structure, with public mingling space on the

first floor and private meeting rooms on the second floor.

The first and second floors of Lailana's both have windows, but the third floor is windowless for discretion.

Mr. Porter wants to avoid excessive damage to innocent people and property, as he and Lailana do excellent business together.

On the bottom floor there are several parties of nobles conversing and making merry with numerous courtesans (also nobles).

On the second floor, two of the private rooms are occupied with nobles making business deals.

Obstacles

Lailana's House of Repose has ample security on hand to keep patrons honest and their employees safe: plainclothes security (use the statistics for spies), and bouncers in tailored suits (thugs). Two bouncers flank the main entrance, and two more keep an eye on things from inconspicuous places.

All doors in the building are locked. The doors on the second floor feature simple locks, requiring a successful DC 14 Dexterity check with thieves tools to open. The doors on the third floor are more difficult, requiring a successful DC 16 Dexterity check with thieves tools to open. There is a single courtesan with a key that unlocks any given room, and Lailana has a master key that unlocks all doors in the building.

Two bouncers keep watch from the top of the stairs on the second level, and two plainclothes security hide in the shadows behind statues.

Bouncers stand at the landing of the stairs going up to the third floor, and at the end of the hallway.

Twists & Turns

Watch Captain Johnson (a knight) is celebrating his bachelor party at Lailana's with a stag party of five guards. At some point

while the party is at the brothel, two of the guards go downstairs to restock on beer.

While none of the stag party have their armor on or readily available, if combat breaks out they can arm themselves and strap the captain into a breastplate, coming to the scene of the disturbance in 3 rounds.

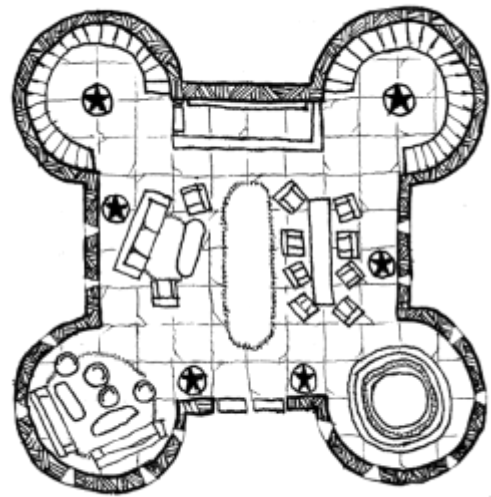
Mr. Porter's "friend" is actually infamous underground bare-knuckle brawler Anoni Jurphy (a gladiator without his armor or weapons). What's worse, the payment is buried beneath Anoni and his three companions in a tangle of bedsheets. His companions, two female and one male courtesan, flee if combat breaks out and summon help.

The payment is a bag of ten 50 gold pieces in the south-east large private room. Anoni has a second bag of similar gems hidden in a locked chest beneath the bed, which is detected if a character in the room succeeds a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check while searching the room. Characters attempting to retrieve the second bag have disadvantage on the Dexterity (Stealth) check to do so without being noticed.

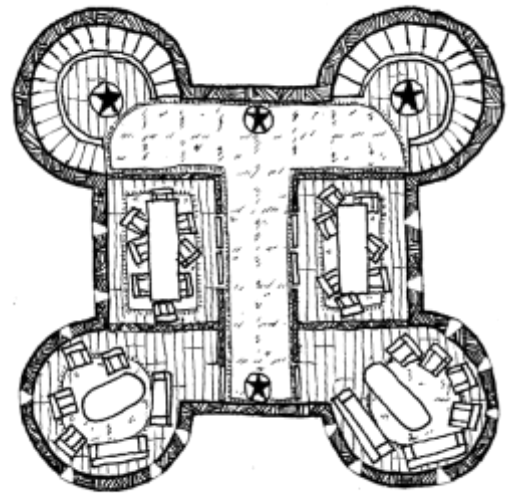
The Escape

Anoni can be talked to, but he is a prideful man. A character can convince him to pay up with a successful DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) or (Intimidation) check. This check is made with advantage if Anoni has half his hit points or fewer. Characters roll a 22 or higher on this check convince Anoni to handle the second bag of gems.

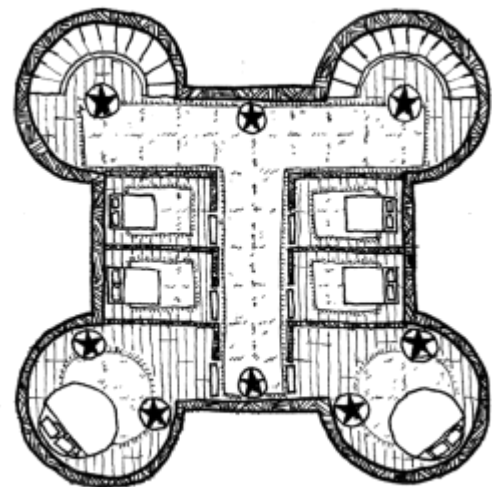
Of course, Anoni would prefer to fight, and in fact prefers to. He even offers to give the characters half the payment one of them agrees to single combat and wins - a tall order. Anoni will concede the fight if he is brought to 50 hit points or fewer. Even if the character loses the combat, Anoni will still give them a single gem for the entertainment.



Lailana's – Level One



Lailana's – Level Two



Lailana's – Level Three

Who Watches the Wizards?

I have it on good authority that the wizard Bumarl just got a fancy new scrying bowl. Apparently, he's planning on giving his old one to his young new apprentice. The hells to that. I can think of a hundred better uses for that scrying bowl than in the hands of some grubby apprentice. Get in, get it, and get out without causing a fuss.

—Mr. Porter

"Who Watches the Wizards?" is a 1-2 hour adventure for characters of 1st – 3rd level.



The Target

Mr. Porter tells the characters that Bumarl is away from his tower for the next three days. He doesn't have a high opinion of the chances of success if the characters try to pull the job with Bumarl in town.

The scrying bowl in question is a three-foot wide silvery bowl with a shimmering clear liquid inside. Mr. Porter can provide a sketch of the bowl, and makes a point of saying that the silvery liquid is part of the package.

The Payout

Mr. Porter has budgeted 250 gp for this job. A character that succeeds a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check can increase that to 300 gp.

If the characters are able to retrieve the mirror without raising an alarm, Mr. Porter rewards them with a bag of *dust of*

disappearance, and the promise of future work in which to use it.

The Layout

Bumarl's tower is an eighty-foot tall stone tower attached to a two-story brick building. The first floor of the brick building is the store, workshop, and servants' quarters; the second floor is the apprentices' quarters, the grand hall, and the student lab. The top two floors of the tower are dedicated to Bumarl's study and living space.

A large spiral staircase is the primary means of travelling from the first floor to the second floor. The apprentices have a teleportation circle in the workshop that leads to the lab, and another set of teleportation circles go from the grand hall to Bumarl's study and from the study to his personal room.

The exterior of the tower is rough enough to climb, but the windows into each floor are secured with iron bars and secured with an *alarm* spell. Characters that succeed a DC 18 Strength check can pry open the bars. The storage room on the third floor of the tower does not have windows.

Obstacles

The doors on the second floor are all locked with simple locks (DC 12 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to unlock), but the doors between the workshop, the kitchen, and the servants' quarters are usually left ajar. The doors from the storefront to the storage room and workshop are left open during working hours. The servants rarely lock their external door, but there is always at least two of them (commoners) resting on their bunks.

A creature can activate the apprentice teleportation circle by using an action to stand on the circle and speaking aloud the keyword. The keywords, "Up" and "Down" in Draconic for the bottom and top circles, respectively, are inscribed in the center of each circle.

Second Floor

The doors on the second floor have more intricate locks (DC 14 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to unlock). The two apprentices are Cassia, a noble with the *prestidigitation*, *mage hand*, and *fire bolt* cantrips; and Todd, a commoner. During the day, Todd typically works behind the counter in the storefront, and Cassia creates scrolls and potions in the workroom.

The doors to the apprentices' rooms are also warded with an *alarm* spell that alerts the apprentice in question if the door is opened without speaking the apprentice's name. This *alarm* can be suppressed for 1 minute with *dispel magic*.

Tower

The teleportation circles leading from the grand hall to the study are keyed to Bumarl's name.

Another intricate lock and an *arcane lock* spell secures the storage room in the study; the password is "Hoard" in Draconic. A character that opens the door without disabling the arcane lock or speaking the keyword triggers an *alarm* spell that alerts Bumarl to intrusion.

The scrying bowl is on the table in the study, next to a scrap of parchment with the rough notes of a graduation speech for Cassia.

The circles leading from the study to the bedroom are keyed to the name of Bumarl's familiar, a pseudodragon named Ireevik. Ireevik's scratching tower, embossed with its name, stands next to the large chair in the study.

The password for any given teleportation circle or lock can be discovered if a character proficient in Arcana studies the circles for a minute and succeeds a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check.

Twists & Turns

Two suits of animated armor guard the second floor. If any of the door *alarms* are triggered, one of them goes to investigate. Once activated, they attack intruders on sight.

The study is protected by a rug of smothering. The rug attacks any character that enters the room and does not say "peace and quiet" in Draconic.

Bumarl's room is guarded by a helmed horror affectionately referred to as "Giles" by the wizard. It attacks intruders on sight.

If three *alarm* spells are triggered anywhere in the tower within the same hour, or if one of the suits of animated armor are destroyed, Giles is teleported to the location to investigate the disturbance. He is teleported back to his post after one minute.

If a creature attempts to use the teleportation circle from the study to the bedroom and they do not use the proper keyword, they are instead teleported 10 ft. outside of the tower - just far enough to drop 40 ft. to the cobblestones below.

Bumarl teleports back to his bedroom one minute after either Giles is destroyed or the study storage room is breached.

Poor Todd

Todd the apprentice knows he is not cut out for wizardry. He can provide the passwords for any of the teleportation circles and doors in the tower if the characters are willing to help him. Provide the characters with one password for each of the following tasks they complete:

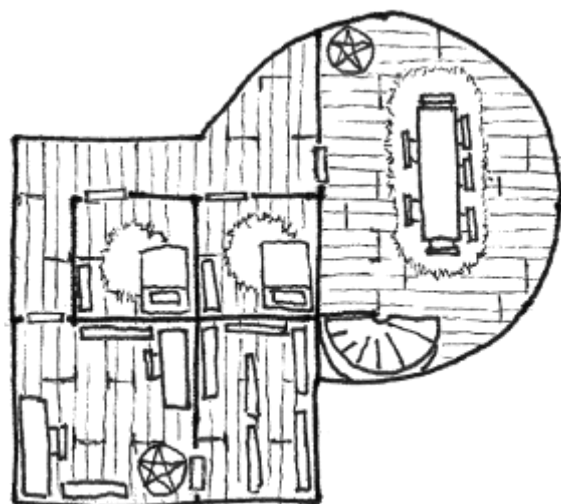
- Steal a bottle of fine wine from the pantry.
- Steal 50 gp of costly reagents from Cassia's desk.
- Steal Cassia's spellbook.
- Plant a forged note in Cassia's hand in Bumarl's library where he will notice.

The Escape

The scrying bowl is quite heavy and quite full. A character holding the bowl must succeed a DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to move without spilling any of the liquid. Characters that move at half speed have advantage on the check. Characters with a Strength score of less than 12 have disadvantage on the check.

Mr. Porter halves the reward if the characters fail three or more Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks while carrying the scrying bowl.

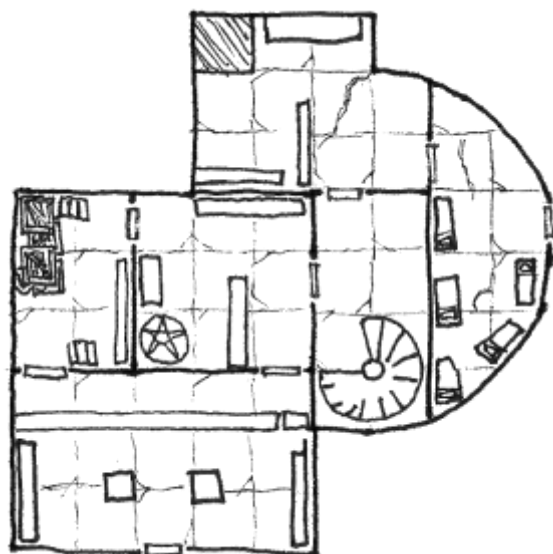
If the characters utilized Tom's knowledge to infiltrate the tower without triggering any alarms, this does not satisfy Mr. Porter's desire for subtlety; if they divulge how they traveled through the tower, they will not receive the additional reward.



Tower First Level



Tower Second Level



Tower Ground



Tower Third Level

Wizardnapping

Nobody in my organization can use my fancy new scrying bowl, and I don't trust rented mages. The good news is, I hear one of the apprentices of the wizard Bumarl is young and ambitious – just my type. The bad news is, Bumarl has already been robbed, so he's on the lookout for thieves and I don't think he'll be playing nice. If you can get her out of his tower and back here safely, I'll keep you safe until the storm is over, and I'll make you rich.

—Mr. Porter

“Wizardnapping” is a 1-2 hour adventure for characters of 1st – 3rd level.



The Target

Mr. Porter wants the characters to relieve the wizard Bumarl of his apprentice Cassia. Mr. Porter has had agents plant the idea of leaving Bumarl in Cassia's head, but he's not sure if she is completely aware she knows she's going to be extracted. Mr. Porter will leave the decision of if and how to inform Cassia up to the characters.

Mr. Porter is a busy man and would prefer this job finished sooner rather than later, and so puts a soft one-week deadline on its completion.

The Payout

Mr. Porter offers the characters 200 gp if they can complete the job in the week deadline. If they take longer, the reward is halved.

Characters that succeed on a DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check can convince Mr. Porter to pay half of the 200gp up front for supplies. If they exceed the time limit, they do not get the second half.

In addition to the gold reward, Mr. Porter will give the characters their choice of the following magic items: a *robe of useful items*, a jar of *Keoghtom's ointment* with the maximum number of doses, an *elemental gem*, a pouch of *dust of disappearance*, and an *alchemy jug*.

The Layout

Bumarl's tower is an eighty-foot tall stone tower attached to a two-story brick building. The first floor of the brick building is the store, workshop, and servants' quarters; the second floor is the apprentices' quarters, the grand hall, and the student lab. The top two floors of the tower are dedicated to Bumarl's study and living space.

A large spiral staircase is the primary means of travelling from the first floor to the second floor. The apprentices have a teleportation circle in the workshop that leads to the lab, and another set of teleportation circles go from the grand hall to Bumarl's study and from the study to his personal room.

The exterior of the tower is rough enough to climb, but the windows into each floor are secured with iron bars and secured with an *alarm* spell. Characters that succeed a DC 18 Strength check can pry open the bars. The storage room on the third floor of the tower does not have windows.

Obstacles

Bumarl has recently upgraded all the doors and locks in his tower. Doors swing shut immediately after a creature uses them and lock as soon as they close.

The servants prop open the door between their quarters and the kitchen during the day, and the apprentices prop open the door between the ground floor storage room and workshop during business hours. There are always at least two servants (commoners) resting on their bunks.

A character can activate the apprentice teleportation circle by using an action to stand on the circle and speaking aloud the passphrase, “I am an idiot”, in Draconic.

A character that studies these teleportation circles for 1 minute and succeeds a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check discovers that the Draconic words “Up” and “Down” were inscribed on the first and second floor circles, respectively. A character that stands on the teleportation circle and says the removed word is immediately covered head to toe in a glowing purple stain and the room is filled with loud quacking for 1 minute.

Second Floor

The doors on the second floor have even more intricate locks (DC 16 Dexterity check with thieves’ tools to unlock). The two apprentices are Cassia, described later, and Todd, a commoner. During the day, Todd typically works behind the counter in the storefront, and Cassia creates scrolls and potions in the workshop.

The doors to the apprentices’ rooms are also warded with an *alarm* spell that alerts the apprentice in question if the door is opened without speaking the apprentice’s name. This *alarm* can be suppressed for 1 minute with *dispel magic*.

Tower

The teleportation circles leading from the grand hall to the study are keyed to Bumarl’s name.

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The scrying bowl is on the table in the study, next to a scrap of parchment with the rough notes of a graduation speech for Cassia.

The circles leading from the study to the bedroom are keyed to the name of Bumarl’s familiar, a pseudodragon named Ireevik. Ireevik’s scratching tower, embossed with its name, stands next to the large chair in the study.

The password for any given teleportation circle or lock can be discovered if a character proficient in Arcana studies the circles for a minute and succeeds a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check.

Twists & Turns

Two suits of animated armor guard the second floor. One patrols from the grand hall to the apprentice dorms, and one patrols from the apprentice dorms to the workshop. If any of the door *alarms* are triggered, one of them goes to investigate. They attack intruders on sight.

The study is protected by a rug of smothering. The rug attacks any character that enters the room and does not say “peace and quiet” in Draconic.

Bumarl’s room is guarded by a helmed horror affectionately referred to as “Giles” by the wizard. It attacks intruders on sight.

If three *alarm* spells are triggered anywhere in the tower within the same hour, or if one of the suits of animated armor are destroyed, Giles is teleported to the location after one round. He is teleported back to his post after one minute.

If a creature attempts to use the teleportation circle from the study to the bedroom and they do not use the proper keyword, they are instead teleported 10 ft. outside of the tower - just far enough to drop 40 ft. to the cobblestones below.

If either Giles is destroyed or the study storage room is breached, Bumarl teleports to the spot on initiative count 20 two rounds later.

Cassia

Cassia is a noble with the following changes:

Spellcasting. Cassia is a 1st-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 11, +3 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, mage hand, prestidigitation*
1st level (2 slots): *magic missile, shield*

She has ambitions to expand past the limiting and slow tutelage of Bumarl, but is smart enough not to make any suggestion of her ambitions while in his tower.

Cassia wants to expand into an altruistic or proactive role; she will not agree to help or accompany characters who cannot provide her a suitable employer. Characters who succeed a Charisma (Deception) check opposed by Cassia's Wisdom (Insight) check can convince her they have a worthy patron.

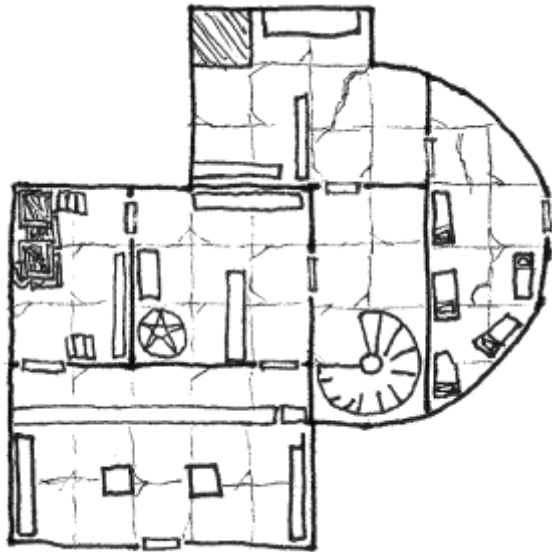
If the characters convince Cassia to help them, she tells them that Bumarl has bound a hell hound to hunt down and kill anyone else who steals from his tower, and to retrieve anything that has been stolen. She doesn't know how to avoid it, but she offers to help the characters in other ways.

Use your best judgement for determining what form that help takes. She is not powerful enough to disable a suit of animated armor, but she might be able to trap it behind a door or disable an *alarm*.

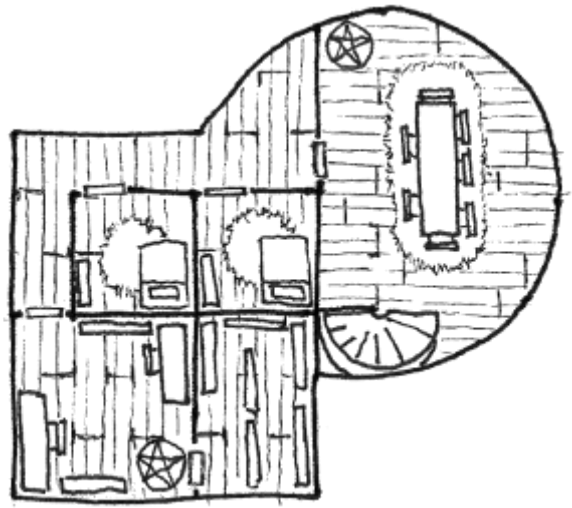
The Escape

On initiative count 20 after Cassia leaves the tower with the characters, a hell hound appears in the last square in the tower Cassia occupied. It attacks the characters without mercy, but avoids targeting Cassia unless it can catch all the characters in its Fire Breath attack.

If a chase ensues, use the Chase rules from the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (page 252). If the characters can reach the bar where Mr. Porter hired them, he has several helpers on hand to protect them from any pursuit.



Tower Ground



Tower First Level



Tower Study



Tower Bedroom

Hot Kitchen

Darga's Blackened Skillet is my favorite terrible restaurant in the Dock Ward – perfect for a pick-me-up after a long night of drinking. Problem is, a pesky city official dedicated to “health” and “cleanliness” wants to shut Darga down for little things like “more rats than wall insulation” and “never cleaning his pans”. I don’t particularly care how you do it, you just make sure that Darga stays in business after her next visit in two days.

—Mr. Porter

“Hot Kitchen” is a 1-2 hour adventure for characters of 1st – 3rd level.



The Target

Darga's Blackened Skillet is, in fact, the worst restaurant in all of Waterdeep. What appears at first to be a filthy, matted rug scatters on approach and scurries into many ratholes. Stains overlap stains all over the floor, walls, and ceiling, and a constant haze of smoke and grease fill the establishment. Adventurers not used to fighting aberrations would do best to avoid the kitchen.

The Payout

Mr. Porter has budgeted 250 gp for this job. A character that succeeds a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check can increase that to 300 gp.

Almost as a joke, Mr. Porter offers each of the characters a vial of *antitoxin* in case they're of a mood to taste the food at Darga's.

The Layout

Darga's is a simple three-room building: a low-ceilinged public area, where food and beverages are consumed; a narrow kitchen / taproom, where food and beverages are served; and a rough dirt cellar, where food and beverages are stored. Darga, an ogre, sleeps in a loft above the kitchen.

Obstacles

Anyone walking into Darga's can instantly see that the public room is unfit to sleep, eat, drink, or really even walk into. The same goes for the kitchen, except that the kitchen is perpetually on the brink of an all-consuming grease fire. The cellar is more of a rat warren than any kind of useful food storage, and it's clear Darga roughly smacks large chunks of mold off any food he intends to cook, or just assumes the grease will kill anything lethal.

The Reviewer

Ram Sagord (a noble) is a barrel-chested half-orc with expertly-tousled and -dyed hair, a fiery temper, and zero tolerance for fools. He's intent on cleaning up the Waterdhavian eateries as much as possible. He has incredibly high standards for hygiene and food quality, and wants Waterdeep's eateries to match before he risks his own reputation there.

Ram Sagord has an office in the Castle Ward of Waterdeep watched by two guards and Ram Sagord's second-in-command, a shaven-headed and humorless veteran named Scott. Open combat will attract the attention of other Waterdeep guards in 1d4 rounds.

Twists & Turns

Darga's “secret sauce” doesn't do anything for the drunks in their terrible bar, but to the street toughs in Waterdeep it has a

reputation for putting a spring in their step and dulling the pain of a good scuffle. Darga doesn't know why they keep running low on the sauce, but they have to employ five goblins full-time to make it in a little cavern behind their cellar.

Needless to say, if Ram Sagord inspects the kitchen and finds the goblins making illicit substances, he will immediately shut the place down. Darga, already struggling to make it in the big city, will react violently.

The Escape

Characters can fulfill Mr. Porter's wishes in a variety of ways, including but not limited to:

Deep Clean

Characters can clean up Darga's and provide Ram Sagord with an appropriate eating experience.

It takes one character the full 2 days to clean Darga's establishments up to the standards of Ram Sagord. Each additional character helping halves the time needed.

Darga's food stores are also completely rancid, needing investment to replace or an exceptional ability check using cooking tools to pass off (likely DC 20).

With new food, new equipment, and a clean kitchen, a character can impress Sagord with a successful DC 14 check with cooking tools.

Chef Swap

Darga is stubborn mule and will refuse to let someone else cook in their kitchen, much less leave their establishment for a few days. A character can convince Darga to leave if they succeed a DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) or Charisma (Intimidation) check. This check is made with advantage if Darga is offered a bribe of at least 25 gp.

New Docs Who Dis

Breaking into Ram Sagord's office to interfere with his documentation requires sneaking past the guards that patrol the Castle Ward

and past Sagord's own guards. A character that spends four hours and succeeds a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check can learn the patrol patterns of the city guards.

Ram Sagord's guards are more permanent. The two hired guards are around all day and go home in the evening. Scott, on the other hand, sleeps on a cot in the first-floor operations center, in the middle of all the documents and maps. He has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks to hear creatures sneaking across the floor.

Ram Sagord is an eagle-eyed bureaucrat with a good memory. Characters wishing to pass falsified documents off as his own must make a check using forger's tools opposed by Ram's Insight check.

No Refunds

Your friend and mine, guard captain Indrick Johnson, is about to celebrate his nuptials, and I'm of a mind to help him out in this trying time. Thankfully, Captain Johnson was kind enough to leave a copy of his wedding registry lying around where just anyone with soft shoes and a set of lockpicks could find it. What better way to make sure he knows we care than by picking up some of the more expensive things on this list for him – without the expense?

—Mr. Porter

“No Refunds” is a 1-2 hour adventure for characters of 1st – 3rd level.



The Target

Mr. Porter is a smiling, jovial halfling who hides an assassin's lethal physicality behind laughs and a portly belly.

Mr. Porter has a list of four specific items he wants procured from the wedding registry: a set of permanently prestidigitated chamber pots, a large bed and fittings, a full set of exotic spices, and a pair of handsome comfortable chairs from the Very Good Wood Shop. Mr. Porter can provide the names and locations of four stores where the items in question can be located: Bumarl's Magical Necessities, Rowanstock Fine Beddings, the Bronze Bazaar, and the Very Good Wood Shop.

There is no real time limit on this job, but Mr. Porter suggests that all the robberies

happen on the same night to avoid any increase in security. If the characters want to space out the robberies to increase Captain Indrick Johnson's chagrin, Mr. Porter promises to find some way to reward them.

The Payout

Successfully bringing the four items to the doorstep of Indrick Johnson's house will earn a reward of 500 gp from Mr. Porter. A character that succeeds a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check can increase the reward to 750 gp.

If the characters space out the robberies, Mr. Porter promise them an additional reward on successful completion of the job,

The Layout

The shops in question are generally pretty similar, featuring a storefront on the ground floor, perhaps a display room and a private room in the back, and living quarters on the second floor.

The real concern with getting around for this job is the city itself. While the shops themselves are not spread especially far apart, bringing all the purloined gifts together will likely require some finagling large boxes or objects along busy city streets or tight alleyways.

Obstacles

Each of the four establishments features some kind of security. In general, locks require a DC 14 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to open, and valuables are often stored in locked crates or chests behind locked doors.

Bumarl's Magical Necessities

This two-story shop is attached to a four-story tower, where the eponymous wizard likely lives. Thankfully, the store room for more pedestrian goods is in the main building on the second floor. A character with a rope and some climbing gear that succeeds a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check can climb the

walls to the second-story windows, but doing so is rather obvious and is likely to attract attention from guard patrols if not from the wizard himself. Inside, a suit of animated armor patrols the halls, but a character that succeeds a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check after studying the patrol for 10 minutes can determine when it is safe to move without being detected.

A single chamber pot weighs about 15 lbs and is wide enough that a single Medium character can only carry two.

Rowanstock Fine Beddings

This shop is a wide one-story affair, and features relatively light security – after all, who could steal an entire bed? The front door and large display windows are guarded by a dozy half-orc thug, and the door is secured with a particularly clever lock (DC 16 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to unlock).

Other than that, there are no protections securing the bedding itself; it is bulky and cumbersome enough to deter easy theft.

An appropriately large bed weighs 600 lbs and is 8 feet on a side, making it very difficult to move. Even if a character can lift the bed by themselves, their speed is halved while carrying the bed, and they have disadvantage on Dexterity saving throws.

The Bronze Bazaar

Outwardly unguarded, the Bronze Bazaar is watched over by two separate forces. First, four bandits lurk in especially deep shadows. Characters with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 15 or higher, or who succeed a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check, notice the bandits.

In addition, an imp is perched invisibly on the countertop, keeping watch over the merchandise. Roll Wisdom (Perception) checks for the imp opposed by the characters' Dexterity (Stealth) checks. If the imp spots intruders, it alerts the bandits with a screech but otherwise does nothing.

Very Good Wood Shop

The doors of this shop do not have locks; rather, they and the window shutters are all secured with sturdy bars at night. The owner, a stubborn mustachioed gentleman by the name of Vaughn Ronaldson (a thug) sleeps in a chair in the middle of the shop, eyes open, with a heavy crossbow pointed at the door.

If he catches the characters trying to steal chairs, Vaughn is open to negotiation. He will sell the characters the chairs for 500 gp each. A character that succeeds a DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check or a DC 18 Charisma (Deception) check can convince Vaughn to donate the chairs to the happy couple. If the check is successful, Vaughn will also give the characters an odd knobby piece of polished Chultan wood as a present for the married couple.

Twists & Turns

Captain Indrick Johnson and his bride-to-be aren't the only people in town with an interest in the chairs of the Very Good Wood Shop. About a month ago, one of the strange socialites that move and shape fashion in Waterdeep declared that Vaughn Ronaldson's chairs were THE thing to have. Unfortunately for her, Vaughn is completely unwilling to compromise his craftsmanship for the incredible demand, so the socialite has resorted to more direct measures to get what she wants.

A team of three spies led by a bandit captain attempt to steal all of Vaughn's chairs at some point during the heist. They are paid well, but if the bandit captain or two of the spies die, they flee.

The Escape

If the characters choose to spread out the robberies, then at each successive shop there will be 1d4 additional guards keeping watch over the establishment.

Mr. Porter pays successful characters, as promised. If they were successful with a spread-out spree, he will give them a *rust bag of tricks* as a special reward.

Peacekeeping

I'll be the first to appreciate a dedication to law enforcement, but the guards out of the 10th Street Watch House are too busy breaking legs and heads to do any real guard work. Ernard, their captain, has kept them from getting too sloppy, but I know some of the disappearances from the South Ward are more permanent than the public has been led to believe. It's time to lay down the law, on the law. Set Ernard and his boys straight, and you'll have earned all the dragons those poor neighborhoods can scrape together.

—Mr. Porter

"Peacekeeping" is a 1-2 hour adventure for characters of 3rd – 5th level.



The Target

Mr. Porter, a thin-faced gnome with a nose protruding past the edge of his hood, is twitchy and nervous, constantly scanning the inn as he gives the characters his pitch.

Ernard (a veteran) and his goons (16 thugs with studded leather armor and shields making their AC 14) operate out of a watch post that covers the southeastern corner of the South Ward in Waterdeep. Ernard is earning recognition from his superiors because of the drop in crime rate in his neighborhoods, and they don't question where he recruits from and how he gets his job done.

The Payout

The neighborhoods under the thumb under the 10th Street Watch have scraped together 250 gp to pay for the job, and Mr. Porter is putting in an additional 250 gp. A character that succeeds a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check can increase Mr. Porter's contribution to 350 gp.

The Layout

The 10th Street Watch House is a three-story building with a stone-floored basement. The first floor has a booking area, kitchen, and common area for the guards to mingle, eat, and gamble. The second floor is where the guards have their bunks, their washroom, and the records room.

The third floor has the offices of Ernard and his lieutenant, Crauz (one of the modified thugs but with 50 hit points), as well as the evidence locker.

The basement has the holding cells for the 10th Street Watch. One of them has been converted to temporary storage.

Obstacles

The doors on the first floor of the Watch House are all kept open and unlocked during the day. The external doors are locked at night, as are the doors to the stairwells. The doors on the second floor are all unlocked, except for the door to the records room. The doors on the third floor are secured with locks.

Ernard and Crauz have keys to all the locked doors. A character that succeeds a DC 14 Dexterity check with thieves' tools can unlock the locked doors without a key.

The windows are all fitted with shutters that can be closed with a simple lock (DC 12 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to unlock).

Twists & Turns

Two of the boxes in the basement hold sets of chain mail for every guard, and full-face helmets. If an alert is sounded, the 10th Street Watch go down in shifts of 4 to arm up, increasing their AC to 16 (18 with their shields). All of the guards are armored in 1 minute after someone sounds the alarm.

House Party

While the characters are in the watch house, the real movers and shakers of the 10th Street neighborhoods surround the house and put it under siege.

Tunnel Knives

A gang known as the Tunnel Knives is the real reason that crime is so low in this section of the South Ward; they have been killing anyone who commits a crime, and threatening the same to anyone who complains to the watch. One person managed to let Ernard know that a new gang was making a foothold, and their body was found hosting a nest of rats the next morning.

The Siege

Ten Tunnel Knives members (use the stats of bandits) attack each of the three external doors. Each group is led by a Tunnel Knife leader, a wererat. They attempt to breach the doors and kill everyone in the building.

Four snipers (use the stats of spies) are on nearby rooftops, covering the windows. The snipers use chimneys and windows to give themselves half cover. If spotted, they move position so they can make use of their Sneak Attack feature.

Bottling Up

Ernard and Crauz have picked up bars for the external doors. Chairs and beds can also be used to brace doors, as well as block attempts to break in through windows.

Tunnel Rats

An hour or so after the Tunnel Knives besiege the 10th Street Watch House, the Tunnel Rat leader (a wererat with 54 hit points) breaks in to the basement from the sewers. He is accompanied by 2 swarms of rats. He tries to make an opening for the rest of his gang to breach the building.

Gearing Up

Both sides of this conflict are ready for a fight. Alchemist's fire, silvered swords, or small consumable magical items that replicate first- and second-level spells can be used by either side to keep things exciting and dramatic, or tip the balance to either side, as you see fit.

You could also have a mercenary cult fanatic show up to add extra firepower to the Tunnel Rats and help them break in to a floor or two.

The Escape

The Tunnel Rats flee if three of the wererats are killed, or if twenty or more of their footsoldiers die.

Turns out, Mr. Porter was one of the Tunnel Knives. As can be expected, payment from him is not forthcoming.

Ernard, however, is quite grateful if the players helped him and his guards, and can arrange for each of the characters to get suited out with up to 500 gp worth of adventuring gear or services, including weapons, armor, spellcasting services, spellcasting materials, or one of the following magic items:

- A bag of holding
- A bag of dust of disappearance
- A cap of water breathing
- A wand of magic detection
- A robe of useful items
- A pair of immovable rods

All This for a Couple of Shrubs

That one over there? She wants you to steal a plant. That guy over there? He wants you to keep it safe. And that biggun, over in the corner? She wants you to kill it. Now, seeing as they're all interested in the same thing, they're probably wise to any attempt at double dipping, but I ain't gonna stop you if you're that stupid. All I can say is that a very rich man has the plant, and very rich men have very rich enemies.

—Mr. Porter

"All This for a Couple of Shrubs" is a 1-2 hour adventure for characters of 3rd – 5th level.



The Target

A well-to-do merchant by the name of Falmas Farringway is part of a very select circle of competitive rich Waterdhavians each trying to discover a new piece of unique flora from around Faerun. Farringway has recently been bragging that he discovered a new species of fern, and he wants to capitalize on his discovery as quickly as possible – possibly even before the botanical experts can confirm the uniqueness of his find. The inspection is due to occur in one week.

A.

Mr. A. Porter, a short and relatively squat elf, wants the characters to integrate themselves into Farringway's life and home for the week leading up to the inspection.

B.

Mr. B. Porter, an aggressively average-looking human, wants the characters to infiltrate Farringway's home and steal his plant.

He's also willing to give the characters an exceptional reward if the theft happens without detection, and in such a way that results in Farringway's humiliation.

C.

Mr. C. Porter, a half-orc with a loud laugh and a dark sense of humor, simply wants the plant destroyed. She's not particularly concerned about how the characters do it, but humiliation for Farringway is preferable to death.

The Payout

A.

Mr. A. Porter says she can reward the characters with 300 gp and establish a discount rate at a number of the city's most reputable vendors of arms and armor.

B.

Mr. B. Porter will only offer 250 gp in coin, but can acquire for each character a single uncommon magic item from the following list:

- A *rust bag of tricks*
- A *Mac-Fuirmidh cittern*
- An *elemental gem (Yellow Diamond)*
- *Gloves of thievery*
- A *wind fan*

If the characters can replace the fern with a common variety, so that Farringway is humiliated during the inspection, Mr. B. Porter will additionally reward the characters with a *portable hole*.

C.

Mr. C. Porter offers the characters 500 gp to destroy the plant. If the characters can embarrass Farringway, she will double her offer.

The Layout

Falmas Farringway has a two-story townhome in the Sea Ward of Waterdeep. The bottom floor features the lounged and great hall, as well as the kitchen and servants quarters. Surrounding the townhome is a moderate but well-kept lawn and garden. The nearest home is separated by about 20 feet of grounds and a fence.

On the second floor is the master bedroom and two spare bedrooms, once rooms for Farringway's children, now guest rooms. Also on the second floor is Farringway's office, and a billiards room.

Farringway has converted his closet into a secret storage room to store his plant samples. The secret door is behind a massive armoire that took the place of the closet.

Obstacles

The external doors of the Farringway house are kept locked at night with sturdy locks, requiring either the key or a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to open. The door to the study is similarly locked, as is the door to the master bedroom and secret room. Only Falmas Farringway (a noble) has the key to these locks, and his caution in the week up to the inspection means he does not let the key leave his person.

Guards, Guards!

Farringway has also hired five humorless guards to protect him and his estate. They are four guards with 18 hit points, outfitted with heavy crossbows in addition to their spears, and led by a veteran. At night, two of the guards patrol the grounds around the house with a massive bloodhound (a wolf) outfitted with hide armor, increasing its AC to 15. One guard keeps watch from the roof, and one guard patrols the two internal floors. The veteran stays close by Farringway at all times.

Twists & Turns

Unsatisfied with his first complement of guards, Farringway has also completely replaced his house staff with a pack of four thugs. One is always loitering on the second floor, keeping an eye on the door to the master bedroom.

In terms of personal defense, Farringway keeps a *wand of magic missiles* on his person at all times, and is quick to use it on intruders.

Plant Storage Room

The hidden room where Farringway stores his plants has several layers of defense, befitting its nature as the focal point of his obsession.

The walls of the room have been reinforced with steel plates, making them incredibly difficult to breach. The only way to break through is by attacking the wall and breaking it open. The wall has AC 19 and 27 hit points.

The armoire that hides the secret door is not only exceptionally weighted, but exceptionally trapped. Before the secret door can be opened, it must be discovered; a character must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check to find the clues that the armoire can be moved.

A separate successful DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check is needed to detect the poison needles trap covering the armoire. A character that attempts to move the armoire through force or with one of the hidden switches must succeed a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 1 piercing damage and 21 (6d6) poison damage from the many hidden needles.

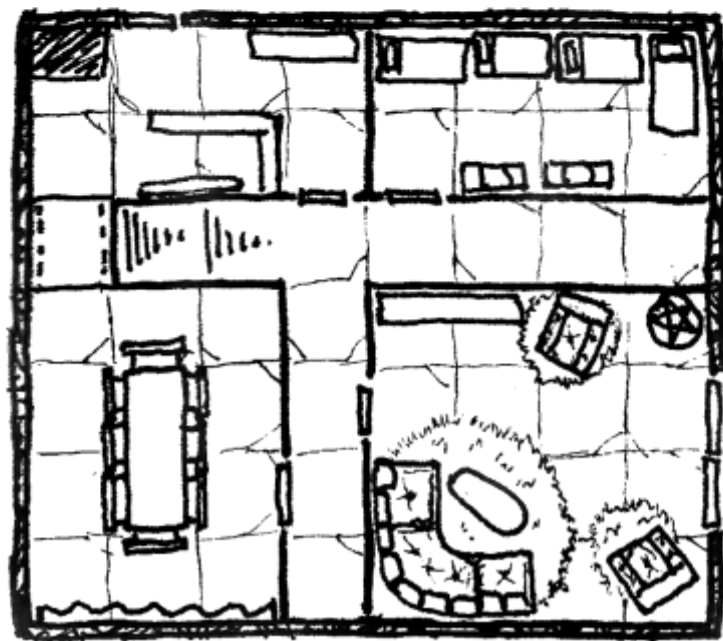
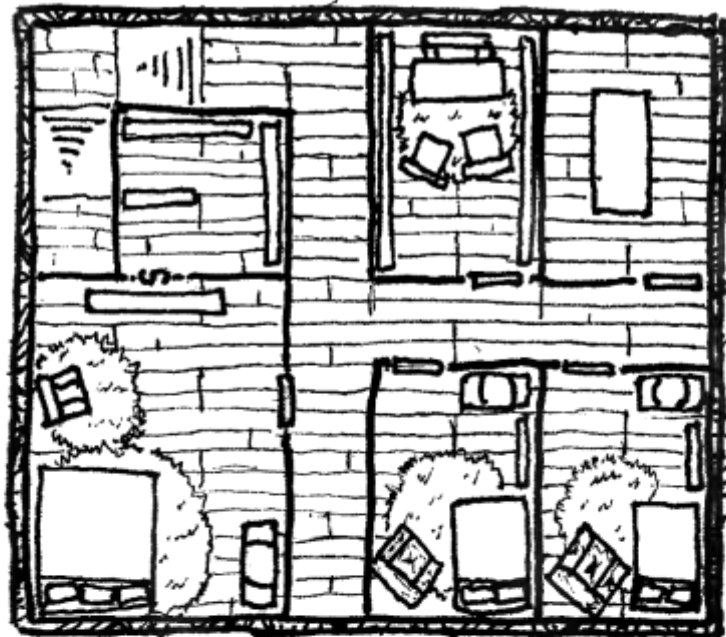
The Competition

The other Mr. Porters are not about to give up if the characters do not accept their offers. As such, the adventurers can expect to see other skilled individuals attempting the other tasks. You can build your own party of rival adventurers, or use or modify the suggested parties below.

- **Acquisitions Incorporated: Team Umbra:** a knight with 40 hit points and half plate (AC 15); two halfling scouts; an acolyte with 16 hit points and scale mail (AC 14)
- **The Black Knives:** a cult fanatic with a chain shirt (AC 15); three cultists with 18 hit points; one spy
- **The Dirty Dozen:** one bandit captain, eight bandits with studded leather armor (AC 13)
- **Rugger's Pack:** one berserker, one druid, three tribal warriors, one scout
- **The Brothers of Steel:** one knight, one veteran, one priest in half plate and a shield (AC 17)

The Escape

If an alarm is raised at the Farringway house, Waterdeep guards arrive in force in 5 (2d4) rounds.



Farringway House

Friendly Fires

Some crazy-ass firebug is crazy enough to earn a name in this town: the Fancy Ifrit, and it's only a matter of time before they torch something really important and the mages get called in to shut 'em down. I need you to find out how they do what they do and spread the love a little. I got a list of places and all the lamp oil you'll need – and don't worry, these places are all abandoned, you're giving this city some breathing room for expansion.

—Mr. Porter

"Friendly Fires" is a 1-2 hour adventure for characters of 3rd – 5th level.



The Target

Mr. Porter, a dwarven figure who keeps themselves fully wrapped and hidden under clothes except for their brilliant white beard, has a list of five addresses they want torched in the manner of the Fancy Ifrit.

The Payout

Each building the characters burn down in the Fancy Ifrit's style will earn them 300 gp from Mr. Porter.

The Layout

A character can study a burned structure burned by the Fancy Ifrit for ten minutes and make a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check. For each ability check a character succeeds, they can learn one piece of information from the following list:

- A certain symbol has been burned into the ground at each location.
- The fires were all started with magic.
- The fires were controlled to remain in a certain area.
- Small illusory flames remain behind and mock anyone who passes by.

Obstacles

All of the Fancy Ifrit locations are kept under guard; two guards and a veteran keep curious interlopers out. A character that succeeds a DC14 Charisma (Persuasion) or Charisma (Deception) check can convince the guards to let them inspect the wreckage.

No Place for a Barbecue

There is a 15% chance that each location Mr. Porter wants burned is inhabited by a family of squatters: 2d4 adults and 1d4 - 1 children, all commoners.

Twists & Turns

As the characters set their blazes, they begin to attract the attention of not only the city guard, but also the Fancy Ifrit.

Use your best judgement for dramatic timing and tension for when guards should arrive. A typical strike team will consist of four guards led by a single knight.

The Fancy Ifrit

The Fancy Ifrit is an ostentatiously-dressed mage taking a shortcut to arcane power by serving Imix, the Prince of Evil Elemental Fire. As such, he is slowly losing control of the fires he sets, and of his mind.

The Fancy Ifrit will show up when it is most dramatic (likely while the characters are being confronted guards. A character that succeeds a DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check can temporarily convince him to not kill the party. This check is made with disadvantage if guards are present.

The Escape

If the Fancy Ifrit confronts the characters while they are being accosted by the guards (which is what this author recommends, for cinematic purposes), the guards are smart enough to recognize the greater of two evils and focus on the powerful wizard.

If the characters are cornered or caught by the guards, a successful DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) or (Deception) check can convince the guards that the characters were just trying to help catch the Fancy Ifrit. If the guards helped bring down the Fancy Ifrit, that check is made with advantage.



Precious Cargo

A box of very special...ingredients...will be arriving very late tonight. Nobody knows what's inside of it but me, and I want to keep it that way. Get it to me by whatever means necessary. Don't break it, don't shake it, and don't let anyone look inside. That includes you – you look inside, the job is off, and I introduce you into a world of hurt. Do this right, and I introduce you to a whole lot of dragons.

—Mr. Porter

“Precious Cargo” is a 1-2 hour adventure for characters of 3rd – 5th level.



The Target

Mr. Porter keeps themselves very carefully hidden in shadows and behind a veil of incense smoke, a low hood and fine gloves concealing all distinguishing information.

They describe a box about four feet wide by five feet long by two feet high, and guess that it weighs “about two hundred pounds.” The box is marked with a special sigil, which Mr. Porter can provide a copy of.

The Payout

If the box arrives at the designated location intact, unopened, and without pursuit, Mr. Porter will pay the characters 3,000 gp.

The Layout

The wagon in question is scheduled to arrive in about two hours – enough time to make it

to the gatehouse it is scheduled to be at and make some minor preparations.

The wagon itself is a large stagecoach, filled with a healthy variety of expensive trade goods. Fine textiles, crates with exotic smells wafting up from their slats, and sturdy locked strongboxes can hold any amount of value; if a character can access or view all of their contents for an hour and succeeds a DC14 Intelligence check, they can determine that the contents of the stagecoach are worth an additional 5,000 gp.

Mr. Porter's box is buried underneath a thick layer of the other trade goods.

Obstacles

Unfortunately, the driver of the wagon and its two guards (three thugs) do not know that they are to receive help or inspections; their orders are to keep the contents of their wagon safe and not let anyone look inside. A character that succeeds a DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) or (Intimidation) check can convince the guards to let them join or inspect the wagon. This check is made with disadvantage if it is made while the wagon is stopped at the official inspection point.

The gate officials (a noble backed up by a knight and four guards) are suspicious of any shipment that arrives at this time of night, and will insist on inspecting the cart. Unless the characters intervene, the wagon riders will refuse, leading to their arrest and the impound of the wagon.

On top of all that, Mr. Porter's box is so completely hidden by the trade goods that it takes one minute and a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check to find. The wagon guards do not know of its existence, so they cannot help find it.

Twists & Turns

At some point during the heist, either during a confrontation at the city gate or as the characters are taking the box across the city to the drop site, a team of drow attempt to

steal the box. The drow team consists of one drow elite warrior leading four drow.

If the characters are part of a confrontation at the city gatehouse, the drow will use the commotion as cover to sneak around behind the wagon and steal the box. They move as a loose group, and focus-fire any character who gets in their way. Characters that succeed a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check or that have a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 14 or higher notice the drow as they move. If the drow are spotted, they use their *Innate Spellcasting* abilities to assist their escape.

If the characters are alone with the box, the drow leader will confront them openly, while the others wait in the shadows with their hand crossbows at the ready, and demand the box be handed over. If the characters refuse, the leader will question their motives, and attempt to paint a horrible picture of what might be in the box and the nefarious ends it might be put to. If the characters refuse again, the leader will angrily offer to pay the characters 1,000 gp for the box. If the characters refuse again, the drow attack.

The drow focus their fire on the characters holding the box, attempting to steal it away. If the drow leader is killed, the rest immediately flee into the shadows.

The Box

The box is secured with a concealed internal lock. A character wishing to open the box carefully must first succeed a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check to find the retracting flap that conceals the keyhole. The spring on the retracting flap means that a character attempting to open the lock has disadvantage on the check.

The Lock

The lock on the box is a fiendish, multi-part lock. A character attempting to open it must succeed three successive DC 16 Dexterity checks with thieves' tools.

The Trap

A character that fails a single check, or a character that tries to open the box without the proper key, must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 27 (6d8) points of poison damage and be poisoned for 1 hour. A character that succeeds the Constitution saving throw takes half damage and is not poisoned.

Breaking the Box

The box is a Medium object that weighs 250 lbs. Its AC is 16, and it has 18 hit points. It is immune to poison and psychic damage, and has resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons.

If the box takes 5 or more damage, its trap is triggered, and everyone within 5 feet of the box is affected. After this, characters that are within 5 feet of the box can hear soft rustling and breathing noises coming from the box.

If the box takes 10 or more damage, it begins to crack open. For 1 minute, any character that starts its turn or moves within 5 feet of the box must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the character is also unconscious while poisoned in this way. The character wakes up if it takes damage or if another creature takes an action to shake it awake. After this point, characters can hear pleas for help in Undercommon coming from the box.

If the box takes enough damage to reduce its hit points to 0, it breaks open, and any excess damage is transferred to its contents.

WHAT'S IN THE BOX?!

Inside the box are two drow children. They are noncombatants with 1 hit point and no effective attacks. They speak only Undercommon. The drow children (named Hall'ibrax and Ixzextis) do not know why they were kidnapped or where they are.

The Escape

Mr. Porter pays for a successful delivery, as promised. If the box shows signs of tampering, either from damage or failed attempts at opening the lock, but is not opened, he will withhold 1000 gp from the payment as punishment.

If the box is handed over to the drow ambush leader, the leader gives them 1,000 gp and thanks them in a strained voice. The next time the characters take a long rest, they have confusing and terrifying dreams involving spiders. When they wake up, they each have been granted a *charm of heroism* (DMG pg. 228).



End Run

You've gone around the block once or twice now, and you're attracting the right kind of attention to really make your way in this city. There's only one thing you have to do to officially make it in the big leagues and start making some real dragons, and that thing is wetwork. A gal I've had a wonderful working relationship with is reaching the end of her career, and she isn't in the mood to retire. She's asked me to find someone to give her the end she deserves. That someone is you.

—Mr. Porter

“End Run” is a 2-3 hour adventure for characters of 5th – 7th level.



The Target

Mr. Porter is a graceful, robed figure with long silver hair flowing down from the sides of their hood. When she speaks common, it is with a noticeable Elven accent.

Mr. Porter wants the characters to find and kill Jess the Beheader, a quasi-legendary contract killer, enforcer, executioner, athlete, and fixer in the criminal underground of Waterdeep and Skullport.

Mr. Porter also informs the characters that one of the conditions of this job is that Jess will be told who is coming after her; after two

days, Jess will start hunting them down to force the confrontation.

The Payout

When the characters bring Mr. Porter the soulbound axe of Jess the Beheader, he will know that she is dead, and will reward them 5,000 gp. She also insists that they bring him all of Jess's magical gear, but reassures them that the characters will receive magical items more appropriate to their skillset as compensation.

The Layout

Jess has made her home and lair in the Churlish Chultan Inn, an establishment with a fearsome reputation and iron-banded windows.

Rumor has it that Jess had some dwarven friends create a dungeon of trials underneath the Churlish Chultan. While the existence of the dungeon is a fairly open secret, no one claims to have entered it. The consensus is that the way to gain access to the dungeon is to impress the bartender of the Churlish Chultan in some way.

Obstacles

The good news is, there are several ways to impress both the bartender and the patrons of the Churlish Chultan. The bad news is, many of them aren't easy.

When and if the characters finally impress the patrons and the bartender, the bartender will show them the secret door in one of the privies that leads to a trapdoor.

Looking for a Fight

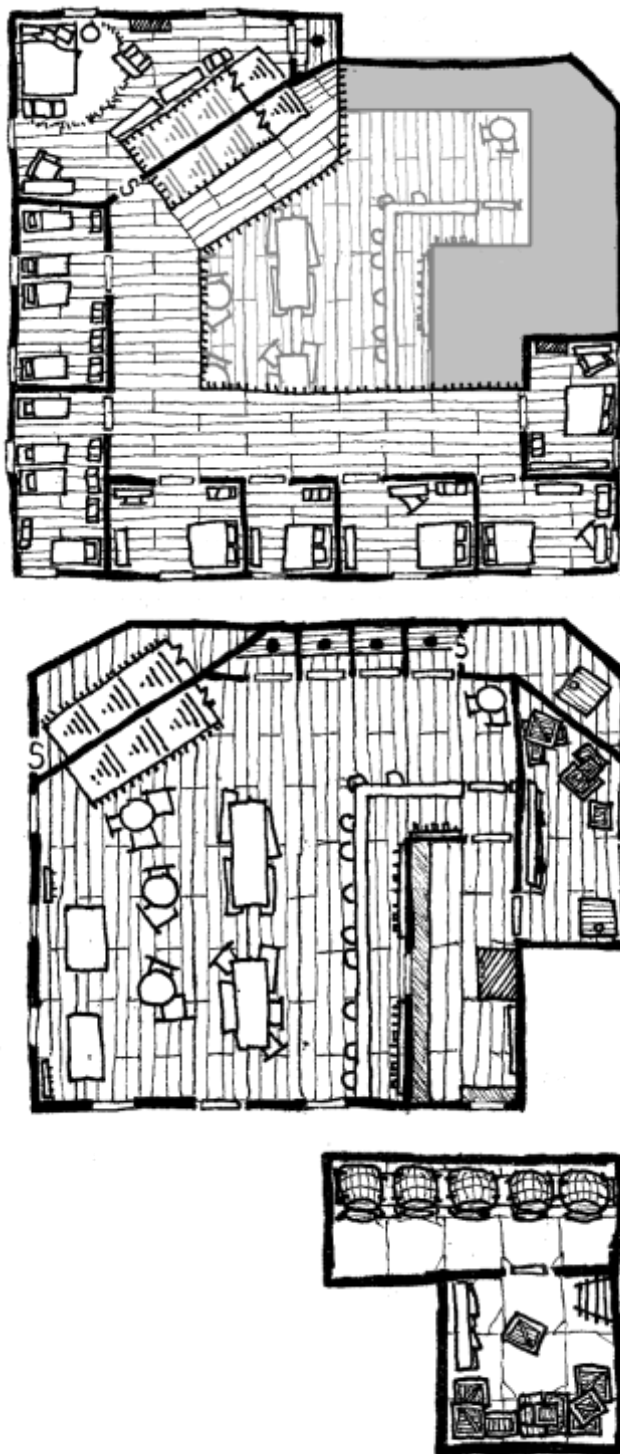
Asking directly and openly about Jess's trials will arouse instant suspicion and can quickly lead to a brawl. Characters that hold their own in the brawl impress everybody, but at any given time there are 8 (4d4) thugs and 7 (2d6) spies in the Churlish Chultan, making this quite a daunting prospect.

Rigged Game

The patrons of the Churlish Chultan are also happy to take on the characters in games of chance, skill, or strength, but they have heavily rigged the games to give themselves the upper hand. In a given contest, patrons of the Churlish Chultan have advantage on associated ability checks and attack rolls, and competing characters have disadvantage on the same.

During a game, a character that succeeds a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check or has a passive Wisdom (Perception) check of 16 or higher notices the cheating. The patrons will deny that they are cheating, and a character that is insistent on evening the playing field can easily start a brawl (see above).

The Churlish Chultan



Twists & Turns

The trapdoor opens to a long ladder that descends 50 feet underground. It ends at a narrow passage that travels an additional 30 feet down and away from the ladder, ending at a large unlocked bronze door.

Trial Dungeon General Features

Walls, ceilings, and floors are all smooth unmarked stone. Ceilings are 15 feet high unless otherwise stated. Doors are all made of stone and weigh 300 lbs. They retract into the ceiling when opened, and slam into 2-foot-deep grooves in the floor when closing.

Light

Unless otherwise stated, there are no light sources in the trial dungeon.

Locks

Locked doors are secured with a complex lock. Characters that succeed a DC 16 Dexterity check using thieves' tools unlock the doors unless otherwise stated.

Traps

Traps are found on the floor, walls, and some doors. There is a 50% chance that any door is trapped.

A character that succeeds a DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check, or whose passive Wisdom (Perception) score is 16 or higher, notices a trap.

A character that triggers a trap causes a gout of flame to spring 30 feet in a cone from the trap. Characters in the fire must succeed a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 11 (2d10) fire damage, or half as much damage on a successful saving throw.

A character that spends a minute and succeeds a DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) check, or a DC 16 Dexterity check with thieves' tools, disables a trap.

False Doors

False doors appear to be normal locked doors, but no amount of skill with a lockpick will open a false door. A character that specifically inspects a door and succeeds a DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check can determine if the door is real or not.

False doors are always trapped. If a character attempts to open or unlock a false door, they trigger the trap.

Secret Doors

Some doors are cleverly carved so that they appear nearly indistinguishable from the surrounding walls. A character that studies a 10-foot section of wall and succeeds a DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check can discern the location of a secret door if one is present.

The First Chamber

The room is 25 feet on a side and 25 feet tall. In the center is a 15-foot tall statue of a broad-shouldered woman wielding an axe and pointing skyward in a gesture of triumph and contempt. It is difficult to make out the features of the statue from the ground, but a character that succeeds a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices that the proportions and the general facial structure do not match the description they know of Jess the Beheader. A character above the statue has advantage on the check.

Doors are centered on each of the walls. The door to the north is featureless, and leads up to the Churlish Chultan. If characters interact with all three of the remaining doors, they slide open.

The West Door

The door to the west is locked. A bronze plaque on its surface reads,

Only the bravest springer of traps and opener of secure doors can survive what lies beyond.

A character that succeeds a DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools unlocks the door.

This door is also trapped. A character that spends a minute studying the door and succeeds a DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check notices the trap. A character must succeed a DC 16 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to disable the trap.

If the door is opened without disabling the trap, thick poisonous gas rushes up out of tiny vents in the floor and fills a 15-foot wide area around the door. A creature in that area must succeed a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 22 (4d10) poison damage and be poisoned for 1 hour. Characters that succeed the saving throw take half damage and are not poisoned.

The South Door

This door is reinforced with steel bands. A bronze plaque on it reads,

True strength is required to bear the trials ahead.

The door is unlocked. A character that opens the door must succeed a DC 15 Charisma saving throw or be affected as though by the spell *suggestion*. The course of action dictated by the suggestion is, "You should take out the people that came here with you – they'll betray you for the first good offer they get."

The East Door

This door has had numerous runes carved into its surface. A bronze plaque on it reads,

The ability to manipulate the world around you at your whim is not only power, it is a necessity.

This door is magically sealed. To open it, a creature must stand directly in front of it and cast a spell that consumes a spell slot. As soon as this happens, the door topples over and collapses the creature under its weight.

A creature takes 14 (4d6) damage when the door falls on them. At the start of each of their turns, a creature trapped under the door takes an additional 14 (4d6) damage from the weight of the door unless it succeeds a DC 15 Strength saving throw.

A creature can use its action on its turn to make a DC 15 Strength check to lift the door off a trapped creature. A creature underneath the door makes this check with disadvantage.

The Second Chamber

All three doors from the first chamber open into short hallways that wrap around and enter into a second, identical chamber. At the base of the statue, there is a small folded scrap of parchment. On it is a message written in a rough hand:

i used up all the good lines on the last one, it's traps and locks to the west, mage duel to the east, and a fight to the south.

show me you got what it takes and do them solo

jess

The West Door

The door on the western wall has a note stuck to it that reads,

you sneaky types will do well here. watch your step

Behind the door is a twisting network of tunnels, made more confusing by locked, false, and secret doors. There are traps that trigger on hidden pressure plates or when doors are opened.

Normally, there are six traps in this maze. For each additional person that enters the maze, two more traps activate.

The South Door

The door on the southern wall has a note stuck to it that reads,

he was a pain in life, he's a pain in death, kill him and I'll thank you before I beat you senseless

Behind this door is a wight. It wears plate armor, raising its AC to 18. It challenges the most martial-looking character to a duel, and fights to the death. If confronted with multiple opponents, it attacks immediately, focusing on mages first if possible.

entrance door snaps shut. Once the wight is defeated, the secret door in the south wall of the room slides open.

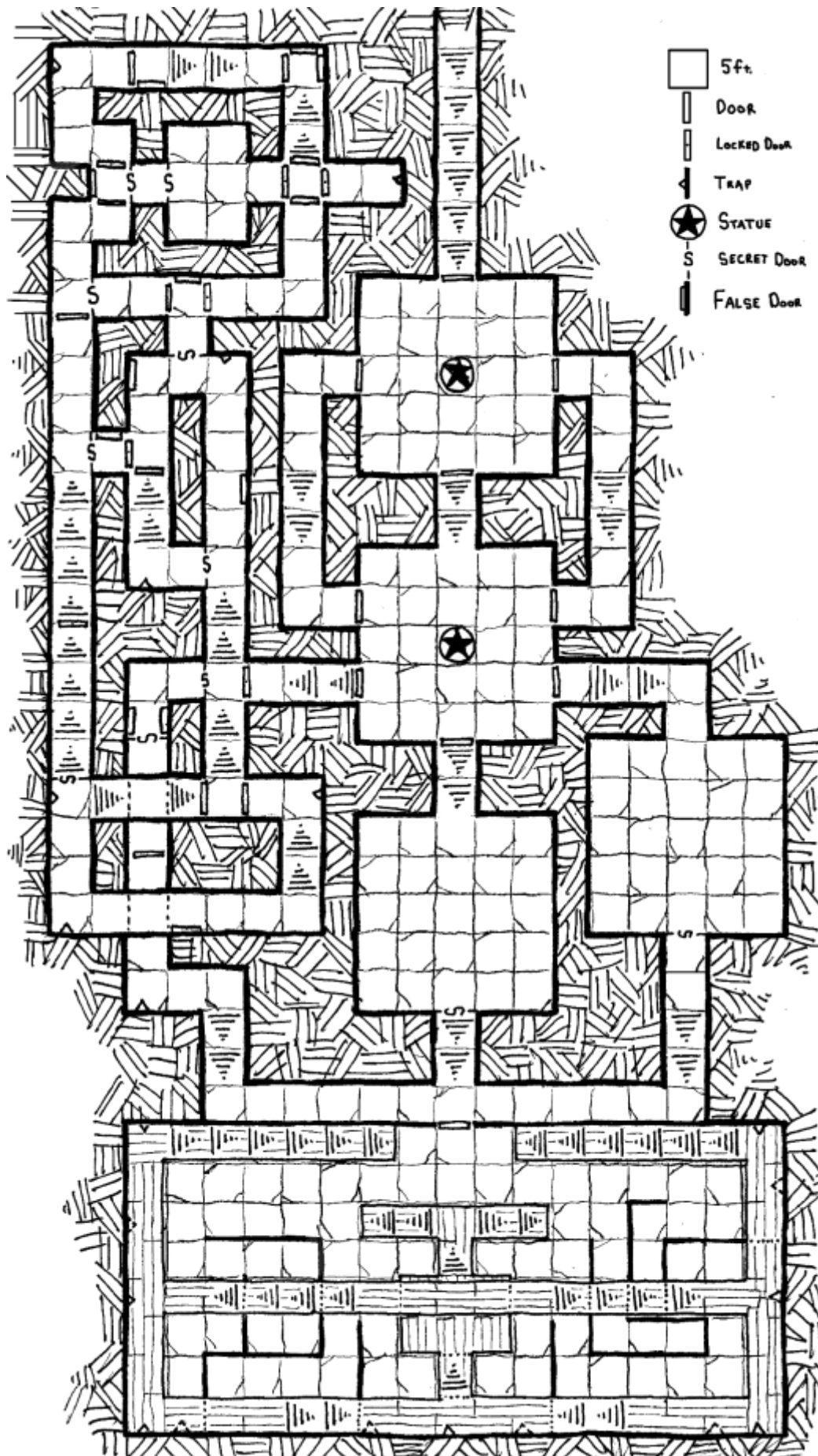
The East Door

The door on the eastern wall has a note stuck to it that reads,

you mages all think you're so smart. try one on for size.

Behind this door is a flameskull. It challenges the most magically-inclined character to a mage duel, and fights to the death. If confronted with multiple opponents, it uses *fireball* immediately, then attacks.

As soon as a character enters the room, the entrance door snaps shut. Once the flameskull is defeated, the secret door in the south wall of the room slides open.



The Escape

All three paths eventually lead to a long hallway with a single door in the center. The door has been left slightly ajar.

The room beyond is a wide-open arena with several ramps, ledges, and low walls. A thick mist fills the room, lightly obscuring the whole room and heavily obscuring everything beyond 10 feet. Torches along the wall provide dim illumination throughout the room.

Jess the Beheader is lounging atop the highest platform, eating a sandwich. When the characters enter, she puts down the meal and summons her soulbound axe to her hand with a boom.

A voice booms out through the mists. “Hey, congrats, looks like you got the stuff. Now all you gotta do is finish the job.” A crackle of purple lighting is all the warning you receive before you are attacked!

Once Jess is defeated, all the doors in her trial dungeon unlock and all the traps are disabled.

The denizens of the Churlish Chultan are dismayed by the death of the Beheader, but they respect the ones who defeat her.

Mr. Porter is more stoic upon receiving the news. If characters do not return with Jess the Beheader’s magic items, Mr. Porter will be extremely upset and assume the characters have kept the valuable items for their own gain. She will refuse to pay the characters at all, reasoning that the items they plundered are payment enough.

If the characters return all three of Jess the Beheader’s magic items, Mr. Porter will still pay out the reward as promised. In addition to the gold, Mr. Porter offers the characters each a choice of one of the following magical items. You can use the suggested magical items, or choose items you deem more appropriate.

- An *arrow-catching shield*
- A *belt of hill giant strength*
- A pair of *boots of speed*
- A *necklace of fireballs*
- A *ring of the ram*
- A bag of 6 beads of force

Appendix A: Magic Items

The following magic items appear at various places in the adventure.

Boots of the Fey Step

Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)

These supple leather boots are carved with flowing patterns that depict a landscape in fall, winter, spring, and summer. Every time the patterns are viewed, the landscape and season has changed.

The boots have 4 charges and regain 1d4 charged daily at dawn. While wearing the boots, you can use a bonus action to expend 1 of its charges to magically teleport up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space you can see.

You can spend 2 charges when you use the boots. If you do, you create an additional effect based on the season depicted most prominently on the boots. You can use a bonus action to change the season on the boots. If the effect requires a saving throw, the DC equals 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier.

Autumn. Immediately after you teleport, up to two creatures of your choice that you can see within 10 feet of you must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or be charmed by you for 1 minute, or until you or your companions deal any damage to int.

Winter. When you teleport, one creature of your choice that you can see within 5 feet of you before you teleport must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or be frightened of you until the end of your next turn.

Spring. When you teleport, you can touch one creature within 5 feet of you. That creature then teleports instead of you, appearing in an unoccupied space of your choice that you can see within 30 feet of you. If the target is unwilling, it may make a Charisma saving throw to avoid being teleported.

Summer. Immediately after you teleport, each creature of your choice that you can see within 5 feet of you takes fire damage equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum of 1 damage).

Mask of the Jungle Hunter

Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)

This smooth stone mask features shaped crystal disks over the eyes. It clasps snugly onto the face without needing straps to secure it.

While wearing this mask, your vision is not impeded by fog, mist, or foliage. As an action, you can switch out the lenses in the mask. With the lenses switched, you have advantage on vision-based Wisdom (Perception) checks to see warm-blooded creatures, and warm-blooded creatures have disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks to hide from your sight.

You can press a small button on the side of the mask to gain advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide and grant disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks made to see you. Pushing the button again deactivates this effect. Pushing the button requires an action.

Soulbound Axe

Weapon (battleaxe), legendary (requires attunement by a person chosen by the axe)

Crafted by vindictive dwarven lords long ago, the *soulbound axe* chooses its next wielder, typically a dwarf or human woman. Some of the names etched into its handle, however, are Elven, and one is even in an Orcish script. *Magic Weapon.* The *soulbound axe* is a magic weapon that grants a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with it. The axe otherwise acts as a *dwarven thrower* and a *sword of sharpness*.

Soulbond. The person attuned to the axe can spend a bonus action to call the axe into their hand, provided they and the axe are on the same plane of existence.

Appendix B: New Monsters

Jess the Beheader

Medium humanoid (half-orc), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 16 (studded leather armor, shield)

Hit Points 75 (10d8 +30)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +7, Dex +5, Con +6

Skills Athletics +9, Intimidation +5,
Perception +5, Stealth +5

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Orc, Elvish

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Boots of the Fey Step (4/day) As a bonus action, Jess the Beheader can magically teleport up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space she can see. When she teleports, one creature that she can see within 5 feet of her before she teleports must succeed a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened of her until the end of her next turn.

Brave. Jess the Beheader has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

Legendary Resistance (2/Day). If Jess the Beheader fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Predator's Vision. Jess can see through concealment provided by mist and plant matter. She has advantage on vision-based Wisdom (Perception) checks against warm-blooded creatures, and warm-blooded creatures have disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks against Jess to move without being seen.

Relentless Endurance. When Jess is reduced to 0 hit points but not killed outright, she can drop to 1 hit point instead. Jess can't use this feature again until she finishes a long rest.

Savage Attacks. When Jess scores a critical hit with a melee weapon attack, she can roll one of the weapon's damage dice one additional time and add it to the extra damage of the critical hit.

Actions

Multiattack. Jess the Beheader makes two melee or ranged attacks.

Soulbound Axe. **Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:** +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. and range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage, or 9 (1d10 + 4) slashing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack, or 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage if used to make a ranged attack. Immediately after making a ranged attack, the weapon flies back to Jess's hand.

Shield Bash. **Melee Weapon Attack:** +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d4 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it must succeed a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone in a square adjacent to Jess the Beheader.

Longbow. **Ranged Weapon Attack:** +5 to hit, range 120/300 ft, one target. Hit: 7 (1d10 +2) piercing damage.

Reactions

Parry. Jess adds 3 to her AC against one melee attack that would hit her. To do so, Jess must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Legendary Actions

Jess can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Jess regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Attack. Jess makes one Soulbound Axe attack or one Shield Bash attack.

Move. Jess moves up to half her speed.

Fey Step (Costs 2 Actions). Jess uses her Boots of the Fey Step.

Traps (Costs 2 Actions). Jess activates any one fire trap that she can see.

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