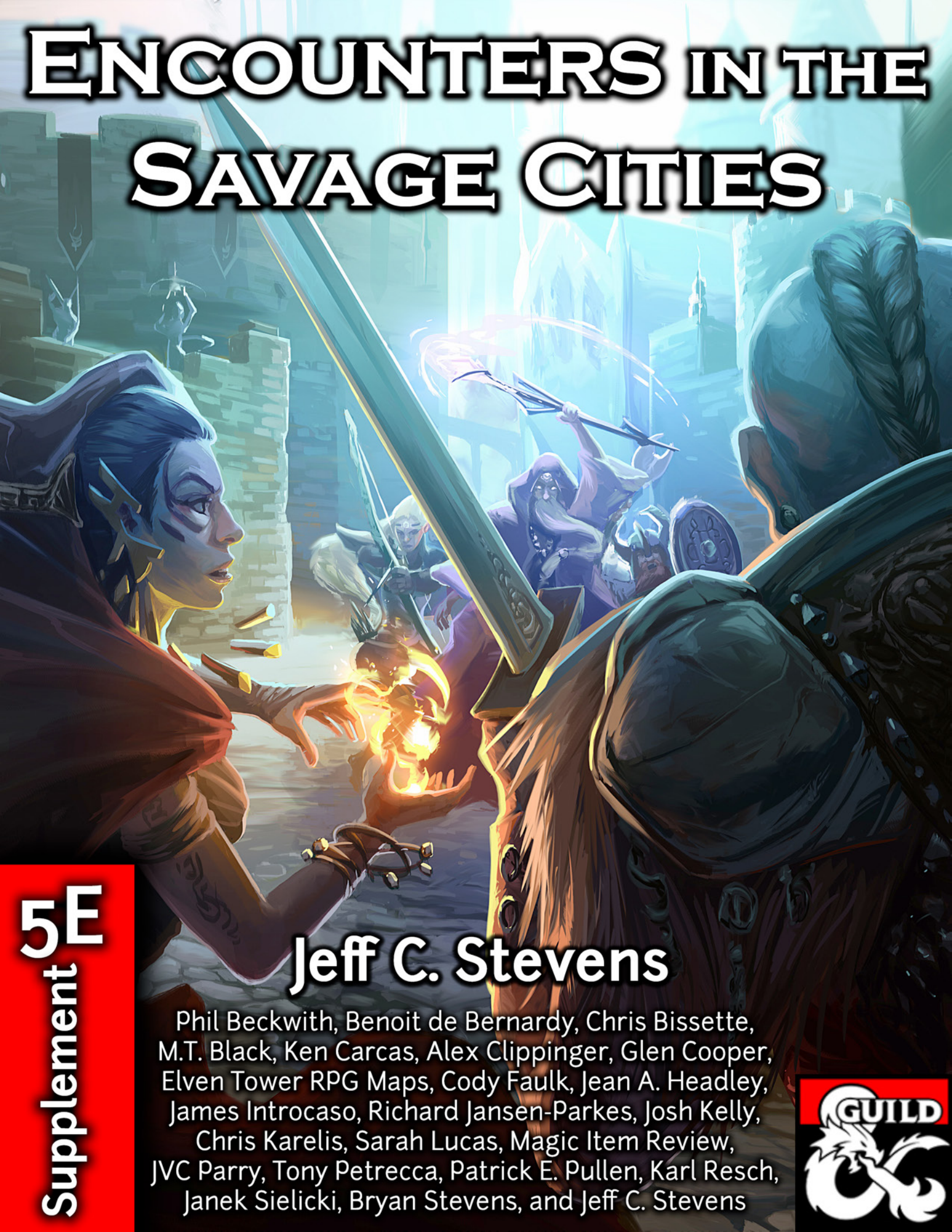


# ENCOUNTERS IN THE SAVAGE CITIES



**5E**  
Supplement

**Jeff C. Stevens**

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# Encounters in the Savage Cities

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**Alex Clippinger** (@Aclippinger) – a fantastic young writer who has what it takes to create fine adventures. If you're looking for some new areas to explore, pick up Alex's *The High Moor: A Forgotten Realms Conversion for 5E*.

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**Jean Headley** – my first proofreader and play-test DM, I wouldn't be here without her. Check out Jean's world building blog at [jeannadira.com](http://jeannadira.com)!

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**Sarah Lucas** (@maraudinowlbear) – a fantastic young lady with a talent for writing. I hope to see more D&D writing from Sarah, I think she has what it takes!

**JVC Parry** (@JVCParry) – a young man with a lot of talent, and a freelance writer of D&D. Mr. Parry has published several titles on the Dungeon Master's Guild. Check out his new adventure: *Terra Incognita*!

**Tony Petrecca** (@TonyPetrecca) – the man who created *Killer Kobolds*! Tony's fun writing style really caught my attention, and it's one of the reasons I started writing my own adventures. Thanks, Tony!

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**Bryan Stevens** (@iamyournerd) – my little brother, who I must thank for getting me back into the world of D&D! Without him, I wouldn't be creating today. Love you, bro!

**Jeff C. Stevens** (@jcorvinstevens) – that's me!

# ABOUT THIS SUPPLEMENT

Thank you for purchasing *Encounters in the Savage Cities*! This is the follow up supplement to *Encounters in the Savage Frontier*, which has been very successful, and I thank you if you have picked it up.

Often, there are times when the adventurers travel to a city to heal, trade, rest, relax, and whatever else adventurers do in a city. Then they head out on the next big adventure. I know I've had this occur in my own games. I wanted to give more to the cities our groups visit. I'm sure you will find many encounters you can easily drop into your own game with little preparation.

I've added suggestions for adjusting the difficulty (CR 1 – 10) for most of the encounters. I found that several didn't need adjustments, as they would work with any party level as written.

Several of the NPCs mentioned in this supplement could grow in your own campaign. I've had a few sketches created of the PCs I think could be used over and over. Many of the encounters could grow, too.

With *Encounters in the Savage Frontier*, I reached out to a handful of writers and I asked them to create two encounters each. For this supplement, I only asked for one encounter, but I reached out to a lot more writers. Why? Because I wanted to showcase some of the talent on the Dungeon Master's Guild, both new and established writers. I also wanted to showcase the creativity of some of the bloggers and podcasters I follow, and a few writers who hadn't published yet. Each submission is fantastic! I invite you to check out their other work, podcasts, and blogs. Also, be sure to follow them on Twitter!

This project was huge for me, and I've not had the time to write any new adventures! Now that it's finished, I'll put pen back to paper (actually... fingers back to keyboard), and get back into the adventure writing mode.

Thanks for purchasing *Encounters in the Savage Cities*! We hope you enjoy the encounters!

**Now – go play D&D!**

-Jeff C. Stevens

## RUNNING THE ENCOUNTERS

Text in textboxes is to be read to the players. Feel free to summarize the descriptions if that is more your DMing style.

Text in orange boxes is for your information and should not be read to the players.

The stat blocks for the creatures in this module can be found in the 5th Edition Monster Manual or in Volo's Guide to Monsters.

Official Wizards of the Coast books referenced:

MM = 5th edition Monster Manual

PHB = 5th edition Player's Handbook

DMG = 5th edition Dungeon Master's Guide

VGtM = Volo's Guide to Monsters

Unless otherwise noted, assume all **NPCs** have the stats of a commoner (MM, p 345). **Maps:** for all maps, 1 square = 5 feet.

Although we give you a good idea of how the encounter should go, we have no idea how your players will react to these situations. Be prepared to be unprepared and have fun! Let your imagination fly!

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## ENCOUNTERS

|                                                                   |                       |         |         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------|---------|
| <b>The Graveyard Shift</b>                                        | Phil Beckwith         | page 6  | CR 1-10 |
| <b>Bad Parenting</b>                                              | Benoit de Bernardy    | page 8  | CR 2-3  |
| <b>The Leaning Door</b>                                           | Chris Bisette         | page 11 | CR 4    |
| <b>Trouble at the Docks</b>                                       | M.T. Black            | page 16 | CR 1-10 |
| <b>The Puppeteers Assistant</b>                                   | Ken Carcas            | page 18 | CR 2    |
| <b>Shopping with Elementals</b>                                   | Alex Clippinger       | page 23 | CR 1-10 |
| <b>Fool me Once, Shame on You</b>                                 | Glen Cooper           | page 25 | CR 1-10 |
| <b>There's Something In My Basement...<br/>And It Ain't Rats!</b> | Jean Headley          | page 29 | CR 1-10 |
| <b>Jackal Run</b>                                                 | James Introcaso       | page 31 | CR 1-10 |
| <b>Party in a Bottle</b>                                          | Richard Jansen-Parkes | page 33 | CR 1-10 |
| <b>The Deadly Fountain</b>                                        | Chris Karelis         | page 35 | CR 3    |
| <b>The Dirty Doves</b>                                            | Josh Kelly            | page 39 | CR Any  |
| <b>Harpies in the City Limits</b>                                 | Sarah Lucas           | page 42 | CR 1-6  |
| <b>Hunger of the Ancient Orb</b>                                  | Magic Item Review     | page 44 | CR 9    |
| <b>Animated Accident</b>                                          | JVC Parry             | page 48 | CR 1    |
| <b>Circus Chaos</b>                                               | Tony Petrecca         | page 50 | CR 3-8  |
| <b>The Haunting of Night Cloak</b>                                | Patrick E. Pullen     | page 53 | CR 2-4  |
| <b>For Whom the Bell Tolls</b>                                    | Karl Resch            | page 56 | CR 5    |
| <b>Hidden Swimmers</b>                                            | Derek Ruiz            | page 61 | CR 1-11 |
| <b>The Festival</b>                                               | Janek Sielicki        | page 63 | CR Any  |
| <b>Ogre Ransack</b>                                               | Bryan R. Stevens      | page 66 | CR 1-10 |
| <b>Humans of E'arth</b>                                           | Jeff C. Stevens       | page 69 | CR Any  |
| <b>Museum Mayhem</b>                                              | Jeff C. Stevens       | page 72 | CR 1-16 |
| <b>The Gunner in the Street</b>                                   | Jeff C. Stevens       | page 75 | CR 1-10 |
| <b>Wanted... Mostly Dead</b>                                      | Jeff C. Stevens       | page 78 | CR 1-10 |
| <b>Take Him to Jail!</b>                                          | Jeff C. Stevens       | page 81 | CR 1-10 |

## EXTRAS

|                                       |            |         |
|---------------------------------------|------------|---------|
| <b>New Background: Museum Curator</b> | Cody Faulk | page 73 |
|---------------------------------------|------------|---------|

# THE GRAVEYARD SHIFT

By Phil Beckwith

*“A thieving ghost, a distraught widower; can your players retrieve the golden locket from the thieving spirit? Or is the spirit the rightful owner? That is for your players to discover!”*

**Type:** Combat & Role-play  
**CR:** 1-10

## DMs NOTES

**Clara Witherstone**, the **ghost** (CR 4; MM, p 147) in this encounter, was the original owner of a gold necklace and locket. Clara’s mother gave the locket to her when Clara married. Clara and her husband had two boys, and when her husband died by the hands of bandits, Clara found herself on hard times and she had to sell the locket to feed her family. Clara’s ghost believes the locket to still be hers, and she can only pass from this world into the next when she returns the locket to her own crypt.

**Zintol Fink** purchased the locket from a trader and presented it as a gift to his wife several years ago. His wife has passed and her body now rests in a local cemetery. Zintol buried his wife with the locket.

## THE ENCOUNTER

### BRAVE ADVENTURERS WANTED! PAYS WELL! IMMEDIATE START!

The heroes start this encounter by finding a ‘Help Wanted’ poster nailed to the tavern notice board. The poster reads:

‘Help! Brave adventurers wanted! Ask for Zintol Fink at the counter. Pays well. Immediate start!’

The bartender points the party towards a large, bearded man sitting at a table, his eyes red with grief stricken tears. The man introduces himself as Zintol Fink, a recent widower, who upon taking flowers to his late wife’s grave at the local city cemetery this morning, caught sight of a ghostly form of an old woman thieving

a golden locket from his wife’s grave. Zintol had given this locket to his wife on their 30th wedding anniversary. He wishes for some brave adventurers to retrieve the locket from the ghost and return it to him. Zintol offers the group 250 gp for this task.

### THE CITY CEMETERY

When the heroes approach the cemetery, it should be the dead of night. They see the ghostly old woman immediately, glowing with ethereal energy. Read or paraphrase the following:

Darkness deepens as you approach the cemetery. The night air is damp, and a thick fog blankets the ground and the graves.

The air grows chill, and then you see it. Appearing from thin air, in front of a large crypt, is a set of ghostly eyeballs. They hover roughly five feet above the ground, staring into the crypt’s darkness. It is then that you also notice a thin golden chain with a locket hanging where the ethereal neck should be.

As you watch in horror, slowly, the eyeballs begin to turn toward you, and features begin to appear. First the nose takes shape, then the cheekbones, followed by the rotting ethereal flesh. Before long, the entire spectral body of an old woman faces you, floating a few inches from the ground.

Her dead lips begin to part in an evil grin as she starts to float backwards into the crypt.

Still grinning at you, and staring with those empty, lifeless eyes, she disappears into the darkness beyond.

### WITHERSTONE CRYPT

If the heroes enter the crypt, they find the old woman’s ghost floating over a casket with the name ‘Clara Witherstone’ engraved on a copper plaque. She turns to the heroes and speaks in a high-pitched ghostly voice. Read or summarize:

“Shhh, you will disturb the restful,” she says as she turns back to the casket and begins to open it.

If the heroes attempt to talk the ghost into giving them the locket, read or summarize the below. Feel free to add any additional information from the DM's Notes.

"I cannot! For you see, I cannot rest and pass on from this place until my locket has been returned to my remains," she says, her tone emotionless.

If the heroes decide to allow her to keep the locket, they must then return to Zintol empty handed, and no reward is paid.

If the heroes attempt to retrieve the locket from the ghost, she attacks and fights until either she has been defeated or the heroes have been killed. She uses her Horrifying Visage ability as her first attack.

If the locket is returned to Zintol, he is very grateful and tips the heroes an additional 25 gp (275 gp in total).

If defeated in combat, Clara Witherstone's eternally tormented spirit reforms and forever haunts the city cemetery, in a never-ending pursuit for her missing locket.

### SCALING SUGGESTIONS

**APL 1:** Change ghost to specter (CR 1; MM, p279)

**APL 2:** Remove Horrifying Visage ability, reduce Withering Touch damage to 2d6+2

**APL 3:** Change Horrifying Visage to DC10, reduce Withering Touch damage to 3d6+2

**APL 4:** As written

**APL 5:** Change ghost to wraith (CR 5; MM, p 302)

**APL 6:** Change ghost to wraith (CR 5; MM, p 302), add +15 HP

**APL 7:** Increase Horrifying Visage to DC 15, increase Withering Touch damage to 5d6+2, add +15 HP

**APL 8:** Increase Horrifying Visage to DC 15, increase Withering Touch damage to 5d6+2, add an extra attack, add + 30 HP

**APL 9:** Increase Horrifying Visage to DC 16, increase Withering Touch damage to 6d6+2, add an extra attack, add +45 HP

**APL 10:** Increase Horrifying Visage to DC 16, increase Withering Touch damage to 6d6+2, add an extra attack, add +60 HP



# BAD PARENTING

By Benoit de Bernardy

*“Innocent-looking children draw the adventurers into a deadly trap...”*

**Type:** Roleplay & Combat

**CR:** 2-3

## DM NOTES

Bad Parenting is an encounter for characters of levels 2 or 3. You can run it in any city with a shady neighborhood.

## BACKGROUND

The Shorty Pants are a group of orphans that grew up in a part of town called the “Manure District”. Until recently, they have survived by doing petty jobs, begging, picking pockets, and stealing from merchant stands.

Their fates changed when a particularly smart and charismatic bugbear named Arnold Bullmeister convinced them to work for him. The kids now lure adventurers into an ambush with their innocent looks, make sure none of their victims survive, and then plunder their corpses.

The encounter occurs after the PCs buy, sell, or show an item of great value (over 50 gp). The Shorty Pants regularly place lookouts near the shops most likely to attract adventurers. When suitable targets shows up, the lookouts try to draw them to where the others are at.

## THE ENCOUNTER

### PUPPY DOG EYES

Tyron Wackaby (human, **street rat**, see below) approaches the PCs shortly after they leave the shop, preferably while they’re in a main avenue not too far away from the Shorty Pants’ ambush site.

When you’re ready to begin this encounter, read or paraphrase the text below:

Someone violently bumps into you from behind. When you turn around to see who pushed you, you see a young boy no more than eight years of age, lying in the street, his face dug into a huge pile of horse dung. He takes a moment to regain his bearings before standing up, and then looks at you with deep sadness in his eyes. When he notices your weapons and armors, his expression changes to joy and hope. “You wouldn’t happen to be adventurers, would you?”

Tyron is in fact the bait in the Shorty Pants’ plan. He tries to convince the PCs to ‘save’ his sister who is being held ‘captive’ by a group of bugbear slavers.

If the adventurers ask him why he looks so sad, he tells them the following:

- † His name is Tyron Wackaby.
- † He and his sister, Jahera, are part of a group of orphans called The Shorty Pants.
- † They used to live in an old abandoned warehouse in the Manure District.
- † Huge, ugly, hairy men arrived in the neighborhood a couple of weeks ago. They’ve been trying to capture the Shorty Pants ever since. (If the PCs ask more details about the creatures, they understand that he’s talking about bugbears.)
- † The rumors say these are human traffickers specializing in the trade of children.
- † They captured his sister this morning. He managed to follow them to their hideout in the sewers, but he can’t do anything alone.
- † The guards won’t help because the hairy men are bribing them.
- † He asks if the PCs can save his sister.

Everything Tyron told the characters is a lie. If they follow him to the 'hideout', they fall into an ambush (see "The Trap" below). The PCs are entitled to a **DC 17 Wisdom (Insight)** check to notice the deception. If the adventurers refuse to help him, he grabs onto one of them and begs. He holds on and lets the PC drag him on the floor if the PC walks away. This is another one of Tyron's ruses to lift something off of them (typically a small jewel or a belt pouch).

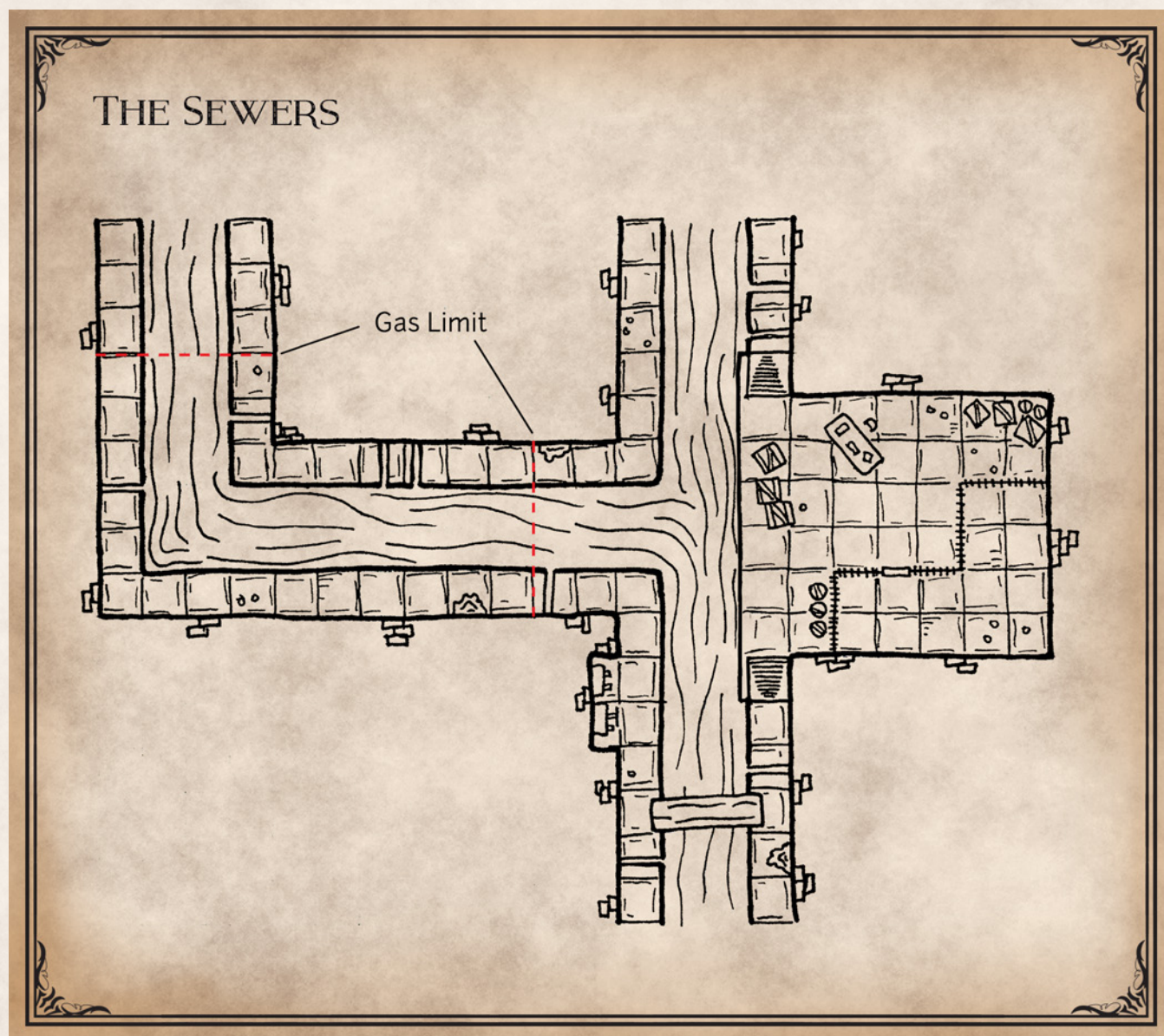
### THE TRAP

Arnold Bullmeister and the other Shorty Pants are waiting in the sewers, on a former maintenance platform that they repurposed for their ambush. Tyron brings the characters into the sewers and stops shortly before reaching the ambush spot.

"It's just around the corner. Somebody built a room down here, and there's a cage, and it's HUGE! It could hold dozens, maybe even hundreds of kids! And a big, ugly, hairy man was sitting there just watching them."

Tyron doesn't want to go any further. He can draw a rough map of the area if the PCs give him parchment and a writing implement. He then runs away, leaving his companions to take care of the rest.

Everything on the platform is made to look like Arnold Bullmeister is watching over five children being held captive in a large cage. Arnold is actually waiting for one of the other kids to lure a



victim to their ambush spot. The five children are pretending to be captives but the door to the cage is unlocked.

#### THE CORROSIVE GAS

Arnold Bullmeister hid a large amount of dangerous acid crystals in a sewer pipe. He can release them into the water below by pulling on a wire from the table he's sitting at. These crystals turn into a highly corrosive gas when they come in contact with the water. Because of the current, these crystals spread before fully turning into gas which fills a large section of the sewers (see map).

The sewer pipe Arnold hid the crystals in is identical to the dozen pipes the PCs have come across on their way to the ambush spot, and the wire that allows Arnold to release them is covered in moss and mud. Unless your players specifically mentioned they spend a ridiculous amount of time searching everywhere, the characters don't notice the trap (it's obvious if they check every pipe).

Anyone in the toxic gas when Arnold triggers the trap immediately suffers 3d6 acid damage. The gas then rises to the ceiling during the next 2 rounds. Creatures that end their turn in the acid cloud during this time suffer 1d6 acid damage.

#### THE FIGHT

**Arnold Bullmeister** (see statistics below) waits for the PCs to get closer, pretending he didn't see them, before activating his trap (as a Reaction). He wants to have as many of them in his acid cloud as possible. If the characters attack him with ranged weapons, he ducks under the table and waits. The crates in front of him grant him half-cover, or three-quarters cover if he's hiding under the table.

The five **street rats** pretending to be held captive in their unlocked prison cell also join the fight, preferably after Arnold has activated the trap. They attack the PCs with their slings or, if the PCs engage Arnold in melee combat, with their daggers. If the characters manage to take the bugbear out before he has a chance to move, for example with a *sleep* spell, the street rats are too afraid of the characters and run away.

**Monster Statistics.** Arnold Bullmeister is a **bugbear** (MM page 33) with an intelligence of 13 instead of 8. The five children are **street rats**.

## MONSTER STATISTICS

### STREET RAT

*Small humanoid (varies), chaotic neutral*

**Armor Class** 12

**HP** 10 (3d6)

**Speed** 25 ft.

| STR    | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS    | CHA     |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|
| 8 (-1) | 15 (+2) | 10 (+0) | 11 (+0) | 9 (-1) | 12 (+1) |

**Skills** Deception +5, Sleight of Hand +6, Stealth +4

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

**Cunning Action.** On each of its turns, the street rat can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

**Sneak Attack.** The street rat deals an extra 3 (1d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the street rat that isn't incapacitated and the street rat doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

#### ACTIONS

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage.

**Sling.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 20/80 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) bludgeoning damage.

# THE LEANING DOOR

By Chris Bissette

*“The Yawning Portal is renowned far and wide, both for its opulent comfort and—of course—the open well in the center of the bar that serves as an entrance to the ruins of Undermountain beneath it.*

*The Leaning Door is not the Yawning Portal, but it very much wants to be.”*

**Type:** Combat & Roleplaying  
**CR:** 4

## DMs NOTES

There are a lot of things to be said about The Leaning Door and Dulren Slenderfoot, but the most important thing—the one the party must not find out until it is far too late for them—is that it is all a lie.

There is no dungeon beneath The Leaning Door. There is only a cruel ambush, and a small group of people in Dulren’s employ who ensure that the rumours continue to circulate and that the unsuspecting adventurers continue to blunder through the inn’s door.

## THE ENCOUNTER

### THE LEANING DOOR INN

The Leaning Door is a seedy-looking tavern in a shady part of town. The party may simply stumble upon it while looking for somewhere to spend the night. Alternatively, they may hear rumours of the titular leaning door, and what lies beyond it, and choose to investigate the tavern for themselves.

Word of the Leaning Door should not be hard to come by. The tavern’s main draw is an old, twisted doorway that was uncovered in the foundations of the building when the current owner began building an expansion to the property. Upon opening the door, Dulren Slenderfoot—the current owner—found a maze of labyrinthine passages filled with ancient traps and strange beasts, stretching for untold miles beneath the city.

If you want to tempt the party towards the Leaning Door rather than have them find it randomly, you can use the following table of rumours to provide the party with information about the Inn.

### 1d6 Rumours

- 1 The Leaning Door is said to be cursed; nobody has managed to keep it in business for more than a year until Dulren Slenderfoot took over.
- 2 A scoreboard of sorts tracks how long groups of delvers have spent beyond the Door before returning. The longest time on record is four days; most groups never return.
- 3 There is an artifact of great power at the middle of the labyrinth below the inn.
- 4 Dulren offers a prize of 1,000 gp to anybody who can survive a tenday below the inn and return to tell the tale.
- 5 An adventuring party descended below the inn just over a tenday ago. It is assumed that they are dead, but they seemed capable and a small economy has formed around the inn as people gamble on whether or not they will return. (To make this rumour hook the party even more, you could hint that this rival adventuring party is a group your players have come across before.)
- 6 The dungeon was built by a long-forgotten group of cultists, who constructed the labyrinth in the shape of enormous glyphs that would wake their sleeping god. They were never heard from again after they finished building it.

### DULREN SLENDERFOOT

Dulren Slenderfoot is something of an anomaly—born of a dwarven mother and a halfling father, he possesses his mother’s magnificent beard and thirst for ale, and his father’s slim form and light fingers. He is gruff and jaded but can turn on the charm when need be. He is also a swindler, a thief, a con man—and, arguably, a murderer.



Dulren was an adventurer, once upon a time. He retired early, preferring the prospect of being alive and bored to being excited and prematurely dead. Rumour has it that he and his party ventured into the well in the Yawning Portal, and that only Dulren emerged—bloodied, beaten, and retired.

Weak and beaten he may have been, but Dulren is anything but stupid. He saw the success of The Yawning Portal, saw the money that could be made with a similar enterprise, and he saw an opportunity. The problem, of course, is that there aren't many pubs conveniently situated atop sprawling megadungeons.

So Dulren built one.

Dulren's stats are provided at the end of this encounter.

## INSIDE THE LEANING DOOR

The Leaning Door is designed to be located in Waterdeep, where its notoriety is increased by its association with The Yawning Portal. That said, nothing about the inn itself is specific to Waterdeep or the Forgotten Realms, and The Leaning Door can be inserted easily into any campaign world. Simply place it in a fairly large city, preferably in one of the less salubrious areas of town. If you are not playing in the Forgotten Realms, replace all references to tendays with weeks, or the unit of time of your choice.

### OUTSIDE THE INN

The Leaning Door is a low, narrow building that seems to hunch behind the buildings surrounding it. It is accessed by a small wooden door set into the wall of the building, partway down a narrow alley.

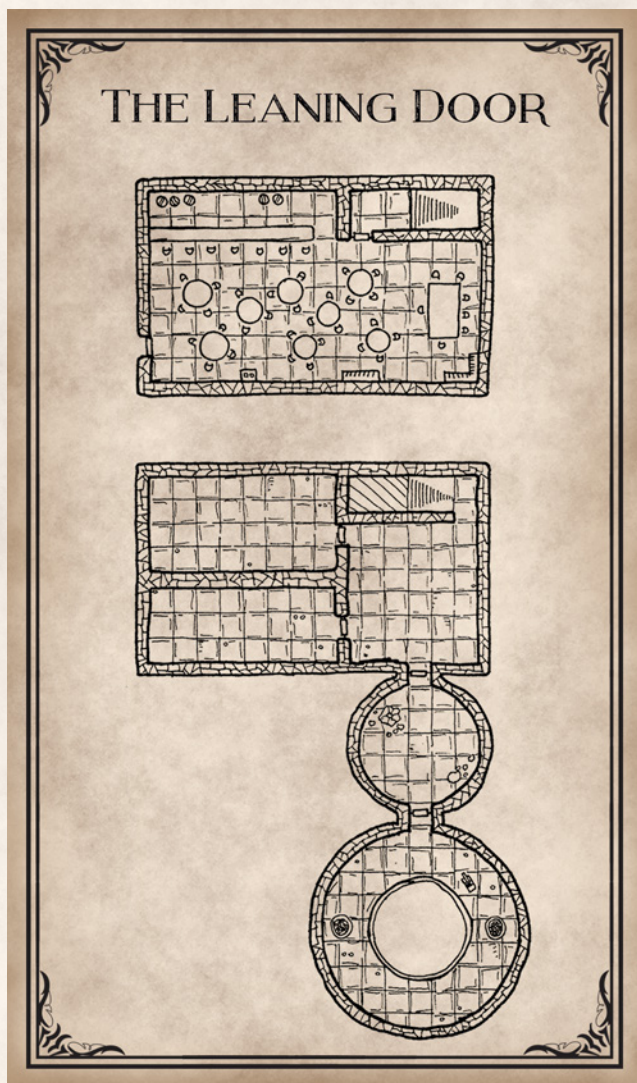
The only indication that the inn is there is the battered wooden sign that hangs above the dingy doorway—a slab of wood painted with an overflowing mug of ale and the words 'The Leaning Door'. The wood is cracked from weather and age; the paint is faded and flaking away from the surface. From beyond the door you can just make out the sound of voices rising and falling, and what sounds like a flute, though its music is mostly inaudible.

### ENTERING THE INN

You almost have to put your shoulder into the door to open it; its wood is swollen with age and neglect, and it sits tight in its frame.

It opens onto a long, dimly lit room. Smoke hangs in the air from pipes gripped in mouths missing too many teeth. A thin layer of straw—matted and stinking of stale beer—covers the wooden floor. A large board hangs on the back wall, bearing names of what sound like sports teams with numbers alongside them. As you enter, a burly man is up on a ladder beside it, hanging a wooden slab painted with the number '8' alongside the name at the top of the board. A group of six well-armed individuals sit at a grand table beneath the sign, clearly celebrating something.

(Continued on next page...)



A bar runs along one wall, manned by a dwarf with strange, delicate features, who looks up as you walk in and grins at you, beckoning you towards a number of empty stools up against the bar.

"Welcome, welcome!" he shouts, raising his voice above the various conversations and the lilting sounds of a flute played by a ragged-looking bard perched on a crate by the fire on the opposite side of the room. "What can I get you?"

The dwarf is Dulren Slenderfoot, and he turns on the charm for his newest customers—especially if they are obviously the adventuring sort, and thus exactly the kinds of people he wants to tempt into the Leaning Door. He will only bring up the Leaning Door, the dungeon, and the 1,000 gp prize if the party mention it—he is smart enough to know that nobody trusts a salesman.

The six individuals are Dulren's hired men. They are known to the patrons of the Leaning Door as an adventuring party who have braved the dangers of the dungeon multiple times. They rarely spend more than a few days below the inn, but always return with riches and are always generous about buying drinks for the rest of the patrons when they return. They are comprised of a dwarf, three half-elves, and a burly half-orc. Name them as you see fit, and provide them with whatever story you like should the party speak to them. They will confirm the existence of the labyrinth, and will confirm both its dangers and its potential rewards.

Should the party ask about the scoreboard or the Leaning Door, read the following.

"Interested in that, are you?" the bartender says, eyeing your weapons. "Aye, you look the sort. Couldn't tell you what's down there for sure—didn't get very far in myself before I decided it was a bad idea. I know there's plenty of loot to be had, if you're bold enough. Plenty of danger too, though."

Flesh out the story of the dungeon however you like. Remember that Dulren wants the party to trust him—he will try not to give any sign that anything is afoot, and if the party seem hesitant he won't press the issue too much for fear of being discovered.

Few of the patrons of the tavern are in on the scam. Regulars will have seen adventuring parties come and go—some of them return (usually stooges paid by Dulren to go into the cellar with him and return after a few days looking beaten but happy, buying drinks for everyone with the wealth they've 'found' in the dungeon) while others simply disappear forever.

### THE LEANING DOOR

Should the party decide to venture into the dungeon, Dulren will ask them for a modest 1 gp each as an entrance fee (he will sell it as a contribution to the prize fund, should they last longer than a week). He will also ask them to sign a waiver that absolves him of any responsibility or liability should they suffer loss of limb, life, or sanity while below ground.

With the entrance criteria satisfied, he will lead them down into the inn's cellar and through a low archway in the back wall.

Holding a hooded lantern before him, Dulren strides confidently ahead through a low brick archway that most of you have to bend to pass under. Beyond it is a small, bare chamber, hewn out of the earth below the tavern. In the far wall, opposite the archway, stands the leaning doorway that gives the inn its name—four feet tall, strangely twisted and leaning heavily to the right, made of a dark wood that is almost red in color and carved with faded runes of unknown meaning.

He stops before the door, an ornate brass key clutched in his hand.

“You sure you want to do this?” he asks.

The runes carved on the door are simply shapes that Dulren thought looked arcane and mystical. They have no meaning, even to characters with traits that allow them to understand languages.

Once the party are ready, Dulren unlocks the door and leads them into the Elevator Room.

## THE ELEVATOR ROOM

Despite its strange shape the leaning door opens before Dulren without any issues, swinging silently into a circular chamber lit by two circular braziers full of glowing coals on either side of a large round platform—maybe twenty feet wide—that takes up the middle of the room. Chains rise up to pulleys suspended from the ceiling and descend through the platform to whatever lies below, and a large lever stands off to one side.

“This is it,” Dulren says, gesturing to the platform. “Stand on that, pull the lever, and down you go.” He pauses for a moment, seemingly distracted by some thought or memory. “Goes down about three hundred feet,” he says. “Takes a few minutes, and it’s pretty boring. Don’t get too relaxed, though. Once it hits the bottom you’ll need your wits about you.”

He moves back to the leaning door, where he pauses again. “We’ll check every day for the next tenday, at dawn and at dusk. If you’re here, we’ll find you. If you’re not... Well. You’re not. Good luck.”

With that he exits the chamber, closing the door behind him. You hear the heavy clunk of the lock as he seals you in with the elevator.

If the party throw the lever, the elevator begins to descend quickly. Move to E. Ambush!

## AMBUSH!

The platform drops away with surprising speed, and it is a matter of seconds before the floor of the entrance chamber is moving up past your eyes and you are staring at rough stone walls on all sides. Once you are below the lip of the elevator shaft you realise just how dimly lit the room was; it is dark down here, and the light does not carry far below the lip of the pit.

You sink into the ground—ten feet, twenty feet, thirty feet. Then, with a judder and the rattle of chains, the platform stops suddenly.

Allow the characters a moment to react and wonder what is going on. The elevator has reached the bottom of the shaft—though they have no obvious way of knowing that—and the ambush is about to begin. Allow a **DC 18 Wisdom (Perception)** check to notice the sound of the leaning door being opened and 6 **thugs** (MM p. 350) (the group seen in the tavern at the beginning of the encounter) sneaking in to circle the pit. They keep back from the lip, staying out of sight until they begin the ambush.

Once you feel it is time for the ambush to begin—either because the party have noticed the sounds coming from above, or have begun trying to climb out of the well—read the following.

From high above you comes a clatter of metal on stone, accompanied by the heavy twang of multiple crossbows being fired. You look up just in time to see one of the braziers tumbling down towards you, spilling its coals into the pit. Shadowy forms surround the opening of the pit, and you realise you have been tricked.

Roll initiative!

If the players failed to hear the thugs approaching, grant the enemies a surprise round before combat begins in earnest. All characters in the pit must succeed on a **DC 20 Dexterity saving throw** to avoid the falling coals and brazier, taking 1d10 fire damage plus 1d6 bludgeoning damage on a failed save, halved on a success.

## SCALING SUGGESTIONS

**Note:** Lower level PCs will not want to tangle with Durlen

**APL 1:** Six bandits (CR 1/8; MM, p343)

**APL 2:** Four thugs

**APL 3:** As written

**APL 4:** As written

**APL 5:** Four thugs, two bandit captains (CR 2; MM, p344)

**APL 6:** Four bandit captains

**APL 7:** Three knights

**APL 8:** Three knights, one priest (CR 2; MM, p348), three thugs

**APL 9:** Two gladiators (CR 5; MM, p346), one knight, one priest

**APL 10:** Two gladiators, one knight, one priest

The thugs will spend their turns firing their crossbows into the pit, stepping back out of line of sight to reload. They will focus their attention on any character who tries to get out of the pit through climbing, levitating, etc. On the second round of combat they tip the other brazier into the pit, with the same effect as above. At this point the party will be in darkness; all of the thugs have darkvision, and will not be hindered by the lack of light.

Dulren is not present during the ambush; he has returned to the bar, and trusts his men to take care of the party.

## CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

Once the party are out of the pit, they will probably have a bone to pick with Dulren. Run with this as you like. He will flee if given a chance, leaving Waterdeep for good once he realises that his con has been busted.

If the party kill Dulren or he flees and they decided to search the pub, a successful **DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation)** check reveals a section of loose brickwork behind some ale casks in the cellar. This contains the loot Dulren has stolen from previous unwitting groups. Roll once on the **Treasure Hoard: Challenge 0-4** table on page 137 of the DMG to determine what this stash holds.

## NPC STATISTICS

### DULREN SLENDERFOOT

*Medium humanoid (stout halfling), chaotic neutral*

**Armor Class** 13

**HP** 49 (9d8 + 9)

**Speed** 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 11 (+0) | 17 (+3) | 12 (+1) | 14 (+2) | 13 (+1) | 16 (+3) |

**Saving Throws** Dex +5

**Skills** Deception +5, Insight +3, Investigation +4, Persuasion +5, Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +5

**Damage Resistance** poison

**Senses** passive Perception 15

**Languages** Thieves' cant plus any two languages

**Challenge** 4 (1,100 XP)

**Cunning Action.** On each of his turns, Dulren can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

**Leaning on the Truth.** Dulren has been conning adventurers into the basement of the Leaning Door for years, and has told the story of the dungeon beneath the tavern so many times that he almost believes it himself. He has advantage on all Charisma (Deception) and Charisma (Persuasion) checks made to oppose players who choose to question his story (particularly in opposed rolls vs. Wisdom (Insight)).

**Sneak Attack (1/turn).** Dulren deals an extra 10 (3d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Dulren that isn't incapacitated and Dulren doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Dulren makes two melee attacks.

**Shortsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

**Hand Crossbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

### REACTIONS

**Uncanny Dodge.** Dulren halves the damage when hit by an attack from an attacker he can see.

# TROUBLE AT THE DOCKS

By M.T. Black

*“A trip to the docks turns violent when the party encounter a press gang.”*

**Type:** Combat & Role Playing

**CR:** 1-10

## DMs NOTES

This encounter has been calculated to present a tough challenge to four characters of 3rd level; that is, with an APL (average party level) of 3.

## DOWN ON THE DOCKS

The scenario begins with the party walking along a dirt road in the harbor district of a city.

### URBAN RENEWAL

The docks smell of saltwater, tar, and rotting fish. Above the din of the crowded streets, you can hear the slap of water against sodden piers, the clank of chains, and the rustle of canvas. The sky is shrouded in dark, heavy clouds, and the odd spot of rain begins to appear on the dirt road you are walking on.

A halfling pushes through the crowd, coming directly toward you. She holds a clipboard in one hand and has a pencil behind her ear. “Please,” she says. “Can you help me? I just need a few minutes.”

The halfling tells them her name is **Seraphina Redport**, and that she is a planner employed by the city council. She is currently trying to interview a broad selection of people in the area. Assuming the party talk to her, she will ask several questions:

- † Are you users of the dock facilities?
- † How often do you visit the docks?
- † How would you rate the infrastructure in the area?
- † What additional facilities would you like to see constructed?

A **DC 16 Wisdom (Insight)** check suggests that Seraphina is being rather disingenuous. She is not a town planner at all, but rather a



sailor on the *Dirty Barnacle* – a pirate ship! The *Dirty Barnacle* is docked under a false name for repairs and reprovisioning, and the captain has told his crew to form a *press gang* and find some “strong, but dim-looking folk” to press into service.

### MOST IMPRESSIVE

While the party are talking to Seraphina, the press gang quietly moves up behind them. Anyone with a **passive Perception score of 15** or higher hears their approach. Anyone deliberately scanning the area for trouble also sees them. The press gang consists of six **thugs** (CR ½, MM, p 350), dressed in classic pirate garb—breeches, linen shirts, waistcoats, knitted caps—and are armed with maces. Their leader, a gap-toothed fellow named **Jonas Brickheart**, gives a cold smile as he says, “Now, ye better come along nice and quiet, hear?”

## TACTICS AND COMPLICATIONS

If the party are very persuasive and offer the right bribe, Jonas may let them walk away. If the bribe is too large, however, Jonas will conclude the party are wealthy and certainly try to capture or kill them.

In combat, the press gangers spread out, attempting to flank the party while remaining within 5' of each other.

### JUMPIN' JONAS

Jonas has a *ring of jumping* (DMG p 191), which enables him to leap 9 feet into the air. If combat is going badly, he uses this ring to jump up onto a nearby roof and attempts to escape.

### SERAPHINA GROWS UP

Once the fighting begins, Seraphina climbs on top of a nearby barrel and begins calling out insults to the party. She will say things like:

- † “Give it up, ye scurvy-infested blowfish!”
- † “I’ll cut out ya tongue, ye flea-ridden shark bait!”
- † “I’ll skewer ya gizzard, ye worm-riddled bilge swiller!”

At the start of the third round, she cries out, “I’ve had it with the lot of ye weevil-eaters! Here I come!” She then pulls out and quaffs a *potion of extra enlargement* (use *potion of growth*; DMG p 187). This potion enlarges her to over 9 feet tall—triple her original size! She then wades into the party from the rear, wielding an enormous dagger. In this form, she has the statistics of a **bugbear** (CR 1, MM p 33).

While fighting, she continues to call out insults—“shark bait!”, “pox-faced landlubbers!”, “treacherous ballast-pigs”, and so on.

## TREASURE

The pirates have 2 gp and 13 sp each on their persons. As mentioned above, Jonas Brickheart has a *ring of jumping*. This ring has 4 charges, which are restored at dawn each day.

## PERSISTENT ELEMENTS

The captain of the Dirty Barnacle, Shar Wolfheart, very likely learns who was responsible for the defeat of her crew. She might become a recurring villain in the campaign.

## SCALING SUGGESTIONS

Unless otherwise noted, Seraphina fights in all of the below.

**APL 1:** The press gang consists of six bandits (CR 1/8; MM, p343), but Seraphina does not fight

**APL 2:** The press gang consists of eight bandits

**APL 3:** As written

**APL 4:** The press gang consists of nine thugs

**APL 5:** Give all NPCs +8 HP

**APL 6:** Change Jumpin’ Jonas to a Spy (CR 1; MM, p349). Give all NPCs +10 HP

**APL 7:** The press gang consists of 5 Veterans (CR 3; MM, p 350). Give Seraphina +20 HP

**APL 8:** The press gang consists of 5 Veterans. Change Seraphina to a Bugbear Chief (CR 3; MM, p33)

**APL 9:** The press gang consists of 4 Veterans, change Jumpin’ Jonas to an Assassin (CR 8; MM, p343)

**APL 10:** As APL 9, but change Seraphina to a Bugbear Chief

# THE PUPPETEER'S ASSISTANT

By Ken Carcas (*Deadmeat Productions*)

*"What could go wrong in a peaceful, children friendly Puppet Shop? Everything when your unusual assistant goes rogue!"*

**Type:** Mostly Combat with minor Investigation  
**CR:** 2

## DMs NOTES:

When running this encounter, even though it's **CR 2 and designed for 4 x 2nd level characters**, it can quickly turn into mayhem with the lone **quadrone (modron)** having flight in conjunction with 4 shortbow attacks. Place at the scene 4 additional modrons trying to apprehend their countryman, and this could quickly turn into a bloodbath for the party. DMs are advised that should the encounter look like it's becoming a TPK (Total Party Kill), share the love by picking separate targets, have the quadrone (modrons) run out of arrows, or have all the modrons resort to the *'Hilarious Attack'* option (see below).

## THE ENCOUNTER

The encounter begins sometime during their visit to any major town or city large enough to support a puppet and marionette shop. The party is alerted to the situation when Isabella Nicoli, the puppeteer and shop owner of 'Bella's Puppets & Marionettes', runs screaming out the shop's front door. If the party chooses to investigate, read the following:

A woman runs out of a shop, screaming for help.

Amongst the crashing coming from inside, you quickly find out that her assistant has gone berserk and is destroying her shop. "I have no reason for the outbreak; one moment it was fine and the next it came screaming from the workshop buzzing, beeping, and chirping. It was then it started to destroy my precious handiwork."

There is a loud thud and a crack like the sound of dinnerware being thrown against the wall. "Oh, By the Gods; not the porcelain marionettes! Please let it not be the marionettes!"

Before the party can ask anything more, the woman turns to them and pleads. "You must hurry! I don't want it killed, just stopped. I'll give you anything I can afford but you must hurry!" She's urgently indicating that you should go inside.

**Isabella** refuses to answer further questions. She constantly begs the party to intervene. Should the party persist on a line of questions, a couple of rounds later she gives up in vain and runs back into the shop to handle the matter herself. If the party still doesn't take the bait, the town guard shows up five rounds later to investigate, going inside upon arrival. At this point, it's up to the DM as to where you go from here.

## THE 'HILARIOUS ATTACK' OPTION

The following is present here for DM's to consider using should the encounter turn deadly. Should it look that the party is on the losing side of the battle, some or all the modrons will shift tactics and start hurling puppets and marionettes at the party. There is no shortage of supply; the shop is packed full of puppets and marionettes for them to throw at the party. Those able to fly will throw the marionettes from the roof space, whilst those on the ground will pluck puppets from shelves and tables to use as missiles. Once this starts, and the ground becomes littered with puppets and marionettes, it's up to the DM to decide when the areas start to become difficult terrain. Keep this up until it looks like the party is starting to gain the upper hand, at which time the surviving modrons attempt to make a retreat, with or without their rogue counterpart.

## THE PUPPET SHOP



### A. THE MAIN SHOP

The environment of the puppet shop is as follows:

**General.** The air smells of fresh wood and cloth. The flowers that dot the main display give off a hint of roses and lilies.

**Walls/Floors.** The floor is wood and generally clear, allowing customers to browse easily.

**Light.** Windows and two skylights provide ample light and only a few shadows.

**Ceiling.** The 30-foot tall ceiling is open with the roof rafters exposed. This allows the owner to hang all sorts of marionettes from the beams above. These are 'normally' accessed via a long pole with a hook on the end.

Once the party enters The Main Shop for the first time, read or paraphrase the following:

You enter what would be described as a child's dream come true. This room is comprised of a 50ft x 40ft area full of low shelves and tables holding every puppet imaginable. Towards the rear of the room, flanking a modest sized counter, are two Men at Arms. It's only when you look more closely that you see strings stretching to the awesomely high ceiling above.

(Continued on next page)

(Point to the 3rd player that entered the main room): You begin to scan the ceiling, and immediately see the immense number of stringed marionettes that hang on hooks from beams and rafters above. You quickly duck out of the way as an expensive clown marionette, dressed in silk pyjamas, and roughly the size of your arm, flies close to your head. It crashes against the wall behind you, and the familiar sound of dinnerware smashing against the wall follows. As you take a glance, you see the head of the clown now in hundreds of pieces on the floor behind you.

You look towards the direction the clown came from, only to be confronted by a winged, square-bodied creature with a monocle. It weaves in and out of the dangling marionettes as it draws an arrow to its short bow and begins to take aim.

Roll initiative ...

The flying winged creature, some 25ft above the characters' heads, is a **quadrone** (CR 1; MM, p226). Designated as **2428297**, former **Section Head of a 3rd Company of the Modron Immediate Expeditionary Strike Force**, it was damaged whilst on an operation to recover an artifact here on the Prime Material Plane for The Minister of Modron TechnoMagic back on his home Plane of Mechanus. Thinking **2428297** was an operating though dysfunctional unit, its section left it where it lay, with intentions of returning to it on the return leg, once the strike run for the artifact was successful. Consequently, the strike failed, with the unit retreating to the portal leading back to Mechanus. The unit passed the location where **2428297** was supposed to be. Failing to find him, the unit took the portal back to Mechanus, stranding **2428297** with amnesia.

With the help of its modron training, 2428297 managed to wander into this populated area unseen, and eventually made its way to the puppet shop. **Isabella** found it amongst the puppets one morning. Patching it as best as she could, **2428297** decided to stay.

Up until recently, it spent its days retrieving marionettes from the beams and rafters above, to the glee and excitement of those who came to visit. Approximately 5 minutes ago, a portal to Mechanus opened in Isabella's basement, and 6 modrons, intent on returning 2428297 back to Mechanus for repairs, exited the portal. A fight quickly ensued in the workshop where 2428297 was, again, struck in that previous tender spot. Malfunctioning, 2428297, after dispatching 2 smaller units, quickly made its way to The Main Shop, and is now confusedly regarding the marionettes towards the ceiling as modrons attempting to do it harm.

2428297 spends this round firing at the party before units from the **18th Recovery and Extraction Team**, comprising of the Section Head **duodrone** (CR 1/4; MM, p225), and the remaining 3 x **monodrones** (CR 1/8; MM, p224), burst through the door behind the counter and join the fight. Whilst 2428297 flies within the marionettes near the ceiling, he is considered to have one-half cover. The Modrons concentrate on obtaining 2428297 by any non-lethal means (subdual damage) whilst fighting off the party. If the party stop attacking or concentrating on 2428297, it turns its attacks towards the other modrons within the room. Combat continues in this fashion until either the duodrone is at or below half HP and/or two of the three monodrones have been killed or knocked out of action (through subdual damage or another magical means). At this point, all remaining members of the 18th Recovery and Extraction Team attempt to retreat to the basement and make their escape through the portal.

At the start of the round, 2428297 has 30 HPs, having already taken 3 HP of damage from a blow to the top of his square (the head). 2428297 has 12 arrows remaining before resorting to fists or the throwing of marionettes, as per The *Hilarious Attack Option* above.

## B. THE WORKSHOP

The environment of the puppet shop is as follows:

**General.** The air smells of fresh wood and cloth.

**Light.** Some light from a single window off to one side.

**Walls/Floors.** Many shelves for storing stock and parts for puppetry and marionette construction. The floor is lightly dusted with wood shavings and scrap material, making the floor slippery (difficult terrain). These wooden floors also form the ceiling of the basement below.

**Ceiling.** 8ft high; standard single-story wood construction ceiling.

Read or paraphrase the following:

This room adjoins The Main Shop through a door on the rear wall behind the counter. There are two other exits in the room; one in the wall on the far side of the room, and a trapdoor in the floor in the far north west corner. The trapdoor appears to have burst off its hinges and presently lies about 5 ft. south of the hole. There is an eerie, faint, pulsating purple aura coming from within the trapdoor hole.

The remainder of the room is crowded with tables containing various puppets and marionettes in several stages of finished and part finished construction. A couple of shelves line the wall, containing spare parts and materials needed for the construction of many puppets and marionettes to come.

Lying near the middle of the floor, clawing its way towards the open trapdoor, are two more of the strange bipedal ball-shaped creatures, like the ones you saw burst into The Main Shop. One appears to be severely beaten, and has a broken wing. As you watch, the other ball-shaped creature sparks, sputters, ear piercingly screams, and then winks out of existence.

The remaining **monodrone** is presently severely injured (1 HP) and malfunctioning, and it is desperately trying to make it to the portal back to Mechanus located in **The Basement (Area D)**. Although it still holds its weapon in its hand, it is not in any condition to fight, even if it wished to. Should this monodrone (Designation **112523268**) take 1 point of damage, it

disintegrates and leaves behind its *masterwork dagger* (non-magical +1 to damage). It's left up to the DM to decide what happens should the party decide to keep 112523268 alive.

## C. THE LIVING QUARTERS

The environment of the puppet shop is as follows:

**Light.** Has some light from a single window off to one side.

**Walls/Floors.** Most of the walls are bare wood with some shelving associated with cooking equipment, crockery, etc. There is a large simple rug located towards the center of the room. Wooden floors that form the ceiling of the basement below.

**Ceiling.** 8ft high; standard single-story wood construction ceiling.

Read or paraphrase the following:

Inside this spacious but modest area is obviously where Isabella makes her home. Adjoining the rear of The Workshop, this area is comprised of a small cooking and washing area, a table with seating for four, and a neatly made bed with simple dressings. Several cupboards align the walls, obviously for storage of foodstuffs and household materials. A small footlocker sits at the end of the bed. A small and simple-looking lock sits locked within the clasp of the chest.

On the fireplace sits a small pot containing something on a slow simmer. The smell within the room indicates that it's possibly a stew of sorts, with a hint of rosemary and thyme in the air.

The small pot on the fireplace contains a lamb and vegetable stew, about two-thirds the way through cooking. The pot contains enough for about three meals. The cupboards do contain various dried and preserved foodstuffs—with jars of herbs and fruit preserve to one side. Other cupboards contain cutlery, crockery, a few pots and pans, and various items of clothing, both day use and for finer occasions. The chest at the foot of the bed contains various precious and personal items Isabella keeps locked away for safe keeping. A successful **DC 10 Dexterity check with thieves tools** opens the lock. Pictures of possibly family members, and manuals on puppetry and puppet construction,

can be found within. In a roll out scroll pouch can be found a set of **Master Puppetry Woodwork Tools**. Isabella keeps them stowed away here for safe keeping and only brings them out for marionette construction for VIP clients. Anyone proficient in woodwork who uses these tools gains a **+5 bonus** towards the successful straight **DC 25 Dexterity** check for the construction of a high-end and exquisite-looking marionette. If successful, marionettes made with these tools can fetch upwards of 100 gp each. Isabella would be devastated should these go missing, and not having them would greatly affect her reputation and the income of the store.

#### D. THE BASEMENT

The environment of the puppet shop is as follows:

**General.** The basement is cool, but no hint of dampness.

**Light.** No natural light and is generally in the dark unless a lantern is used.

**Walls/Floors.** The walls and floor are hard, dry stone blocks.

**Ceiling.** 10ft high; wood supports rafters and floor boarding from the rooms above.

Read or paraphrase the following:

You charge downstairs to what should be total darkness ... except there is a purplish swirling hole in the far wall. In amongst the hypnotic haze and cascading ebb and flow of the circling mist, you make out a strange land beyond. What is now no longer surprising is that you make out several more of these strange creatures staring back at you. Many appear to be armed with various weapons you recognize: swords, polearms, spears. What you don't recognize is the odd shaped cylindrical version of these creatures. This one is holding what appears to be a staff, and it is this staff that appears to be holding this gateway open.

After a matter of moments, the creature with the staff taps it on the ground and the portal begins to close. In the mere moments it takes to close, you make intense eye contact with the strange and unfamiliar creature, and you swear, as the portal blinks out of existence, the creature has taken each of your faces to memory; the Gods only know what purpose ...

The party, should they wish, have about four rounds before the portal closes to pass over into Mechanus. Should they do so, they are instantly taken into custody until their identity and intentions can be determined. Should this happen, the DM is left to determine the member's fate, as this doesn't form part of the encounter.

Who the cylindrical modron is on the other side of the portal is also left up to the DM to determine. Short to say that were the DM to include modrons in their up and coming adventures, players would surely remember this moment as the pivoting turning point in their continued journey within the Realms.

#### CONCLUSION

It's left up to the DM as to what happens now that the remaining modrons have retreated through the portal back to Mechanus.

If 2428297 managed to survive, Isabella retraces the steps she initially took to bring him to a sort of normal. Unless the party can speak Modron, he makes his gratification to the party for their help as best as he can, then begins to clean the mess he had a huge hand in creating.

Isabella grants the party whatever monetary reward the DM deems appropriate, up to the value of 200 gp. A character with a **passive Perception of 10**, or succeeds a **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception)** check, sees the damage caused to the store and its inventory, and realizes that the cost of repairs will be greater than 1,000 gp. The character(s) also realize that this reward coin would have been used to replace broken and destroyed puppets and marionettes, and without it, her business will surely suffer, if not close altogether.

Should the party decide to forgo the reward, at some later stage of the DM's choosing, they are surprised with a delivered package which contains marionettes in the likenesses of each of the characters, valued at 100 gp each. The package also includes a letter of thanks and an invitation to dinner with her and 2428297 should they next pass through town.

# SHOPPING WITH ELEMENTALS

By Alex Clippinger

*“Elemental creatures wreak havoc at a market square.”*

**Type:** Combat/Alternative Solutions

**CR:** 1-10

## DMs NOTES

The **xorn** (CR 5, MM p 304) is an earth elemental creature that usually doesn't resort to violence to sate its appetite for gems and precious metals. In this instance, packs of treasure-greedy **mud mephits** (CR ¼, MM p 216) have latched on to the creature, stealing away its food and driving the xorn berserk with hunger.

This encounter could become deadly if a lower level party attacks the xorn.

## THE ENCOUNTER

### RUCKUS FROM THE MARKET SQUARE

It's a normal day—oh, forget it, it's an absolute mess. An earth-rumbling crash rips through the block, causing residents to cry out in alarm. Their initial shouts are soon echoed by screams from further up the street—screams of terror, as people begin fleeing from the direction of the market square. “Madness!” one shouts as they run past you. “Some monster just burst up from the earth!”

**DM Note:** Xorn can usually travel through the ground without disturbing it, but only if it is unworked. To burst through the man-made street, the xorn used its burrowing speed and may have left a tunnel or hole connecting to the sewer, or merely several feet deep until it meets natural earth.

### THE MARKET SQUARE

The scene of the market is as follows:

**General.** The air is dusty, clouded earth mixing with ground spices thrown clear by a smashed merchant's stall nearby.

**Light.** Despite the dust, the area is visually unobscured and the sun shines brightly.

**Walls & Floors.** The buildings making up the edge of the square are standing, albeit with a few smashed windows. Apart from the nearby hole in the street, the ground is littered with broken paving stones and there are odd splatters of mud all around the square.

### TUNNEL

A large-sized hole in the square is the source of broken stones. A few wooden market stalls, which had been sitting on top of that area, are overturned.

### MARKET STALLS

The stalls in the same row as the hole are in ruins; tops torn off, wares scattered. One such stall appears as if it had been lifted and then tossed aside by a beast of considerable strength. Piles of earth and mud are strewn about the area.

### THE XORN

Towards one corner of the market stands a large, strange creature. Three powerful arms sprout from alongside a huge mouth where the creature's head should be, full of spiny teeth. Three squat legs crouch down, then straighten as the monster holds a terrified gnome merchant over its head with one hand and shakes him upside-down. As you watch, coins begin to shower out of the gnome's pockets and towards the open mouth.

Immediately, many of the piles of mud come alive, taking the form of muddy little imp-like creatures. They swarm together and upward into the air as a flying mass, sweeping overtop of the open mouth and apparently snatching the coins out of the air before more than a few coins sprinkle into the large creature's open maw. It bellows angrily, setting the now-fainted gnome back onto the ground before trying to swipe clumsily at the swarms of muddy, impish creatures.

The large creature is the xorn, and the impish creatures are mud mephits albeit presented with swarming behavior (**mud mephit mischief pack**). The xorn is starving and seeking a meal of gems or precious metals, but is being thwarted by the pesky mephits. Both elemental creatures, as well as the dietary needs and normally helpful nature of the xorn, can be determined with a successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Nature)** check. The xorn might turn its hungry curiosity to the players if they're carrying more than several hundred coins, or several valuable gems.

At this point, given what the players might know about the xorn as a creature or glean from the situation, they might choose to engage the xorn, the mephits, or both. When starting combat, the xorn may engage with the mephits, or seize the distraction as a chance to gorge on nearby precious wares. The mass of mephits will split into mud mephit mischief packs as determined by party level and size:

| Party Level | Creatures                                       |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| 1st         | 4 mud mephits                                   |
| 2nd         | 1 mud mephit mischief pack                      |
| 3rd         | 2 mud mephit mischief packs                     |
| 4th – 5th   | 3 mud mephit mischief packs                     |
| 6th – 7th   | 4 mud mephit mischief packs                     |
| 8th         | 5 mud mephit mischief packs                     |
| 9th         | 6 mud mephit mischief packs                     |
| 10th        | 6 mud mephit mischief packs, +8 HP to each pack |

## CONCLUSION

If the xorn was not attacked by the players or did not flee combat, it will move to the hole and drop inside, using its Earth Glide ability (MM, p 304) to sink back into the ground without a trace.

## MONSTER STATISTICS

### MUD MEPHIT MISCHIEF PACK

*Large swarm of elementals, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 12

**HP** 52 (8d10+8)

**Speed** 25 ft., fly 25 ft, swim 25 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT    | WIS     | CHA    |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 10 (+0) | 14 (+2) | 12 (+1) | 9 (-1) | 11 (+0) | 7 (-2) |

**Skills** Stealth +4

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** Aquan, Terran

**Challenge** 2 (450 xp)

**Death Burst.** When the mephit pack dies, it explodes in a burst of sticky mud. Each Medium or smaller creature within 5 feet of it must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or be restrained until the end of the creature's next turn.

**False Appearance.** While the Mephit pack remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an ordinary mound of mud.

### ACTIONS

**Fists.** *Melee weapon attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 16 (3d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage or 8 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage if the Mephit pack has half of its hit points or fewer.

**Mud Torrent (Recharge 6).** The Mephit pack belches a torrent of mud in a 20 ft. line. Each creature in that area must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or take 4d6+4 bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. On a successful save, the creature takes half damage and isn't knocked prone.

# FOOL ME ONCE, SHAME ON YOU

By Glen Cooper

*"A routine house clearance turns into a brutal murder investigation with a monstrous outcome."*

**Type:** Combat and Investigation.

**CR:** 1-10

## BACKSTORY

As part of the city's administration, a rag-and-bone man was sent to the property of a recently deceased old man. His dilapidated city home has seen better days, and it resides just on the edge of a wealthy part of town. Ragul, the human rag-and-bone man and his brother, Dolpt, were contracted to clear out some of the worthless furniture before the city executors arrive to auction off the more valuable belongings. What no one knew was that this old man used to be an adventurer and had managed to collect several interesting curiosities. One of them being a large wardrobe, which is in fact a hibernating giant-sized mimic.

Travelling along the cobble streets, the mimic was shaken awake. It immediately threw the contents of the wagon onto the road and made short work of poor Ragul and Dolpt, chewing them both to pieces in its gapping maw. Passers-by panicked and ran for their lives, leaving the mimic to finish its tasty breakfast.

By the time the PC's arrive at the main scene, the peasants have all run away screaming. The PCs find a lot of smashed and damaged furniture, the chewed up remains of two humans, and a pair of hand-drawn wagons waiting for them.

## THE ENCOUNTER

### THE GIANT MIMIC!

The encounter begins when the party either stumbles upon the street where the wagon and the wagon mimic are, OR perhaps they rush to the area after hearing lots of crashing sounds and blood curdling screams for help.

The **giant mimic** (see below) is not too bright, but it is predatory. After its long sleep, it has awoken in a ravenous state. Its first meal in decades was disturbed by screaming humans, and now another group of them approaches. It decided to change into a replica wagon, and it will remain quiet and motionless until they begin to ride on it, or pull it away. It will automatically surprise whoever is on it by trying to chew them to death.

## THE POOR DISTRICT

The environment of the street is as follows.

**General.** The street in which the encounter occurs is eerily quiet compared to the sounds of the escaping city dwellers, running away screaming to save their mediocre lives. The street is 15ft wide and the adjoining alleys are a mixture of differing sizes, all the way down to 5ft wide.

**Light/Weather.** It is a bright morning with a nip of cold in the air and some mist hanging around which hasn't quite lifted.

**Buildings & Road.** The buildings and their windows have a small amount of morning dew on them, and this encounter is set in one of the poorest districts of your town/city. The roads are pot-holed and in dire need of repair. These uneven cobbled streets are what initially woke the mimic up. Roads and narrow lanes dart off in many directions between tightly packed buildings which almost seem to lean onto one another.

## A SCREAM TO ACTION

As the PC's reach the heart of the poor district, let them know what time of the day it is, describe to them the surrounding buildings and read the following text aloud to them.

Taking in the sights whilst keeping your hands firmly on your purses and valuable belongings, suddenly you hear a loud crashing sound, perhaps only several streets away. Before you can react, you hear a chorus of screams shouting "RUN! RUN!" coming toward you.

(Continued on next page)

Several people burst out from a side alley almost hitting you on their way past. They all seem to be running scared, crying “RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!”.

You hear more screams in the distance. What do you do?

### FROM A DISTANCE

Hopefully, as all good adventurers do, the PCs investigate where the city people came from. They can do this by stopping one of the escaping commoners in his or her tracks and asking them directly—“what is going on?”. Allow the PCs to roll a **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) or (Intimidation)** check with a disadvantage as the fleeing commoner is quite frightened and flustered. A successful roll gives them the street name - Rag Street, and its general direction. The PCs are only a 30 second jog away from Rag Street. However, a roll of 25 or above results in them speaking with a commoner who saw the giant mimic attack. He describes a giant wardrobe with long, pointed teeth chewing down on two rag-and-bone men. “They didn’t stand a chance!”.

If the PC’s decide to track back to where the city people came running from, use a combination of clues on the road, and the screams which can be still heard in the distance. Two successful **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Survival/Investigation)** checks leads them to Rag Street. If they fail these checks, have them eventually stumble upon the area, but remove the dead bodies of Ragul and Dolpt (they will have been completely eaten by the mimic by now). As the PC’s approach the Rag Street scene, read the following text to them aloud.

You turn a corner to see a horrific scene. Blood and little bits of flesh cover most of the narrow road. Shattered and damaged chunks of wooden furniture lay on and around the cobblestone road. Amongst the litter and carnage are two hand drawn wagons.

The street is eerily quiet. Only the sounds of distant cries and screams are heard, echoing off the walls along the street and in the adjoining alleyways.

From this point, the PCs have various choices on how to proceed. They can try an **Intelligence (Investigate)** check from a distance. If they choose to investigate the scene from a distance greater than 15ft, then their checks are made with disadvantage. Here is a list of things they may detect whilst they take in their surroundings:

### DC 12:

- † There appears to be broken, damaged, and undamaged domestic furniture lying around the street and adjacent the two wagons. A bed (broken), a bookcase (undamaged), two wardrobes (damaged), and a pile of splintered, scattered wood pieces which cannot be recognized.
- † The chewed up remains of a humanoid body lay next to broken furniture (note: the body won’t be there if the PCs failed checks and arrived late).
- † Both wagons look to be identical: blood stained but undamaged. They have the words Stainbords’s Inc. stenciled on their sides, and the emblem of the city/town.

### DC 15:

- † All the above, plus:
- † Chunks of flesh, blood and lots of goo, making up two human bodies. Some parts appear to be missing.
- † City knowledge—the carts and furniture appear to belong to some unfortunate rag-and-bone men doing a house clearance.

### DC 18:

- † All the above, plus:
- † Some of the furniture appears to have orange luggage labels on them (these labels are how the executors inform the rag-and-bone men as to which items they can pick up and take away. Each label has the address of where they came from - 31 Angelbusted Terrace, [your city/town]).
- † City knowledge - The brothers, Ragul and Dolpt Stainbords, are well-known in these parts and regularly do house clearances for the city administrators. Perhaps their families would offer up a reward for the safe return of their belongings, including the wagons?

## DC 20:

- † All the above, plus:
- † Strangely, counting all the furniture lying around in the street, you estimate that they would all easily fit into just a single wagon... I wonder what the other wagon was for?
- † A fleeting glimpse of a figure at one of the many first floor windows looking down into the street suddenly disappears. (this is a red herring, and designed to possibly split the party right at the point which they are going to get into a fight with the giant mimic). Allow an investigating side team or single PC to discover that the wagon is not what it appears to be. But role-play both the street group and the investigation party at the same time. Set up the possibility that one party discovers this secret... just as the other PCs are climbing all over the wagon. Exciting, please have fun with that and watch out for meta gaming.

## KNEE DEEP IN WAGONS

As the characters approach, they may have another round of search skill checks, this time without disadvantage. If they move through the splintered wood, have each PC roll a **DC 15 Dexterity save**. A single failure amongst them means that the bookcase (which is already leaning) falls over and crashes onto the ground. If any of PCs react by drawing weapons or preparing spells, have them roll initiative! Let them search the area and ready themselves for combat.

If they succeed on yet another **DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation)** check, they conclude that by moving across the loose pile of timber, they must have tipped over the bookcase, which was already precariously balanced.

Eventually the PCs may relax and begin to formulate a new plan. Warn them that in a few minutes the local watch or the city militia may arrive on the scene. So, if they wish to do something, they should do it quickly. Help them along by having them hear armored soldiers or see a few militiamen approaching from a long distance away.

If they decide to move the furniture or litter back onto the wagons, make notes as to what is put on each wagon. Pulling a wagon requires

a successful **DC 10 Strength (Athletics)** check to get it moving. If a wagon is pulled, roll a d20. On a result of 1-10, it is the mimic, which immediately attacks whoever is on it, or pulling it. On a roll of 11-20, they pull the real wagon.

You may have a situation where a separate group is investigating the strange figure at a first-floor window, in which case time the situation so that by the time the information is passed on that one wagon just might be the monster—the PCs in the street will either already be on one of those wagons or just about to pull it. For awesome effect, have THAT wagon be the mimic.

## FOOL ME TWICE, SHAME ON ME

This is where your PCs are introduced to the giant mimic as it attacks for the first time. Read aloud the following to anyone who is either on the mimic or pulling it:

Strangely, a small pool of a translucent goo appears at your foot, it immediately begins to dissolve the soles of your boots, and the entire wagon around you heaves upwards and then folds in on itself!

Razor sharp teeth erupt from the edges of the wagon, and long, fleshy pseudopods swing around your head before they immediately dive back towards you to attack...

Have all PCs roll for initiative, but allow the mimic to get its first attack on any PCs who can be surprised and are also within 10ft.

If the PCs attack the mimic with ranged attacks, the mimic hurls bits of furniture at them for a ranged attack (20ft/60ft): +5 to hit, 2d6+2 bludgeoning damage and knocking them prone if they fail a **DC 14 Dexterity save**; half damage, but not knocked prone, if they succeed. If the mimic runs out of objects to throw (1d8+1 items), and is being frustrated by long range attacks from the PCs, it moves off towards easier targets, or perhaps crashes into a house and tries to hide by shape changing into a large piece of furniture. It will run, hide and surprise attack until it either escapes or kills everything in sight.

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT...

After dealing with the giant mimic, they have the home address should they wish to follow up and warn others of the presence of these monstrosities. Or perhaps they decide to take all the remaining furniture and wagon back to the family of the unfortunate rag-and-bone brothers.

This could be a way to introduce them to their next 'quest'. Here is a list of ideas:

- † They head to Angelbusted Terrace and gatecrash an auction full of merchants and noble representatives buying the magical and valuable items. This is the first time they get to see in person that evil villain in your next adventure...
- † The PCs arrive late to the auctioning of the old adventurer's belongings, and now they rush around the city/town to save anyone who bought items. Who knows how many of these creatures exist!
- † The family of Ragul and Dolpt are surprisingly thankful and give the PCs a monetary reward. They find that Ragul and Dolpt both had families and children of their own. Time for some charity work?
- † The militia report back to the baron/lord/mayor/city-ruler about how well the PCs dealt with the monstrosity. They are recommended for a quest, which will further test their skills. This time, the city demands it.

### SCALING SUGGESTIONS

**APL 1:** Change giant mimic to a mimic (CR 2; MM, p220), reduce starting HP to 40

**APL 2:** Change giant mimic to a mimic

**APL 3:** As written, reduce giant mimic starting HP to 63

**APL 4:** As written

**APL 5:** Increase giant mimic starting HP to 93

**APL 6:** Increase giant mimic starting HP to 110

**APL 7:** Increase giant mimic starting HP to 125

**APL 8:** Increase giant mimic starting HP to 110, add a third attack

**APL 9:** Increase giant mimic starting HP to 125, increase AC to 16, add a third attack

**APL 10:** Increase giant mimic starting HP to 150, increase AC to 16, add a third attack

## MONSTER STATISTICS

### GIANT MIMIC

*Large monstrosity, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**HP** 78 (12d8+24)

**Speed** 15 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT    | WIS     | CHA    |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 17 (+3) | 12 (+1) | 17 (+3) | 5 (-3) | 13 (+1) | 8 (-1) |

**Saving Throws** Str +7, Con +7

**Skills** Stealth +5

**Senses** darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 4 (1,100 XP)

**Shapechanger.** The mimic can use its action to polymorph into an object (large in size) or back to its true form. Its statistics are the same for each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

**Adhesive (object form only).** The mimic adheres to anything that touches it. A huge or smaller creature adhered to the mimic is also grappled by it (escape DC 14). Ability checks made to escape this grapple have disadvantage.

**False Appearance (object form only).** While the mimic remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an ordinary object.

**Grappler.** The mimic has advantage on attack rolls against any creature grappled by it.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The giant mimic makes two attacks: one with its bite and one (or two) attacks with its pseudopod.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5ft., one target (or two targets if they are in the wagon). *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage plus 7 (1d8 + 3) acid damage.

**Pseudopod.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage. If the target is Medium or smaller, it is grappled (escape DC 14, disadvantage) and is restrained until the grapple ends. The giant mimic has two tentacles, each of which can grapple one target.

# THERE'S SOMETHING IN MY BASEMENT... AND IT AIN'T RATS!

By Jean A. Headley

**Type:** Roleplay, Combat

**CR:** 1-10

**Location:** Neverwinter, any town or city

## INTRODUCTION

The encounter begins when the PCs approach the market square. They hear high-pitched screaming and, at first, think a woman is in trouble. Once they enter the square, they see a lanky, dark-skinned man in brilliantly colored silks. He is wildly gyrating, flailing his arms, and slapping himself while screaming. The party needs to calm Asad enough to learn Asad was attacked while working in his basement.

## BACK STORY

**Asad al'Sarif** (commoner; MM, p 345) is a merchant and trader of exotic spices. He has recently received a shipment of spices and herbs, and was attacked while taking inventory.

The DM may choose from the following as to what attacked Asad:

- † 3 **pixies** per party level (CR ¼; MM, p 253) were accidentally shipped with the spices. The pixies are terrified. They have had a strange reaction to the exotic spices and, in their befuddled state, they attacked when the shipment was opened. One of the pixies has cast *confusion* on Asad who now believes he's being attacked by stinging ants.
- † Asad is actually being attacked by stinging ants. A large nest was accidentally shipped with the herbs and spices. There are **2 insect swarms** per party level (CR ½; MM, p 338) of ants blanketing the basement.



- † A clutch of 1d6+1 **baby pseudodragons** (use pseudodragon, CR ¼; MM, p 254, and remove the poison effect) were accidentally shipped with the spices. The eggs appeared to be seed pods and were collected and shipped with the rest of the herbs and spices. The little creatures have now hatched. Their presence terrified Asad which terrified the pseudodragons in turn.

### SCALING SUGGESTIONS

Use the below as suggestions for option #3 is using this encounter with a higher APL party.

**APL 1-4:** As written

**APL 5-6:** Five red faerie dragons (CR 1; MM, p133)

**APL 7-8:** Four black dragon wyrmlings (CR 2; MM, p88)

**APL 9-10:** Four blue dragon wyrmlings (CR3; MM, p 91)

### COMBAT

The basement is a small, cramped space filled with boxes, barrels, and shelves. You may consider it difficult terrain for an added challenge.

### REWARDS

If the PCs deal with the creatures without destroying Asad's inventory, he is exorbitantly grateful for the assistance. He offers the PCs a carved wooden box of spices for their trouble. The box is worth 5 sp. The spices, being exotic, are worth 15 gp. In addition, Asad is a very

dignified man under most circumstances. He is mortified by his behavior, and will express his concern about what other people might think of him after this, as he calls it, little performance. With a little persuasion, Asad agrees to pay an additional 50 gp to the party if they agree to "Never Mention This Again".

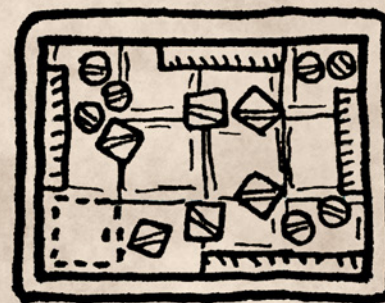
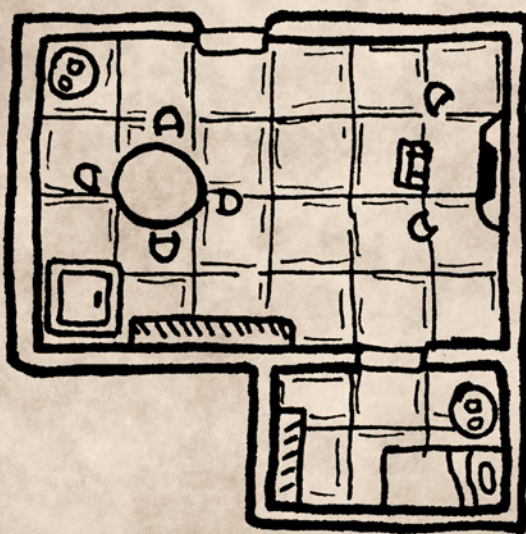
If the party encountered the pseudodragons and captured them, they could sell the hatchlings to local mages or to a mages' guild for 100 gp each.

### PLOT HOOKS

For additional questing: the incident may have been orchestrated by one of Asad's rivals in an attempt to disrupt his business and/or discredit him. The pixies or pseudodragons (if they're not sold or claimed by the PCs) need to be returned to the wild.

If the party happens to sell the pseudodragons, the city may have a law against trafficking in magical creatures. Also, the pseudodragons, being intelligent, may recall the adventurers' actions as they mature, and may seek revenge for being sold.

### SMALL HOUSE



# JACKAL RUN

By James Introcaso

*"Jackalweres lead the characters into a lamia's trap."*

**Type:** Combat & Exploration

**CR:** 1-10

## DMs NOTES

This encounter uses the **Chase** rules (DMG, p 252) and **Urban Chase Complications** table (DMG p 254) found in the **Chases** section of the **Dungeon Master's Guide** (Chapter 8 "Running the Game").

## THE ENCOUNTER

### MY BABY!

The encounter can occur anytime the characters move through a city.

A shriek stabs your eardrums as a human noblewoman cries, "He snatched my baby!"

Beyond her an elf sprints through the crowd, a wailing bundle under his arm.

The noblewoman Petra, a **jackalwere** (CR ½, MM p 193) in humanoid form, is baiting the characters into a trap. If they don't rush after the kidnapper, she promises a reward of 1,000 gp. The characters know she is lying with a **DC 17 Wisdom (Insight)** check. If the characters don't act after three rounds, Petra, Montolo, and six other jackalweres hidden in the crowd attack.

The kidnapper is a jackalwere in humanoid form named Montolo. He has a +4 bonus to Strength (Athletics) and Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks and *slippers of spider climbing* (DMG p 200). A ventriloquist, Montolo is mimicking the sound of a crying baby as he carries a loaf of bread. A **DC 17 Wisdom (Insight)** check reveals Montolo is making the sound. His goal—stay ahead of the characters but keep them on his trail.

### SCALING SUGGESTIONS

**APL 1:** Change Marabeck from a lamia to a jackalwere. Reduce total Jackalwere count to two (Montolo and Petra).

**APL 2:** Use APL 1, add one jackalwere

**APL 3:** Use APL 1, add two jackalweres

**APL 4:** As written, remove two jackalweres

**APL 5:** As written

**APL 6:** As written

**APL 7:** Add 5 HP to each jackalwere, add 10 HP to lamia

**APL 8:** Add 15 HP to each jackalwere, add 10 HP to lamia

**APL 9:** Add 20 HP to each jackalwere, add 20 HP to lamia

**APL 10:** Add 25 HP to each jackalwere, add 30 HP to lamia

### THE CHASE

The chase starts with Montolo 90 feet away from the characters. He leads them 500 feet away to the roof of an abandoned 40-foot-tall warehouse. In addition to the **Urban Chase Complications** table, the characters face the following obstacles:

- † 200 feet into the chase Montolo drops a large bag of caltrops that covers a 10-foot-square area.
- † 300 feet into the chase the characters run by two jackalweres on 20-foot-high rooftops. If any of the characters are too close to Montolo, they use their Sleep Gaze ability.
- † 400 feet into the chase Montolo whistles and a pack of ten **jackals** (CR 0, MM p 331) come out of an alley and fill the street to make opportunity attacks against characters who pass.
- † 500 feet into the chase Montolo climbs the warehouse. Characters can scale the warehouse with a successful **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** check. A character who fails the check by 5 or more makes it 10 feet up then falls, suffers 1d6 bludgeoning damage from the fall, and is knocked prone.

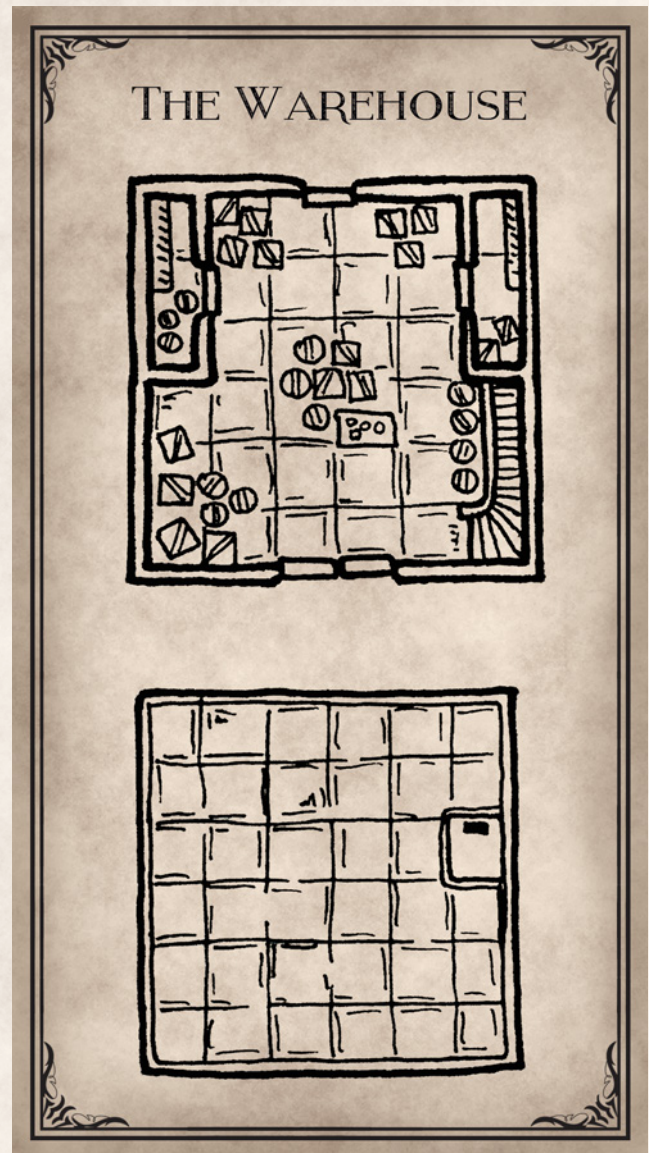
If Montolo is caught, seven jackalweres, including Petra, trailing the characters, attack.

### ROOFTOP BATTLE

On the 30ft x 30ft roof, eight **jackalweres** in hybrid form, including Montolo and Petra, attack the characters. Marabeck, the **lamia** (CR 4, MM p 201) leader of the band, announces the characters will make excellent slaves and have equipment worthy of her collection. She uses her Intoxicating Touch ability and casts *suggestion* to make a character to fight for her, while the jackalweres use their Sleep Gaze ability to knock their enemies unconscious. If any characters resist the charms of Marabeck, she attempts to push them off the roof.

### WAREHOUSE

Twenty **jackals** roam the warehouse that holds a chest with Marabeck's hoard of 2,000 gp. Strewn on the floor is equipment taken from ten **commoner** humanoid slaves held in manacles. Marabeck holds their key.



# PARTY IN A BOTTLE

By Richard Jansen-Parkes

*“The party are relaxing in a tavern when a young follower of the goddess of joy and festivals decides to test an ancient artefact guaranteed to make any party swing like there's no tomorrow!”*

**Type:** Combat & Roleplaying  
**CR:** 1-10

## DMs NOTES

**Ellya** (acolyte, CR ¼; MM, p 342) is a genuinely kind, generous and good-hearted fellow, though he is naive and lacks confidence. He has been dispatched by his superiors in the Church of Lliira to spread cheer and good times, and he's determined to make them happy.

**Flavio** is a flamboyant incubus (CR 4; MM, p 285) who desires good times and stolen souls in equal measure. Other than pretending to be a normal human he rarely bothers with outright lies, preferring to simply tell the brazen truth and let his charm do the rest for him.

## THE ENCOUNTER

### GET THE PARTY STARTED

The encounter takes place while the party are relaxing at an inn or tavern. Rain drips down the windowpanes and the mood is fairly subdued. Soon, however, their quiet conversations are interrupted by the sound of someone tapping a glass bottle with a fork.

A young halfling has climbed up onto a table in the center of the room. He wears bright blue robes adorned with multicolored ribbons, and around his neck hangs a wooden symbol showing a triangle of three six-pointed stars. Any adventurer proficient in **Religion** recognize the symbol as that of Lliira, the Goddess of Joy, and those that succeed on a **DC 14 Intelligence (Religion)** check correctly identify him as a low-level acolyte of her priesthood.

The nervous young man's voice squeaks as he explains that his name is Ellya, and that it is his holy duty to bring joy and excitement into the world. Tonight, he plans to bring some right here and now with the help of the item he carries, which resembles a bottle of champagne.

A character who succeeds a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** check is able to see that the label reads 'Party in a Bottle'.

Without waiting for anybody to respond, Ellya pops off the cork. Rather than emitting any foam or liquid, the bottle releases a rather disappointing puff of smoke that shifts colors as it drifts toward the ceiling.

As the patrons begin to laugh at the embarrassed acolyte, the front door to the inn is kicked open with a loud bang. A tall, handsome man wearing tight leather trousers, an open white shirt, and spectacles set with smoked glass strides into the room and asks, "Who called for a PARRR-TAY?"

### THE DANCE OF DEATH

The man introduces himself as Flavio, the Grandmaster of Grand Old Times. He is actually an incubus who was summoned when the bottle was opened, though he has shapeshifted into the form of an attractive human male.

Flavio surveys the room before turning to the adventurers, declaring them people who look like they know how to have a good time. Pointing to a different character each time, he asks them to name the three things every party needs.

The answers he is looking for, and will supply regardless of what the adventurers actually say, are music, bright lights, and attractive people to dance with.

When he or an adventurer says 'music', Flavio clicks his fingers and a quartet of instruments (drums, a fiddle, a double bass and pipes) float in through the open doorway and take up station in the corner of the room. Each of these uses the statistics of a **flying sword** (CR ¼; MM, p 20) though their attacks deal bludgeoning rather than slashing damage.

On 'lights', the colored smoke begins to glow, changing colors every few seconds.

Finally, a dozen strands of smoke drift down towards the ground and form into humanoid shapes that begin dancing seductively. These smoke forms use the statistics of **commoners** (CR 0; MM, p 345) though they do not engage in combat.

Flavio encourages everybody in the tavern to come up and dance with him, including the adventurers and an elated Ellya. Any creature who does not wish to dance, or who attempts to stop, must succeed on a **DC15 Wisdom saving throw** or be charmed (Charm ability; MM, p 285) by Flavio for one hour. They may repeat this save if they take damage; allies may attempt to break them out of the charm by slapping or punching them to cause 1 point of bludgeoning damage.

Assume that the regular patrons of the inn always fail their saves and therefore keep dancing no matter what.

For each hour that a creature spends dancing they suffer one level of exhaustion. This means that after six hours the patrons of the inn will die. This is actually Flavio's aim, which he's more than happy to admit to anybody who resists his charms.



### SCALING SUGGESTIONS

**APL 1-3:** Reduce incubus to 18 HP, change Charm DC to 13, remove Draining Kiss ability

**APL 4:** Reduce incubus to 30 HP, reduce Draining Kiss ability damage to 3d10+3

**APL 5-7:** As written

**APL 8:** +15 HP to incubus, change melee attack to +6, change Charm DC to 16, add 1d10 to Draining Kiss

**APL 9:** +30 HP to incubus, change melee attack to +6, change Charm DC to 16, add 1d10 to Draining Kiss

**APL 10:** +45 HP to incubus, change melee attack to +6, change Charm DC to 16, add 2d10 to Draining Kiss

Ellya is initially taken in by Flavio's charms, but if the adventurers have not intervened themselves after the first hour he begins to get suspicious. If questioned about the origin of the '*Party in a Bottle*', he explains that he bought it from an old peddler. At the time he thought it was incredibly cheap for a magical artefact...

In the event the adventurers attack Flavio, he fights back, calling on his magical musicians for back up.

However, particularly cunning adventurers may be able to lure the incubus into a dance-off or a fiddle-playing competition, so long as they offer up something he may be interested in, such as a soul or a powerful magical item.

### CONTINUATION

Assuming he survives the night, Ellya is incredibly embarrassed and wracked with guilt. He only recently heard the call to serve Lliara and only wanted to spread the feeling of joy and of fun.

Curious adventurers may also wonder where the '*Party in a Bottle*' came from in the first place, and whether it was sold to the young acolyte intentionally...

# THE DEADLY FOUNTAIN

By Chris “The Kind GM” Karelis

*“The characters will encounter a water weird that has been bound to a fountain.”*

**Type:** Combat & Exploration

**CR:** 3

## DMs NOTES

This encounter can take place in a city big enough to have a large market and a fountain. The characters can come across the **water weird** (CR 3; MM, p299) in various ways which are presented in the “Adventure Hook” section.

## BACKSTORY

Rupert Brightwood (human **commoner**) was a rather wealthy merchant. However, his greatest flaw was the fear that his riches would be stolen. This fear led him to create various hiding spots all over the city to place parts of his treasure. One of them was what he called his greatest idea. “Hiding something in plain sight is the best way to keep something hidden,” he said when he decided to build a fountain at the center of the city’s market. And at the center of the fountain he built a large statue, at the base of which he hid a vault. But that wasn’t enough for Rupert; he hired a wizard to make sure the vault was protected at all times. The wizard bound a water weird to the base of the fountain. A safe word was set so Brightwood could approach the vault without the water weird attacking. Brightwood knew people would visit the fountain during the day, so the enchantment was set to activate only at night, in the event someone came too close to the vault. He ordered two of his guards to stay at the fountain during the day, with the order to not let anyone go too close to the statue on the grounds that he didn’t want anyone to damage it. However, in case anyone touched the vault without speaking the safe word, the water weird would wake up and attack - no matter the time of the day.

All would be perfect, if not for his second greatest flaw - greed. When the wizard finished his job and asked for his full payment, Brightwood paid only a fraction of what was due. Enraged, the wizard went to the fountain that night and changed the enchantment’s safe word.

Years passed, and Rupert, happy with this hiding spot, continued creating more. One fateful day he learned that one of his hiding spots had been discovered and its contents missing. Immediately, he began checking his other spots to make sure they were safe. At midnight, when the market was empty, he visited the fountain. He jumped inside its waters and reached the hidden vault, but when he spoke the safe word, the enchantment wasn’t deactivated. The water weird awoke and attacked the intruder. The next day, the first vendors to come to the market found Rupert floating face down in the fountain - drowned.

The water weird was now awake, and every night it would prey on those who went too close to the fountain. The next victims were a couple that sat at the edge of the fountain after a night at the local tavern. Days later, a drunkard who threw up inside the fountain was found floating in the water. The most recent victim was one of the market’s vendors, who arrived at the crack of dawn to move his stall away from the fountain.

Rumors spread quickly that the fountain had become cursed or haunted. The stalls close to it were moved and everyone started avoiding it - even during the day.

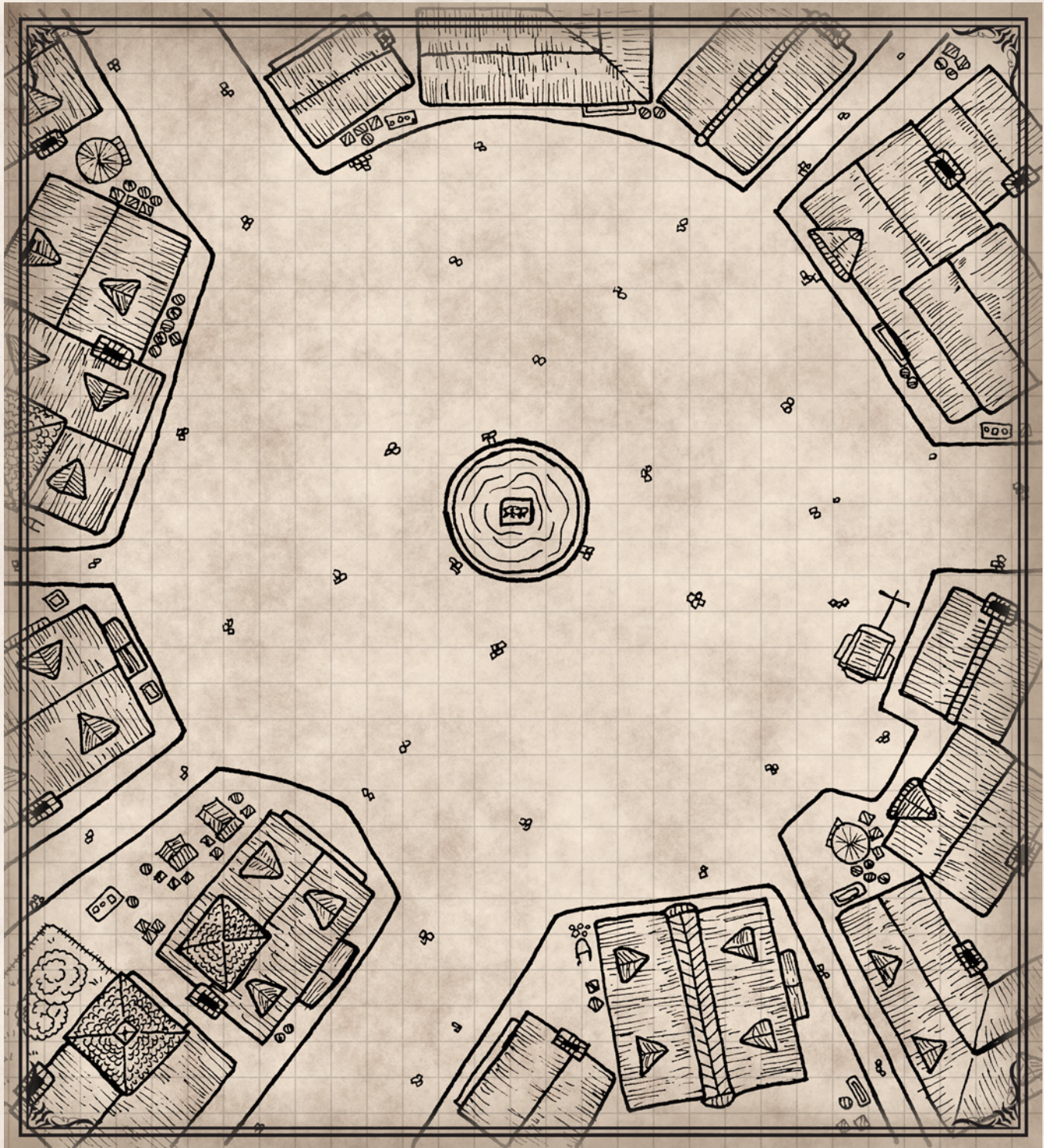
## ADVENTURE HOOK

There are a few ways the characters can come across the water weird:

- † In the local tavern, they hear the rumor about the fountain being haunted or cursed.
- † If the characters are known in the city, the vendors of the market may ask them to investigate the haunted fountain. It’s become dangerous for the vendors, and the consumers are afraid to visit the merchants, which has led to poor sales.

- † When passing through the market at night they witness the water weird attacking again. They'll have a few rounds to act before the water weird manages to kill its victim.
- † Now that Brightwood is dead, the guards no longer stay at the fountain since they are no longer paid. There's a chance that some children haven't listened to their parents and

have gone to play in the waters of the fountain. If one goes too close to the vault, the water weird attacks. The characters may be passing through the market at that moment and they have a few rounds before the water weird manages to kill its victim.



## THE FOUNTAIN

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The fountain is circular, made of marble, with a radius of 10 feet. The water is 3 feet deep and is considered difficult terrain. At the center of it stands a statue of an elf woman wearing a tunic. There is an amphora on her left shoulder which she also holds with her left hand. At the base of the statue, one of the marble tiles can be removed, revealing a steel vault. The tile is currently removed and the vault can be spotted with a successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception)** check. Brightwood managed to remove the tile, and put the key into the vault's keyhole, before the water weird awoke and killed him.

## THE ENCOUNTER

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The water weird takes advantage of its Invisible in Water trait. During combat, it hides in the water until one of its opponents comes close enough for it to use its Constrict action.

The characters have a few ways to get rid of the water weird. The first one is simply killing it.

The second one is by taking advantage of the water weird's Water Bound trait. A character passing a **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana)** check recalls hearing information about this trait (refer to MM, p299). However, destroying part of the fountain, in order to let the water flow out, does not empty it completely, but does negate the difficult terrain.

With a successful check, they also recall that the water weird may return to the Elemental Plane of Water if the enchantment that binds it here is dispelled. A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana)** check reveals the ties between the water weird and the vault. The characters can also attempt a **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** check with disadvantage in order to spot the arcane markings on the safe that create the enchantment. The enchantment should be considered as a 4th level spell for the purposes of dispelling its effect.

## THE SAFE

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The vault is embedded at the bottom of the fountain. A marble tile was covering it, but the tile was removed by Brightwood. Its door's dimensions are 1.5' X 1.5', and it is made of steel with a tin coating. The key is already in the keyhole, put there by Brightwood before being killed.

When opened, the vault fills with water, since it's at the bottom of the fountain, and a small chest is found. A **DC 15 Dexterity check with thieves' tools** is required to unlock the chest. One who is not proficient with thieves' tools can attempt to open the chest using them but the roll has to be made with disadvantage.

The small chest has a minor enchantment that makes it waterproof. It contains the following:

- † A small silver statue (25 gp) resembling the marble statue of the fountain.
- † A short sword whose hilt and scabbard are decorated with gold and gems (100 gp).
- † A blood stone (50 gp).
- † A *potion of healing*.
- † A scroll of *create or destroy water*.

There's also a journal by Brightwood with various entries about sales and purchases. Notes about the construction of the fountain, the vault, and its enchantment are on the last page. You can also include entries that contain clues about where other hiding spots are located.

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

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The story of Rupert Brightwood and his hiding spots can easily be continued. He has created a lot of hiding spots all over the city which the characters may try to find. Also, they can visit his house which also may hide even more secrets.

# THE DIRTY DOVES

By Josh Kelly

**Type:** Roleplaying & Combat

**CR:** Any

## BACKGROUND

The Dirty Doves (aka The Doves) are a trio of con artists who use misdirection and deception to steal from unsuspecting travelers. Once a valiant team of adventurers until their leader was killed, they now use their adventuring skills to steal from gullible and unsuspecting adventurers. The Doves prefer to target non-locals, adventurers laden with looted treasure, or foreign merchants and tourists. The Doves typically operate in disguise and have multiple cover identities and safe houses seeded throughout their city.

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

**Faciel (see below).** The beautiful half-elf sorcerer is the leader of the trio. She is the charming social engineer who can talk her way past an elite guard and con a young noble out of



## USING THE DIRTY DOVES

This trio of con artists can be incorporated into your adventure in any number of ways. The short cons detailed below can serve as random encounters in a city environment. They can also enlist the characters as members, or victims, in a longer multi-part plot.

The key to any confidence scam is the victim's own greed and ego. Let your players offer their own solutions to the scenarios the Doves feed them. A good con artist knows how to improvise and follow the mark's train of thought, waiting for the right time to make their move.

his inheritance. Faciel is a master of disguises, both mundane and magical, and has dozens of false identities to draw on as needed.

**Murtork (see below).** The squint-eyed gnome is a masterful pick-pocket, scout and alchemist. He specializes in stealing keys, cracking safes, and infiltrating tough to reach locations. Murtork carries a number of alchemical devices and nonlethal poisons to aid in infiltration and escape.

**Bacarus (see below).** The half-orc brute is the strong man and enforcer on the team. Bacarus is also a talented smith and jeweler and crafts the tools and forgeries used in the Doves' schemes.

## SHORT CONS

Use the following short encounters to add deception and a bit of levity to your play session:

### DANGEROUS GOODS

Murtork is disguised as a blind beggar. Clutching a finely-crafted, locked wooden box, he approaches the characters. He claims to have heard the city guard chasing someone who dropped the box at his feet before their arrest. He offers to share the box's contents if the characters can help him open it. The box can be opened with a successful **DC 10 Dexterity check using thieves' tools**. Inside the box is a silver cat's skull with emeralds for eyes. It emits an aura of transmutation magic.

When the box is opened Faciel approaches the group; she is disguised as a wizened crone and accompanied by her bodyguard Bacarus. She claims to recognize the skull as a token of the rat king, rumored to somehow lead the owner to a treasure hoard hidden in the city sewers.

Faciel immediately offers 20 gp for the skull and Murtork asks the characters if they can pay more. If the adventurers offer more, Faciel counters by increasing her bid to 30 gp. She regrets not carrying more coin in her purse, but cannot bid any higher.

The skull is merely a cat skull coated in silver paint and adorned with fake jewels. It has been enchanted to emit a magical aura that fades after 24 hours. Characters proficient with **jewelers' tools** can spot that the jewels are fake by succeeding on a **DC 14 Intelligence check with jewelers' tools**.

### THE ANTIDOTE

Murtork is sprinting through a crowded street pursued by Faciel, who is dressed as an exotic assassin. Faciel fires a blowgun dart at Murtork just as he runs behind the characters. The dart “accidentally” strikes one of the characters and Faciel reacts with horror. She explains the dart was coated with the deadly white wyvern poison which kill its victim within 24 hours.

The dart is covered with *oil of taggit* poison (DMG, p 258). A character coming into contact with this poison must pass a **DC 13 Constitution saving throw** or become poisoned and fall unconscious for 24 hours. *Oil of taggit* is not deadly.

Fortunately, Faciel knows an apothecary (Bacarus in disguise) who can manufacture an antidote for 50 gp, of which Faciel offers to pay for half using her meagre savings.

### RUST MONSTER IN THE BASEMENT

The characters are approached by a panicking Faciel dressed as a smith's apprentice and begging for help. Her employer has discovered a nest of rust monsters in their basement and is desperate for someone to stamp them out before they eat all their wares.

Faciel leads the characters to the smithy (“borrowed” from a dwarf on vacation), where they find Bacarus disguised as an elderly smith bracing the door to the cellar. Red dust is pooled



on the ground near the door and the characters hear the scuttling of large insects coming from the cellar. Murtork is in the cellar making the noises and has a bolt-hole ready to escape through when the characters enter.

Faciel and Bacarus warn the characters against taking anything metal with them as it can be corroded by the rust monsters. Fortunately, the smithy has several wooden tools the characters can use as crude clubs. Once the cellar door is opened the noises cease and the characters find themselves in an empty cellar. Faciel and Bacarus then barricade the cellar door behind them and disappear with any metal weapons and armor the characters left behind.

### THE LONG CON

A long con is a confidence scam that unfolds over weeks or months, with multiple meetings between The Doves and their mark. The Doves have researched their victim thoroughly, using several false identities, and know their habits and weaknesses.



The Doves slowly earn the trust of the mark with smaller scams, these can involve “rescuing” the mark from fake attackers or returning profits on an initial investment as ‘proof’ of their scheme’s profitability. Eventually, the mark is asked to make a large investment. It could be to fund the importation of a supply of exotic potions, purchase the deed to an ancient mithral mine, or secure a magical loom that spins flax into pure gold. Once The Doves have the gold in hand they vanish, leaving the mark to slowly realize they have entrusted a fortune to creatures who never existed.

## DEVELOPMENTS

Inevitably, the characters discover they have been swindled and might seek revenge. By then The Doves have shed their disguises and have disappeared.

The Doves avoid violence as a matter of principle, preferring to out maneuver and humiliate their enemies, though Bacarus does fight to preserve his dignity. When cornered, The Doves are happy to apologize and return the mark’s stolen gold, while picking their pocket as they make their departure.

Alerting the city authorities can be just as frustrating. Many an indignant shop keeper has caught a Dove red-handed, only to turn the thief over to their partner disguised as the city watch.

If the characters are relentless in pursuing The Doves, Faciel arranges a surprise meeting. She is impressed with the characters’ tenacity, and is looking for such a team to help The Doves with a new caper they have been planning. The plan is a risky one, but if the characters are willing to invest their skills and their gold, she promises they can make them all rich beyond their wildest dreams...

## THE CON ARTISTS

### FACIEL

*Medium humanoid (half-elf), chaotic neutral*

**Armor Class** 12 (15 mage armor)

**HP** 18 (3d6+3)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR    | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 8 (-1) | 14 (+2) | 12 (+1) | 15 (+2) | 14 (+2) | 17 (+3) |

**Skills** Arcana +3, Disguise +8, Deception +8, Insight +4, Persuasion +8, Stealth +4

**Damage Resistance** cold

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common, Elvish, Thieves’ Cant, Dwarvish, Draconic

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Fey Ancestry.** Faciel has advantage on saving throws against being charmed and magic can’t put her to sleep.

**Subtle Spell.** Faciel can choose to cast any spell without any somatic or verbal components.

**Spellcasting.** Faciel is a 3rd level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma. (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks).

Cantrips (at-will): *mage hand*, *message*, *minor illusion*, *prestidigitation*

1st Level (4 slots): *charm person*, *disguise self*

2nd Level (2 slots): *invisibility*, *suggestion*

### ACTIONS

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage.

## MURTORK

*Small humanoid (gnome), chaotic neutral*

**Armor Class** 14 (leather armor)

**HP** 18 (3d8)

**Speed** 25 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS    | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|
| 12 (+1) | 17 (+3) | 11 (+0) | 16 (+3) | 8 (-1) | 14 (+2) |

**Skills** Acrobatics +5, Athletics +3, Deception +4, Sleight of Hand +6, Stealth +8

**Proficiencies** thieves' tools, alchemists' tools

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

**Languages** Common, Gnomish, Thieves' Cant

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Gnome Cunning.** Murtork has advantage on all Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma saving throws against magical spells and effects.

**Sneak Attack.** Once per turn Murtork can deal an extra 2d6 damage using a finesse or ranged weapon if he has advantage on the attack roll, or if another enemy of the target is within 5 ft. of the target.

### ACTIONS

**Dagger.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d4+3) piercing damage and target must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw. Creatures that fail the saving throw are paralyzed for 1d4 minutes but suffer no effect on a successful save.

**Sling.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 3 (1d4+1) bludgeoning damage.

**Grease.** Murtork upends a vial of grease that coats a 10 ft. by 10 ft. or a 5 ft. by 20 ft. area changing it into difficult terrain. Creatures traveling through the area at more than half speed must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone.

**Smoke Bomb.** Murtork uses a bonus action to release a cloud of acrid smoke. The smoke creates a heavily obscured area in a sphere with a 5 ft. radius.

## BACARUS

*Medium humanoid (half-orc), chaotic neutral*

**Armor Class** 16 (breastplate)

**HP** 32 (3d10+9)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX    | CON     | INT     | WIS    | CHA     |
|---------|--------|---------|---------|--------|---------|
| 17 (+3) | 8 (-1) | 16 (+3) | 12 (+1) | 9 (-1) | 14 (+2) |

**Skills** Athletics +6, Deception +5, Intimidation +6

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

**Languages** Common, Orcish, Thieves' Cant, Giant

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Savage Attacks.** When Bacarus scores a critical hit with a melee weapon attack he adds one of the weapon's additional damage dice to the weapon's damage.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Bacarus makes two slam or greataxe attacks.

**Greataxe.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft, one creature. *Hit:* 9 (1d12+3) slashing damage

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft, one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d4+3) bludgeoning damage

**Handaxe.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* 5 to hit, range (20/60), one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+3) slashing damage.

# HARPIES IN THE CITY LIMITS

By Sarah Lucas

*“As the party enjoy a moment of respite in a tavern, they overhear the innkeeper firing a weeping barmaid, due to the loss of money and business he has endured at the hands of a mysterious and impossible thief.”*

**Type:** Combat & Exploration

**CR:** 1-6

## DMs NOTES

**Tomin** (human commoner, MM p 345) is a straight-forward and earnest middle-aged man. If the party successfully return the stolen treasure, his honesty will lead him to ensure all goods are returned to their rightful owners.

The **boggle** (CR 1/8, VGtM, p 128) is a mischievous fey creature beholden to three harpy sisters. His fear of, and loyalty to, the harpies ensures he will continue to obey their command.

The **harpies** (3 of, each CR 1, MM p 181) are three sisters whose love for riches and anything that glitters has driven them from their usual habitat and into the city. Why prey on the occasional traveler when their boggle slave can earn them far greater riches with no effort of their own?

## THE ENCOUNTER

### AN IMPOSSIBLE THEFT

The encounter begins as the party enter a tavern. The establishment is comfortable and well maintained, warm fires roaring in pot belly stoves at each corner of the room as a band of bards play jovial music. Such an inviting atmosphere makes it all the stranger that only three other patrons can be seen here: an aging half-elf man sitting at the bar, and two human women seated at the table nearest the stage.

Behind the bar a middle-aged human man speaks to a barmaid with tears in her eyes. The innkeeper takes the barmaid's hand sadly, saying that he can't afford to pay her with all the thefts, and sends her on her way, promising that if someone brings the thief to justice she will have her job back.

When approached by the party, the innkeeper introduces himself as Tomin and explains that the thefts have been happening daily—mostly after dark, but not always. Locked doors and windows seem to be no barrier, and the thief responsible has never been seen—only heard, it's mocking laughter marking each theft. The tavern has suffered a great loss of business because of these thefts, especially since an influential ambassador's prized longsword was taken. Tomin fears that unless the sword is found and returned, the ambassador will permanently ruin the tavern's reputation. He offers the party a reward of 300 gp and a free evening's stay, including meals, should they return the stolen goods to him.

On a **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception)** check, players notice a small gnarled hand appear in the air next to the half-elf patron's belt, take his coin purse, and disappear. A hideous cackling can be heard from just beyond the tavern doors.

A **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation)** check reveals a slick, slippery trail of strange oil leading from the tavern. If followed, the trail leads the party through the city, eventually taking the them to a decrepit shack in a rundown, largely abandoned district.

The boggle's theft is made possible using the creature's Dimensional Rift ability, and the boggle oil used is in the slippery form, giving the creature advantage on **Dexterity (Acrobatics)** checks while in contact with the oil.

### INSIDE THE HARPIES' LAIR

The shack, made of crumbling wood, rich with the odor of decay, has boarded up windows blocking any view of the inside. The door, too, appears boarded shut, but given its deteriorated state, a **DC 13 Strength** check is all that is necessary to force the rotting wooden door open. The interior of the shack is dimly lit by beams of light filtering through holes in the roof. Broken



and overturned furniture lies abandoned about the space. Doors to two additional rooms can be seen—one on the left wall, and one directly opposite the front entrance.

#### A. MAIN ROOM

The main room contains no signs of life and has no lighting other than the breakthrough beams of light from the broken roof. Stewn across the floor are various pieces of broken and upturned furniture, coated in a thick layer of dust.

#### B. BEDROOM

The left door leads to a makeshift bedroom. Three small, straw-stuffed beds are positioned in the tiny room, and the scattering of jewels and gold total: 15 gp and three jewels worth 10 gp each.

#### C. TREASURE ROOM

The final room contains a moderate pile of gold, jewels and weapons, surrounded by three harpies and the cowering boggle. If the party listens at the door, on a successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception)** check they hear the muffled sounds of the harpies and boggle talking, although they can't make out what they are saying.

All four attack immediately when the party enter the room, though once his masters begin to fall, the boggle attempts to flee. The total treasure in this room includes: gold, silver and copper pieces totaling 2,000 gp in value, 15 gemstones totaling 200 gp in value, a dagger with an ornately carved ivory handle (50 gp), a small silver picture frame (5 gp), a gold necklace (10 gp), a standard shield, a *+1 long sword* and a *wand of magic missiles*.

### RETURNING THE GOODS

On their return to the tavern with the treasure in tow, the party is greeted by a grateful Tomin. The innkeeper assures the party that he will make certain all the items stolen from patrons are returned to them, then takes a pouch containing 300 gp from beneath the bar and gifts it to the players, thanking them for saving his business. Tomin also offers the party a free night's stay and a warm meal for their efforts.

Tomin does not have a list of each item stolen, so as long as the party hasn't obviously pilfered from the treasure, one or two missing items may go unnoticed, except the *+1 longsword* and wand of magic missiles. A **DC 14 Charisma (Deception)** check will convince Tomin that these items were not recovered by the party.

### SCALING SUGGESTIONS

**APL 1:** Remove 2 Harpies

**APL 2:** Remove 1 Harpy

**APL 3:** As written

**APL 4:** Give each Harpy +8 HP

**APL 5:** Give each Harpy +16 HP

**APL 6:** Give each Harpy +8 HP, and two additional Harpies enter the house on round 2

# HUNGER OF THE ANCIENT ORB

By Tom & Drew's Magic Item Review

**Type:** Lore heavy, combat

**CR:** 9

World renowned archeologist Graff Drayin (human) has uncovered an ancient evil relic in the dark reaches of this land. He is now burdened with a dark secret: to sate the artifact's thirst for blood, he must secretly stalk and abduct innocent people as sacrifices, lest his family becomes the next victims.

## DM's NOTES

The human archeologist **Graff Drayin** (known simply as **Fox Mask**) dresses in unembellished black cloth and conceals his face with an ornate wooden mask carved to resemble a fox. This description has circulated only in whispered rumors, for he is capable of carefully shadowing his targets for days before abducting them.

To capture his targets, he uses a complex combination of herbal reagents that have been boiled into a thick paste, known as **Blackout Paste**. When he coats his gloves in the substance, a clasped hand over his victim's mouth is all he needs to incapacitate them.

**Blackout Paste:** When the fumes from this substance are inhaled, the victim suffers from a disadvantage to all saving throws for one hour. The victim must also roll a **DC 15 Constitution saving throw** or they fall into a deep slumber for 1d4+1 rounds.

**The Ancient Orb of Aeons:** A relic that comes from a time before time, in a place beyond our knowing. Strangely, the orb only desires to return to its own realm, but the energy to do so is robbed from the devoured flesh of mortals. The orb itself is dark blue in color when directly observed, but it casts a golden light. When Graff Drayin discovered the orb, it delivered him an ultimatum: produce enough bodies through sacrifice for its nourishment, or Drayin's wife and two sons would be devoured. Graff's choice was clear.

## THE ENCOUNTER

At the end of the night, the party is walking together to their appropriate resting places. The encounter begins when they hear a faint scream in a nearby alleyway.

**DC 10 Wisdom (Perception)** check: Upon listening, it sounds like the violent screams and whimpering of a young woman who is clearly in distress.

## THE ENTRANCE

**General:** This part of the city has seen better days. Patches of cracked stonework have sunk unevenly into the mud, where wild grass has sprouted unevenly. Taller grass lines the cracks between the old brick buildings and the road. This place has surely started to show its age. From between two buildings, you hear someone shouting.

**Environment:** The wind breaks at the start of the city and pushes the smell of distant hillsides through the streets. The night air is crisp as the moon hangs bright. The entrance to the alleyway is 10 feet wide.

**DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation)** check: You hear someone in the alleyway speaking in a low voice.

"I know. I'm sorry, just please be quiet. I don't want them to die. You have to understand."

**DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** check: You hear the faint gurgling noise.

**DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation)** check: You see a possible flanking approach to the right, but it's small. It leads through a broken shell of a building to the top of the alleyway.

If a gnome or halfling manages to get in there, they get +3 to stealth to approach unnoticed and would gain an advantage to their first attack.

## THE ALLEY

**General:** This corridor is 50' long and 10' wide. The buildings that line each side are 30' high on both sides. There's a cart full of trash to the left, and an old wooden table to the right with a couple well-made oaken chairs tucked under it. On top of the table, there is an upturned bottle of red wine and a bag of tobacco.

**1.** A man dressed all in black is dragging someone with a red bandana to the end of the alleyway. His face is concealed by a decorative wooden mask resembling a fox. The man is holding a rag over his target's face and the victim looks to be struggling.

**2.** A woman crawls back slowly on the ground. Tears flow from her eyes and she is sobbing. Terrified. She's pushing herself back against the wall.

The woman has been stabbed in the chest and will bleed out in three rounds unless someone succeeds a **DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine)** check, administers a *potion of healing*, or uses healing magic on her.

**DC 10 Wisdom (Perception)** check: The woman has been stabbed in the chest and is quickly bleeding out.

**DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine)** check: You can slow the bleeding, buying the woman an extra half hour before she succumbs to her wounds.

**DC 20 Wisdom (Medicine)** check: You can stop the bleeding and you save the woman's life. Once she is back on her feet, she's ready to fight. She draws a *wand of magic missile* out of her coat and points it at her would-be killer.

The woman goes last in combat initiative. She has 5 hp and can cast *magic missile* (1st level) up to 7 times.

**3.** Upon being confronted by you, the masked man hesitates, then continues to drag his victim down the alley faster than before. "You don't understand," he says, "this has to happen." Grappled, the man with the red bandana has gone limp. His legs drag in front of him as he is carried away.

**4.** A faint golden glow shines at the end of the alleyway. It becomes increasingly brilliant as you approach until you find its source: a dark blue sphere that seems to reflect no light at all. It is completely void and without dimension.

**DC 15 (Wisdom (Perception))** check: You hear a low voice that makes the hair on your arms stand up—a whisper, tingling across the back of your neck, faint and distant:

"Bring the flesh to me, Graff. Do not let them sway you from your purpose."

## REVELATIONS OF THE ORB (OPTIONAL)

When someone hits the orb with a physical attack, the orb can flood its attacker's mind with visions. The visions can grant some insight into the events that led up to this moment:

**1.** The orb floods your vision with a blazing, golden light. All the while, the dark blue orb grows larger and larger. In its center, you see a mass of spiraling pinpricks of light. You realize then that you are passing through them. They fly by faster and faster.

**2.** The colors change in rapid succession. One dot becomes the center of your vision, and you seem to be rapidly approaching it. Just as it seems the light will pass through you, your approach stops, and you find yourself looking down on the masked man talking to the orb.

**3.** The orb speaks: "Mine is a great power, but my long slumber has left me weakened. Awoken by mortal folly, the only remedy to your trespass is payment of blood. Your life will be forever bound to my service. Offer unto me sacrifice so I may regain my former glory, or else I shall devour all you hold dear."

**4.** You see the man take a wooden fox mask from his son's toy box. He puts it on and looks at his reflection in a dirty old mirror. From underneath the mask, he sees two weary, bloodshot eyes he does not recognize as his own.

**5.** You see the man with the red bandana confronting the woman in the alleyway. He violently lunges forward, stabbing the woman multiple times before a gloved hand emerges from the shadows behind him and clasps over his mouth. Fox Mask grapples him from behind and begins dragging the killer to the back of the alley, where the orb awaits.

## TREASURE

**Fox Mask (Art Object, Common):** An ornate wooden fox mask. 5 sp.

**Gloves Covered in Blackout Paste (Slot: hands; Weight: 10 oz; Cost: 1 gold):** Were they not covered in Fox Mask's peculiar poison, these would be normal black leather gloves. The paste that coats these gloves works as described above, but it will lose its potency by morning.

**Graff Drayin's Journal:** (See below)

**Wand of Magic Missiles:** The woman carries this wand in her coat. This wand can cast a Magic Missile (level 1), but it only has 7 charges remaining.

In addition, Fox Mask carries 1 gp. The man with the red bandanna carries 3 sp and a dagger that has been recently coated in fresh blood.

### GRAFF DRAYIN'S JOURNAL (OPTIONAL)

A well-kept leather-bound bundle of notes and thoughts discussing the travels of an archeologist.

#### Three months ago -

"After weeks of excavating the tomb, we had much to be happy about. Together, we had uncovered several decorative vases filled with platinum coins of unknown origin. We also found several intact skeletons that bore crude swords and simple hide armor. The most interesting find, however, was a small ornate box, carved in a style we had never laid eyes on before. But try as we might, no one can seem to get the damn thing open. Glenn has been prying at it with his tools for over an hour."

#### One month ago -

"I had almost given up after I cut my hand. It was the third late night in a row spent with the box. I admit that it had become an object of obsession, but I was just so eager to find out what was rolling around in there. The box must have been magical in origin because when my blood dripped into the lock, I could hear a mechanism inside ticking and turning. I held the wound over the lock and let my blood continue to drip inside the keyhole. To my surprise, the box suddenly sprung open. You'll never believe what was inside. It was a dark colored orb, smooth upon its surface and flat in color. What a marvelous creation."

## NPC STATISTICS

### FOX MASK (GRAFF DRAYIN)

*Medium humanoid (elf), chaotic good*

**Armor Class** 16 (leather armor)

**HP** 45 (6d8+18)

**Speed** 35 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 12 (+1) | 20 (+5) | 16 (+3) | 10 (+0) | 15 (+2) | 10 (+0) |

**Saving Throws** Str +7, Con +7

**Skills** History +2, Nature +2, Perception +4, Stealth +7, Survival +4

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 4 (1,100 XP)

**Fey Ancestry.** fox Mask has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put him to sleep.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Fox Mask makes four weapon melee attacks or four ranged attacks.

**Shortsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 +5) slashing damage.

**Paste.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* the target has disadvantage on its saving throws for one hour. The target must also succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or they fall into a deep slumber for 1d4+1 rounds (as the *sleep* spell). Fox Mask may only make one paste attack per round, on his turn.

**Longbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 150/600, one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 +5) piercing damage.

**Drain Life.** Fox Mask drains the life of a single unconscious living creature within 10 feet of him. The target of this ability must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the target dies, and the Acient Orb of Aeons (see below) regains 2d4 charges.

Battle Quotes:

"Please, you must understand."

"I have to feed it!"

"It's going to kill them!"

## THE ANCIENT ORB OF AEONS

*Tiny construct, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)

**HP** 40 (9d6+9)

**Speed** 0 ft., fly 15 ft. (hover)

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 10 (+0) | 10 (+0) | 12 (+1) | 12 (+1) | 14 (+2) | 16 (+3) |

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** blindsight 120 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common, and whatever languages its owner can speak

**Challenge** 6 (2,300 XP)

**Drain Life.** The owner of the orb (see “Enthrall” below) can use their action to drain the life of an unconscious living creature within 10 feet of them. The target of this ability must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the target dies, and the orb regains 2d4 charges.

**Regeneration.** Providing the orb has 1 hit point, the orb regenerates 5 hit points per hour. When reduced to 0 hp or lower, the orb ceases to glow and falls to the ground, lifeless, as a simple ordinary glass ball.

**Special Purpose.** The orb is a sentient intelligent magic item with the *Destroyer* special purpose.

**Spellcasting.** The orb is an 8th-level spellcaster. The orb doesn't have spell slots like a normal spellcaster. It instead has charges, 40 when the PCs first encounter it, that it may use to cast its spells. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). It knows the following sorcerer spells:

Cantrips (at-will): *blade ward*, *fire bolt*, *poison spray*, *ray of frost*, *shocking grasp*

1st level (1 charge): *comprehend languages*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *witch bolt*

2nd level (2 charges): *hold person*, *misty step*, *scorching ray*

3rd level (3 charges): *counterspell*, *fireball*, *slow*

4th level (4 charges): *blight*, *stoneskin*, *wall of fire*

### ACTIONS

**Enthrall.** For the orb to gain charges, it must have an owner. To gain an owner, the orb casts a modified version of *dominate person* on an intended victim. Should the victim fail against a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw, the victim becomes the new owner. The new owner gains the purpose to fulfill the desires of the orb, that being to sacrifice victims to the orb. Should the new owner die, the orb must cast *dominate person* on a new victim within 1 minute or the orb falls dormant to the ground. The next person to touch the orb must succeed a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be automatically susceptible to a dormant casting of *dominate person*, and will become the new owner of the orb.

Should the owner or orb be forced to move outside of 45ft from each other, the orb and owner must move to within 45ft. or less within 3 rounds. Should this not be possible, the orb falls dormant to the ground. Should this happen, the current owner will attempt to reestablish contact with the orb. Should the current owner not be able to touch the orb with 3 rounds, the owner is released from the modified *dominate person*, and becomes resistant to the modified *dominate person* for the next 24hrs. The next person to touch the orb must succeed a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be automatically susceptible to a dormant casting of *dominate person*, and will become the new owner of the orb.

**Necrotic Touch.** *Melee Spell Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 33 (6d10) necrotic damage.

**Vanish.** The orb can expend 100 charges to teleport back to its home plane, severing its bond with its owner.

Ancient Orb Battle Quotes:

“Gaze unto the horizons of eternity.”

“Do not simply reach. You must be present in the harmony.”

“I must step unto the brink.”

“Feed me the flesh of the dead.”

# ANIMATED ACCIDENT

By JVC Parry

*“A young wizard’s apprentice accidentally animates a set of cutlery whilst trying out a new spell. Fleeing from the scene, she bursts into the marketplace, causing the traders’ goods to come alive!”*

**Type:** Combat & Roleplay  
**CR:** 1

## DMs NOTES

The party have just finished shopping in the city’s marketplace. There are numerous stalls selling a variety of goods. What the players don’t know is that **Elsie Wandallon** (LG female human apprentice wizard) has just accidentally animated her mother’s most precious set of silver cutlery in an attempt to cast a spell far above her ability.

Not wanting to face her mother’s wrath, Elsie has fled the scene, but the cutlery is following her! To make matters worse, she can’t seem to stop the spell, and items she runs past are joining the crowd of angry animated objects!

## THE ENCOUNTER

### MARKETPLACE

The encounter begins with the party buying goods in a marketplace, where there are various stalls selling a variety of wares. The following stalls are present:

**Mungo’s Menagerie.** Mungo (LG male human commoner) sells pets. These include bats, cats, frogs, lizards, owls, rats and ravens. Each can be bought for 20 gp. He also sells collars for these animals (2cp) and small wooden cages (5cp).

**Fine Farm Food.** Tammy Wellswood (LG female human commoner) sells food. These include rations (5 sp), loaves of bread (2 cp), hunks of cheese (1 sp) and chunks of meat (3 sp).

**Blades and Boots.** Timoth Tanner (LG male human commoner) sells daggers (2 gp), knives (1cp), whetstones (1 cp) and boots (1 sp).

**Apothecary’s Wares.** Selesine Starflower (NG female high elf acolyte) sells potions. These include acid (25 gp), alchemist’s fire (50 gp), antitoxins (50 gp), holy water (25 gp), ink (10 gp), oil (1 sp), perfume (5 gp), and *potions of healing* (50 gp).

**Tullie’s Tooters.** Tullie Sprocketcog (CG female rock gnome bard) sells instruments. These include bagpipes (30 gp), drums (6 gp), dulcimers (25 gp), flutes (2 gp), lutes (35 gp), lyres (30 gp), horns (3 gp), pan flutes (12 gp), shawms (2 gp) and viols (30 gp).

**A Perfect Picture.** Dwarin Thunderstone (LN male hill dwarf bandit) is a member of the Zhentarim who sells counterfeit and stolen paintings, under the guise of an artist. These include painter’s supplies (10 gp), one small painting of rolling hills (150 gp), a small painting of a handsome young half-elf (160 gp), a tiny painting of a squirrel (75 gp) and a medium painting of Castle Waterdeep (750 gp). A successful **DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation)** check allows characters to notice the extra layer of paint over the original artist’s signature, replaced with a new “DT” signature. If confronted, Dwarin flees.

Whenever you feel ready, or after the characters have spent all their hard-earned gold pieces, Elsie should stumble into the marketplace, pleading for help. If characters listen, she quickly exclaims “I shouldn’t have tried to cast the spell! Mum’s going to kill me!” before a floating swarm of silver cutlery emerges from the crowd and flies straight for Elsie.

## ANIMATED OBJECTS

| Name              | HP | AC | Attack                                                                                 | Str | Dex |
|-------------------|----|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|
| Tiny Basic Item   | 5  | 14 | +4 to hit, 3 appropriate damage                                                        | 4   | 14  |
| Small Basic Item  | 10 | 14 | +4 to hit, 1d4+2 appropriate damage                                                    | 14  | 4   |
| Small Wooden Cage | 10 | 15 | +4 to hit, target is grappled                                                          | 14  | 4   |
| Dagger            | 5  | 14 | +4 to hit, 1d4+2 piercing damage                                                       | 4   | 14  |
| Acid              | 5  | 13 | +4 to hit, 2d6 acid damage, object destroyed                                           | 4   | 14  |
| Alchemist's Fire  | 5  | 13 | +4 to hit, 1d4 fire damage per round, object destroyed, DC 10 Dexterity check to douse | 4   | 14  |
| Ink               | 5  | 13 | +4 to hit, target is blinded, action to remove                                         | 4   | 14  |

All animated items have a Constitution of 10, Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma of 3 and a flying speed of 30 feet. Reducing an item to 0 hit points destroys it.

### ELSIE'S MANIA

Elsie runs into the marketplace already followed by a swarm of cutlery (see 'Small Basic Item' in the 'Animated Objects' sidebar above). Elsie takes the Hide action on her turns, hiding behind the nearest stall. On the objects' turn, roll a d6, on an even number the objects discover Elsie and attack her, on an odd number they attack whoever is closest. If Elsie is found, she runs to the next stall.

When determining stalls, roll a d6 and consult the following table:

#### 1d6 Stall

- |   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| 1 | Mungo's Menagerie  |
| 2 | Fine Farm Food     |
| 3 | Blades and Boots   |
| 4 | Apothecary's Wares |
| 5 | Tullie's Tooters   |
| 6 | A Perfect Picture  |

Once Elsie has hidden behind a stall, 1d4 objects from that stall animate and fly around attacking whomever is closest on their first turn. After this they behave as noted above.

Knocking Elsie unconscious causes all the items to become inanimate once more and fall to the floor.

Selesine and Tullie may lend a helping hand if the characters are becoming overwhelmed by the sheer number of animated objects.

If the objects reduce Elsie to 0 hit points, she is knocked unconscious.

### ANIMATED OBJECTS

As Elsie was unable to properly cast the *Animate Objects* spell, the cutlery and other items she unintentionally animates have the following statistics (assume an item is 'basic' unless it appears in the sidebar above).

#### AFTERMATH

Once the objects are back to normal, the stall owners are rather angry at Elsie, especially if they have had their items destroyed. They demand a payment from her, equal to the amount they lost. Elsie starts crying, and waits for her mum to catch up and pay.

If the characters are feeling nice, they can foot Elsie's 'bill'; consider giving them inspiration if they do so. Alternatively, a successful **DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation)** check convinces the stall owners to back down on the matter, and let the poor girl be.

As thanks for their help, Elsie can offer the characters a place to stay, and a fine supper at her family's tavern.

# CIRCUS CHAOS

By Tony Petrecca

*"A circus is in town! What could go wrong?"*

**Type:** Role-play/skill

**CR:** 3-8

## DMs NOTES

**Barnabus Baylum** (commoner; MM, p345), an exuberant, gregarious gnome ringmaster and showman, has brought his circus and menagerie to town, and trouble follows.

The challenges in this series of encounters vary, and its nature presents the PCs with choices on what problems to tackle—from recapturing escaped orangutans to subduing a herd of stampeding elephants. Thus, it can be appropriate for a large range of levels, from 3rd possibly through 8th level.

The series of encounters should be set in an open space, such as a market square or courtyard, ideally with a tavern or inn nearby. For best results, the tavern should be a two-story building, with the second-floor guest rooms emerging onto a balcony that overlooks the chandelier lit dining hall. Barring that, rafters and a high ceiling should work. We need to give the freed apes somewhere entertaining to swing, after all.

## THE ENCOUNTER

Like any good circus, it starts with a parade.

### THE PARADE

With PCs situated on a primary road in town, read or summarize the below:

"Make way, make way, make way I say! For the Barnabus Baylum Menagerie! We've got wonders to witness and thrills to display, we're the Barnabus Baylum Menagerie! With evening shows and daily matinee, we're the Barnabus Baylum Menagerie!

"So, come one, come all on this grand old day, to see the Barnabus Baylum Menagerie!"

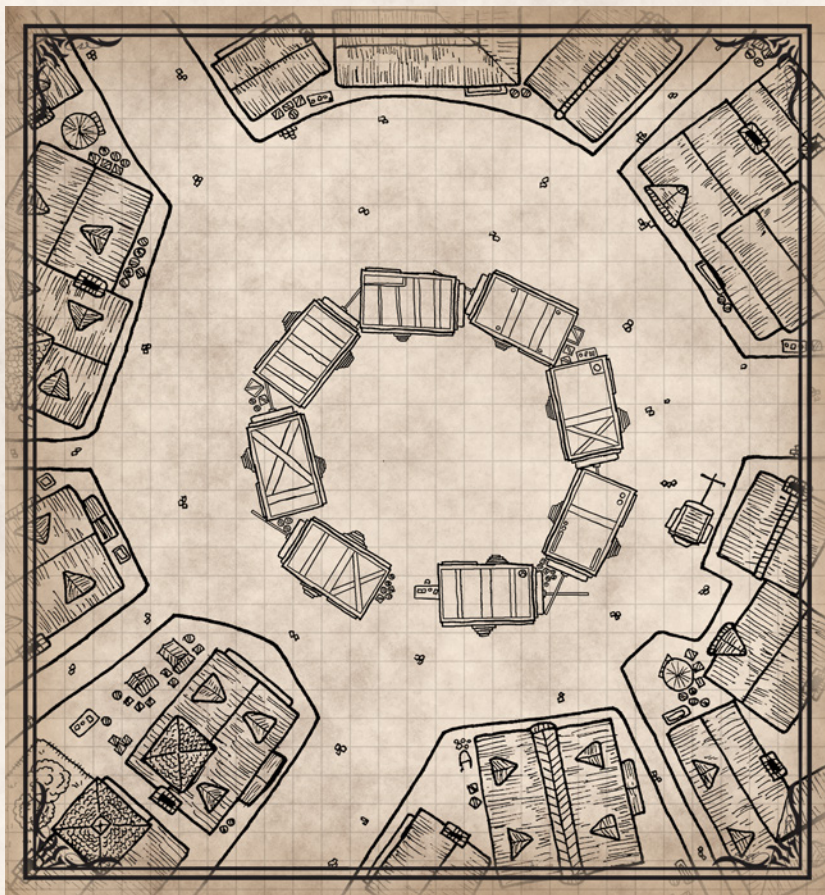
The crier is heard many buildings off, and the crowds of the street part as a wondrous sight approaches. Eight massive, long-snouted beasts, with tusks of gleaming ivory, pull a train of large, brightly decorated wagons toward the center of town. A white-bearded gnome, wearing a tall top hat and bright red jacket, stands atop the lead elephant, heralding their presence. The eight wagon boxcars are garishly painted with depictions of exotic apes, tutu wearing bears, fierce lions, and foolish jesters. Several performers stand atop the wagons and offer a preview of their show - a muscle-bound man lifts a lovely lady over his head, a magician pulls a rabbit from a hat, and a crossbow marksman hits the bullseye of a target at the train's rear. It truly is quite the spectacle and, apparently, the circus is in town!

The parade is indeed quite the spectacle, and certainly gets the attention of the local populace. Children and quite a few adults follow the train to its destination, where the elephants pull the wagons into a wide circle before coming to a rest. At the DM's discretion, the parade and the presence of the circus might provide local thieves (possibly including PCs) with a distraction sufficient enough to allow some mischief, or the scene can complete itself without incident.

### THE SHOW OF SHOWS

The circus sets up shop in a sufficiently open area, ostensibly with permission, and quite possibly by invitation, of local authorities. The elephants park the wagon train in a tight ring with a narrow opening allowing access to the middle, and tarps are strung between the wagons in the ring, sufficiently obscuring the central performance area.

Six of the eight wagons have entrance and exit doors on their outer ring sides, and with those doors open and steps placed down the curious can access the sideshows for just 5 cp per person. The other two wagons are dressing and prop rooms and traveling quarters for the performers. Each of these wagons is 12' wide and 18' long, and inside each sideshow wagon is



a 4'wide walkway from the entrance to exit with a velvet rope between audience and spectacle.

The sideshow spectacles include caged viewings of the Dancing Bears, the Exotic Red Apes, and the Man-Eating Lions ... all which laze about disinterested.

Other side shows wagon include:

**A Fortune Teller**—the Great Zardo, who uses careful questioning and discussion to produce vague prognostications of happy futures applicable to his rule, leaving his guests smiling, even if their actual fate is to be mauled by an escaped lion.

**The Talented and Titillating Tatiana The Horny**—an attractive Tiefling woman who juggles, eats fire and swallows swords while telling mundane, groaner jokes in a performance that is mildly amusing and utterly lacking in titillation.

**The Museum of Artifacts Obscure**—a dry exhibition of pottery, sculpture, weaponry, and armor of no particular note.

**The Main Events**—held in the middle of the wagon ring, costs 2 sp apiece and are far more spectacular. A stage occupies half of the inner ring, where the standing room only audience enjoys the show. Barnabus Baylum is the

ringmaster, and he spectacularly disappears in a puff of smoke, thanks to a *cape of the mountebank* (DMG, p 157), after taking his final bow of the evening. The show includes Dancing Bears dancing, Red Apes prancing, the Man-Eating Lions tamed by Bjeorn the Lion Tamer, who uses the charges in his *ring of animal influence* (DMG, p 189) for his routine, illusions by Illifarn the Illustrious, feats of knife throwing and archery by Elastriam the Throneless Elf Queen, and acrobatic martial arts displays by the Bold Brothers Brim. Each of the animals emerges from their wagons in spectacular fashion from ringside doors, to be led by its handler past the crowd and onto the stage for its performance, while the other performers emerge from the dressing room wagon in bold fashion when introduced.

Whether PCs partake of any of the paid entertainment or not they're sure to enjoy the trouble to come.

## THE TROUBLE

Read or paraphrase the following:

After the show, you find yourselves relaxing at the Inn that sits across the road from the closed-up circus tents. Barnabus Baylum and several of his performers boisterously enjoy their ale at a table nearby. The waitress smiles as she brings another flagon of ale when suddenly a scream from a room above draws your attention to the balcony surrounding the tap room. A door bursts open, and charging out of the door, jumping onto the railing and leaping onto the chandeliers are the four red apes! "Those are MY MONKEYS!" shouts Barnabus, "Which of you dolts let them out?" he asks of his entourage. "Aww never mind—get em back or get lost! And I'll give 25 gold to anyone in this crowd who returns them to me alive!"

This should be sufficient motivation for the PCs to get involved. Treat the four escaped orangutans as **apes** (CR ½; MM p 317). The apes have been in captivity for most of their lives, are quite used to people, and won't initiate

aggression, though they will violently defend themselves if attacked. They aren't particularly interested in being co-operative, but each might be coaxed down with a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Animal Handling)** checks. Grant advantage on the checks if something of interest, such as food or shiny objects, is offered as a lure.

Whether the PCs manage to recapture the apes through careful handling or other means, just as the situation seems to have calmed down a series of screams is heard outside of the inn.

“Awww what now?!”, grumbles Barnabus.

Outside, two tutu-wearing **brown bears** (CR 1; MM, p 319) walk lazily down the street as passersby flee. The bears are well fed and do not present an immediate threat unless they are aggressively approached.

“Beatrice and Bessie?! How'd you get out? 25 gold EACH for anyone that captures them!”

As the pcs emerge from the inn to handle the bears a **DC 12 passive Perception** check allows them to notice shadowy figures leaping from one circus wagon top to another. This is Aquimat, an elf **druid** (CR 2; MM, p 346), and her three **scout** (CR ½; MM, p 349) companions. Having seen the circus wagons roll through the nearby forest road Aquimat became immensely offended by the treatment these animals receive and set out to free them. Clearly, their plot is successful, and the next beasts they free are the lions!

The four **lions** (CR 1; MM p 331) are riled up by all the excitement, and they aggressively leap into the roadway, spooking the bears and looking for someone to maul. And that, of course, is when the eight **elephants** (CR 4; MM, p 322) stampede. Aquimat, who has been speaking with the animals, has convinced the elephants to be mounts so that she and her crew can escape. The elephants trample anyone who attempts to impede their exit from the city.

“Aaargh, there goes my profits. Stop those thieving elves!” shouts Barnabus, to anyone listening.

Barnabus offers 25 gp per animal re-captured alive, and 25 gp per thief taken dead or alive. With two frightened bears, four dangerously aggressive lions, and eight fleeing elephants

carrying off the four thieves, the PCs are left with ample choices on how to be of assistance. They can help subdue the angry lions, chase down the frightened bears, pursue the fleeing druid, help the fleeing druid, or perhaps even take advantage of all the chaos to loot a store. The possibilities, at this point, are wide open.

Meanwhile, Barnabus and his animal handlers should choose to contain whichever threats the PCs ignore - either the bears, the lions, the apes (if they are still at large), or the fleeing, mounted elephants. Should stats be required for any of the circus performers they are a hearty bunch whose travels have made them quite used to the occasional need for self-defense. Treat most of them as **spies** (CR 1; MM p 349) and **thugs** (CR ½; MM p 350). **Bjeorn the Lion Tamer** has the stats of a berzerker (CR 2; MM, p 344) and **Barnabus** has the stats of a bandit captain (CR 2; MM, p 344). DMs with access to Volo's Guide to Monsters might also consider several NPC stats from Appendix B, including an **archer**, **bard**, **illusionist**, and pair of **martial arts adepts**.

## TREASURE AND THE AFTERMATH

Barnabus begrudgingly pays any of the hastily offered bounties earned, and if he sees talented PCs perform impressive feats he might offer a job in his circus!

If any ambitious PCs thought to loot the circus wagons during the chaos, they should encounter locked doors (DC 10), trapped chests (DC 10), and possibly a performer or two sleeping through the trouble. Successful infiltration might net the personal belongings of the performers, including 2d12x10 gold pieces in assorted coins and jewelry. A careful search of the prop room could yield a locked prop box (DC 12) that contains *dust of disappearance*.

Barnabus keeps the Circus earnings locked in a secret compartment beneath the floor under his bed. A **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** check specifically under his bed is required to spot the compartment. Inside is a heavy chest with 256 copper pieces, 328 silver pieces, 136 gold pieces, and four *potions of healing*.

It seems likely that Aquimat escaped with a herd of elephants, and possibly other animals, in tow. What long term consequences this might have on a campaign are left entirely up to the DM!

# THE HAUNTING OF NIGHT CLOAK

By Patrick E. Pullen

CR: 2-4

The Haunting of Night Cloak is a short side quest made for 4 to 6 players of 2nd to 4th level. The adventure takes place in the Night Cloak Inn. The Inn can be placed in any town or city that the players may be staying in during their travels.

## SUMMARY

The adventurers have just arrived in town and are looking for a place to stay for the night. The first inn they come to is the Night Cloak Inn. It is a good quality inn, and it has a nice tap room to relax in, as well as comfortable rooms on the 2nd floor. When the PCs enter the inn, business seems very slow. The owner is desperate for assistance as a ghost has recently started haunting the premises. His business has dropped considerably since the ghost appeared a couple of nights ago. The ghost has scared off most of his customers. He begs the adventurers for their help, asking them to get rid of the restless spirit.



## BACKGROUND

The proprietor of the Night Cloak Inn, **Albert Barton** (bandit captain CR 2; MM. p 344), killed his wife two days ago and hastily buried her body in the cellar in a crude, shallow grave. Now, her **ghost** (CR 4; MM, p147) haunts the Inn and seeks to have Albert's crime come to light before she finds eternal rest. She attempts to lead the adventurers to clues that bring the truth to the surface.

Albert knows the ghost is his wife, and he is desperate to have her destroyed before anyone finds out about his murderous crime. When the adventurers enter the inn, he seizes the opportunity to trick them into destroying the ghost.

## THE ENCOUNTER

There are not many people in the inn's tap room. A couple of patrons sit by a window at a table, and a dwarf named **Griggs** (commoner; MM, p345) sits at the bar drinking.

Griggs is a furrier, and he stops at the Night Cloak Inn whenever he is traveling between cities, towns, or villages. He finds the quality of the rooms to be the best in this town.

Albert is behind the bar. He indicates for the adventurers to come in and have a drink. If the PCs seem reluctant, Albert offers them a free round and/or a room for the night if they sit and listen to his proposal.

## ALBERT'S TALE

**Note:** Albert only wants the PCs to get rid of his wife's ghost. He does not want them snooping around too much because he doesn't want them to discover what he has done.

Once he has convinced the PCs to sit and listen to him, Albert tells them about a ghost that is scaring away his customers.

“It was two nights ago, when the ghost first appeared. It was seen by some guests in the rooms upstairs. Every night since, the ghost has been scaring customers away. As you can see business is not very good. Will you please help me by getting rid of the ghost? I can pay you for your trouble!”

A PC with a **passive Perception of 14**, or one who passes a **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception)** check, notices that Albert has four scratches on his forearm and a fresh bruise on his cheek. If asked about the injuries, he claims the ghost appeared in front of him while he was cleaning a room on the 2nd floor, and he was injured as he stumbled down the stairs to escape.

He asks the PCs to explore the upstairs of the inn. If they accept his offer, they are tasked with confronting and destroying the ghost if they see it. A PC passing a **DC 15 Wisdom (Insight)** check believes Albert is not telling them everything. If questioned about this, Albert quickly decides that it's time to go do some cleaning, do the dishes, or go run an errand.

Albert explains that Room 13 is locked due to a leak in the ceiling that needs repair. He avoids unlocking this room, and explains that there is no reason for the PCs to go into Room 13. Picking the lock requires a successful **DC 13 Dexterity check with thieves' tools**.

Albert gives the PCs Room 11, which is right next to Room 13. There are 14 rooms total on the 2nd floor, as well as a common room at the top of the stairs. Griggs occupies Room 2, all other rooms on the 2nd floor are unoccupied. The common room is connected to the rooms by a long, L-shaped hallway.

If the PCs speak to Griggs, they learn a little information from him (see Clue #2).

The night starts out quiet enough, but just as the PCs are getting settled in, noises and banging can be heard coming from Room 13. This is the ghost of Deloris. She is trying to lure them into Room 13 to discover clues to her demise. At this point, the PCs should begin their investigation and start finding clues.

By this time, Albert is intoxicated and has passed out in his room with the door closed but not locked. Albert's room is located on the 1st floor, behind the counter of the tap room.

The tap room doors are closed but unlocked. Griggs is the only patron in the inn and is in his

room. With Albert asleep, the PCs may freely investigate the 2nd floor without worrying about stealth.

If they attempt to investigate Albert's room, or an adjacent room, they must pass a **DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth)** check. On a failure, Albert wakes up and demands to know what the PCs are doing sneaking around his inn. Albert is still intoxicated. PCs making Charisma checks against Albert have advantage.

Beneath the stairs that lead up to the 2nd floor is a door that opens to stone stairs, which lead down to the cellar. A shovel lies beside a mound of loosely packed dirt. Deloris is buried under the mound of dirt.

To keep the PCs on their toes, have the ghost of Deloris show up occasionally, or make noises throughout the inn which might draw the PCs closer to clues. Keep in mind, the ghost is not trying to hurt the PCs. She just wants them to find the clues and expose Albert's crime.

## THE CLUES

The following is a list of clues and where they can be found. The PCs should be able to figure everything out by using the clues. If the PCs are having trouble, you can use Deloris' ghost occasionally appearing to lead them to the clues.

**Clue #1 - Albert's injuries:** The scratches on his forearm and the bruise on his cheek are actually from his wife struggling to defend herself. A successful **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception)** check may lead a PC to believe Albert is not being truthful about the source of his injuries. If questioned further, Albert finds a reason to leave the establishment, and asks the PCs to get on with finding the ghost.

**Clue #2 - Griggs the Dwarf:** The dwarf is a regular patron and is staying in room 2. He stops at the inn every other week, as he travels between cities. He was there the night of the murder, and can relay information to the PCs to help in their investigation. He does not discuss anything in front of Albert, but does share what he knows if pulled aside in private, or if talked to in his room.

- † Deloris, Albert's wife, has not been around in the last 2 days.
- † Albert and Deloris fight constantly and had a huge fight 2 nights ago. She has not been around since then and Griggs is worried about her. Albert told him she left to go out of town, but the dwarf isn't sure he is telling the truth.

- † Griggs doesn't know what they fight about, he tries not to listen.
- † Albert has been acting very strange and moody the last 2 days.
- † Griggs has seen the ghost, but says if you ignore it, then it eventually goes away.

Griggs is a commoner and will avoid fighting or helping the PCs, other than giving them information.

**Clue #3 - Room 13 (locked; DC 13 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check):** This is the room where Albert murdered his wife, and he has not had time to fully clean up after killing her, partly because Deloris' ghost keeps haunting him whenever he enters Room 13.

He keeps the room locked to keep people out until he can thoroughly clean and get rid of all the evidence. There is a dried puddle of blood on the floor next to the bed. It is easy to see that someone has attempted to clean it. The broken knife blade used in the murder is located on the floor under the bed, but the handle is missing.

**Clue #4 - The broken knife handle:** the handle of the knife that Albert used to kill his wife is on the counter in the kitchen, but the blade is missing. The blade was old and it snapped out of the handle when Albert used it, and it still has his wife's dried blood on it. If matched up with the broken blade found in room 13, it fits perfectly.

**Clue #5 - The fresh mound of dirt and shovel in the cellar:** If inspected (DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check), traces of dried blood, in the form of hand prints, can be found on the shovel's handle.

Albert's wife is buried in a shallow grave. A small piece of her dress can be seen protruding from the fresh dirt. If some of the dirt is moved aside, the PCs can start to uncover the body. The dirt is still loose and can be easily dug out by hand. In his haste, Albert did not dig very deep, nor did he cover the body well.

## THE GHOST OF DELORIS

Rules for Ghosts can be found on **page 147 of the 5th Edition Monster Manual**.

Whenever you have the PCs run into the ghost of Deloris, use her to try and help them out. At first, the PCs may think the ghost is an adversary. You can use this to heighten a sense of fear, but

eventually the PCs should realize she is not trying to hurt them. She cannot speak and fades away quickly every time she is encountered. She can point and make simple gestures. She may attempt to possess a random PC to try and lead them to check out certain areas.

Once her body is found, Deloris' ghost stops haunting the inn, and she can finally rest knowing her murder has come to light. The townsfolk see that she gets the proper burial.

## CONFRONTING ALBERT

If the PCs confront Albert Barton with the clues they have uncovered, he stumbles over his lies and contradicts himself. He comes across as extremely nervous.

Albert desperately tries to escape if accused of murdering his wife or having any involvement in her death. You can use this opportunity to do an exciting chase scene if you wish.

If he can't escape, he fights. If hurt too badly, Albert surrenders to save his life. Albert is an old bandit that used his loot to start up his inn.

If you wish to make Albert more of a challenge, you can give him a class of your choice.

## CONCLUSION

Once Deloris' ghost is laid to rest, the adventurers should notify the local authorities of what they found out. If they subdued Albert instead of killing him, they should now have him arrested.

With the clues the PCs found, Albert is placed in jail, and convicted of his wife's murder. The townsfolk are very grateful, and may give the party a minor magic item, or a small amount of gold for their help. Anything you feel would make a good reward for your players' efforts is fine.

# FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS

By Karl Resch

*“The kenku flock known as the Bell-Ringers are involved in many of the underworld dealings within the city. Their lair is a crumbling watchtower where the old city wall once stood. The nobles pay it no mind, and those under the sway of the flock live in fear, worrying that their movements may be watched and their lives will be cut short when the bell tolls for them. At the suggestion of an ally, the characters have decided to storm the tower and remove the flock leader from power.”*

**Type:** Combat & Exploration

**CR:** 5

## DM NOTES

For Whom the Bell Tolls is a dungeon delve meant to be run continuously, with no rests between encounters. The DM may choose to expand upon the tower, adding additional levels and features if they so desire. If inserting as part of an ongoing campaign, DM's should find ways to incorporate the Bell-Ringers before the confrontation at their base of operations.

This adventure is not a typical dungeon delve in that while most of the challenges could be on par for a group of characters levels 1 through 4, the end conflict with Deathknell could be more than the characters may have bargained for (and rightly so!). The delve is written to provide ideas for different locations and characters within the city. The “Conclusion” section presents some ideas about what could happen if things don't go according to the characters' plans.

For added immersion, the DM should feel free to play recordings of the various sounds the kenku create. The delve makes notes in the descriptive texts about kenku jeering, taunting, and the like, but the DM should incorporate their own sounds the kenku are making.

The table below, Kenku Noises, provides some ideas:

### d8 Kenku Noises

- |   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 1 | Crying, newborn babies          |
| 2 | Roosters crowing                |
| 3 | Harsh laughter                  |
| 4 | The twang of a string           |
| 5 | Prisoners screaming & moaning   |
| 6 | Growls and roars of wild beasts |
| 7 | Sounds of spell effects         |
| 8 | Slow, heavy footfalls           |

## APPROACHING THE TOWER

If the characters choose not to approach using stealth, they may be spotted by the 4 **kenku scouts** (see Area C below). If spotted, the kenku sound the alarm (using whatever noise the DM wishes), alerting the rest of the tower of unwelcomed guests. They also fire their longbows at the approaching group. If the DM wishes, the bell may begin to sound throughout the tower, reverberating through the weakened structure. The DM should adjust the read-aloud text based on noises made by the kenku. The heavy oaken doors of the tower can be pushed open with a **DC 10 Strength** check.

## THE TOWER

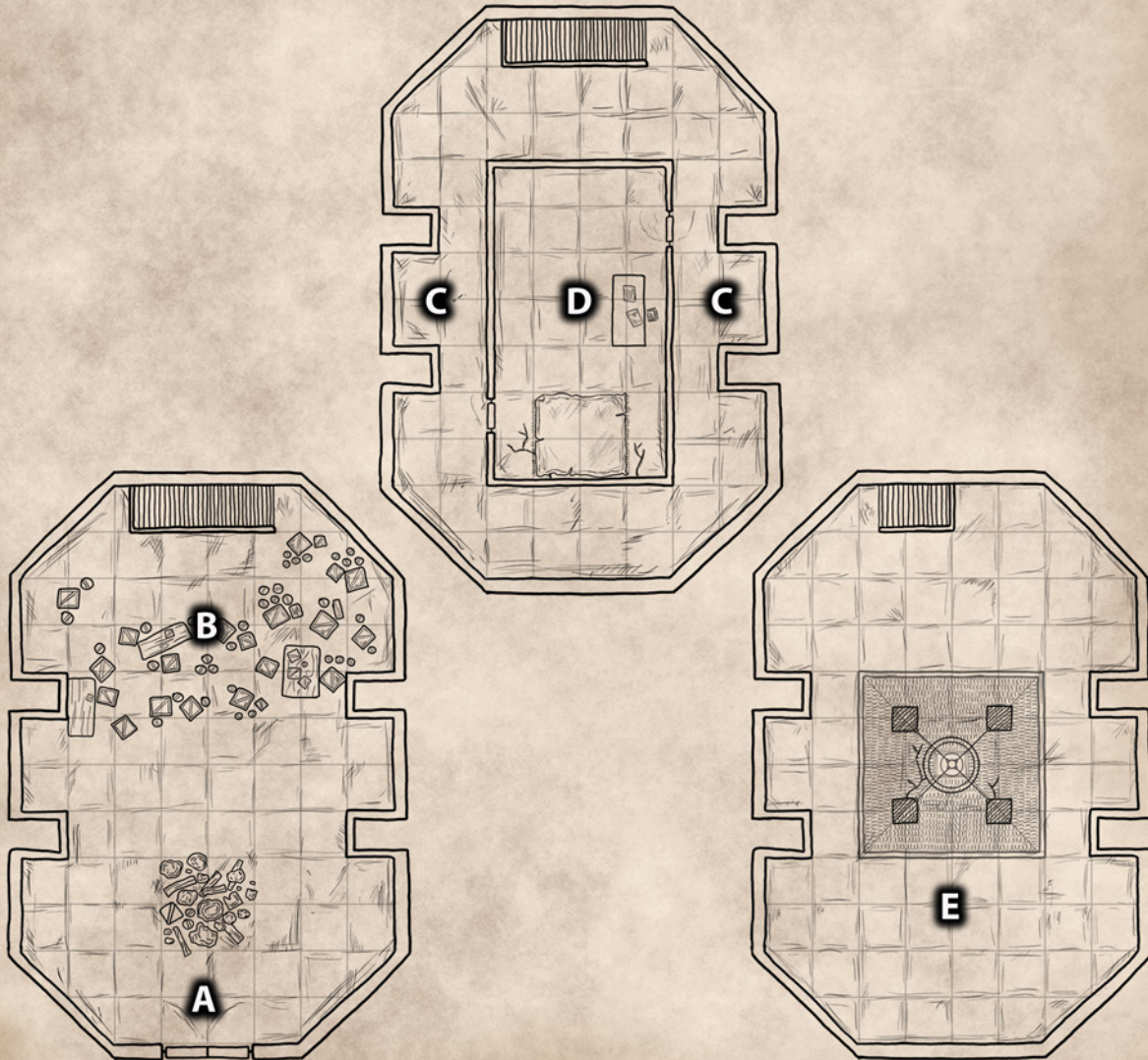
All locations within the tower have the following conditions, unless otherwise specified:

**General.** Different noises echo throughout the tower, bouncing off the stones and stairwells (see the Kenku Noises table in DM Notes). It takes an active **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception)** check to realize these are just mimicries.

**Light.** Dim light.

**Ceilings.** Each room is 10 feet high.

## THE BELL TOWER



### A. TOWER ENTRANCE

The first floor of the tower has been converted into a crude guardhouse.

Weathered books, soiled fabrics, and other pilfered goods lie scattered about the floor. Two wily looking kenku begin taunting you with various sounds as they swing their weighted clubs.

Two **kenku thugs** (CR 1/2, see below) act as sentries to the tower for the flock. They are accompanied by four **kenku** (CR ¼, MM, p194). If the tower has not been alerted to the group,

the thugs act cautiously and inquire (in various sentence fragments and voices) about who the intruders are and what they want. If the characters cannot give a reasonable answer, the thugs make sounds signaling the others to attack.

**Rubble:** This 10' x 10' square of rubble provides half cover. A character with a passive perception score of 11 or higher notices that it fell from the ceiling.

**Treasure:** Any character searching through the books finds two spell scrolls hastily written and stuffed within. One is a spell scroll of *feather fall*; the other is *blindness/deafness*.

## B. STOREROOM & STAIRWELL

The stairwell is blocked with crates and barrels, creating a maze-like path to the stairwell. Rubble lies about, as if the area was once cordoned off with smaller rooms.

Deathknell's familiar, a pseudodragon (CR ¼; MM, p254) named **Krithip** is hiding among the various odds and ends within the room (**passive Perception of 14** to spot). Any hostile act causes the pseudodragon to flee up the stairs to the Belfry (Area E). Krithip may be persuaded to join the characters, providing telepathic warnings of the dangers that lie on the second floor, and the gargoyles on the belfry.

**Crates & Barrels:** These are difficult terrain.

**Stairs:** These lead up to the Lookout Post (Area C).

**Treasure:** Characters who succeed on a **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation)** check to rummage through the boxes and crates find two *potions of healing* and 1d6 hand bells (50 gp each).

## C. LOOKOUT POST

Used as a guard post to keep watch, the characters may have already encountered these sentries when approaching the bell tower.

The stairs lead up to a crude hallway, where rubble and refuse form a crude room in the middle of the floor. You see two ragged kenku sentries standing at the end of opposite hallways. They make sounds indicating their annoyance as they draw their bowstrings back.

Four **kenku scouts** (CR 1, see below) scan the streets below, making note of the comings and goings of Bell-Ringers, their allies, and possible enemies. When the characters enter their post, they see two kenku scouts patrolling the northern alcove. The kenku alert the others and attack, seeking the most advantageous positions, ducking into the Meeting Room (Area D) to position themselves to fire off shots and then run.

**Stairs:** These lead up to the Belfry (Area E).

## D. MEETING ROOM

This room is used by Deathknell as her personal quarters, and for any meetings and discussions she may wish to have with rivals and servants.

Tarnished baubles, bent quills, and inkpots of various shapes and sizes are strewn about. A frayed rug, once worth some value, lies on the far side of the room. Sitting at a writing desk is an emaciated man with beady eyes and a scowl. As you crash through the room, he jumps up, clearly on edge.

A wererat (CR 2; MM, p209) named **Skab** is here, waiting for his chance to parley with Deathknell. At the first signs of combat, he changes into his rat-form and attempts to escape, though he will fight in his wererat form if cornered. A member of a wererat gang called the **Gnawers**, Skab's motivations are entirely up to the DM. He could be looking to reach an agreement with Deathknell about using their bell to signal when their contraband shipments arrive at the city. The Gnawers could be oppressing the Bell-ringers, and Skab is here to ensure their cooperation.

**Trap:** The square rug (10' x 10') covers an opening in the ceiling that drops to the first floor. Deathknell uses it to shout messages to the first-floor sentries, though it also works as a way to get enemies out of her chamber. Any character that steps on the rug falls to the floor below, and suffers 1d6 bludgeoning damage.

**Treasure:** The desk holds two pieces of parchment. One is written in Thieves' Cant and describes the delivery of a package down at the docks two nights from now, though it doesn't say what is being delivered. The second is a crude map detailing the various tunnels and pathways through the sewers to the undercity and marked with a symbol. The map leads to a meeting point used by the Gnawers, something that can be gleaned by a **DC 18 Intelligence (History)** check.

## E. BELFRY

Upon reaching the top of the tower, the characters confront Deathknell, Master of the Flock.

The city looms below you as you stand on top of the tower, wind hitting your face. The stone is worn and broken in most parts, creating crude crenellations that surround grotesque statues. A large bell sways slowly, overhead. A kenku holds the rope, pulling with all her might until she is lifted up by the bell's movement. A loud "DONG!" echoes across the ruined plaza below, ringing in your ears. The kenku watches you smugly as two of the statues begin to stir.

If Krithip fled from the players, the **pseudodragon** is here, perched on Deathknell's shoulder. The statues at each corner of the tower are two **gargoyles** (CR2, MM, p140). They move to protect Deathknell, a **kenku mage** (CR 6, see below). The DM is free to change Deathknell's spell list as they see fit, though she should possess the *blindness/deafness* spell and will have cast the Deafness portion on herself, making her immune to the bell's tolling. The two gargoyles may attempt to grapple characters attacking Deathknell, flying over the edge of the belfry and dropping them to the ground below which deals 3d6 bludgeoning damage.

**Tolling:** At the top of every round (before the first character acts), the bell tolls. All creatures must make a **DC 13 Constitution saving throw**, or take 1d8 thunder damage. Deafened characters are immune to this effect (such as being under the effects of a *blindness/deafness* spell).

**Bell:** The bell is suspended 10 feet off the floor of the tower. It is centered under the awning in the 15' x 10' rectangle, held in place by four ropes (**AC 10, 5 hit points, resistance to bludgeoning damage, and immunity to poison and psychic damage**). If all the ropes are broken, the bell crashes through the tower, down to the first floor. Any character underneath the bell as it breaks may make a **DC 13 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** check to leap out of the way of the falling bell. Failure results in the bell pinning the creature as it crashes through the tower, causing them to take 6d10 bludgeoning damage from the bell and 2d6 bludgeoning damage from the fall. Creatures pinned by the bell are prone and restrained. It takes a **DC 20 Strength** check to move the bell off the character.

## CONCLUSION

Defeating Deathknell creates new opportunities for the characters and the city. If the characters decide to spare her life and interrogate her, additional information and story hooks can be gleaned based on what the DM has decided for background (as described in previous sections). Her death could create a power vacuum within the city (as not all members of the Bell-Ringers are present in the tower), or could give another faction like the Gnawers the upper hand on consolidating power within the seedy underbelly of the city.

Deathknell is no slouch for lower level characters. Confronting her in the Bell-Ringers' base of operations is an act of bravery (or possibly insanity). There is a chance that characters may fail in their attempt to defeat her, at which point she may capture them and use them as spies against a rival group, or make them pay some other debt. The DM should not be afraid to let the players fail. Rather than ending the story, failure should create more unexpected twists and turns!

Being a dungeon delve, For Whom the Bell Tolls contains many possibilities for expansion. Perhaps the easiest suggestion is to add more levels to the tower. The additional levels could give Deathknell larger, more elaborate quarters, more bunks, a gambling den of some sort, and a treasury containing all sorts of odds and ends the kenku pilfered. The tower could also have some sub-levels, perhaps a small forge where bells of various sizes were created.

## MONSTER STATISTICS

### KENKU SCOUT

Medium humanoid (kenku), chaotic neutral

**Armor Class** 14 (leather armor)

**HP** 16 (3d8+3)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 11 (+0) | 16 (+3) | 12 (+1) | 11 (+0) | 13 (+1) | 11 (+0) |

**Skills** Nature +4, Perception +5, Stealth +6, Survival +5

**Senses** passive Perception 15

**Languages** understands Auran and Common but speaks only through the use of its Mimicry trait.

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Keen Hearing and Sight.** The kenku scout has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing and sight.

**Ambusher.** The kenku has advantage on attack rolls against any creature it has surprised.

**Mimicry.** The kenku can mimic the sounds it has heard, including voices. A creature that hears the sounds can tell they are imitations with a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The kenku scout makes two melee attacks or two ranged attacks.

**Shortsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

**Longbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

### KENKU THUG

Medium humanoid (kenku), chaotic neutral

**Armor Class** 12 (leather armor)

**HP** 16 (3d8+3)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 15 (+2) | 13 (+1) | 14 (+2) | 10 (+0) | 10 (+1) | 11 (+0) |

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** understands Auran and Common but speaks only through the use of its Mimicry trait.

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Pack Tactics.** The kenku thug has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the thug's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

**Ambusher.** The kenku has advantage on attack rolls against any creature it has surprised.

**Mimicry.** The kenku can mimic the sounds it has heard, including voices. A creature that hears the sounds can tell they are imitations with a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The kenku thug makes two melee attacks.

**Mace.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

### KENKU MAGE

Medium humanoid (kenku), chaotic neutral

**Armor Class** 13 (16 with mage armor)

**HP** 40 (9d8)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR    | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 9 (-1) | 16 (+3) | 11 (+0) | 17 (+3) | 12 (+1) | 11 (+0) |

**Savings Throws** Int +6, Wis +4

**Skills** Arcana +6, History +6

**Senses** passive Perception 11

**Languages** understands Auran and Common but speaks only through the use of its Mimicry trait.

**Challenge** 6 (2,300 XP)

**Ambusher.** The kenku has advantage on attack rolls against any creature it has surprised.

**Mimicry.** The kenku can mimic the sounds it has heard, including voices. A creature that hears the sounds can tell they are imitations with a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check.

**Spellcasting.** The kenku mage is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at-will): *acid splash*, *chill touch*, *light*, *mage hand*  
1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *misty step*, *blindness/deafness*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *fireball*, *fly*

4th level (3 slot): *greater invisibility*, *Evard's black tentacles*

5th level (1 slot): *Bigby's hand*

#### ACTIONS

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

# HIDDEN SWIMMERS

By Derek Ruiz “Elven Tower”

*“The adventurers are ambushed by a band of sahuagin who are hiding in the sewer system.”*

**Type:** Urban Ambush

**CR:** 1-11

## DMS NOTES

The encounter is appropriate for a regular sized city with sewers. The sahuagin attempt to ambush the party by rapidly emerging from 3 manholes that are close to each other.

## THE ENCOUNTER

### 1A. RANDOM AMBUSH

The encounter begins when the party is traveling from one part of town to another. The sahuagin are waiting to attack. Once the party is between the manholes, they emerge from down below to attack.

### 1B. PLANNED AMBUSH

A local goblin named **Fring** would do anything for some gold. As he has language difficulties, he struck a deal with a sahuagin priestess. He keeps an eye out for people who look “rich” and sends them to the ambush spot. The party can meet Fring in many ways; he can offer guide services in town, offer “incorrect” directions or, as a last

resort, steal something from the party so they chase him down to the sahuagin’s ambush. If appropriate, he may even join the skirmish (use **scout**; CR ½; MM, p349).

When the sahuagin attack, read or paraphrase the following:

As you make your way through the crowded city, the sounds of street vendors, children playing, and some distant music from an unseen bard assault your ears. The smell of people and cattle is everywhere; it reminds you of the last city you visited. Your path brings you to a smaller and quieter street; it’s surrounded by houses, and barely wide enough for a horse cart. A sudden metallic noise and glint out of the corner of your eye catch your attention. When you turn it’s already too late ... you’re surrounded! Your assailants have scaly skin, fins on their arms and back, and the face of a carnivorous fish. Some of them wield spears, whilst one of them wields a short staff with a golden lobster on top of it.

## THE FIGHT

One **sahuagin priestess** (CR 2; MM, p264) and three **sahuagin** (CR 1/2; MM, p263) attack the party. The goal of the sahuagin is to kill for food and plunder, but they know they must be fast. The sahuagin priestess starts by casting *hold person* (level 3) to immobilize two adventurers. Sahuagin have a Blood Frenzy ability that gives them advantage when attacking anyone who is below maximum HP. They already know the best course of action is attacking immobilized foes.

Two sahuagin attack the party while one always stays with the priestess to shield her. If a party member appears to be dangerous, she snipes them with a *guiding bolt*. When the sahuagin fighters are wounded, she can cast *mass healing word*.

The Sahuagin do not retreat unless the priestess commands it. She may do so if the party kills two or more sahuagin. If the priestess is killed, the rest of the sahuagin may flee, unless you decide that some of them cannot resist their own Blood Frenzy.

## SCALING SUGGESTIONS

**APL 2:** Remove the sahuagin priestess and use 4 sahuagin

**APL 3:** As written

**APL 4:** Add one sahuagin

**APL 5:** Add one sahuagin priestess

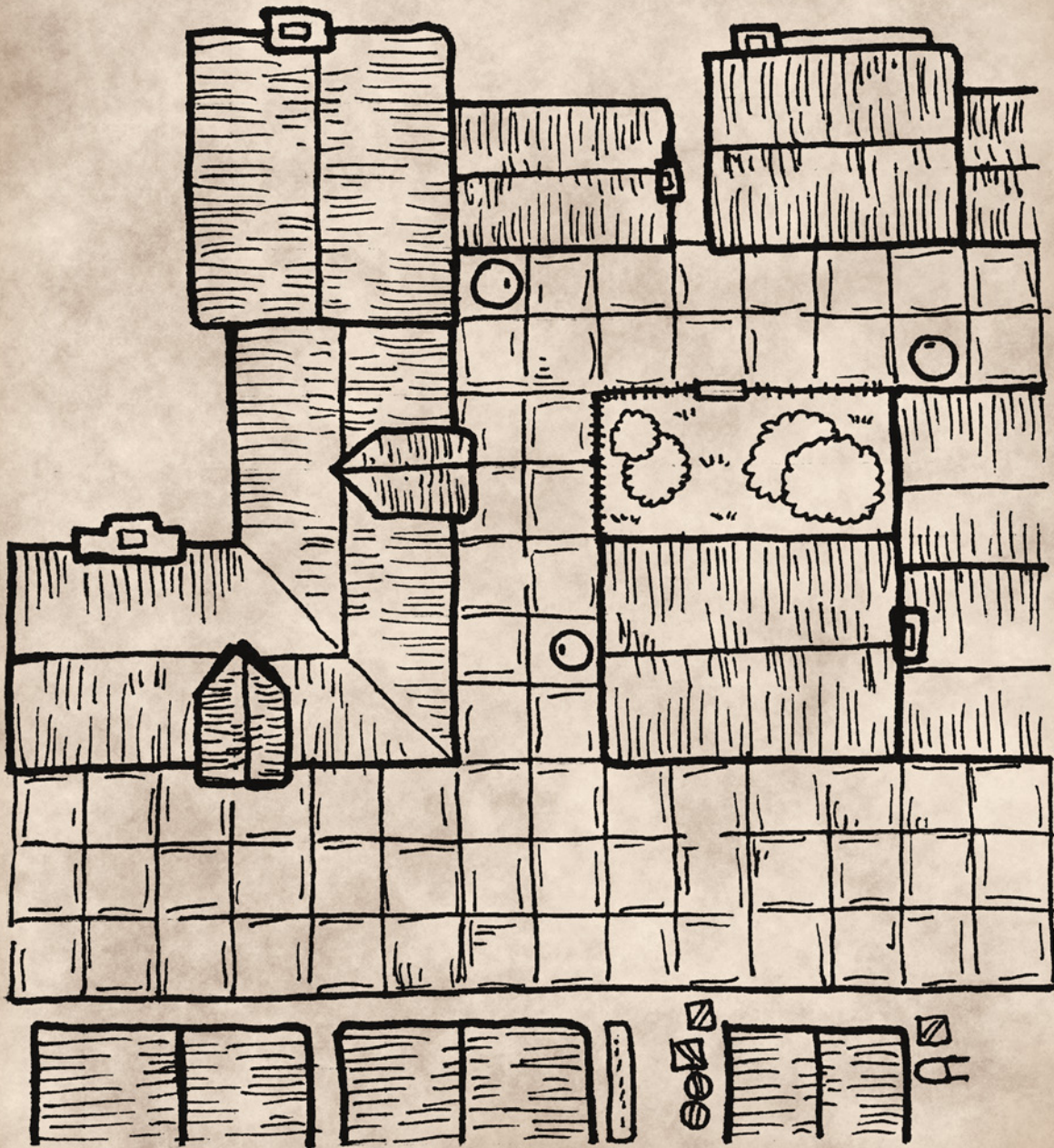
**APL 6 & 7:** Add one sahuagin baron

**APL 8 & 9:** Add one sahuagin priestess and one sahuagin baron

**APL 10 & 11:** Add two sahuagin barons and one sahuagin priestess

Alternatively, the sahuagins’ strategy can also change difficulty. For added deadliness, their first action is to grab any immobilized PCs and pull them down to the sewers, thus splitting the party and limiting healing options.

## THE AMBUSH



# THE FESTIVAL

By Janek Sielicki

**Type:** Roleplaying

**CR:** Any

## DMs NOTE

Most of the below is roleplaying, and some of the suggested events do not use skill checks. For these events, you create the outcome based on the players' actions and ingenuity.

## THE ENCOUNTER

Heroes spend their days, or even lives, exploring dungeons, fighting monsters and searching for long-forgotten treasures. They save towns, foil evil-doers' plans and constantly get into all sorts of trouble. And while leading the life of adventuring they sometimes forget that the majority of people who inhabit the land do not know, or even abhor, the taste of such endeavours instead preferring a simple (which does not mean easy), peaceful life in their village or town.

Feasts and festivals are important events for any community, a day or two of rest and respite from hard work. Although the specifics of individual holidays may vary and depend on the geographical location, culture, and time of the year, most of the big festivals, in addition to more solemn religious rites, include more or less formal events that allow people to have fun.

This encounter assumes that the PCs arrive to a town or a city while a festival takes place. This can be a grand occasion, such as Shieldmeet, or a small, local holiday. The inns are fully-booked, there are carts and travellers everywhere, houses and fences are decorated with colourful ribbons and flowers. Everyone is smiling and kind and the atmosphere of joy permeates the air. Enter the PCs. In a way, they are intruders here: bigger than life heroes who enter into ordinary people's lives. How will they behave? Aloof? Trying to downplay their achievements? Will they be recognized, or boast if they aren't? These are the notions you should consider when introducing a folk festival into your game.

## GETTING THE PCs INVOLVED

The Festival is, first of all, an opportunity for roleplaying and your PCs may decide to approach the whole event as, for example:

- † Passive observers. The PCs just sit back and enjoy themselves, while the holiday atmosphere washes over them. Don't force your players to participate in the activities if they don't want to!
- † Participants. The PCs take part in the contests and activities. Some NPCs may applaud them and admire the PCs' skills, while other may complain that "the lords" are spoiling the fun and showing off, especially if the party consists of high-level PCs. A good compromise here might be running a contest between NPCs, but before or after a PC would make a special appearance, as "a guest star."
- † Judges. If the PCs are heroes of some renown, the town elders might ask them to join the judges (elders, the mayor, and other important figures) and vote on the winners of various contests. Again, some NPCs may like it, while more conservative ones may complain about letting outsiders decide on local matters.

Moreover, to better involve the players in the festive atmosphere, try to think what the crowds around the PCs talk about: think about everyday problems such as a broken cart wheel, no money for a gift, rebellious children, gossiping about someone getting fat, etc. Finally, you may ask your players to create some of the NPCs, especially if the PCs chose the passive observers or judges options explained above. You don't need a full stat block, just ask your players to think about a common person they want to roleplay for 5 minutes. Such an NPC can be created according to this pattern: Adjective + job title + who \_\_\_\_\_. For example: a black-haired seamstress who can't dance. Or: a strong smith who is very handsome.

## EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Below are examples of games and activities that the PCs can participate in, or be asked to be judges of, if they are famous and/or powerful individuals. Although some of these encounters might lead to combat, it is recommended to avoid fighting altogether; the festival should be a respite from the dangers of adventuring! If the

PCs decide to be observers, the players may get a bit bored. To avoid this, allow them to roll dice for the NPCs, which may also represent the PCs “cheering” their contestants.

#### THE RUN

Traditionally, skill contests were an important part of folk festivals. Jumping over bonfires, log throwing, or racing are popular in a lot of cultures. During this particular festival, people celebrate the “shooting star run”, which commemorates the night when the founders of the town saw two shooting stars in the sky and took the sight as a good omen, telling them where the town should be located.

During the race participants wear long, billowing scarves or ribbons (which represent the shooting star’s tail and are carefully prepared beforehand, while the best ones are family treasures passed between generations) and run down a local hill. Vendors are nearby to sell star-shaped candies and cakes, and beautiful scarves to participants and spectators for 1cp each.

Both speed and grace count, because the runners often get entangled in the ribbons and fall down. The two people to arrive first to the finish line are proclaimed “the stars” and join the judges’ panel (for other contests). They also receive free food and drinks, and they are certain to receive the romantic attention of swooning NPC’s.

Mechanically, the run requires two successful ability checks. First a **DC 10 Strength (Athletics)** check, and then a **DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** check. Keep track of the results. If both tests are successful, the higher results determine the winner.

It could happen that the NPCs place wagers of two copper pieces between themselves, or one betting against the other, or betting against the PCs. Instead of coppers, the NPCs could be betting services, which, if overheard, could lead to a quest for the adventurers. “If \_\_\_\_ wins, you fix my leaky roof. If \_\_\_\_ wins, you come over and take care of the boars that are rooting through my garden.”

#### PIE CONTESTS

Preparing special dishes is an important part of any holiday. For this festival people bake a vegetable and meat pie and make it as spicy as possible, often using “secret ingredients.” Then, a special contest is held: the person who eats the most pies without the need to drink is the winner!

Mechanically, the participants must pass **Constitution checks**, with the DC beginning at 5 and increasing by 5 with each new round, until only one participant is left. The winner earns respect of the community and the title of “the Dragonbreath.” They can also drink for free until the festival ends.

There are six participants in all, and this number can include any number of PCs. One NPC, a 10-year-old human girl with wispy, blonde hair, and a cute ‘I just lost a tooth’ smile, is of particular note. Gavina enjoys spicy food, and she has a bonus of **+3 to her Constitution checks**. In addition, Gavina rolls her checks **with advantage**. If spoken to, Gavina comes across as a shy little girl who is in awe of the adventures. She’s also just a little bit nervous about competing against so many adults.

#### BATTLE OF THE BANDS

Two groups of musicians are competing at the market: one of them is made of local artists, the other is a travelling band. They ask the PCs to judge who’s better. A PC who knows how to play an instrument (or sing) can be also asked to join in, each group offering to teach songs or techniques in exchange for help.

The bands’ music can be represented with die rolls (simply roll d20 and add +5 for each group’s skill), but it might be more interesting to find medieval music on the Internet and play it for your players, so they can really decide what they like more! The winning band gets free food and lodging at the local inn, which is a big deal for them.

### DANCES

Dancing is an important part of any festival. Some are highly ritualized social affairs, while others are more free form, fun activities. Particularly agile dancers are praised and cheered. Assuming that the PCs are strangers to the town, they probably are not familiar with the steps of the Festival's dance. Called "*Come, Go, and Twirl*", it is danced in fours, with dancers wearing traditional local costumes. Memorizing the steps requires a **DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation)** check. If successful, the dancer has an advantage on the **DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** that is required to perform the dance. A Dexterity check with a roll of:

| DC      | Result                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 – 5   | The PC Twirls instead of Goes, gets caught up in their feet, and falls to the ground.                                                                                                                                                  |
| 6 – 9   | The PC is always one step behind everyone else. A few members of the crowd snicker softly at the PC when the dance is over.                                                                                                            |
| 10 – 15 | The crowd claps appreciatively for the PCs performance.                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 16 – 19 | The crowd applauds loudly, and a gentleman buys the PC a drink.                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 20+     | A standing ovation from the crowd, multiple requests from NPCs to dance, and a few free drinks. In addition, the PC now has proficiency in the " <i>Come, Go, and Twirl</i> " dance' which may or may not come in handy in the future. |

### GIFT FINDING

One of the favourite activities among children and teenagers, this local custom involves hiding small gifts (usually star-shaped sweets) and then providing clues that help to find the stash. Young couples use this opportunity to check if their beloveds know them and will, for example, hide the gift "in the place where we first kissed."

A PC might be approached by a small child who is unable to find their sweets, or a desperate young man who can't solve his girl's cryptic clue. Alternatively, they might see an orphan, sitting sad and forlorn, because no-one hid anything for them. The PCs can play this gift-finding game with the child, making the festival special for this child, too.

### STORYTELLING

When people are tired of dancing and running, when they are stuffed with good food and drinks, they sit by the fires – in inns or outside - and listen to stories, while the night slowly turns into day. People are always eager to hear news, and the PCs are asked to share their stories. Let each player think of a past adventure and tell it as they remember it. No rolls or ability checks should be involved here, but some NPCs might complain that they want more details, or more combat, or more love... In addition, some PCs may find fault in their comrade's story and take it upon themselves to add more flavour. Such a story telling session is a perfect end to the Festival.

If the PC, or PCs, tell fantastic stories, they may earn themselves a free room for the evening. Also, many a commoner is sure to swoon over the PCs after hearing of their bravery and fearlessness. A truly magnificent story may prompt the DM to award the player(s) *inspiration*.

# OGRE RANSACK

By Bryan Stevens

*"A band of ogres led by a few enterprising orcs is attacking and looting a defenseless village."*

**Type:** Combat

**CR:** 1-10

## DMs NOTES

This side encounter takes place in a small town while the characters are on their way to another destination. It can also take place on the outskirts of a larger city.

## THE ENCOUNTER

### ENCOUNTER INTRODUCTION

Read or paraphrase the following:

As you continue to travel down the road to [insert destination here], in the distance you see a tower of smoke rising into the sky. As you draw closer, you pass by fleeing villagers all short of breath and frantically muttering to one another. Though most words are hurried and incoherent, one word cuts through the air quite clearly... "OGRES!"

None of the villagers knows the number of ogres.

### PART ONE: OGRE IN THE STREET

The encounter begins when the party enters the town. Read or paraphrase the following:

This small town, once full of busy villagers, now stands still with empty streets and smoldering buildings. The crackle of burning wood and the sounds of distant screams fill the air. A hulking ogre emerges from one of the buildings, dragging behind him a large sack. Accompanying him is an orc with a smaller sack draped over his shoulder.

The **ogre** (CR 2; MM p 237) and the **orc raider** (see below) are crossing the street and heading toward an untouched building. If the party is visible and chose to not intervene, the creatures notice the characters and attack them when they are halfway across the street. A character



succeeding on a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** check notices something moving inside the large sack. Inside the large sack is Serafeen, a 25-year-old female half elf; she was hiding in her bedroom when the ogre grabbed her.

### PART TWO: OGRES IN THE DINING HALL

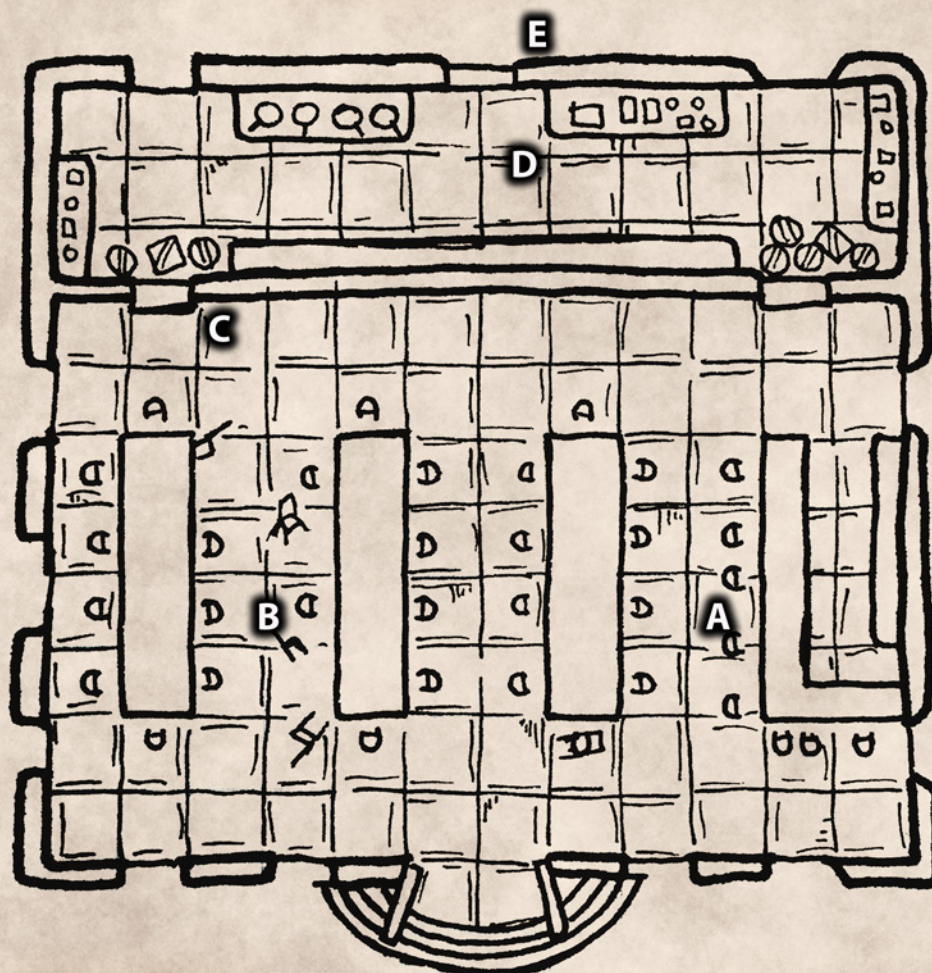
Read or paraphrase the following:

A large building with steps leading up to a set of double doors stands at the end of the street. The doors have been ripped open and now hang loosely from their hinges. The sounds of screams and heavy banging spill out from the doorway.

This building is a community dining hall. Three large tables with chairs fill the room and a bar sits along the east wall.

The two ogres in the (A and C on the map) do not notice the party enter the dining hall; they are too busy pillaging. If either ogre is attacked, the other ogre joins the fight on the following round.

## THE DINNING HALL



See below for details of the dining hall encounter in relation to the included map:

- A) A single **ogre** is reaching over the counter of the bar trying to grasp a delicious elf barkeep named Emril who is hiding underneath. Once everyone in the dining hall is safe, he pours the party a free round of drinks.
- B) The chairs here have been knocked over and/or trampled by a large beast.
- C) A single ogre is trying to force his way through a door that leads to the kitchen. Behind the door are two workers and four

patrons. They have barricaded the door and are doing their best to prevent entry. Screams for help can be heard from behind the door.

- D) The kitchen contains a fire pit with cook pot and roasting spit, shelves of food, barrels of wine and a long food preparation table.
- E) An orc raider is outside this backdoor. He is attempting to get inside by attacking the door with his great axe. Two cooks are trying to fortify the door.

## AFTER THE ENCOUNTER

After this encounter, you could choose to continue the story. Here are a few ideas:

- † The ogres/orcs are working for a main villain within your campaign or working for a higher boss somewhere within your campaign. The party must track down this individual and bring him to justice.
- † The party could track the ogres/orcs back to their nearby encampment and deal with any remaining creatures.

## MONSTER STATISTICS

### ORC RAIDER

*Medium humanoid (orc), chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (scale armor)

**HP** 33 (6d8+6)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT    | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|---------|
| 16 (+3) | 12 (+1) | 16 (+3) | 7 (-2) | 11 (+0) | 10 (+0) |

**Skills** Intimidation +2

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common, Orc

**Challenge** 2 (450 xp)

**Aggressive.** As a bonus action, the orc raider can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The orc raider makes two attacks with its greataxe or javelin.

**Greataxe.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d12 + 3) slashing damage.

**Javelin.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d3 + 3) piercing damage.

### SCALING SUGGESTIONS

**APL 1:** Change all ogres to half-ogres (CR 1; MM, p238) and orc raiders to orcs (CR 1/2; MM, p246). Reduce all creatures to 10 HP.

**APL 2:** Change all ogres to half-ogres and all orc raiders to orcs.

**APL 3 & 4:** As written

**APL 5:** As written. Add 8 HP to all creatures

**APL 6:** A third ogre comes in through the front entrance and joins the battle. All ogres have 72 HP.

**APL 7:** Change orc raiders to orc war chiefs (CR 4; MM, p246)

**APL 8:** Change orc raiders to orc war chiefs. Add 8 HP to all creatures.

**APL 9:** Change all orc raiders to orc war chiefs. Change one ogre at (C) to an orc war chief. Add 16 HP to all creatures.

**APL 10:** Change all orc raiders to orc war chiefs. Change one ogre at (C) to two orc war chiefs. Add 16 HP to all creatures.

# HUMANS OF E'ARTH

By Jeff C. Stevens

*"A local RPG club has set up a booth to sell some potions in hope of funding their gaming addiction."*

**Type:** Roleplay

**CR:** Any

## DMs NOTES

Some DMs and players may not like this encounter, while others may love it. For me, it took me back to my teenage years when all I wanted to do was play RPGs. That's just about all I thought about, too. Well, that and marching drumline. If I wasn't drumming, I was playing RPGs at the local gaming store, at a friend's house, or in my basement. I have a lot of great memories, and some of those memories are very geeky.

Have fun with this encounter. Change it up as needed to fit your players/group. This one requires a lot of DM roleplay, and hopefully the PCs play along with the encounter. Explain the events as you would explain an RPG to someone who doesn't know about RPGs.

## THE ENCOUNTER

The 1st Order of the D 20 RPGers is five members strong, and they use the acronym F.O.D.R (pronounced Fodder) when they address others. The group plays fantasy roleplaying games, and they cosplay their characters often. Their current RPG of choice is called *Humans of E'arth*, and they are selling potions to earn some coin to purchase the next HoE supplement – *Land Vehicles and Watercraft That Move on Their Own*.

F.O.D.R consists of the following teenagers:

**Kelvan** – a human boy dressed in a fancy, yet bizarre three-piece navy-blue suit.

**Camilla** – a tiefling girl who wears cutoff pants and beige colored makeup

**Max** – a stout young dwarf with short brown hair. He speaks with a strange accent (New York)

**Jane** – a human girl dressed in a fancy black dress. She wears strange-looking shoes - similar to sandals, but with a very tall heel.

**Pete** – a young Kobold who dabbles in alchemy. He wears spectacles, dark brown makeup, and a thin white robe.

## THE SALES PITCH

An odd-looking sight is seen amongst the other merchant tables. Several youngsters of various races stand around a table lined with potions. The youngsters appear to be teenagers, but they are dressed strangely. A tiefling girl, who appears to be wearing beige makeup, wears pants that have been cut above the knee...way above the knee.

The same oddness in dress can be said for the other youngsters, too. Each appears to be wearing a strange and foreign style of clothing.

They appear to be selling potions to passersby. There's something else, too. They keep dropping an oddly-shaped die in a small tower-looking wooden box. It rolls about, the youngsters call out a number, they check a list, and then you hear "Oh snap! The cute clerk in the mailroom just returned your text!"

The youngsters aren't having a lot of luck selling their potions, but that isn't stopping them from introducing the passersby to the wonderful world of RPGs. When someone stops, as people have been doing due to the strange appearances of the youngsters, they are asked to drop an odd-shaped die into the top of a small wooden tower. The youngsters explain that the die is called a D 20. One of F.O.D.R then consults a table using the die roll as a reference (see F.O.D.R. D 20 Table), and then says the result out loud.

If the PCs approach the youngsters, have the PCs overhear one or two more of the D 20 results as they walk up to the table. If asked, the youngsters explain why they have set up a booth to sell potions. They are very excited to explain RPGs and *Humans of E'arth* to the adventurers. They are also very excited to have potential customers, and to have them roll the D 20!

Pete has created the potions they are selling. Although the group was able to find many of the materials needed to make the potions, some ingredients they had to substitute.

If the *detect magic* spell is cast on a potion, it radiates magic. The use of an *identify* spell does not identify a potion. The youngsters may wave this off since the potions were ‘hand-crafted’. In addition, if the potions are examined, they do not resemble the descriptions listed in the Dungeons Master’s Guide.

If asked if they have tested the potions, they reply with a ‘no’ and explain that they didn’t have the extra ingredients to waste. But rest assured, these are all-natural potions – for the most part. All of the potions are labelled with what they are supposed to grant the drinker, not with the actual effect. For instance, if someone were to ask about the *biggerness potion*, the group would explain that it makes things bigger.

## THE POTIONS

There is only one of each potion, and F.O.D.R has priced each at 10 gp, but the youngsters could be negotiated down to 5 gp each. They really need money for the HoE supplement, and for upgrading their cosplay costumes.

**Envisibility** – you suffer the effects of the Faerie Fire spell for three rounds.

**Heal** – the drinker of this potion regains 2d4+2 HP, however, the potion is only good for 48 hours. After this time, the potion turns into vinegar.

**Biggerness** – you suffer the effects of the *reduce* spell for 3 rounds. Everything around you suddenly becomes bigger.

**Flame Breath** – you gain the same benefits of the *potion of fire breath*. If a creature breathes fire using this potion, that creature must pass a **DC 12 Constitution saving** throw or take 1d4+1 fire damage, or half as much damage on a successful check.

**Animal Speak** – for 2 hours, you gain the abilities of the *speak with animals* spell. You also lose the ability to speak in any other language. You must resort to animal sounds whenever you speak during this timeframe.

**Muscles** – you gain the ability of the *potion of hill giant strength* for 2 rounds

**Fastness** – you gain the ability of the *potion of speed* for 1 round

**Know Thoughts** – after drinking this potion, whenever another creature says something, you feel the urge to start your reply or interject with, “I knew you were going to say that...”

**Good Ears** – your ears elongate by six inches for 48 hours. You gain no other benefits from this potion.

**Blink** – for 48 hours, your eyes blink quickly and uncontrollably while you are awake.

## THE D 20 DICE TOWER

Kelvan consults the table and reads the below responses. Voice him as you like, but he is always excited to read the results. A few additional comments are added for the other members of F.O.D.R. to respond to certain results.

### d20 Result

- |   |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|---|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | “OH! That’s a critical miss with your persuasion check vs. your IT boss.”                                                                                                                                     |
| 2 | “Oh snap! The cute clerk in the mailroom just returned your text!”                                                                                                                                            |
| 3 | “This is cool! The stock market is up 20 points!”<br><b>Others.</b> “Hey, that’s really good if you have levels in Investing.”                                                                                |
| 4 | “Oh no! Your significant other has run up the credit card bill. Again!”                                                                                                                                       |
| 5 | “This is a bad one...the Internets are down again.”                                                                                                                                                           |
| 6 | “Maybe the worst of all...you have to cancel your RPG session. Two players can’t make it.”                                                                                                                    |
| 7 | “Woohoo! You’re a GM of an RPG session, and everyone just chipped in to buy you pizza!”<br><b>Others.</b> “We tried to make that—pizza—using the Humans of E’arth Recipe Supplement. It’s pretty good stuff!” |
| 8 | “Uh-oh...your car is in the shop for 1d10 x 10 dollars’ worth of repairs.”<br><b>Others.</b> “Man...that sucks...”                                                                                            |
| 9 | “This could be good or bad, depending on your Relations status. The Doctor called, you’re having a baby.”<br><b>Others.</b> “Oh...we all know how that happens (chuckles).”                                   |

10 “Nice one! Your boss just quit, and you are next in line. Promotion Time!”

**Others.** “Woot, Woot!”

11 “This isn’t good. You’ve been pulled over by the police for going too fast.”

**Others.** “Haha! Ticket Time!”

12 “This one’s a little steamy...but...your significant other surprises you in the bedroom...hehe...naked under the covers.”

**Others.** “Ummmm....boom chicka wow wow”

13 “Whoa! It’s Christmas Bonus time, and you received a nice one!”

14 “Your parents are coming over for dinner.”

**Others.** “Lame!”

15 “Ouch! During your RPG session, someone dropped a 4-sided die, and you just stepped on it!”

**Others.** “Hey, what’s the damage for that?”

16 “Your boss just bought you lunch, but it was from someplace you don’t like AND it’s not agreeing with you. You are considered poisoned for the next 15-minutes while you sit in the bathroom.”

**Others.** “Aw...yuck!”

17 “You win a 5-day vacation to Cancun!”

**Others.** “Sorry, we don’t know if that’s good or not. We don’t own ‘The Exotic Places on E’arth’ supplement yet.”

18 “You defeat an evil thief with one punch! And, the very cute victim invites you to dinner as a thank you!”

19 “Your boss is so cool, he gives you an extra day of vacation so you can attend a local RPG convention!”

20 “You are invited to the headquarters of the creators of Humans of E’arth, and Mitch Wilkins is going to GM you!”

**Others.** “Man! That’s a CRIT right there!”

## CONCLUSION

The youngsters only fundraise for one day. Even if they only earn 5 gp in one day, they have enough to purchase the HoE supplement, and enough to upgrade their costumes.

If they did not sell all the potions, they use the potions themselves. This could lead to some nasty events, but I leave that up to you.



# MUSEUM MAYHEM

By Jeff C. Stevens

*“A recent delivery to the museum has come to life, fled the museum, and is now creating havoc in the city.”*

**Type:** Combat

**CR:** 1-16

## DMS NOTES

This encounter is designed for a 3rd level party consisting of four characters. You could make the encounter much more interesting if you use a **mummy lord** (CR 15; MM, p 229).

## BACKSTORY

Periwinkle Smallnose, the gnome curator of the city's museum, has recently received an exciting new addition – The Casket of Tumota. The Casket of Tumota is very rare in that it has never been opened. Graverobbers and thieves have been kept from the casket and the contents inside should be well preserved; including the mummified remains of Tumota. Periwinkle paid a handsome sum to acquire the casket, and she has spent many a restless night dreaming of what she might find inside.

Unfortunately, while Periwinkle was cleaning the outside of the casket, she accidentally pressed a hidden button that released the lid of the casket. The lid slid open and a mummy – the remains of Tumota, no doubt – climbed out of the coffin. The creature bashed its way through the museum and is now crashing through the streets of the city.

## THE ENCOUNTER

Crashes and screams are heard up ahead, along with the cries of, “Help! Help! Save my mummy!”

A well-dressed woman gnome wearing spectacles stands outside on a stoop. The remains of an elegant door, its stained-glass panels in shards, lay in the street.

She spots you, waves you over, and cries, “You must stop my mummy!”

Periwinkle quickly explains the situation. She'd love for the adventurers to keep the mummy intact as much as possible, but she understands the safety of the citizens is more important.

Periwinkle doesn't expect the adventurers to ask for a reward. After all, they are adventurers and should be looking for this type of excitement. If they do ask for a reward, she stumbles about and offers them 50 gp.

“A reward?” stutters the gnome. “Well...I never imagined you would expect one. The citizens needed your help!”

## THE MUMMY'S RAMPAGE

While speaking with Periwinkle, the adventurers hear screams and crashes coming from around the corner of the building. If they investigate the noise, they see a **mummy** (CR 3; MM, p 228) on a rampage, wobbling down the street, bashing carts and throwing items. The mummy speaks Elvish, but cannot be reasoned with. Combat seems to be the only option.

### SCALING SUGGESTIONS

Adjust the statistics of the mummy as follows:

**APL 1:** Reduce HP to 40, remove Dreadful Glare ability, reduce Rotting Fist save DC to 10

**APL 2:** Reduce HP to 45, remove Dreadful Glare ability

**APL 3:** As written

**APL 4:** Increase HP to 72

**APL 5:** Increase HP to 85

**APL 6:** Increase HP to 92, increase to Attack to +6

**APL 7:** Increase HP to 100, increase Attack to +6, add a second rotting fist attack

**APL 8-10:** Increase HP to 125, increase Attack to +7, add a second rotting fist attack

**APL 11-13:** Change mummy to mummy lord (CR 15; MM, p229), reduce Spell Save DC to 15, and attack bonus to +8.

**APL 14-16:** Change mummy to mummy lord

# NEW BACKGROUND: MUSEUM CURATOR

By Cody Faulk

Some seek wealth, others glory, and still others want only for comfort. You, however, are the curator of a museum, and as such, you want nothing so much as to find new and interesting exhibits to put in your museum, though your motivations could be any number of things. Perhaps you want to spread knowledge freely, or perhaps you simply feel compelled to collect interesting things, or maybe, just maybe, you're in it for that sweet museum cash. Regardless of your reasons, you are responsible for the items in your museum, including their care, security, and acquisition.

**Skill Proficiencies:** History, Arcana

**Languages:** Two of your choice

**Equipment:** A ledger detailing your museum's contents and business, an ink pen, paperwork proving that you are the curator for your museum, a set of small brushes, a pair of soft leather gloves, and a pouch containing 10 gp.

## FEATURE: KNOWLEDGEABLE CONTACTS

Given your role as the curator of the museum, you have learned the importance of knowing who to talk to when it comes to finding leads on new exhibits, as well as identifying and appraising them once you procure them. In regions you are familiar with (and in some regions you aren't, at the DM's discretion), you have a fairly easy time finding the right people who can provide you with leads on where to find new items for your museum's collections. These people aren't all guaranteed to have detailed information, though some might, but in most cases, they can provide you with fairly reliable rumors and bits of information that would allow you to at least begin a productive investigation into finding and acquiring those artifacts. At the DM's discretion, some contacts may be able to provide more substantial assistance.



Additionally, among your contacts are individuals who can assist you with identifying items. Their services may or may not come free, depending on a variety of factors, but regardless, you can locate with relative ease such individuals who would know enough about your collected objects to provide you with guidance as to what they are, what they do, and how much they might be worth (in terms of both gold and cultural significance).

## SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: What sort of exhibits does your museum specialize in? Which are you most proud of? Where is it located? Do you like your job? What lengths are you willing to go to in order to protect the exhibits? Or to acquire new ones? Are your collections valuable? Would greedy hands be reaching for them? If so, whose in particular?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Did your duties as a museum curator lead you into a life of adventure, perhaps to protect or acquire exhibits? Or did your adventuring career lead you to take up the mantle of the museum's curator? In either case, were there particular exhibits and items involved in your stories? What was special or important about them? Where are they now? Who else might want them?

### **d8 Personality Trait**

- 1 Ah! Don't touch that! It's super important!
- 2 Come! Let me tell you about the Third Dynasty's use of clay jars.
- 3 OK, I admit, all of these artifacts and bones can get boring.
- 4 Delving into the past yields knowledge, and the pursuit of knowledge is its own reward.
- 5 Sometimes, at night, I like to move the skeletons around and scare the cleaning crew.
- 6 Yay! Treasure! Have you considered donating to the museum?
- 7 If it's not more than a hundred years old, I'm not impressed.
- 8 The best way to get ahold of new exhibits is to go out and find them!

### **d6 Ideal**

- 1 Free Access. Knowledge should be attainable by anyone with a thirst for it. (Good)
- 2 Learning. Knowledge and learning are paramount, regardless of who you are or what you stand for. (Neutral)

- 3 Taxonomy. Study and investigation leads to proper classification: the ultimate aim. (Lawful)
- 4 Availability. These artifacts should be seen by everyone, not locked away in secret. (Chaotic)
- 5 Shamelessness. Get an orc skeleton, stick some horns on it, and tell them it's evidence of a new kind of monster that no one has ever discovered. Until now! (Evil)
- 6 Completion. Any collection worth having is a collection worth completing. (Any)

### **d6 Bond**

- 1 Soon, my museum will be the biggest attraction in this whole region!
- 2 I am always searching for that next amazing exhibit.
- 3 I inherited this job from my parents, and I feel obligated to keep it in the family.
- 4 The people who work here with me are for more important to me than all of these dusty old trinkets.
- 5 I would sooner live on the street than give up any of my exhibits.
- 6 The patrons of my museum make all of this hard work worth it.

### **d6 Flaw**

- 1 The more dangerous the quarry, the more important it must be.
- 2 I understand historical cultures better than my own modern culture.
- 3 If I hear a rumor about an object worthy of my museum, I will go to any lengths to check it out.
- 4 I constantly embellish the contents of my collections to outlandish proportions.
- 5 I don't understand how money works very well, but I'll pay plenty for new exhibits.
- 6 I'm shamelessly obsessed with shiny objects.

# THE GUNNER IN THE STREET

By Jeff C. Stevens

*"A hallucinating gnome creates chaos in the city streets."*

**Type:** Roleplay

**CR:** 1-10

## DMs NOTES

This encounter is designed for a party of 4 to 5 characters of any level, and it uses F.O.D.R, a group of youngsters who are introduced in the *Humans of E'arth* encounter.

## BACKSTORY

**Gunner Hamershaw** (gnome acolyte. CR ¼; MM, p 342, replace *sacred flame* with *eldritch blast*) purchased a homemade, all-natural *joy potion* this morning from a group of youngsters. The youngsters were having a fundraiser for something they called an RPG system and for cosplay costumes. The group called themselves F.O.D.R, and they seemed like a good, yet strange, group of teenagers. They made him laugh, so Gunner purchased one of the potions they were selling.

## THE ENCOUNTER

Gunner, being a frugal gnome, decided to divide the potion and create two potions. He was a happy person anyway, and didn't really need a full dose of joy. He poured half of the original potion into an empty beaker. He then filled both half-full potions with water, thereby creating two potions.

Gunner, having a date this evening with his lovely gnome girlfriend Brooma, decided to drink one of the potions. It's not that he wasn't already in a joyous mood, he just wanted to test it out. After drinking the potion, which he did roughly 15 minutes ago, he felt tingly and happy. This was no doubt the potion taking effect.

Only moments ago, while he and Brooma were sitting in a tavern and waiting for their dinner of roast lamb, his joy washed away. Gunner began running around the tavern, firing off *eldritch*

*blast* cantrips (+4 to hit, with disadvantage) in every direction. He then ran out the tavern door, and began running around the street, firing his cantrip at will.

A gnome wearing a fresh blue suit runs around the street and yells, "You slimy buggers! You'll not take this city! Be gone!". He then fires off a radiant spell, runs over to a cart overflowing with straw, and ducks behind it. He peers out from around the corner of the cart and points his fingers at you, which happen to be formed like he's holding a crossbow with his index finger extended, and releases a radiant spell in your direction. He quickly ducks back behind the cart and yells, "I said be gone! You green meanies aren't getting me or this city!"

Gunner is hallucinating due to the ingredients used to make the potion. The members of F.O.D.R used some **Greentop Mushrooms** they found near the pig pens to make the potion. Gunner is under the effect of the *joy potion* for 30-minutes. After this time, Gunner collapses and has no memory of his hallucinations or his actions.

While hallucinating, Gunner sees all creatures as green, slimy foreign creatures resembling Troglodytes, and he believes they are attacking the city. He reacts with hostility if approached.

Large, red hives cover Gunner's face and hands – a reaction to the Greentop mushrooms used in the potion. A creature passing a **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception)** check notices these bumps. A creature passing a **DC 13 Wisdom (Nature or Medicine)** check knows that these bumps can be caused by a food allergy. Another successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Nature or Medicine)** check reveals that these bumps are caused by the Greentop Mushroom, and consumption can cause hallucinations.

Three rounds after the adventurers arrive on the scene, Brooma runs out of the Tavern. She yells at the adventurers "Please don't hurt him! I

don't know what's going on...he just went crazy!" If questioned further, Brooma doesn't know about the Joy Potion Gunner drank. She does mention that he broke out in strange, red bumps before all of this occurred.

During this time, Gunner continues to run from cart to cart, gaining **half cover** to **full cover** (PHB; p196) as you see fit, and fires his *eldritch blast* cantrip at anyone in the open. He continues to yell at, and taunt, the creatures he sees:

"Come on, ya green blooded buggers!"

"I can smell ya from here, you filthy creatures!"

"Go back to where ya came from!"

"I'll get all of ya!"

"Slither back down the smelly hole you crawled out of!"

If one of Gunner's attacks misses, roll a d6. On a result of 1-3, the *eldritch blast* hits a cart or building, which causes wood to splinter and fly about (no damage). Each of the carts has 30 HP.

Although Gunner primarily uses his *eldritch blast* cantrip, he may use his other spells, too.

## THE JOY POTION

Any creature that drinks the Joy Potion must pass a **DC 15 Constitution** saving throw, a failure results in the below effects, which last for 30-minutes, but occur 10-minutes after drinking the potion. The effects of the potion are as follows:

- † Hallucinations – every creature you see appears as a green, slimy foreign creature resembling a Troglydyte.
- † Disadvantage on spell and weapon attacks
- † Advantage to all saving throws
- † Resistance to all magical, melee, and ranged combat damage
- † +15 temporary Hit Points

After the effects of the potion wear off, the creature can't move or take actions until the start of its next turn, and has no memory of the hallucinations.

A creature passing the Constitution save, or a creature immune to poison, gains 15 temporary HP for 30 minutes, but no other effects.

## TREASURE

Gunner carries the second potion and 30 gp worth of various coins in a small satchel. The potion bottle is unmarked.

## CONCLUSION

If the adventurers successfully stop Gunner without killing him, Gunner has no memory of the hallucinations, or his actions while he was under the influence of the *joy potion*, and he doesn't associate the events with the potion. As a reward, he happily gives the adventurers the second *joy potion*.

If the adventurers kill Gunner, Brooma is most distressed. She leans over his body, sobbing loudly. She calls for help, and two guards arrive 5 rounds later. The guards inquire about the incident, asking the adventurers what occurred. They'll believe any story that is the truth. If Gunner's body hasn't been searched, or pilfered, the guards give it a once over and take the second potion. This could lead to another similar city encounter.

**Writers Note:** I envision Gunner peaking around corners of objects, tumbling across the street, and running in zigzag patterns. I also imagine him saying "pew, pew, pew" when he fires, with the third 'pew' being the *eldritch blast*.

### SCALING SUGGESTIONS

**APL 1-3:** As written

**APL 4-6:** As written, add +15 HP (total HP 39)

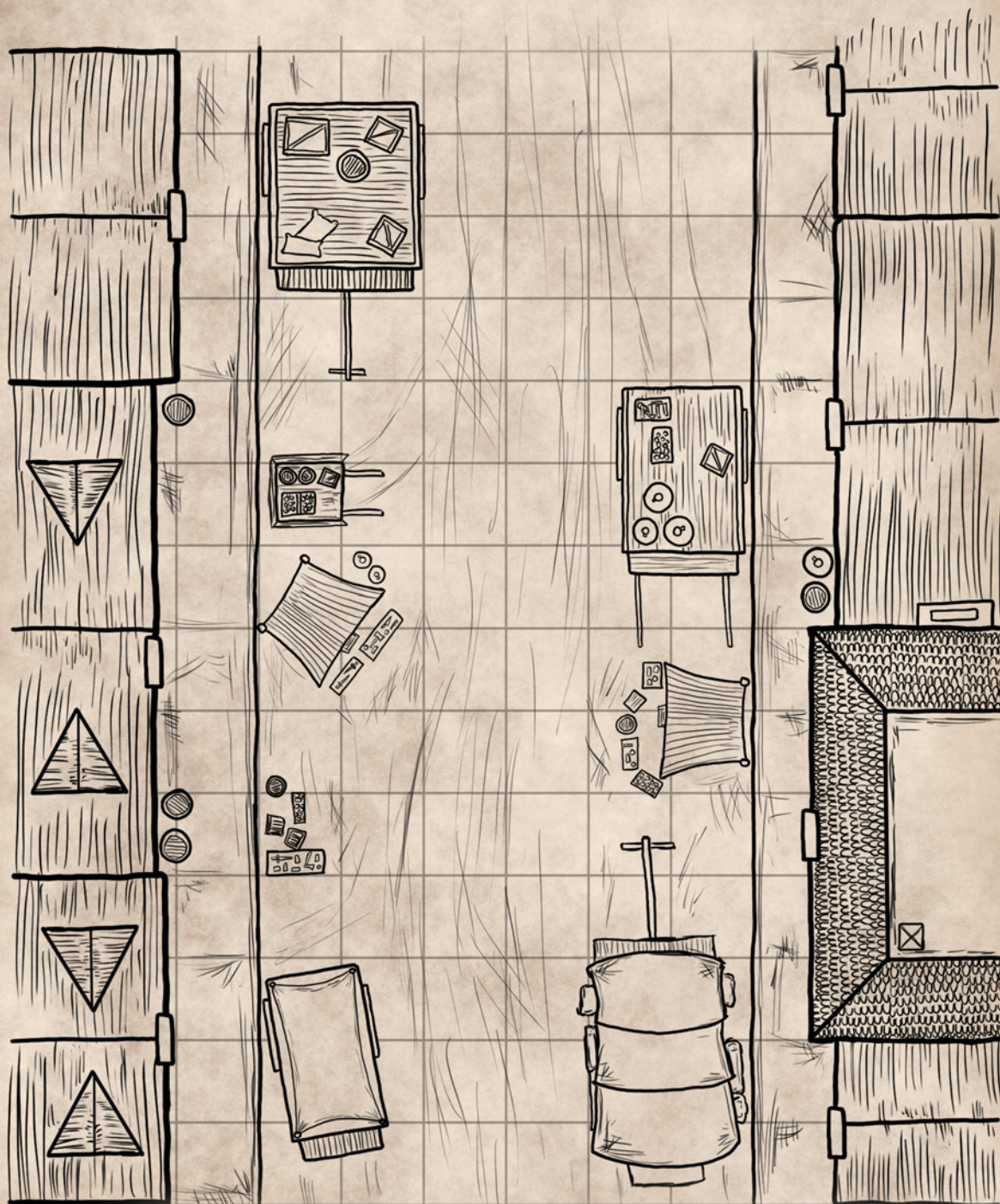
**APL 7-9:** As written, add +30 HP (total HP 54), increase *eldritch blast* damage to 2d10.

Or, change gunner to a warlock of the archfey (CR 4; VGtM, p219), and allow him to use his *Misty Escape* to teleport behind cover.

**APL 10:** As written, add +45 HP (total HP 69), increase *eldritch blast* damage to 2d10.

Or, change gunner to a warlock of the archfey, and allow him to use his *Misty Escape* to teleport behind cover.

## GUNNER IN THE STREET



# WANTED... MOSTLY DEAD

By Jeff C. Stevens

*"The adventurers could make a little coin if they happen upon, and capture, a local thief."*

**Type:** Combat

**CR:** 1-10

## DMs NOTES

This encounter is designed for a party of 4 to 5 characters of 1st level, and it introduces Gavin Lightfinger, a sneaky, yet very well-dressed, halfling thief who is also used in the *Take Him to Jail!* encounter. Depending on the initiative order, and the combat rolls, this could be a deadly encounter.

## BACKSTORY

Recently, a very pesky and masterful thief has been creating quite a stir in the city. The local officials know who he is, but haven't been able to catch him. **Gavin** (scout; CR 1/2, MM, p349, adjust CHA to 16) is very quick and stealthy, and the party may encounter that first hand.

The City Watch are handing out, and posting, wanted notices all over the city. The adventurers should have found, or been given, one of these notices prior to this encounter. The top of the notice reads "Wanted...mostly dead", and a detailed sketch of Gavin is in the center, and a note at the bottom reads "The thief Gavin Lightfinger – 100 gp reward". You may change the reward amount as you see fit.

## THE ENCOUNTER

When you are ready to use this encounter, the next time the adventurers enter a tavern, Gavin is in the tavern, too. A PC with a **passive Perception of 10**, or passing a **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception)** check, notices a halfling standing at the bar who bears an exact resemblance to the sketch on the notice.



A halfling man, impeccably dressed and wearing a large hat with a feather in it, stands on a 2ft tall stool at the bar. He says something to a man sitting to his right, and they both laugh jovially. The halfling then takes a moment and looks around the tavern. He notices your party, puts a finger to the brim of his hat, and gives a friendly wink in your direction. He then turns his attention back to his mug and takes a hearty drink.

He looks exactly like the sketch of the thief on the wanted notice.

Gavin is enjoying himself this evening, and isn't looking for trouble. Although he is always prepared for trouble. The secret to Gavin's success is the silver flask he keeps in his vest pocket. The flask is filled with a *potion of speed*, and drinking the potion prior to a battle makes Gavin a very formidable opponent.

If approached, Gavin acts hospitable until the PCs become aggressive, or until he senses he is being trapped or deceived. If the PCs attempt to engage Gavin with lies, begin contested ability checks (Deception vs. Insight), with Gavin receiving a **+3 to Wisdom (Perception) and Wisdom (Insight)** checks.

Once Gavin learns of the PCs' intent, he continues talking as he reaches into his vest pocket, pulls out his silver flask, and drinks his *potion of speed*. If questioned about this, read or summarize:

"If we are about to dance, and I am up against such formidable opponents as yourselves, then I'd like to taste the flavor of my homeland one last time. After all, I'll probably die this evening."

Gavin is ready to fight after he drinks his potion. All creatures roll initiative. None of the other patrons in the bar assist Gavin in the fight.

## THE FLASK AND THE POTION

When Gavin drinks his *potion of speed*, for one minute he receives:

- † +2 bonus to AC (AC now 16 (potion and +1 leather armor))
- † Double speed (Base speed becomes 50ft.)
- † Advantage on Dexterity saving throws
- † An additional action on each of his turns. Attack (1 weapon attack only), Dash, Disengage, Hide, or Use an Object.

## TREASURE

Gavin's fine clothing has been tailored to hide the +1 *leather armor* that he wears. The clothing is worth 25 gp, but it only fits halflings. In addition to his silver flask (20 gp if empty), Gavin also carries a leather belt pouch that contains 200 gp worth of various coins.

## SCALING SUGGESTIONS

**APL 1:** As written

**APL 2:** Add 15 HP

**APL 3:** Change Gavin to a spy (CR 1; MM, p349)

**APL 4:** Change Gavin to a spy (CR 1; MM, p349), +20 HP

**APL 5:** Change Gavin to an assassin (CR 6; MM, p343), reduce starting HP to 63

**APL 6:** Change Gavin to an **assassin**.

**APL 7:** Change Gavin to an assassin. +15 HP, add a *potion of healing*.

**APL 8:** Change Gavin to an assassin, and give him a *cloak of displacement* (DMG; p158).

**APL 9:** Change Gavin to an assassin, and give him a *cloak of displacement*, and a *potion of greater healing*.

**APL 10:** Change Gavin to an assassin, increase HP +15, and give him a *cloak of displacement*, and a *potion of greater healing*.

## CONCLUSION

If the adventurers successfully capture Gavin, and take him to the city officials, they are rewarded with the reward written on the notice.

If Gavin is killed, and they take him to the city officials, they are awarded with ½ the reward.

If Gavin survives and successfully escapes the adventurers, he may become a bigger villain in your ongoing campaign.

## GAVIN

"Who is Gavin? When I think of Gavin, I think of a spry and agile rogue who dishes out witty taunts while he fights. He's a rogue motivated by the way city officials and nobles treated him when he was younger. He could be a hero to some, standing up against the guards, nobles, and officials who constantly mistreat the less fortunate. He steals from the rich and gives to the poor, but he keeps enough gold for himself to dress impeccably and live well.

Gavin could have a totally different motivation in your campaign."

# WANTED!

## Mostly Dead



# REWARD

Deliver to nearest city  
guard for payment

# TAKE HIM TO JAIL!

By Jeff C. Stevens

*“The adventurers are hired to transport a pesky thief to a more secure facility within the city.”*

**Type:** Combat

**CR:** 1-10

## DMs NOTES

This encounter is designed for a party of 4 to 5 characters of 3rd – 4th level. In this encounter, the adventurers are hired to transport **Gavin Lightfinger** (introduced in “Wanted...Mostly Dead”) to a more secure facility. Many of the city guards have fallen ill, and those who are healthy feel that this effort requires more muscle.

## BACKSTORY

Recently, a very pesky and masterful thief has been creating quite a stir in the city. The thief, **Gavin Lightfinger**, has recently been captured (perhaps by this very group), and the local holding cell is no match for Gavin – he’s already nearly escaped twice.

Many of the city guards have fallen ill with food poisoning, no doubt from last night’s ‘guard bonding’ event – a quarterly ‘show of appreciation’ event thrown by several nobles in this area. The healthy guards all abstained from eating the roasted boar, which they believe is the cause of the mass illness.

The adventurers are hired to accompany **Lance Fieldman** (guard, CR 1/8; MM, p347) while he transports Gavin to a more secure facility 10 blocks to the east. They are offered a reward of 200 gp for transporting Gavin and Lance safely to the East Block Holding Facility (the EBHF).

## THE ENCOUNTER

Gavin must be transported by walking him to the EBHF; the guards do not have horses or a wagon. This area is often busy with foot traffic, and horses leave untidy messes, so these are not permitted in this section of the city. The PCs may find a hand-pull cart, but that’s about it.

## THE TRANSPORT

As the transport begins, the adventurers notice that the pedestrians along the road spread out and give the party a wide berth. Many of the onlookers know who Gavin Lightfinger is, and they do not wish to interfere with the transport.

While traveling, Gavin is restrained with metal handcuffs, but his feet are not bound. Smart adventurers may tie a rope to Gavin; otherwise consider him untethered to the party. Gavin may attempt to bribe the adventurers 250 gp to release him. Lance Fieldman does not accept the offer. If the adventurers accept the bribe, Lance, being a very brave guard, stands next to Gavin and attacks the party. If Lance lives, he tells the city officials what occurred, and the adventurers may find future dealings with the city to be very difficult.

## THE BANDITS

Five blocks into the transportation, three rather unhappy creatures – **thug** (CR ½; MM, p350), **scout** (CR ½; MM, p350), **acolyte** (CR ¼; MM, p342) – flow out of a dark alley and block the adventurers’ way. Another two unhappy creatures – **bandits** (CR 1/8; MM, p343) – stand behind the party, slipping out of another dark alley behind them.

There could be multiple reasons for the bandits appearing, a few are listed below. Use the best scenario for your campaign, or create one yourself.

- † The bandits work for Ja’mā – a well-known crime boss in the city. Gavin’s thieving exploits have earned him firsthand knowledge of the security of several well-established estates, and Ja’mā would like this information.
- † Gavin has had this group of bandits on retainer, preparing for the event of his capture. They are rescuing Gavin, and hope to receive their 200 gp reward for rescuing him.
- † The bandits are a recently established misfit gang looking to make a name for themselves. What better way than to kill the notorious Gavin Lightfinger?

† The bandits have been hired by a nobleman to capture Gavin. The noble is very upset that Gavin spent time with his youngest daughter, and he wishes to teach the halfling the ‘manners’ he should have used. The bandits are in this for the money. A 50 gp bribe would be enough for them to give up on the attack. Taking the bribe is easier than fighting and dying.

If combat ensues, the bandits at the rear attack with their light crossbows. The acolyte casts *bless* on his companions, and then attacks with his *sacred flame* cantrip. The thug and scout resort to melee attacks.

The guard Lance Fieldman is a very brave soul, but not so bright. Lance is eager to attack, and he may interfere with negotiations by making snide comments or remarks about the bandits.

“We aren’t afraid of you...you dirty toe fungus!”

“Hey, don’t you all clean out latrines? Because you smell like poo-pool!”

“My mother wears that same color cloak.”

“You all look like the manure I stepped in today.”

“You look about as strong as goat’s milk.”

“Bring it on, you dimwits!”

“Hey, do you smell something? Cuz’ I’m cooking up a butt whuppin’!”

“You all stink of fear.”

If combat ensues, Lance dives head first into the battle, even if he’s told to stay out of combat.

If given the chance, Gavin attempts to escape while the party is involved in combat. Especially if no one is guarding him. If Gavin escapes, refer to the **Chase Rules** on page 252 of the *Dungeon Master’s Guide*.

## TREASURE

Even though Gavin has been searched several times, he carries a set of thieves’ tools hidden somewhere on his body.

Each of the bandits, in addition to their regular gear, carry a total of 8 gp of various coins. For an Adjusted CR bandit crew, use the following for treasure:

**APL 1-3:** As written

**APL 4-5:** Treasure Horde Table 0-4. DMG; p137. Change all ART to GEMS.

**APL 5-10:** Treasure Horde Table 5-10. DMG; p137. Change all ART to GEMS.

## CONCLUSION

If the adventurers successfully deliver Gavin and Lance to the EBHF, they are paid the pre-determined reward.

If Lance falls in combat, and they deliver his body to the EBHF, the other guards take his body and send it to be resurrected, but the reward is halved.

If Gavin is not delivered to the EBHF, the guards may believe the adventurers had a part in Gavin’s escape, and they may attempt to apprehend the party. Or, they may give a few nasty comments to the adventurers like, “Yeah, you all don’t look tough enough to hold a baby down for its diaper changing.”

### SCALING SUGGESTIONS

**APL 1:** As written

**APL 2:** As written

**APL 3:** Change the thug to a bandit captain (CR 2; MM, p 344)

**APL 4:** Change the thug to a bandit captain, and the two bandits to scouts (CR 1/2; MM, p349)

**APL 5:** Change the thug and scout to bandit captains, and the two bandits to scouts.

**APL 6:** Change the thug to veteran (CR 3; MM, p 350), the scout to a bandit captain, and the two bandits to spies (CR 1, MM, p349).

**APL 7:** Change the thug and the scout to veterans (CR 3; MM, p 350), one bandit to a spy (CR 1, MM, p349), and the other bandit to a priest (CR 2; MM, p348).

**APL 8:** Change the acolyte to a mage (CR 6; MM, p347), the thug to a veteran, and both bandits to spies (CR 1, MM, p349)

**APL 9:** Change the acolyte to a mage, the thug to a gladiator (CR 5; MM, p346), one bandit to a spy (CR 1, MM, p349), and the other bandit to a priest (CR 2; MM, p348).

**APL 10:** Change the acolyte to a mage, the thug to a gladiator, one bandit to a spy, and the other bandit to a priest.

For increased difficulty, give each of the NPCs a *potion of healing*. You may also wish to give the veteran or gladiator a *+1 longsword*, and the spy a dozen *+1 arrows*.

For Gavin’s CR adjustments, see the ‘Wanted...Mostly Dead’ encounter.

# THANK YOU!

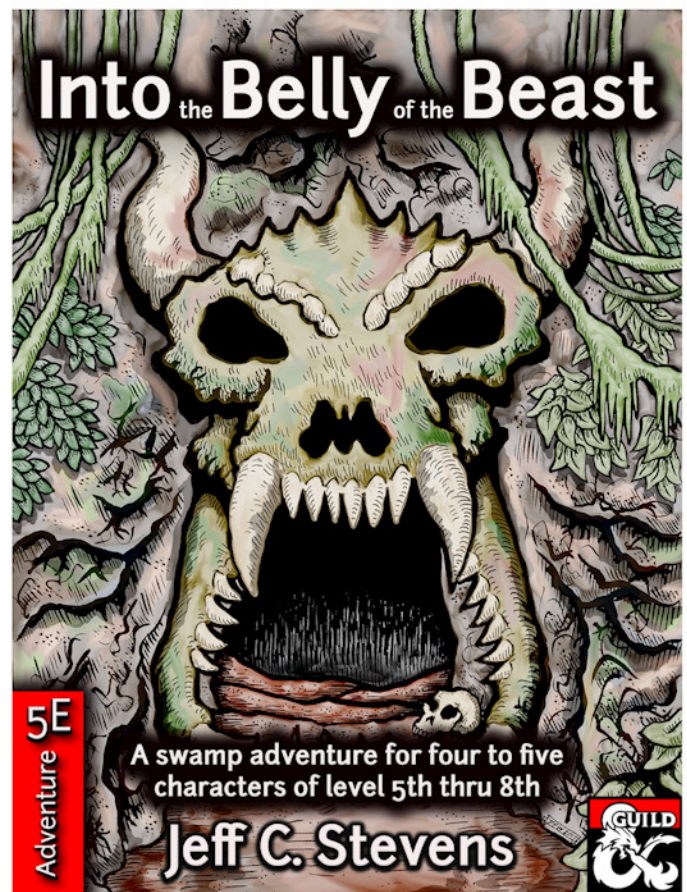
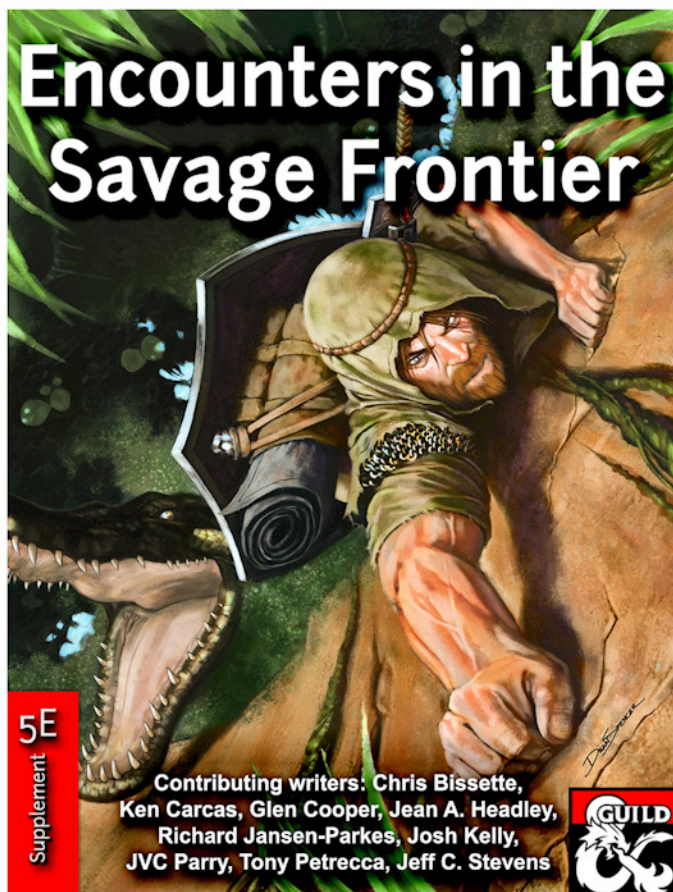
Again, thank you for purchasing *Encounters in the Savage Cities*! I think it has a lot of fun encounters that will spice up your ‘city time’.

I’ve used *Shopping with Elementals* to start a new campaign, having each of the PCs happens upon the situation at different times and allowing each of them to figure out what is going on with the xorn, the mephits, and the other PCs. It worked very well.

I’ve also used *Museum Mayhem* as an introduction for a one-shot. After defeating the mummy, the museum curator rewarded the adventurers with a map that lead them to another DMs Guild product: *Quick Dungeons 1: The Hidden Tomb* by Patrick E. Pullen. The encounter and the mini-adventure tied together very well, and the players had a blast!

Being the savvy DM that you are, I’m certain you’ll find a way to use most of these encounters – either as written, or as inspiration for your own writing. I’d love to hear what you do with them! If you feel like sharing, please leave a review or a discussion thread on Dungeon Master’s Guild. You can even email me at [jcstevens@centurylink.net](mailto:jcstevens@centurylink.net).

Thanks again!



# Looking for more adventure?

