

SPINNING ON THE EDGE

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Adventure Code: CCC-BMG-X PHLAN3-3

Optimized For: APL 3rd Level



With Phlan's prosperous new future hanging in the balance, Chancellor Calypso isn't about to let a new stream of thieves, the recently identified Coin Spinners, flood into the city. A lucky tip and safe-house sting has secured "invitations" for a single group of adventurers into the organizations, and a path to where the supply lines end. Steel yourself, this invitation has your name all over it.

A four-hour adventure for 1st-4th level characters

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Spinning on the Edge*, a Convention Created Content D&D Adventurers League™ adventure, part of the official D&D Adventurers League™ organized play system.

This adventure is designed for four to seven 1st - 4th level characters, and is optimized for five characters with an average party level (APL) of 3. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

Adjusting This Adventure

This adventure provides suggestions in making adjustments for smaller or larger groups, characters of higher or lower levels, and characters that are otherwise a bit more powerful than the adventure is optimized for. You're not bound to these adjustments; they're here for your convenience.

To figure out whether you should consider adjusting the adventure, add up the total levels of all the characters and divide the total by the number of characters (rounding .5 or greater up; .4 or less down). This is the group's APL. To approximate the **party strength** for the adventure, consult the following table.

Determining Party Strength

Party Composition Party	Party Strength
3-4 characters, APL less than	Very weak
3-4 characters, APL equivalent	Weak
3-4 characters, APL greater than	Average
5 characters, APL less than	Weak
5 characters, APL equivalent	Average
5 characters, APL greater than	Strong
6-7 characters, APL less than	Average
6-7 characters, APL equivalent	Strong
6-7 characters, APL greater than	Very strong

Some encounters may include a sidebar that offers suggestions for certain party strengths. If a particular recommendation is not offered or appropriate for your group, you don't have to make adjustments.

Before Play at the Table

Before you start play, consider the following:

- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you'd like to highlight or remind yourself of while running the adventure, such as a way you'd like to portray an NPC or a tactic you'd like to use in a combat. Become familiar with the adventure's appendices and handouts.

- Gather any resources you'd like to use to aid you in running this adventure--such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battlemaps.
- Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information, such as name, race, class, and level; passive Wisdom (Perception), and anything specified as notable by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, etc.)

Playing the Dungeon Master

You have the most important role—facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You provide the narrative and bring the words on these pages to life. To facilitate this, keep in mind the following:

You're Empowered. Make decisions about how the group interacts with the adventure; adjusting or improvising is encouraged, so long as you maintain the adventure's spirit. This doesn't allow you to implement house rules or change those of the Adventurers League, however; they should be consistent in this regard.

Challenge Your Players. Gauge the experience level of your players (not the characters), try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to deliver the experience they're after. Everyone should have the opportunity to shine.

Keep the Adventure Moving. When the game starts to get bogged down, feel free to provide hints and clues to your players so they can attempt to solve puzzles, engage in combat, and roleplay interactions without getting too frustrated over a lack of information. This gives players "little victories" for figuring out good choices from clues. Watch for stalling--play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that players don't finish too early; provide them with a full play experience.

Adventure Primer

This section provides the adventure's background, a list of prominent NPCs, an overview of the adventure in play, and hooks that you can use to introduce your player's characters to the action.

Adventure Background

With Phlan's prosperous new future hanging in the balance, Chancellor Calypso isn't about to let a new stream of thieves, the recently identified Coin Spinners, flood into the city. A single group of adventurers gain entrance into a small installation where the Coin Spinner's supply line ends. Steel yourself, this invitation has your name all over it.

Location and NPC Summary

The following NPCs and locations feature prominently in this adventure.

Bursar Therandra Buddle is a gold dwarf with brown skin and silver streaked, black hair. She is a Coin Spinner lieutenant tasked with initiating new recruits.

Drikett & Rutzus Deephowl are wide-eyed, twin goblin thieves. Rutzus believes the moon grants him special powers while Drikett jumps up and down, laughing like a braying donkey at anything mildly humorous.

Keeliu Mildread, an androgynous drow bartender who has agreed to turn a blind eye to Coin Spinner operations but expects no nonsense.

Palcron de'Moordenaar is a Chondathan agent, a Harper, and Calypso's man undercover.

Tam Jai is a Shou thief, with a myriad of social problems, who is tired of sticking it out alone.

The Thirsty Purse is a makeshift bar within the Coin Spinner compound.

Wendri Coppertoos is a halfling captain of the Black Watch.

Zellzo Katar is a calico Tabaxi with a swollen black eye and missing left K-9 tooth from her last rowdy celebration.

Adventure Overview

The adventure is broken down into five parts:

Part 1. After receiving their mission, the party gathers under the cover of a pre-dawn rendezvous, and roleplay crafted personas to deceive all other recruits and Bursar Buddle. Their answers to how they "earned their coin" (invitation) will allow opportunities for the DM to grant advantage on initial checks related to the suspicion meter, a new mechanic derived for this adventure set.

Part 2. Blindfolded, the adventurers arrive at the secret compound, where a commotion startles the recruits. Inside, a series of skill challenges await.

Part 3. Those who survive are initiated, given a tour, and a round at the gang's makeshift tavern where they bump into Calypso's inside man with a message and mission. The suspicion meter will track successes and failures while the party celebrates just enough not to break cover.

Part 4. En route to the portal the adventurers can stop along the way and discern how the portal operates, among other things — but any delay will cost them. In the portal room, Coin Spinners atop load bearing dinosaurs advance the main shipment.

Part 5. As the portal shatters, remnants of the gateway flitter through the air like incandescent onyx shards. Gusts of hot air hold aloft these portal-shards to block the party's egress.

Note: Special Events

For DM's running the subsequent "special events", the fragments of the portal are smaller active gates opening tiny, momentary portals to Chult all over the city.

Adventure Hooks

Choose an appropriate reason for the party to become involved with this adventure. Different characters in the party might have different motivations.

Mercenaries. The characters are primarily interested in coin, and hear that the Black Watch is looking for adventurers and offering a handsome fee.

Local Heroes. The characters have defended Phlan in previous adventures, and have developed a heroic reputation in the city. The Chancellor requested the Black Watch seek them out by name. Modify this hook for characters that have played the previous adventures of CCC-BMG-X PHLAN 3-1 or 3-2.

Humanitarians. The characters are living in the Docks district and have several friends there. One of their friends, a young entrepreneur, finds his startup capitol gone one afternoon, with a single coin left spinning on edge. The characters approach the Black Watch, offering to help track down the savings.

The Harpers. There is a new criminal organization in Phlan, and they appear to be very dangerous. The Harpers have asked their members to do all in their power to thwart their plans.

Lord's Alliance. The exotic nature of the beasts flooding into the land have raised eyebrows and rumors of a distant consortium extracting wealth from a finally prosperous Phlan.

Zhentarim. There is a new criminal organization in Phlan, and the Zhentarim hierarchy want to know more about them.



PART 1. WROUGHT IRON INVITATION

Coin can get you out of a lot of tight spots, but usually it's the other way around.

—Palcron de'Moordenaar

Of Copper and Gold

Following a summons from Chancellor Calypso, the adventure opens on the outskirts of Phlan by the far loop of Huldane Way, south of where Axmar Lane meets. Read the following:

As the clock strikes midnight, you lean against a nondescript building, pondering why a summons from Chancellor Calypso led you this far, this late at night and—WHOOMPH!

The door beside you splinters as a half-orc smuggler crashes through. Wendri Coppertoos, a halfling, not four feet tall, surfs the unconscious mongrel to the ground then rifles through his vest in haste. “Finally!”, she says, locating a hexagonal wrought iron coin, she flips it to you.

Her deputies yank two more hoodlums through the door, bound and gagged. One resists but Wendri quickly strikes his ankle with the heel of her sabaton—THWACK! He groans, drops to one knee. Without a glance she asks, “Who else needs one?”

If the adventurers don't speak up, she stops, counts the party, then continues to frisk the thug until she finds enough coins to outfit the party.

Roleplaying Wendri Coppertoos

Wendri is a halfling veteran, and captain of the Black Watch in the Docks. She is also a lapsed Harper.

- **Ideal:** It is the spirit and not the letter of law that keeps justice alive.
- **Bond:** I protect those who cannot protect themselves.
- **Trait:** I judge people by their actions, not their words.
- **Flaw:** I'm overworked and tired. I constantly think about quitting.

A whinny from a Clydesdale carries across the night fog as its hooves clomp against the rough stone road. She reads the constellations, “Time is short. You've been briefed, right?”

Even for adventurers that have played previous modules, all they received was a summons, and no additional information. Enjoy a moment of bumbling before Coppertoos shakes off a yawn and takes over.

“Perfect... You were kept out of the loop. Listen up. Quickly!”

The Mission

Wendri shares the following:

- The city is very prosperous presently, with lots of trade and new construction.
- The Black Watch are responsible for keeping the peace and are doing a respectable job, though they are stretched thin.
- Recent missions and underground raids have uncovered a dinosaur pit-fighting and slave smuggling syndicate, known as the Coin Spinners.
- The Coin Spinners are recruiting, and the iron **wrought coins** the adventurers now possess act as “invitations” to the Coin Spinners ranks.
- Wendri says Chancellor Calypso asked for this lot by name, and they are to go undercover, locate the smugglers' shipping lane, and shut it down.

Chancellor Calypso has offered 200 gp for the job, with half up front. If the party wish to negotiate over the fee, Wendri can go as high as 250 gp but cites she's putting her salary on the line here, so they won't see a single coin until they return successful, and they'll be on their own for incidentals.

You can roleplay the negotiation out, or make opposing Charisma (Persuasion) rolls and Wendri gets +5 on her rolls. She is stubborn, however she tires quickly and will eventually give in with a sleepy yawn. Rather than one opposing skill roll, make multiple rolls in 10-25gp increments.

After negotiations conclude, read the following:

Wendri points toward the western fields, “Hear that horse making its way down the road? That's the Coin Spinner recruiter, they call'em bursars.” She shrugs, “Don't know why, don't care, but they are notoriously suspicious and volatile. You should each make up an alias. I know you don't have

much time but think of something before you get down there. Don't go forgetting your alias either. Just because they let you in, don't mean they ain't suspicious no more or yer in the clear." She pushes you toward the field, "Don't worry about me, I'll just be here cleaning up this mess."

...and they're off! Once they reach the field, they can make out a raggedy gaggle loitering below a weeping willow tree.

Coin Spinner Collections

Nearing the willow in the dark of night, you make out a tall calico Tabaxi, goblin twins, and a human who stands off by himself. A large Clydesdale pulls a covered wagon to a halt beyond a willow tree. Upon dismounting, a brown-skinned gold dwarf, carpetbag in hand, takes stock of your lot and mutters under her silver-streaked mustache, "Two sides to every..."

Projecting her raspy voice just north of a whisper, "Alright, pay the bursar. Let's see the invitations and recount how you came to hold them."

This is **Therandra Buddle**, a Coin Spinner officer tasked with transferring and training new recruits. Though extremely proud of those she fosters, Bursar Buddle is skeptical of a recruit's value until proven.

Roleplaying Bursar Buddle

Therandra Buddle is a gold dwarf **bandit**, and lieutenant within the Coin Spinners.

- **Ideal:** It takes more than flint to make a fire. I keep that in mind as I train worthless recruits into hardened fighters.
- **Bond:** I don't mind thinning the weak from my herd.
- **Trait:** My best interests better be your best interests.
- **Flaw:** Sometimes I pity lesser races so much that I let my guard down around them.

To show the players what Buddle expects, come up with a few quick situations in which the NPC's earned their invitations. Make up your own recruits or use the ones listed below:

Other Recruits

- **Drikett & Rutzus Deephowl** are wide-eyed goblin twins. Rutzus believes the moon grants him special powers. Drikett laughs like a donkey while she jumps braying at anything humorous.
- **Tam Jai** is a Shou thief with some social problems who's tired of sticking it out alone.
- **Zellzo Katar** is a calico Tabaxi, missing the left K-9 tooth, swollen black eye from her last rowdy celebration.

Along with their alias and fib, the adventurers should produce the coin Wendri gave them. Buddle records the names given on her manifest and exchanges their "invitation" for a blindfold, which she watches them apply, before helping them into the wagon. Attempts to subvert the blindfold will draw a suspicious snort from Bursar Buddle. A character watching can sense her demeanor with a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check. Use this opportunity to introduce the **suspicion meter** to the players. (See Handout. Suspicion Meter)

XP Award

If the party convinces Bursar Buddle without gaining a level of suspicion, award each character 25 XP.

To Part 2

With tales spun and blindfolds tied, Therandra leads the party into the wagon and embarks. Only scarce blindfold rests interrupt the 7 to 8-hour journey east along the coast. Eventually, the wagon trundles over the threshold of the Coin Spinner hideout to **part 2: Into the Vault**.



PART 2. INTO THE VAULT

Nothing comes free, not even charity.

—Chancellor Calypso

Just one of many Coin Spinners strongholds, this one rests below the ruins of a fort abandoned by a pirate captain lost to antiquity. The stable's hidden stairway descends into the fort's escape tunnels, later expanded for storage, slave quarters, and torturous exploits, and leads to a moderately carved dock within a coastal cavern of the Moonsea.

General Features

Ceilings. The ceilings of the tunnel portion vary between 10-20 feet high, while most rooms range from 10-30 feet high.

Climate. The temperature within the underground passage remains stable and moderate in most of the underground spaces depending on the activities of a hot spring below the crust that provides warmth.

Light. Brass lanterns dangle from metal torch-sconces spiked into the cavern walls and seemingly lit at random. Each lantern flickers with bright light for 10 feet and dim light beyond that. General meeting areas seem to contain a closer network of sconces lit in the same fashion as the tunnels.

Ante-Chamber Up

The sway of the wagon finally comes to rest. A series of heavy clunks echo against a cobble stonework like a massive tree just felled within a paved forest.

Any sunlight visible through your blindfold has been replaced by a faint flicker of light while the air seems cool and stagnant. "On yer feet," Bursar Buddle's voice at the rear of the wagon alerts you to dismount.

One by one you stumble blindly off the wagon and an instant later, your hand is placed on the shoulder in front of you, "Hold tight!", you hear Buddle say as you shamle on.

If any of the adventurers find themselves curious of their surroundings, they must make a DC 10 Dexterity (Stealth) check under the watchful eye of **Bursar Buddle**. Failure results in a suspicion check. Reward either outcome using the description below:

- Lantern light reveals a spiral staircase before them descending below a cobblestone floor. Stray bits of straw litter the stairs and trail into a stable where a **bandit** rejoins the Clydesdale and his kin.
- Behind the party, the wagon sits just inside a heavy wooden sally port with a long, timber door-bolt. Quick inspection reveals a small slot roughly the size of an electrum piece.

If the adventurers return to the door, they easily locate the small coin-sized slot. Opening this door by any other means, including magical, will alert gang members preparing for a journey in the courtyard, including a **thug** and 1d10+5 **bandits** who would love to knock the rust off with some target practice.

A Blood Tax

The Coin Spinners organization runs by the numbers, and this obstacle course helps thin the recruits in no condition to help the operation. Each challenge is considered essential to a thieves' arsenal; second story-work, breaching, and perception. If a PC fails a challenge, the DM calls for a suspicion check only once, before moving to the next. Buddle rewards dry recruits at the end of the tests.

If Bursar Buddle has become suspicious of the party before they finish the course (suspicion level 1 or above), she flips a coin. If the PC's win, continue as directed. If not, she allows their initiation but the PC's can't gain rank above Copper-bottom and their suspicion level does not reset as Part 3 begins. (See Appendix. Suspicion)

Worth Their Weight

A DM might desire to sprinkle in bits of flavor to the following events and sections by determining the number of NPC recruits who pass or fail the challenges to come. This number can be found by rolling 1d4-1.

Assigning these results early can help remain consistent through later sections of the adventure.

A generous DM might indicate how the NPCs succeed or fail, hinting at ways the PC's might follow suit.

Hand Over Fist

As the blindfolds come off, the characters find themselves in an open cavern, toes inches away from a jagged ledge and steep drop.

A 30-foot gap separates the ledge from a wide plateau before them and a murky pool of unknown depth swirls below. A 15-foot high ramp slopes toward the cavern ceiling where a 50-foot rope is anchored. A gaggle of muddy footprints emerges from the muck and navigates around the soft, wet ground below the plateau.

Two **bandits** flank the line of recruits as Bursar Buddle climbs to an observation deck in the center of the cavern. Read the following:

Buddle's raspy voice echoes on all sides, "Alright recruits, I'm only going to say this once, so listen up! Don't worry about your belongings, they are untouched at the end of the course. Can't have you cheating, even with mundane aid."

Your blindfold drops with a tug, revealing your position inches from a ledge with a quick 25-foot drop into a murky pool below. A horseshoe-shaped cavern 60 feet high unfolds before you, its center divided by a 40-foot tall wall, with Buddle standing on a tower atop the wall. Directly in front of you, a 30-foot gap separates you from the next platform upon which a second wall rises 15 feet above that at a 45-degree incline and a series of 50-foot ropes tied off at its apex. Each rope is knotted to secure itself in a beveled board planted vertically in the ledge.

A pair of Coin Spinners flank the recruits. Buddle flattens her mustache, "Each of you has a station. Each station has a rope. Grab the rope, swing across, and climb to the top."

She continues, "Whether by Tymora's luck or Beshaba's misfortune, your path has left you with a challenge before you, two more in wait. Want favor and fortune? Get moving."

The first obstacle requires PC's traverse the gap to the waiting plateau of equal elevation. Succeeding on a DC

10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check allows the PC to swing across but the excess rope leaves them dangling just shy of the ledge.

A pair of DC 12 Strength (Athletics) checks allow a dangling recruit to reach the landing. The incline's sturdy footing grants advantage on the second roll.

A PC who fails any previous check flops into the murky water below and must circle the pit. The sheer cliff prevents any additional attempts.

Honor Among Thieves

Upon reaching the top of the wall, the PC's will toss themselves over and slide to safety, landing at the start of the next station. Chest-high partitions curve around a craggy bend while a Coin Spinner **bandit** leaning against the center-most lane recites the following with monotone-enthusiasm:

"Almost done. Pick a lane. Any lane. One recruit per lane. Only one. Each lane has a door. It's locked. Breach the one in your lane. Some more reinforced than others. Lock picks provided on the stools at each door. Breach your door. Go through your door. No one else's. I'm serious. Seriously."

This obstacle sounds straight-forward but can be negotiated in a few ways. When a recruit follows the curve around their chosen lane they are confronted with a pliable door-sized sheet of wood, a battered lock, and a set of Thieves' tools on a short stool. The quality of the each impediment can be randomly determined by rolling 1d12+3 and remains the same on multiple attempts. Use this number in place of the DC, AC, and Hit Points normally required to breach a door or lock.

Desperate recruits can smash the lock (or door) with a successful Strength (Athletics) check. Clever recruits gain advantage on rolls using the stool for their Strength checks. All doors open after 5 rounds.

A PC that attempts to leap a partition to help another while Bursar Buddle watches must make a DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) check to remain unseen.

On the other side of the door, a 5-foot mud pit awaits. Those who smash through the door must make a Dexterity saving throw to avoid falling in, while all others are able to jump over with ease.

If a PC fails to complete the challenge or is seen switching lanes, call for a suspicion check.

Heads, no Tails

When the PCs complete the second challenge, read:

Emerging from your lane, you round the bend to see a bright-lit circular shrine with a myriad of white alabaster and black marble statues occupying small alcoves around its circumference, the nearest of which sits incomplete with a chisel and hammer at its base. The floor appears to be a wide circular coin embossed with the likeness of Beshaba and Tymora halved down its center. At the far edge of the room, Bursar Buddle motions to your equipment behind her, "Statues are for those who lead... And if ever you add up, a pedestal awaits. 'Til then, you follow, and I ain't the waitin' kind. Quickly, I got something for those of you still dry."

The coin on the floor disguises one last well-laid obstacle, a large revolving platform that measures 15 feet across with a murky pit 20 feet below.

A long rod runs through its midpoint, bolted just under the statues that act as a central fulcrum. The platform tips freely if more than 30 pounds is applied.

A DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check or a similar Passive Perception score will reveal the thin line between the platform and natural cavern floor for those who inspect the area.

A PC might circumvent this trap by dashing and leaping once to the center and again to the other side, by hugging the wall space between the alcoves, or by using the hammer to spike the chisel below the near edge of the platform to keep it from flipping as they lessen the distance before jumping to safety. No matter the method, a DC 12 is appropriate for most skill checks but a DM could reward creativity by granting advantage on the desired check.

The first recruit to cross before discovering the coin's true duality - and each that fails a skill check to pass - will succumb, splashing into the darkness below before the platform returns to its previous position. The first PC that falls also lands on a lumpy pouch containing 3 gold pieces lost by one of the previous victims. Even in the darkness, an adventurer can easily locate and use a rope, placed here for just this occasion, to climb out.

Open Says Buddle

Therandra twirls her mustache between two fingers as the recruits approach, grinning at the muddy trails littering the final few yards. "I see you found a little something extra. Don't worry, every coin is worth something," as she produces an electrum coin, she continues, "Don't think just cause you're in, we ain't watching like a hawk." With a wink, she turns to the wall and seemingly pushes the coin directly into the stone. An instant later, the stone depresses and grinds aside to reveal a passage to another chamber. "Come now."

After the PC's collect their belongings, Buddle leads them through the secret door and collects the coin from a natural depression on the other side of the slot. As she does, it shifts slightly, and the stone wall responds, shifting back into place.

Therandra takes the opportunity to indicate the various points of interest as she guides them along the hideout's main hallway to the subterranean amphitheater beside the **Thirsty Purse** (See: Part 4 for description or Appendix Map & Key). She is sure to point to the Armory, Copper & Silver dwellings, and the Purser's Vault. Take this time to answer any questions characters might have before they arrive.

Bursar Buddle climbs atop the stage and directs the recruits to sit on the first two benches nearest the stage. As they settle in place, she strikes a large gong stage left. Over the next 10 minutes, 1d12 **bandits** arrive to welcome the new initiates.

As the rows fill, Bursar Buddle clears her throat, "All ye Lad and Lass of luck, in lieu of Croupier Wildlight, please join me in welcoming the newest initiates to our ranks. No change can be made without the infrastructure to back its worth. Today, these proud few start down the road to realize their prosperity, close as it stands with our own." She hoists her hands aloft. The moment lingers until she coughs, repeats the motion and says, "Close as it STANDS with our own!"

Give the PC's another second to take the hint, but whether they do or not, the other recruits will rise almost immediately and are greeted with cheerful applause. Buddle calls the recruits to the stage one by

one, allowing them to announce themselves, starting first with those who succumb to the challenges.

These recruits are announced as **Copper-bottoms** and given a **hewn-copper coin** allowing them access to the most common rooms in safehouses and strongholds. Those who remained dry are announced at the rank of **Silver-tongue** and given a **hewn-silver coin** used to gain access to the safehouse and stronghold entrances, as well as additional rooms of privilege. (For more information, see Appendix. Coin Spinners)

The Name Game

Therandra Buddle is a meticulous note-keeper, and if recorded, aliases the PC's provided in the previous section would appear in her manifest. An adventurer that uses the wrong name, asks another recruit to recall, or announces a different name draws Therandra's notice and an opportunity for the DM to call for an additional suspicion check.

Rewards

If the party gains access to the compound, award each character 50 XP.

For each obstacle that is successfully navigated prior to gaining a level of *suspicion*, that character gains an additional 25 XP.

If the party gains access to the compound without gaining a level of *suspicion*, award each character the maximum total of experience for this section.

To Part 3

As the ceremony concludes, Buddle remarks "One last challenge. Time ta' hold yer drink at the Thirsty Purse!" Hardy laughter echoes through the cavern as the Coin Spinners take the party to **The Thirsty Purse**. Follow the lead to **part 3: The Purse Thirsts**.



PART 3. THE PURSE THIRSTS

If you can't appreciate a fine ale, I don't trust you. If you don't pay first, you got no business with me. If you do neither, you got no business being here.

—Keelium Mildread

The Thirsty Purse

As one might expect, the tavern doors have been cut to depict both sides of the Coin Spinners “decision coin” at once, with Tymora’s bust carved into the left’s light wood, opposite of Beshaba’s dark door.

When the new initiates enter the room, read or summarize the text below:

The saloon-style doors mimic a silver-coin split down the middle. The interior décor does nothing to hide or accentuate the cavernous walls that make up the only permanent borders of the Thirsty Purse. Tall tables and bar stools sprawl the distance between the entrance and a cobble-shod bar partitioned from the saloon floor by a moth-eaten velvet curtain. Various gaming materials litter the tables.

The “proprietor” of the establishment is named **Keelium Mildread**, an androgynous drow bartender who has agreed to turn a blind eye to Coin Spinner operations but expects no nonsense from the lot and isn’t afraid to cut someone off who’s “spinning on the edge”. If anyone fits that definition, Keelium will be the first to let them know, including the PC’s, prior to alerting the ranking officials. They have no interest in the PC’s beyond their coin.

Indirect Direction

On the way in, a tall human Bursar called **Ishtarn** targets a Harper to shoulder-check. If no Harper is available, the DM chooses who he bumps. He whispers, “Not now, *after*” and stares the PC down. An instant later, he winks, apologizes, and calls to Keelium to put the recruits first round on his tab, and waits for confirmation, his arm draped around the PC. This is **Palcron de’Moordenaar**, a Chondathan Harper who Calypso directed to infiltrate the stronghold months ago under the alias Ishtarn.

Roleplaying Keelium Mildread

Bartender of the **Thirsty Purse**, Keelium is a non-binary drow elf **commoner**, who is not a Coin Spinner and does not identify as male, female, drow or elf but instead prefers to be referred to as they or them. Always polite, Keelium is patient and tactful when expressing their very neutral viewpoint.

- **Ideal:** Sincerity. There’s no good in pretending to be something I’m not.
- **Bond:** I’m trying to pay off an old debt I owe to a generous benefactor.
- **Trait:** I’m willing to listen to every side of an argument before I make my own judgement.
- **Flaw:** I know everything about the properties of alcohol, its creation, and which stocks are best. If you disagree, I will explain the complexities you fail to grasp at nauseum.

Roleplaying Palcron de’Moordenaar

Palcron is a Chondathan human spy, a Harper, and Calypso’s inside-man under the alias: Bursar Ishtarn.

- **Ideal:** People. I’m loyal to my friends, not any ideals, and often too kind and generous for my own good.
- **Bond:** Something important was taken from me, and I aim to steal it back.
- **Trait:** The first thing I do in a new place is note the locations of exits or hiding spots.
- **Flaw:** I can be a loner who is slow to trust.

Palcron has just slipped a note into one pocket or another. If the PC attempts to retrieve the note from the pocket, Palcron quickly and nonchalantly pushes the hand with the note back in, and reiterates, “After!”, through a forced smile. Keelium arrives with a tray of drinks complements of Bursar Ishtarn, and with a lavish bow he exits the tavern.

Interior Decorating

Feel free to include any additional information or flavor provided throughout this section in the box-text. Otherwise, embellish only if the PC’s wander or inspect the room.

A natural rock alcove with a single booth residing in the north-east of the tavern sits empty. If the PC’s inquire, any Coin Spinner is quick to point out the table

is always reserved for the Croupier, even when away on business, the position currently filled by **Chance Wildlight** who's overdue to return.

If the players completed Phlan 3-1 they might recall their flight with Chance Wildlight and identify themselves as the cause of her continued absence.

Thirsty Kitchen

In the north-western portion of the room, an oval banquet table sitting just south of a kitchen serves the strongholds meals and late night eats. The only alcove ideal to house both a meat locker and fireplace, the kitchen sports one of the few avenues, and clues, to the hot spring below and the world above. The shaft was constructed by the past occupants who inhabited the fort above and circumvents what would be a naturally occurring geyser.

Drinking Games

Shortly after the party gets settled, a couple of the current members saunter over and challenge the newly initiated party to a friendly drinking game. If the PC's agree, the mood for the entire tavern remains celebratory, and other members drink to excess. (See: Handout. Drinking Games & Intoxication)

Abstaining is possible but, after a round of chiding from the members, any adventurers with a Passive Perception of at least DC 12 will notice **Bursar Buddle** monitoring their interactions from the bar.

If they stick to their guns, commend the PC for their willpower, then follow with a *suspicion* check from Buddle.

Bet Your Tails!

If the players would like to make things interesting, the Coin Spinners might decide to partake, using a coin flip each time to decide. Allow the player to call heads or tails (even/odd on 1d4) and if the PC's win, the Coin Spinners agree.

Coin Spinners will match bets as low as 5gp and up to 50gp each. After the players have accumulated any more than 100gp in profit from their winnings, Coin Spinners make excuses or refuse any additional bets.

Victory Nap

While the middle management and higher-ups seem to have left hours ago, the organization's lower-ranking have never been known for their discipline or foresight, and any number of Coin Spinners remain in the Thirsty Purse, having passed out across splintered tables or on the floor. Even as Keelium finishes the closing tasks, stepping over snoring Coin Spinners seems common place. As she leaves, read:

Pausing at the saloon doors, Keelium glances back, "It's your hall now. You won't find any coin if you rummage, I've got it with me. If you help yourself to the booze, I'll know."

Take this opportunity to remind the players of the note they received from Calypso's inside man, Palcron, when they arrived. (See: Handout. Palcron's Note)

At this point, the party is largely unsupervised, as many of the governing members have long retired for the evening or wandered off to their post. If they have retained any level of suspicion, none of the snoozing patrons are Silver-tongue rank or higher in the common areas.

If the PC's help themselves to additional libation, continue to employ the alcohol's effects as the mission continues.

Developments

With the games concluded and messages read, they are free to begin searching for answers or for the portal room directly. Take a note of their current suspicion level as they roam the compound in search of the portal and how to shut it down.

Rewards

If the party maintains less than 1 *suspicion* level during the evening, each character gains 100 XP.

If the party won their game, each character receives an additional 100 XP.

Treasure

Based on Winning. Maximum 100gp.

Time is Money

At this point, the party is on the clock and has 2 hours before the smugglers return. To complete the rest of the mission, a DM could decide to treat each room as a 15-minute excursion to simplify the outcome and ignoring additional visits to a location.

Alternatively, if you wish to challenge a competent party, inform them the clock runs in "real time" and use a timer. Update players every 15 minutes as to how much time they have to complete their mission before the smugglers return. In this scenario, returning to previously explored rooms does not halt the clock.

Keep this in mind as your players search about in **part 4: A Bunk Too Far.**



PART 4. A BUNK TOO FAR

If you can lie on the floor without holding on, you're still thirsty.

—Purser Deanma Rtin

Amphitheater & Beyond

When leaving the Thirsty Purse, adventurer's will find the amphitheater and stage, gong and all, in much the same condition they left it. From the tavern door, the PC's would see a 50 to 60-foot long wall extending the main hall past the amphitheater to the east. The hall stretches over 100 feet north before bending west to the obstacle course in part 1. To the south, it circles around the Thirsty Purse's kitchen and pushes 100 feet into natural wall.

With the clock ticking, the DM has obvious intervals for the **bandits** on rounds and if the characters are not careful and quiet will meet the fireguard patrol, consisting of either Drikett & Rutzus or Tam & Zellzo, before making it to their next destination.

Silver Opens Doors

If their actions to this point go without scrutiny (suspicion level 0), the Coin Spinners remain lax in their discipline, drinking in excess, and the party can likely relieve individuals of their access coins to additional areas with a DC 10 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. To determine the likelihood the he or she is of Silver-tongue rank roll 1d6, and on an even result the drunkard is. Feel free to create additional spots for drunks to "sleep it off" on the list below corresponding to numbers 3, 6, and 7b on **Appendix. Map & Key**:

- (3) Amphitheater: face down on the stage
- (6) Bathhouse: clothing left in the dressing room
- (7b) Silver-tongue barrack: sprawled before the door

Armory Robbery

Lanterns hang from the ceiling against the east and west walls but only the western is lit as the bright light recedes into its depths. Smooth walls form a natural horseshoe with racks of armor and shields lining the north and south walls. A tall rack stretches down the center, with all manner of sword, mace, and bow. On the eastern wall, a *bone-pommel glaive* leans against a workbench cluttered with broken armor links, whetstone, and maintenance manuals.

Above the workbench, 2 *potions of healing* hide

among the various vials. To locate the healing draughts requires a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check while a PC who rolls DC 15, or higher, finds 2 *flasks of Alchemist's Fire*.

Bathing for a Change

A bathhouse, complete with dressing room, warms the hall west of the amphitheater. The northern hot-bath is a nearly circular hot spring between 15-20 feet wide for the lower-ranking Coin Spinners. **Purser Deanma Rtin**, a half-elf female **bard**, is currently making use of a partitioned bathtub designated for higher officials.

An adventurer, or curious recruit, could take the opportunity to search the pockets of her clothing in the dressing room while she bathes, and would quickly locate her **hewn-gold coin**, which grants unrestricted access to every room in the stronghold — as well as a choice.

Purser Rtin's *coin pouch* proves easy pickings for sticky fingers and contains 2 platinum pieces and 4 gold pieces. However, while she might not notice the absence of her access coin for some time, she would immediately find cause for alarm should the pouch or its contents disappear.

Bandit Billeting

Copper Quarters

Using any Coin Spinner access currency the party has will grant entrance to the copper-bottom barracks. At least three rows, cots 5 to 6 deep, stretch away from the entrance. A *map* over the only desk reads, "Bathroom here!" and "You sleep here!" scrawled across the bathhouse and Copper quarters respectively. (See: Handout Map)

Silver Barracks

The dormitory consists of five partitioned rooms with two beds each. Mismatched lounge pieces, lopsided tables, and quasi-comfortable chairs are arranged around two natural ducts which now act as chimneys for small firepits that fill out the shared communal space. Snooping for loot is fruitless and risky but a bulletin board tacked to the east wall contains various lists, the most important being the fireguard patrol.

- Drikett & Rutzus on patrol when found, to be relieved by Tam & Zellzo, followed by the PC's alias in an hour

after that.

- Fireguard is to split their time between the entrance and the docks, migrating from one to the other every 15 minutes.
- Report oddities to the Bursar or Purser on duty. In case of an emergency, strike the nearest gong.

Only 2 patrols will walk the main hall during the entire adventure. If the patrol sees a PC, they wave and smile, but subsequent encounters will require PC's to come up with an excuse, starting with a DC 10 Charisma check, increasing by 5 each time, always accompanied by a *suspicion* check.

If the PC's subdue the patrol or anyone else, but do not hide the evidence, the second patrol will find them on patrols after the 5th location they visit.

Bursars & Pursers Dormitories

Two slot-operated doors lead to the Bursar & Purser dorms (electrum and gold, respectively) at the west end of the den. Should the party investigate either of the almost 30-foot by 20-foot rooms, they find these nearly identical dwellings come stock with two beds, desks, dressers, and a few amenities not shared elsewhere, like a large rug to safeguard the barefoot at night.

Bursar Side. Bursar Buddle is a bit of an insomniac, and sleeps only lightly in her bed. She stirs if any intruder is louder than a mouse. A DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) check will avoid her restlessness. A PC that rolled higher than a 20 can make a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check to locate her savings under her dresser that amount to 46 gp.

Purser Side. Both beds are empty in the Purser's room and, while half the room looks ransacked, the other is clean and orderly, and placing a hand on the recently made bed reveals that it still retains some amount of body heat. On the tidy nightstand, a half-open toiletry bag and a *once-folded note* are the only signs of clutter. (See: Handout Annotated Shipping Instructions)

Flat Chance

The faint dancing light south of the amphitheater emanates from the Croupier's flat. Players that took part in the storyline's previous adventures would recognize the name on the door placard, **Chance Wildlight**, and note themselves for her absence.

Per her ambitions and quirks, her room is a mess of drawings akin to conspiracy sages across Faerun. Red lay-lines of yarn crisscross a massive map of the world with Phlan as the hub. Chaotic revolutions of black ink encircle the name of a peninsula far south — Chult.

Sketches of spinning coins from every Sword Coast province form a chaotic border on the map. The title, "Beasts and Bonds", sits at the bottom of one list, a bevy of other amalgamations nixed above.

A quick inspection of Chance's desk finds **Chance's journal** under a pyramid of other scribbles. Briefly, the journal praises how Beshaba's guiding hand pieced together the stabilization of the portal. (See: Handout Chance's Journal)

Purser to Pauper

The archway to the purser's office reveals that no lanterns or torches are lit within. A desk sits immediately inside the office with a plaque that reads, "Purser Rtin". Positioned in a diagonal fashion across the room is another desk whose plaque reads, "Purser Chortier". Both desks are cluttered with receipts and leather ledgers. A towering brass door with silver filigree guards the western wall.

Upon closer inspection, the desktop paperwork seems to be records but included dates and payments with no discernable logic, and the door is a vault and that sports the usual coin slot.

If the PC's are in possession of a **hewn-gold coin**, either from a visit to the bathhouse to relieve Purser Rtin of hers, or some other way, they can enter the pantry-sized vault.

Purser Vault

Upon opening the vault, streaks of dim light direct the PC's eyes to a waist-high shelf and the small black coffer open atop it. In the chest velvet fabric, three fist-sized indentations denote absences. Inscribed upon the inside of the lid are the words, "Stable Gems".

Anyone with darkvision would also notice a small white card too small to fill a wide gap between a pair of strongboxes. If the room is illuminated with bright light, it is easy to see an outline of dust much larger than the card it encapsulates. The card simply reads:

"DEAR THIEVES,
YOU HAVE BEEN ROBBED. WAS IT ONE OF YOUR
OWN? YOU MIGHT THINK SO.
SPIN ON IT,
PAL
PS. DEANMA, YOU'RE A CROON!"

If the party searches the room they discover the coffers bare but notice small clusters of platinum, gold, and silver coins left in haste equaling 68 gp.

Midshipping & Mishandling

The space at the end of the main hallway to the south functions as a staging area for inventorying, packaging, and creating the ship manifests and bills of goods. A myriad of crates, packing hay, and valuables wait in various states for transport. The parcels ready to ship are placed next to a 5-foot wide ramp that leads east up the dock and to a gangplank adjoined to a moderate sized vessel. If the party take the time to search through the crates and boxes, a value of 109 gp can be had for their time.

A Coin on the Ground

Pockets of sand along the floor reveal the presence of a short beach behind the parcels and ramp.

This area is an example of a space that provides enough room and “normal décor” to disguise the presence of bodies.

If the PC’s visit the ship at any point, they find it is empty, has been scrubbed clean, and is ready to receive cargo.

Developments

If at any point the players wander into the portal room, or decide to move within implicitly, move to Part 5 and ignore any learning or loot for the missed rooms.

Treasure

If the PC’s explored the **armory**, and searched the workbench area, they likely found

- 2 Flasks of Alchemist Fire
- 2 Potions of Healing.
- Bone-pommel glaive, a +1 *polearm*

The bone-pommel glaive leaning against the workbench is a +1 *glaive (polearm)*. The entire lower portion of the weapon’s haft is made of some unidentified creature’s thigh or shoulder joint. The pommel has purposely notched edges and looks as though it could no longer function in the socket of whatever it came from.

In truth, the pommel of the polearm can be combined with a fulcrum at the base of the Coin Spinner’s patchwork-portal and pushed to open the steam vents which releases the pressure necessary to power the portal’s stability gems.

- If they burgle Purser Rtin’s pouch of its contents, it’s platinum and gold coins come to 24 gp.
- If they locate Bursar Buddle’s savings, add to the pile another 46gp.
- If they entered the vault, the worth of the scattered coins would be converted to 68 gp.

Story Award

If the characters find Chance’s journal and or visit at least six locations within the Coin Spinner stronghold they earn the following story awards during this adventure.

Time Well Spin’t

Few events stick with us as much as when going deep undercover to infiltrate a criminal organization. Your experiences infiltrating the Coin Spinners stick with you for life, so you typically know any information available to the lower ranks and may have picked up more during your assignment.

You have advantage when making Intelligence (History) checks to recall all but the most secret information regarding the organization’s known rank structure, members, past operations and discovered or rumored locations.

Further, you can’t be at disadvantage when making a Charisma skill check to Intimidate, Persuade, or Deceive a Coin Spinner that you have spent at least 10 minutes studying to determine how they fit into the organization.

To Part 5

Equipped with the various texts, journal, and glaive, the characters should be ready. Only one way to find out, and that’s moving on toward **part 5: Through the Loop**.



PART 5. THROUGH THE LOOP

I don't know, I would be lost as a smuggler... if it weren't for that handsome deckhand who taught me celestial navigation. I really should look him up.

—Purser Penny Chortier

Chult on the Horizon

This series of modules deals with the tropical jungle peninsula of Chult, which is the subject of the upcoming Tomb of Annihilation and DDAL Season 7 storyline. Chult's jungle teems with a variety of exotic wildlife, like dinosaurs and flying snakes. Worse, an infestation of countless undead have claimed its interior since before the Spellplague. The waves of zombies in the following section are a small taste of the terrors awaiting those who venture to Chult's jungles.

Gateway to... Profit?

DESIGNER NOTE. *There is a lot going on in this room. It is complicated. Now might be a good time to break your players and check your notes. Read the passage as a cliff-hanger and break the table:*

One-part storage, one-part menagerie, and two-parts makeshift translocation device makes it the optimal means for storing incoming merchandise.

This 100 by 70-foot cavern houses more boxes, crates and tarps lining the wall but their contents range from equipment, sarcophagi, sculpture, and even seed, feed, and grain, that waits to be measured, recorded, and sold.

Coils of blue and green light glint in the northwest nook and draw your eyes to what looks like caged winged serpents.

In the south of the room, a towering sandstone arch rises 30 feet above the base of a platform designed with clear intention and purpose. At this distance, the portal seems dormant save a faint fizz accompanying the dull orange network connecting three pulsing gems.

While the menagerie and storage rooms have a good amount of the shared space to themselves, the cavern chamber where the gateway sits is at least twice the size of the others.

Likely the largest single space in the hideout, the space across from the staging room fills many roles to maximize the financial return of smuggling the inventory on hand, as well as the new arrivals.

Relocation Station

The sandstone's natural brilliance conceals decades absent of care. Closer inspection reveals the vein-like condition of the stonework evident only by the cracks in the outer ring where the color and meter aren't sheathed below. The glow extends to the elongated steps near the base of its ingress.

Against the darkness, the orange veins snake their way to three pulsating gems, each granting dim light 15 feet away from their settings, the lower two gems equidistant from the apex where the first resides.

Though it appears stable, the portal looks as if a temple's stained-glass window were deliberately shattered into large panes. Yet, each incandescent onyx shard hovers precariously in place, a slight pitch or yaw changes its angle but then corrects.

The fizz heard with the orange glow is the steady pressure release of many pounds of hot air, the ducts of which are behind the portal itself. As a PC moves closer, the fizz and the heat steadily increase.

Massive Transit

The ambient subterranean silence almost deafens the fizz from the portal. Save the arcane gateway before you, next to nothing here looks out of the ordinary, and even its dormant black shards seem peaceful enough. Perhaps your party could replace the Coin Spinners with a reputable enterprise? The patchwork nature of the gate's shards is almost beautiful, in an "up by the boot-straps" sort of way.

A tiny ripple, like a raindrop in a pond, grants color to one of the peripheral shards. The ripple spreads, it's color claiming one

bit, then more. A raindrop plops against a distant fragment, then another. Blues and greens fill the portal like a storm through a window. There she is — Chult.

Then Coin Spinners, cargo strapped to the shell-like hide of two massive load-bearing beasts, run toward the portal. A large half-orc runs out front but yells back. No sound penetrates the silence from the other side. What did he say? Can they see you? Why are they runni--

The question locks in your mind as you see him leap through the portal, shock and confusion register across his face, until he sees the armament you carry. Two more Coin Spinners step through, drenched from the rain, and land beside him. He points his blade, and bellows: "If it's Penny Chortier's day to die, I'll add your name to my list before that last breath!"

Fighting like a proper **bandit captain**, Purser Chortier rushes the weakest looking creature relentlessly. The irony of his predicament is still a mystery to the PC's but as the 2 **ankylosaurs** rush the gate in panic, they are too much for its width and too scared to squeeze. The other 6 **bandits** (8 total) hop off the dinosaurs and engage. The other 2 urge the dinosaurs through, until their brethren fall.

Adjusting the Encounter

Here are the recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter to suit the group at your table. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Remove two **bandits**, and **Purser Chortier** has 35 hit points.
- **Weak party:** **Purser Chortier** has 35 hit points.
- **Strong party:** Add two **thugs**.
- **Very strong party:** Add two **spies**.

Many Ways to Spin a Coin

Scales of Justice

Two cages of magnificent **flying snakes** are tucked into the northwest alcove 90 feet from the entrance.

A character can free them with a DC 10 *thieves' tools* check. Brute strength is also an option — if the attack roll hits AC 10 or higher, the lock is disabled or destroyed, respectively.

If released, they will buzz by the portal on their way to

the grotto, startling other animals, and other creatures within a 20-foot radius of the portal have disadvantage on attack rolls and ability save DC's until the end of their turn. This effect is once per cage in the same action as when it is opened.

I'm a Portal Gem, Not a Doctor!

The gems helping to stabilize the portal seem to be powered by the orange veins beneath the stonework of the arch. A character can make a ranged attack against the gem but because of the size, and energy coursing within, even accurate attacks can miss. To resolve these attacks, the gem has an AC of 18 and 50 hit points.

A PC who climbs the 15 feet to reach each gem must succeed on a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check, and on subsequent rounds can attempt to pry each gem loose or smash it with a successful DC 18 Strength (Athletics) or DC 15 *thieves' tools* check. Each time a player touches the gem, it strikes out, dealing 1d6 magic damage. A dislodged gem crumbles to dust.

A Glaive Mistake

As a character moves closer to the portal, at the eastern base of the stairs, a character with a passive Perception score of 12 or higher will notice a depression in the floor but not be able to identify its purpose, while a PC with a passive Investigation of 12 or higher deduces the depression as housing for a fulcrum and pivot joint, and understands how to operate it.

If your PC's found the bone-pommel glaive in the armory, this is the place to apply its pommel, and when applied, a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check engages the mechanism that opens the vents and releases the built-up pressure. Read:

You hear a click and feel the mechanism engage. A column of scalding vapor explodes behind the portal. The pulsating network dies, the gems dim, and the jagged portal shards seem intent to break free from the boundaries of the arch.

The stabilizing gems have lost their power. A PC who targets the gems can do so with an attack roll of 13 or higher. One who climbs the archway can now pry them out with a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) or DC 13 *thieves' tools* check but the gem no longer hurts the character. A dislodged gem crumbles to dust.

Development

With the power disengaged and the gems shattered, the gateway barely functions, the portal shards begin to flicker and slowly drift from their roosts as the

PC's decide any number of ways to topple the structure. Pushing it over requires an average of DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check across a minimum of 3 players. Startling the dinosaurs, causing them to fight their way back to Chult, requires an average DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation) check across the same minimum. Reward creative options. If the characters are successful, read:

Spying the first sign of downward momentum, you gasp, filling your lungs for an eternity as the keystone teeters. Crackles of friction dissolve the last of the enchanted mortar with a steady, rhythmic snap. Free, at last. The relief, the weightlessness, it's nice, consuming, even.

Snap, snap, snap-snap, snap-snap-snap, the rhythm trembles, dislodges, slugs you in the chest, reclaiming the borrowed air, as if the temporal dissonance packed the room thick. Your eyes open and brow furrows as you find yourself floating backward. Your feet drifting before you effortlessly, your arms stretch to reach but without approval, a stone block in your chest and lap... and SNAP! You hit the ground and struggle from under the stone.

Incandescent onyx patches of translocating temporal essence, the size of shattered stained-glass, twirl and twist through the chamber, absorbing everything they touch in sharp swaths as you scramble to your feet and quickly dodge another hail of stone from the collapsing arch.

OR if the portal remains open for 10 rounds, read:

A distinct and baleful roar echoes throughout the cavern. You glance back at the fractured window to Chult, and see a rising wave of undead crash against the Ankylosaurs and flood through the gateway. In death's throes, the dinosaurs thrash about, but their plight is futile and they crush but a few against the stone archway, keystones buckle and dislodge, the beginning of the end.

Incandescent onyx patches of translocating temporal essence, the size of shattered stained-glass, twirl and twist through the chamber, absorbing everything they touch in sharp swaths, the next only inches away, and the dead inches behind that.

The Rising Tide

Whether the PC's are able to collapse the archway, or the zombies latch onto the dinosaurs, the gateway cannot withstand the punishment and collapses. Amidst the chaos, the characters hear Palcron yell, *"Run to the ship!"*

Upon destruction, and at the end of each round, the rising air pressure spreads the shards out in a 20-foot radius away from the collapsed arch. Each round the players remain inside this radius, they must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take 3 (1d4) necrotic damage from the slow-moving shards.

If the zombies flood through the gateway, the saves above are made with disadvantage unless a PC elects to sacrifice themselves or fight to delay the zombies. If the character successfully holds off the advancing tide while the others escape, only that character receives disadvantage on their saves. A wave of zombies is comprised of 1 zombie per PC, each of which has 5 hit points and does not benefit from the undead fortitude feature. Additional waves come through the portal every other round after the first.

If the shards, or the zombies, reach the dock before the PC's, Palcron has no choice but to leave stragglers behind.

Conclusion

Smuggled goods, creatures, and even the cavern's natural stone structure are devoured by the vacuum of the errant portal remains — and the cavern shakes...

You rush the southern ramp and sprint toward the gangplank as Calypso's spy, Palcron, pulls a scroll from his weathered woolen longcoat. Raising the parchment eye level, his fingers contort with each syllable, ethereal wisps draw and coil over his knuckles. A breeze becomes a gust, becomes a gale that fills the sails and urges the craft forward.

Purposeful knots drag the gangplank along the pier. It thumps over each board as you scramble up, find the railing, and lose the berth beneath your feet.

Another quake heralds the compound's collapse and stalactites rebel against the disruption. Some missiles splash starboard of the bow, others shatter across the deck. Navigating the rocky grotto, skimming the shoals, the Moonsea opens her arms to you, as this port closes for good.

Rewards

Make sure players note their rewards on their adventure log sheets. Give your name and DCI number (if applicable) so players can record who ran the session.

Experience (Min/Max XP: 900 /1,200)

Total up all combat experience earned for defeated foes, and divide by the number of characters present in the combat. For non-combat experience, the rewards are listed per character.

Combat Awards

Name of Foe	XP Per Foe
Bandit	50
Bandit Captain	450
Bard	450
Spy	200
Thug	100
Zombie	50

Non-Combat Awards

Task or Accomplishment	XP Per Char
Convincing Buddle	25
Completing Course Obstacles	75-200
Tavern Games	100-200
Lifting Rtin's Coin	50
Find Map	25
Avoiding Patrols	75
Purser Office Information	50
Find journal	50
Vault Note	50
Bodies Hidden	0-100
Distracting Menagerie	75
Handling Ankylosaurus	75

Treasure

The characters receive the following treasure, divided up amongst the party. Treasure is divided as evenly as possible. Gold piece values listed for sellable gear are calculated at their selling price, not their purchase price.

Treasure Awards

Item Name	GP Value
Calypso's fee	200-250
Tavern Games	0-100
Pouch in Pit	03
Deanma's Pouch	24
Buddle's Savings	46
Vault	68
Statues from Shipping	109

Consumable magic items should be divided up however the group sees fit. If more than one character is interested in a specific consumable magic item, the DM can determine who gets it randomly should the group be unable to decide.

Permanent magic items are divided according to a system detailed in the D&D Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide.

Bone-pommeled Glaive

+1 magic weapon (polearm), uncommon

The entire lower portion of the weapon's haft is made of some unidentified creature's thigh or shoulder joint. The pommel has purposely notched edges and looks as though it could no longer function in the socket of whatever it came from.

You have a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

Potion of Healing

Potion, common

This item can be found in the Dungeon Masters Guide.

Flask of Alchemist's Fire

Potion, uncommon

This item can be found in the Dungeon Masters Guide.

Player Rewards

For completing this mission, the characters earn downtime and renown as described in the D&D Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide (ALDMG).

Story Award

The characters have the opportunity to earn the following story award:

Time Well Spin't. You infiltrated the Coin Spinners, and have advantage when making Intelligence (History) checks to recall all but secret information regarding the organization's known rank structure, members, past operations and discovered or rumored locations.

Further, you can't be at disadvantage when making a Charisma skill check to Intimidate, Persuade, or Deceive a Coin Spinner that you have spent at least 10 minutes studying to determine how they fit into the organization.

DM Rewards

In exchange for running this adventure, you earn DM Rewards as described in the D&D Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide (ALDMG).

Appendix. Coin Spinners

Coin Spinner Background

Originating in Luskan, the Coin Spinners are a quasi-religious criminal organization that has recently established itself in Phlan. They revere both Tymora and Beshaba, believing both gods to be aspects of the one divine being—Tymora representing good fortune, and Beshaba representing misfortune.

Character. Chaotic and unpredictable behavior characterizes the gang. While some members are philosophically and spiritually committed anarchists, others simply like plunder and violence. There is sometimes tension between the genuinely devout and those who are just looking to line their own pockets.

Criminal Activities. As a criminal organization, they are heavily involved in gambling, as well as smuggling, extortion, robbery, counterfeiting and slave-trading. With the Welcomers abandoning some of these activities, the Coin Spinners have been able to expand their operations rapidly in Phlan.

Violence. The Coin Spinners do not hesitate to use violence to achieve their goals. Some of the devout members see violence as an almost sacramental means of spreading chaos, while others are merely vicious. Prize-fighting, hunting and other blood-sports are very popular in the gang.

Denominations of Value

Every organization, or mode of currency for that matter, has a hierarchy, rank structure, or denomination and the case is doubly so with the Coin Spinners who pride themselves with hiding their coins, and themselves, with only slight variations to shape and weight that blend into everyday Faerun society. Even at second glance, it is impossible to discern the identically-crafted Coin Spinner coins without the tale-tell markers known only within their ranks. Beyond the coin of their station, a Coin Spinner can possess at least two other marks of value at a given time.

The Coins. One, a non-descript **hexagonal wrought-iron coin** handed out during times of recruitment as an invitation to the organization and the second, often referred to as “The Coin”, is a **unique silver coin** inscribed on one side with the antlers of Beshaba and the other with the coin of Tymora, “Let the coin decide” is one of their catchphrases.

“The Coin” is often used when passing judgement on some offense. This means that a minor wrong might result in very severe consequences, whilst a major transgression might see the offender gently warned and sent away with a purse full of gold. This unpredictability makes the Coin Spinners especially feared.

Excess and Access

In ascending order, Copper-bottoms, Silver-tongues, Bursars, Pursers, and Croupier have been identified by spies stupid or lucky enough to insert themselves into the organization and live after exfiltration. Though additional ranks exist, the number and size of them are exceedingly secret. Such information is known only to the Croupier, in rare instance passing to select Pursers, and unknown entirely to the tiers below. When a mention is required, the Coin Spinners endearingly refer to the unknown above as “The Bank”.

Copper-bottoms are recruits of the lowest tier and upon entering the organization are given a hewn-copper coin that grants access to most common rooms within their strongholds and safehouses.

The rank of **Silver-tongue** is earned by exceptional recruits or proven copper-bottoms and given a coin hewn of silver that can be used to gain access to the main ingress of strongholds and additional rooms of privilege within. This is the most prevalent rank throughout the organization.

A **Bursar** functions as a lieutenant tasked with indoctrinating recruits and training initiates. With coins made of hewn-electrum, their access is mostly unrestricted beyond vaults and other specific areas of great importance.

Pursers are captains with gold-hewn coins, with access to vaults and even the tunnels of egress leading from one city safehouse to the next. Akin to a ship’s quartermaster, a Purser’s responsibility is to guard the vault and dole out pay within their jurisdiction and can preside over a stronghold or safehouse, handling disputes in the absence of a Croupier.

Underbosses of the Coin Spinners are called **Croupiers** and typically preside over a stronghold or city’s network of safehouses with a handful of Pursers and Bursars to oversee its area of operation. Their access is granted by a variation on the original silver-hewn coin but with one side coated in platinum to remind them that the responsibilities of the system remain no matter which face is on top.

Different hewn coins’ shape and weight engage a variety of mechanisms when pushed through the appropriate slots and are most notable within their hideouts’ hidden passageways. So purposeful is the measurement, that a coin of greater value can be used to trigger lower clearance mechanisms while lesser value coins pass through without consequence. Once pushed through the slot, there is always a basin, usually on the other side, where it waits to be retrieved.

Anyone found in a room above their assigned pay grade without the appropriate coin, or an escort, is given a 10-day of ‘vault detention’, always said in a manner purposely indicating the severity vaguely inherent to the euphemism.

Appendix. Dramatis Personae

The following NPCs are featured in this adventure.

Prominent NPCs

- **Bursar Therandra Buddle** is a gold dwarf with brown skin and silver streaked, black hair. She is a Coin Spinner lieutenant tasked with initiating new recruits.
- **Palcron de'Moordenaar** (Alias: Bursar Ishtarn) is a tall Chondathan human with chin-length chestnut hair, tidy beard, green eyes and tan skin. He's a Harper, and Calypso's spy in the Coin Spinners under the alias Bursar Ishtarn.
- **Keelium Mildread** is a surly and burly drow bartender of the Thirsty Purse who turns a blind eye to Coin Spinner operations but expects no nonsense.
- **Wendri Coppertoos** is a halfling captain of the Black Watch.

Secondary NPCs

- **Drikett & Rutzus Deephowl** are wide-eyed, twin goblin bandits. Rutzus believes the moon grants him special powers while Drikett jumps up and down, laughing like a braying donkey at anything mildly humorous.
- **Purser Deanma Rtin (Deen-ma Tin)** is a female half-elf Coin Spinner bard who's access coin is left in the bathhouse dressing room.
- **Purser Penny Chortier** is a male half-orc Coin Spinner bandit captain guiding the shipment through the portal.
- **Tam Jai** is a Shou bandit, with a myriad of social problems, who is tired of sticking it out alone.
- **Zellzo Katar** is a calico Tabaxi bandit with a swollen black eye and missing left K-9 tooth from her last rowdy celebration.

Roleplaying Wendri Coppertoos

Wendri is a halfling veteran, and captain of the Black Watch in the Docks. She is also a lapsed Harper.

- **Ideal:** It is the spirit and not the letter of law that keeps justice alive.
- **Bond:** I protect those who cannot protect themselves.
- **Trait:** I judge people by their actions, not their words.
- **Flaw:** I'm overworked and tired. I constantly think about quitting.

Roleplaying Bursar Buddle

Therandra Buddle is a gold dwarf thug, and lieutenant within the Coin Spinners.

- **Ideal:** It takes more than flint to make a fire. I keep that in mind as I train worthless recruits into hardened fighters.
- **Bond:** I don't mind thinning the weak from my herd.
- **Trait:** My best interests better be your best interests.
- **Flaw:** Sometimes I pity lesser races so much that I let my guard down around them.

Roleplaying Keelium Mildread

Bartender of the Thirsty Purse, Keelium is a non-binary drow elf commoner, who is not a Coin Spinner and does not identify as male, female, drow or elf and prefers to be referred to as they or them. Always polite, Keelium is patient and tactful when expressing their very neutral viewpoint.

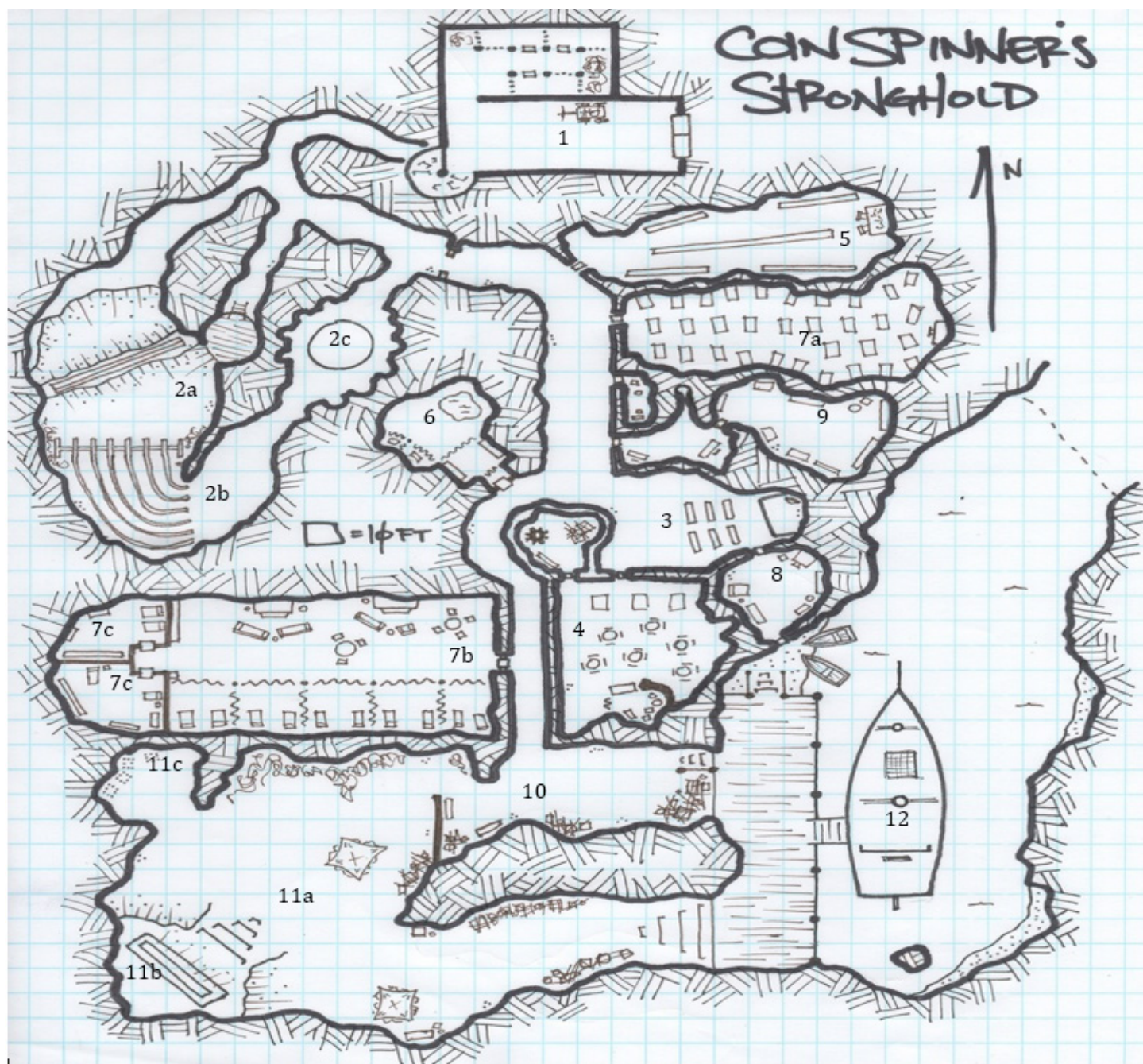
- **Ideal:** Sincerity. There's no good in pretending to be something I'm not.
- **Bond:** I'm trying to pay off an old debt I owe to a generous benefactor.
- **Trait:** I'm willing to listen to every side of an argument before I make my own judgement.
- **Flaw:** I guard a dangerous secret that keeps me from returning to my family.

Roleplaying Palcron de'Moordenaar

Palcron is a Chondathan human spy, a Harper, and Calypso's man inside under the alias: Bursar Ishtarn.

- **Ideal:** People. I'm loyal to my friends, not any ideals, and often too kind and generous for my own good.
- **Bond:** Something important was taken from me, and I aim to steal it back.
- **Trait:** The first thing I do in a new place is note the locations of exits or hiding spots.
- **Flaw:** I can be a loner who is slow to trust.

Appendix. Map & Key – COIN SPINNER STRONGHOLD



PART 2

1. Antechamber/Stables
2. Bursar's Obstacle Course
 - 2a. Rope/Wall Obstacle
 - 2b. Locks Obstacle
 - 2c. Coin Flip Obstacle

PART 3

3. Amphitheater
4. Thirsty Purse

PART 4

5. Armory
6. Bath House
7. Coin Spinner Dorms
 - 7a. Copper Barracks
 - 7b. Silver Barracks
 - 7c. Purser & Bursar
8. Croupier Flat
9. Purser Vault
10. Staging

PART 5

11. Portal Room
 - 11a. Gateway
 - 11b. Airshafts
 - 11c. Wild Animal Cages
12. Ship

Appendix:

NPC / Monster Statistics

Ankylosaurus

Huge beast, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 68 (8d12+16)

Speed 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	5 (-3)

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages —

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Actions

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 18 (4d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Bandit

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-lawful alignment

Armor Class 12 (leather armor)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Actions

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 80 ft./320 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

Bandit Captain

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-lawful alignment

Armor Class 15 (studded leather)

Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +4, Dex +5, Wis +2

Skills Athletics +4, Deception +4

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any two languages

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The captain makes three melee attacks: two with its scimitar and one with its dagger. Or the captain makes two ranged attacks with its daggers.

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

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

Reactions

Parry. The captain adds 2 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the captain must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Bard

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-lawful alignment

Armor Class 15 (chain shirt)

Hit Points 44 (8d8 + 8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Wis +3

Skills Acrobatics +4, Perception +5, Performance +6

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages any two languages

Challenge 2(450 XP)

Spellcasting. The bard is a 4th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following bard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *friends, mage hand, vicious mockery*

1st level (4 slots): *charm person, healing word, heroism, sleep, thunderwave*

2nd level (3 slots): *invisibility, shatter*

Song of Rest. The bard can perform a song while taking a short rest. Any ally who hears the song regains an extra 1d6 hit points if it spends any Hit Dice to regain hit points at the end of that rest. The bard can confer this benefit on itself as well.

Taunt (2/day). The bard can use a bonus action on its turn to target one creature within 30 feet of it. If the target can hear the bard, the target must succeed on a DC 12 Charisma saving throw or have disadvantage on ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws until the start of the bard's next turn.

Actions

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80 ft./320 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Spy

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 27 (6d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +5, Insight +4, Investigation +5, Perception +6, Persuasion +5, Sleight of Hand +4, Stealth +4

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages any two languages

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

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

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). The spy deals an extra 7 (2d6) 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 spy that isn't incapacitated and the spy doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Actions

Multiattack. The spy makes two melee attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Hand Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Thug

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-good alignment

Armor Class 11 (leather armor)

Hit Points 32 (5d8 + 10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Skills Intimidation +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Pack Tactics. The 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.

Actions

Multiattack. The thug makes two melee attacks.

Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

Zombie

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 22 (3d8 + 9)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	6 (-2)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	6 (-2)	5 (-3)

Saving Throws Wis +0

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages understands the languages it knew in life but can't speak

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

Actions

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

Handout. Annotated Shipping Instructions

Penny & Deanma,

I'm off to Phlan. Don't worry, blind luck ain't blind. Beshaba will be your eyes and ears.

Quick points we discussed:

- The switch does not close the gate. That power comes from the gems.*
- Do not throw the switch before arranging the gems properly. Don't believe me? Shocking.*
- Post guards on the Chult side.*
- The gateway remains open if the gems aren't shut it off. When you must go for a Tenday, best only to use the key when needed.*
- No Carnivores and no more snakes. I am not impressed they have wings!*

Have the next deliveries ready to ship as soon as I return. That means you actually use the three "I's" - Import, Inspect, Inventory.

Keep things moving, cause they're looking up!

Be smart. If all else fails...

Let the Coin Decide,

Croupier Wildlight

Handout. Chance Journal

405

I failed again. I'm starting to think it's the archway, and not my ignorance. Arcane inflection ain't prayer, that's for sure. Beshaba won't abide this for long. I can feel her disappointment with me.

408

No change. It might as well be all garbled, all at once. What do I know? Oh. Do I know any wizards? Time to call in some favors.

411

I had it for a moment! It flickered. It's like rain in a pond. I must have gotten some of it right. Praise Beshaba! I'll show those stupid Wormlucks.

426

My lady, I repent for my hubris.
My lady, I repent for my hubris.
My lady, I repent for my hubris.

Sorry - Was tails up for weeks. Beshaba knows why. Beshaba knows best. Back to work.

436

Writing today because I noticed something— Fresh gems. Strong start. Six or seven attempts with good progress. Kept it up for a few minutes. Today, notice spell gem didn't consume the gem... Why?

445

My lady whispers. Another week of fizzles. However, the strands of magic that remain, remind me of the stained windows in Tymora's temples, shattered. Hah!

446

It's the gems. I've rearranged them and now they keep the individual strands from floating about. I'm close...

449

It worked! Praise her. Tymora can sneer in the wind! I couldn't sleep, and went to talk to the arch. Saw her. #ER! Beshaba appeared to me. Spoke to me. She showed me how to operate the machine. That's it. No need for magic words, arcane studies, none of it! No word from the Bank.

451

It took some time to get the process down. The age of the thing isn't doing us any favors but it is now functional. I'll send a Copper-bottom or two through first. I'll even let them flip to see who goes first.

459

It's finally stable. Went to Chult today. I saw dinosaurs, in the flesh. Hear stories about their feathers.... True. Could have been lunch but by the coin saved me. I found some smaller dinosaurs. I think we can use them. I have a plan.

472

I've taught my Pursers to open the portal. We worked out a schedule. And a path. The Bankers know. They're pleased. Beshaba has big plans for me. I'm all in.

483

Figured I'd make a quick note to commemorate. I've started sketching out tattoos. All who hear, will know by the sight. I'm off to Phlan. The groundwork took a couple of weeks to set up the hub and distribute my new beasts. With the cut I'm sending to the Bank, the other safehouses should be able to recruit. Our time is now!

I think my new Bursar will be a good influence on the rest. He's alarmingly suave and an avid believer. It's like he knows everything about me. Beshaba, be praised!

Handout. Drinking Games & Intoxication

Coin Vault

Coin Vault is a team game played where each team consists of an even number of players attempting to toss their coin in an empty spittoon. The teams line up side by side 10 feet away from the spittoon.

On their turn, a player must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check or miss the spittoon. If a player fails to toss their coin in the spittoon on their turn, they must take a quaff from their flagon before play can resume.

On a success, the player is removed from the order but can take an action on their turn to cheer on a teammate, adding 1d4 to the roll, or decide to quaff in place of a teammate who misses.

After each player, the DM attempts the check for the opposing team, who's bonus is +2. The round is won when all the players from one team have succeeded and been removed from play. Typically, a team will concede when the opposing team wins two rounds in a best of three. However, heartier players have played until both teams collapse in exhaustion.

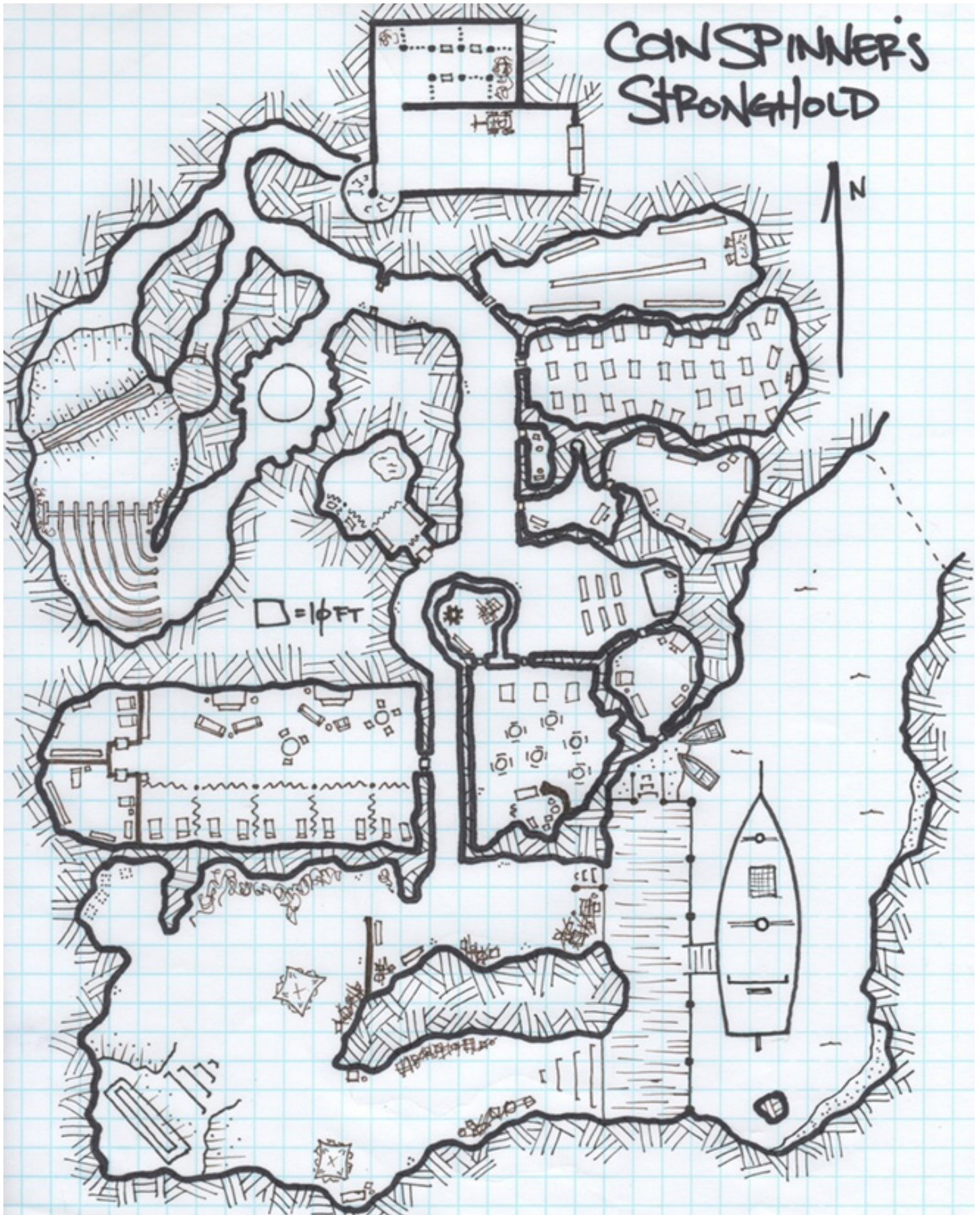
Intoxication

During this adventure, a character's Constitution modifier dictates the amount of alcohol they can ingest without ill effect. The first time a PC exceeds this number they must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned. Each additional drink increases the DC by 1.

A creature who gains the intoxicated condition suffers disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks — the same effect as a creature that gains the poisoned condition, especially to tasks related to the continuance of drinking.

The condition lasts for 2d4 hours, until the condition is cured, or the character completes a long rest. A character's resistance to poison grants advantage on any Constitution saving throw after exceeding a number of drinks equal to their Constitution modifier.

Handout. Map



Handout. Palcron's Note

Even as you read, the words waver in and out of existence.

By the Owl's eyes,

So now I know, it's a portal. Big shipment tonight and everyone else is drunk. Now is our moment. You lot shut it down and I'll secure the ride.

I'm sure you can find some information about it in the various offices. You can lift the access coins from one low-life or the other. If you don't want to risk that, check the bath house, coins fall out there all the time.

Your equipment looks terrible. Raid the armory. Maybe do that first in case you get in a fight. I won't be able to help. If you do fell some punk, hide the body. Nothing sets off an alarm like that!

Meet me at the ship. You have two hours between closing time and the shipment. You don't want to miss that window.

*Get to work,
PAL*

As soon as your eyes absorb the last line, the ink on the parchment fades away as if the message were an illusion from the start.

Handout. Suspicion Meter

In certain stories, characters remaining anonymous can be essential to the goals of their group. If your campaign has a strong espionage or intrigue theme, you might want to use suspicion as a way to reinforce that theme, emphasizing a specific undercover element that permeates the day to day survival of the adventurers.

While remaining unseen is the obvious path to anonymity, the suspicion meter can be used in places where characters' presence or visibility is unavoidable but they desire to remain incognito. Certain situations of indiscretion, like using Thieves' tools in a crowded room, a DM might be encouraged to call for NPC's to be suspicious even if the task succeeds.

Suspicion in Play

The suspicion meter of a typical adventure's encounter is equal to the number of players multiplied by 100. For example, if your table consists of four players, the threshold of the suspicion meter is set to 400.

When a PC fails a skill check that might leave them exposed, whether Stealth or Persuasion, etc., a DM can determine the level of suspicion surrounding the party instead of the encounter devolving directing into combat.

To establish the suspicion gained by an NPC or group of NPCs on a failure, the PC rolls percentile dice, subtracts the number rolled on the failed skill check from the percentile, and adds the result to the party's suspicion meter. For group checks, each individual failure increases the meter.

If the party exceeds their cumulative threshold, all the characters in the party become suspicious to the appropriate NPCs and any number of effects may be imposed upon them depending on the adventure. If the party's presence becomes known, the DM can continue to ask for suspicion checks. For additional failed checks, the suspicion level increases by 1.

If a player rolls a 100 on the percentile, the suspicion meter reduces by 100 or suspicion level reduces by 1, whichever is appropriate. DMs could use their discretion to reduce the suspicion level in other

situations. For instance, although skill checks do not normally benefit from critical successes, a DM might rule that a natural 20 on an appropriate Intimidation or Deception skill could reduce the party's level of suspicion.

If the adventure dictates, this meter might reset as the characters move from encounter to encounter or at the DM's discretion. If the party has been discovered but completes the encounter, the suspicion level reduces by 1.

Suspicion at Work

While running adventures, suspicion is measured in three levels, affect any suspicion-based check or saving throw, are cumulative, and do not reset between encounters:

Suspicion Level

Level	Effect
1	Suspicion DC increases by the party's number
2	NPCs gain advantage on Wisdom-based checks
3	NPCs gain advantage when rolling initiative

Adjusting the Suspicion Meter

Some adventures may even provide suggestions in making adjustments for smaller or larger groups, characters of higher or lower levels, and characters that are otherwise a bit more powerful than the adventure is optimized for. You're not bound to these adjustments; they're here for your convenience. Consult the group's APL to approximate the party strength for the adventure.

A DM can increase the suspense of this mechanic by maintaining the number themselves and by selecting percentile dice used for this roll, handing them to a player only for this check.

Thoughtful use of the **suspicion meter** can prevent the fear of instant failure that causes "choice paralysis" and hinders roleplay. If a PC jumps directly into roleplay during an encounter, the DM may decide to modify the roll or negate it altogether.