

Off the Beaten Path

City Excursions



Thom Wilson

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Author: Thom Wilson
Cartography: MonkeyBlood Design
and Thom Wilson
Cover Art: Travis Hanson

Introduction

It's tough being a tabletop game master (GM). You plan and create, building adventuring material from hours of writing or hundreds of dollars of purchases, only to have your players avoid your hooks and go off the planned path. Or maybe, you're unprepared for the next session because of real life interference. These things happen, right?

Well, wouldn't it be nice to have one or more Fantasy Roleplaying Game adventures at your finger tips? A series of unrelated, stand alone adventures that can be played whenever you need a side quest. **Off the Beaten Path: City Excursions** is the perfect supplement for GMs who need that last minute scenario for their wayward group. Inside, you'll find 25 one- to two-page city adventures perfect for your low- to mid-level group.

City Excursions? Yes, the 25 adventures found within this book *start* in a city or town but may take the characters into dank basements, sewer tunnels, dark attics, and abandoned dwellings. What they all have in common is their starting point; each short scenario begins in a city somewhere, easily inserted into your campaign as needed!

Off the Beaten Path: City Excursions has been printed in two versions; a system neutral book was created for any fantasy roleplaying system—empty boxes are provided for the GM to pencil in monster stats and treasures for their system of choice. The *Swords & Wizardry*™ (S&W) book was created to support the growing needs of players of the ever-popular *Swords & Wizardry*™ system (S&W) by Matt Finch and Frog God Games ©. Either book is easy enough to convert to any fantasy roleplaying system.

Adventure Difficulty. Each adventure in this book is rated from Easy to Moderate, with a few Hard or Very Hard scenarios added for good measure. Most Easy adventures are playable by characters of beginning to lower levels. Moderate adventures are about twice as hard as the Easy rated encounters. Although not impossible, the Hard adventures should challenge characters of higher levels. The table below offers suggestions for common systems. Adventures that span difficulties would be good for a mix of characters on the fringe of both categories.

| Adventure Ratings | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Difficulty | D20 System Levels |
| Easy | 1-3 |
| Moderate | 3-5 |
| Hard | 5-7 |
| Very Hard | 8-10 or higher |

How to Use This Book. Each short adventure has several distinct features that help the game master run the encounters. A quick look at any of the adventures that follow and a review of this section will help the GM get ready to run an adventure quickly.

Adventure Background: A quick background to get the ball rolling. Most Excursion adventures don't need a detailed story; they are usually brought in to fill time or to handle a change in plans. This section is usually one or two paragraphs.

Difficulty / Characters / Locale Table: The three row table provides a simple guideline to help GMs choose their quick, fill-in adventure. The locale is a recommended starting point but can be modified as necessary.

Adventure Start: This section provides a starting point for the characters. It is usually followed by a *read-aloud* text block.

Read-aloud Text Block: Boxes filled with a grey interior contain text that is meant for the players. GMs should read these sections aloud when necessary or needed.

Monster Statistics: Each foe encountered within the adventure will be given a special section for statistics. The system-neutral book provides an open, bordered text box for GMs to pencil in stats for the encountered creatures. The *Swords & Wizardry*™ version of the book has detailed statistics found within a lightly shaded text box. Note that creatures found within the Excursions adventures that are not within the S&W rules have been given new statistics.

Special Encounter Challenges: Bordered or shaded text boxes are also found for special challenges, saving throws, or other important encounter checks. The system-neutral book again leaves the box empty for the GM to add details from the system they are using.

Magical and non-Magical Treasure: Valuable treasure is often **bolded** to stand out amidst the other text; non-magical items with silver or gold piece values are easily spotted in the same manner. Magical items in the system-neutral book are either given loose abilities or left as open text boxes for the GM. The S&W book provides more detailed statistics for magical treasure, created within the constructs of that simple system.

Special Thanks: A very special "thank you" goes out to Matt Finch for his work on *Swords & Wizardry*™, and to Frog God Games © for allowing me to use their logos on this book. Additionally, to all of the Kickstarter backers—thank you!!!

The Sacrifices for Youth

Adventure Background: An old, abandoned house in an impoverished neighborhood is the new home of an evil witch. She has abducted two local children to use for her "youth potions" research. After securing funding from a couple of noblewomen seeking to reverse the aging process, she has begun her potion testing which requires the hair, nails and skin of children. She is holding the two kids in the hidden attic (a second attic) in the old house, so far only using hair and nails in her potions. Within a few days, she will move onto skin and other "components"...

Adventure Summary

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| Adventure Difficulty: | Easy to Moderate |
| Number of Characters: | 1-3 |
| Adventure Locale: | Any Town or City |

Adventure Start: The distraught mother has posted a reward for finding her children, after the local guard were convinced that her 2 children ran away. They investigated the old house but missed the ceiling trapdoor to the attic. She will urge the players to search the abandoned house again. The widowed mother is offering her husband's prized warhorse as the reward for finding her children.

Abandoned House

The ramshackle three-story building looks like it may fall down at any moment. It's missing parts of several walls, windows are broken and the front door swings open on the breeze.

The characters may notice that the building actually has three-and-a-half stories. The topmost floor has an extended section or peak.

Interior, First Floor

Each of the four rooms on the first floor is empty, stripped of valuable items long ago. A broken staircase leads down into a flooded, empty basement. A rickety wooden staircase leads up to the second floor. Searching characters may discover children's drawings on the walls of the largest room.

Second Floor

The inner walls of the second story are broken, leaving the four main support beams in the middle of the floor. Empty casks, shattered boxes, and wooden chests are found throughout. A well-concealed trapdoor in the ceiling leads to the attic. The fireplace on the northern wall looks recently (in the last month) used. There is nothing of value here.

Ceiling Trapdoor Check: found 1 in 6, 2 in 6 for elves

Attic

The attic is warm and inviting, with a smokeless fire burning in the fireplace. An old woman stirs a pot in the fireplace as a black cat warms itself nearby. Three stools, a table, a short bed, and a wardrobe fill the small room. A wooden chest sits in the shadows near the western wall. Several clay pots and glass bottles line the mantle.

The old woman will be upset with intruders but will appear nice and friendly. She will answer questions but claims to not know the whereabouts of the children. If the characters take any hostile action or move toward the trapdoor to the hidden attic, she'll attack with her **wand of paralysis** and spells. Her little cat will transform into a **panther** and also attack.

"Nagatha", old witch, statistics: HD 3, AC6 [13], Atk 1 dagger (1d4), MV 12, Save 14, AL C, CL/XP 5/240

Spells: *levitation, charm*; **Key Item:** *Wand of Paralysis*

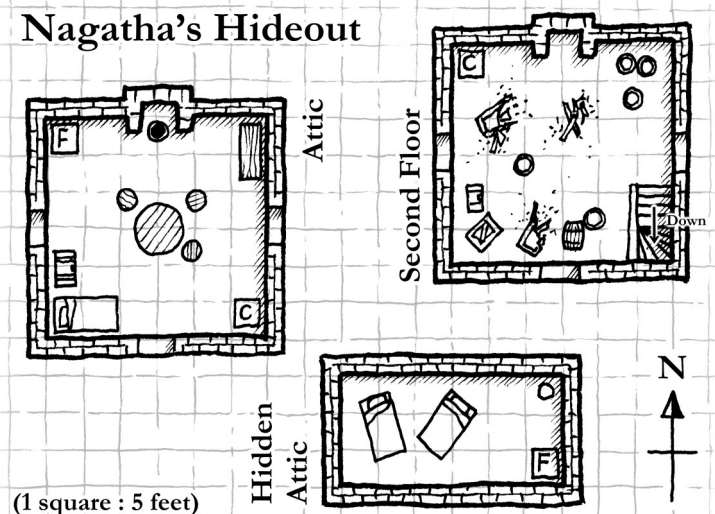
Panther, statistics: HD 3, AC6 [13], Atk 2 claws (1d3), 1 bite (1d6), MV 16, Save 14, AL N, CL/XP 4/120, special: rear claw attack when front claws hit (1d3)

The chest contains dozens of rare herbs and ingredients the witch uses in her potion brewing. An unlabeled box at the bottom of the chest contains **100 gp**, the down payment for two potions of youthfulness.

Although the witch thinks she is close to creating the potion, she will be unable to craft the difficult recipe. She lacks the skill to properly enchant the ingredients.

Hidden Attic

Two children are gagged and shackled to their beds. Most of their hair has been cut off and several of their fingernails have been removed. Otherwise, they are in decent health.



The Abandoned Horror

Adventure Background: Workers expanding a shoemaker's shop have uncovered a hidden staircase into the ground below the street. After clearing the stairs of age-old debris and fallen rock, the workers cautiously investigated the open area below. Moments later, they fled the shopkeeper's small shop, running recklessly into the streets and were never seen again. The old shoemaker is too terrified to venture below to see what the workers found, preferring to hire brave adventurers to make his shop safe.

Adventure Summary

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| Adventure Difficulty: | Hard |
| Number of Characters: | 4-6 |
| Adventure Locale: | Tomb (City) |

Historical Background: Long before the city expanded into this area of the realm, a group of treasure hunters discovered an ancient site below the ground. They spent several years digging out the site, building stairs to simplify their travel to and from the ancient tomb. As they dug, they found hundreds of small sarcophagi with minor trinkets and treasures. The archaeologists felt that a wondrous prize must be further below, and hired more laborers to speed up the digging.

When they finally uncovered the central chamber, they were both amazed and shocked. A large circular sarcophagus made of black marble was centrally located in a large chamber. Hieroglyphics and strange writing on the stone container were illegible, but the treasure hunters knew they had found the central focus of the site. When they opened the stone coffin, they were horrified to find a primordial evil slumbering within.

The ancient godling whose name was no longer remembered was a large horror; a six-foot warty mass with feathery moth wings and a tortured human face greeted the unprepared treasure hunters. It's eight long legs – each tipped with razor sharp talons – twitched as it rose from its eternal bed. A five-foot tongue lashed out at the group, delivering poisonous grapple attacks and dragging laborers closer to its hideous face. The ill-fated group were confused, not only by the visage of the grotesque beast they faced, but also by waves of magic pulsing out of its large, exposed brain.

Before the last member of the dig site perished, he was able to close the foul creature back into the sarcophagus.

Adventure Start: The characters are passing through one of the many back streets of the city when they see a large sign in the window of a shoemaker's shop. It reads, "Brave Heroes Wanted. High Pay for Dangerous Mission". The shop looks run down, but the characters can see several sawhorses, buckets, and tools scattered throughout the shop's interior.

Sam the Shoemaker

The old shoemaker has been making and repairing shoes for the neighborhood for several generations. Sam has always

made a meager living doing what he loves, but recently inherited a small fortune from a distant relative. Sam wanted to expand his shop and hired workers to knock down an old back wall. The workers found an old staircase leading under the shop.

Sam will offer **500 gp** to investigate and clear out anything "unwanted" in the area below. If pressed, he will mention that his workers fled after spending several minutes in the area at the bottom of the stairs. He doesn't want to know what's down there and doesn't care what the adventurers find. He just wants it cleared of anything "evil, bad, or dangerous". He also tells the group that they can keep whatever they find below as long as they make it safe for workers to return.

The Stairs

It is immediately apparent that the stairs are ancient; the stones are worn and cracked, and covered in dust. Footprints are found in the thick blanket of dirt, supporting the shoemaker's story of the workers' search below. An ominous feeling emanates from the area below the stairs. Weak-willed characters will have to save versus Fear (Intimidation) to continue down the stairs.

Fear Check: Roll under half Wisdom (round up)

Archeological Dig Site

A circular black sarcophagus commands the attention of any who enter the chamber. Raised on an even wider pedestal, the stone coffin is over eight feet in diameter. Several skeletal remains are found around the coffin, with one bony body collapsed over the lid. The cover is not fully closed, its lid slid across the base leaving a few inches of open space between the two sections. Rusted and broken tools litter the floor. Buckets, rotted wooden crates, and broken clay pots cover much of the floor space.

If the characters open the lid of the sarcophagus, the **perverted godling** will rise from its long sleep to feed. It uses its horrible tongue to grasp an opponent one turn, then delivers a lethal dose of poison the next. If characters get close, it uses its eight talon-tipped legs to slash and pierce foes. Using its exposed brain, the foul beast will try to confuse characters: spell casters may miscast spells 50% of the time, either picking the wrong targets (other characters) or casting useless spells. Weak-minded characters may flee its presence as the workers did days earlier.

Primordial Godling, statistics: HD 10, AC0 [19], Atk 1 tongue (poison), 1d8 talons (1d6), MV 3, Save 5, AL C, CL/XP 13/2300, special: fear, poisonous tongue

If the characters somehow manage to slay the primordial monster, they will find the sarcophagus filled with gold coins (**15,000 gp**). Additionally, a powerful and ancient artifact is found within the coin pile.

Silver Mace of Lifetaking: +2 to-hit bonus, 3x damage 5% cumulative chance per successful hit to utterly destroy a living foe. This chance increases until successfully taking a life, then resets back to 0%.

The Return of Hrannax

Adventure Background: An exiled necromancer has finally returned to the city and brings with him years of pent-up rage and hatred for the place that shunned his practices. After a decade of training and dark study, Hrannax the Deathbringer has decided to return to his birth city and turn its residents into the walking dead.

Adventure Summary

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| Adventure Difficulty: | Hard |
| Number of Characters: | 3-5 |
| Adventure Locale: | Any Town or City |

Adventure Start: As the adventurers stroll through a busy city street, an unknown entity from the skies forcefully lands amidst a throng of people, knocking everyone prone. While most will be knocked unconscious, several people will be killed by the force of the dark energy attack.

Moving through the busy street, you scan the windows of various shops and observe merchants selling items from their wooden carts. Without warning, a shrouded entity from the sky plummets to the ground, sending a wave of dark energy throughout the area. Every merchant and city resident on the street is violently knocked prone! Only your group remains standing.

Hrannax, the Deathbringer

The exiled necromancer plans to kill every human in the city—street by street, home by home. He has randomly and unknowingly chosen to begin on the very street the characters are traveling.

Lifting the cowl from his head, the scarred and pocked face of an angry man sneers at you. “Who are you to stand in the way of Hrannax, the Deathbringer? Do you not know that this is the day of your death?” Spreading his arms wide, he says, “You should have died with the rest. Now you will face all of us.”

When Hrannax raises his hands upward and over his head, the newly dead city residents will begin to jerkily rise to their feet. They will shamble toward the adventurers, silently instructed to kill and feast upon their flesh.

(2d6) Dead City Residents, statistics: HD 1, AC 8 [11], Atk 1 strike (1d8), MV 6, Save 16, AL N, Cl/XP 2/30, special: immune to sleep and charm

Hrannax may use his dark energy attack once every three combat rounds. Although this attack does not affect the powerful adventurers, it will kill another 2d6 people each time.

The evil necromancer will continue to send wave after wave of dead city residents at the adventurers, bent on seeing them killed before he continues on his personal vendetta against the city. He is strangely linked to the zombies, instructing them to do his bidding. Using typical combat tactics (surrounding the characters and himself with the undead), he will press on until there are no zombies left or the characters are dead.

“Hrannax, the Deathbringer”, necromancer, statistics: HD/LVL 8, AC 7 [12], Atk 1 dagger (1d4+1), MV 12, Save 5, AL C, CL/XP 10/1400, special (see below)

Key Abilities: *Dark Energy Wave, Bone Wall, Death’s Touch, Shrouded Flight*; **Key Items:** *Rod of the Underworld, Invisible Crown of the Dead King*

If the characters somehow survive the battle with the zombies, the necromancer will use his Shrouded Flight ability (see below) to escape. He will eventually return, ultimately seeking vengeance upon the city and his new found enemies.

Hrannax wears a black cloak with red robes underneath. He carries his two artifact items at all times, but also will have **two Potions of Full Healing** and a **magical dagger** made from the bones of tortured demons and blood rubies (+1 to-hit and damage bonuses).

Rod of the Underworld: a three-foot, black steel rod with a demon-face skull. Gives the wielder Dark Energy Wave and Death’s Touch abilities.

Invisible Crown of the Dead King: a gold band that becomes invisible when worn on the head. Gives the wearer Bone Wall and Shrouded Flight abilities. Increased defensive bonus (AC better by 2). The wearer may also control up to 20 undead creatures at any time.

Both artifacts shorten their owner’s life by 25 years each.

Hrannax, the Deathbringer – Abilities

| Roll* | Ability | Description |
|-------|-------------------------------|--|
| 1-2 | Dark Energy (10x per day) | An invisible energy wave erupts from the necromancer, dealing 2d6 damage to every low-level living creature within 100’. |
| 3 | Bone Wall (20x per day) | The bones of nearby dead are magically stacked to create a defensive wall in any one direction near the necromancer. |
| 4-5 | Death’s Touch (10x per day) | A single creature may be touched (to-hit roll) for 4d6 damage. |
| 6 | Shrouded Flight (20x per day) | The necromancer turns invisible and levitates/flyes up to 1 mile. Very difficult to see. |

* use a random roll (d6) for an ability, if desired.

The Failed Alchemist

Adventure Background: An old alchemist was nearing a scientific breakthrough, having thought he had created a natural healing recipe from simple weeds and an unusual fungus he discovered in his basement. Locking himself in his secluded laboratory, he misjudged his work and created a plant-creature that quickly grew and consumed him.

The alchemist was the sole guardian of his grandson, a young boy of the age of twelve. For three days, Sonny Lenfort has been looking for his grandfather, searching the house and nearby streets for his only family. He has placed a "help wanted" sign on the local request board, hoping for assistance.

Adventure Summary

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| Adventure Difficulty: | Easy |
| Number of Characters: | 2-4 |
| Adventure Locale: | House (City) |

Adventure Start: The characters see a poorly scrawled note posted to the community request board.

"Ples help! My grandpapp is mising! Com to 99A Woodvin Lane"

Area A: 99A Woodvine Lane, Lenfort House

You step up to the house at the address on the note, and see a building falling into disrepair. Whomever lives here lacks the carpentry skills or desire to maintain their home.

As the characters approach, a distraught young boy opens the door. He looks at the characters and exclaims, "Are you here to help find grandpap?"

Assuming the characters want to help, the boy tells the group that when he returned from getting bread at the market, his grandfather was missing. Although it was not unusual for the old man to leave the house for supplies, he did not return by nightfall and every day since. He fears his grandfather is dead and will begin crying every time he thinks that his only family has left him.

Questions about his grandfather's supplies will lead to a dialogue about "experiments" and "strange glass bottles and tubes". The young boy does not know about the secret laboratory. A thorough search of the house may reveal enough clues to determine the whereabouts of the boy's grandfather.

Sonny has no knowledge of his grandfather's skills or abilities as an Alchemist.

Area B: Basement (*ladder in kitchen*)

The characters will find a dangerous fungus growing in the basement. Any successful nature or medicine check will indicate that the mysterious mushroom are deadly. It's possible to see that some have been picked recently.

Nature / Medicine Check: roll under Intelligence

Area C: Grandfather's Bedroom (Maralfo Lenfort)

Maralfo Lenfort kept a diary, documenting his work. The last several entries discuss his recent fungus discovery and his theory on the natural healing recipe. The very last entry mentions that he'll send his grandson to market to give him time to test his new recipe in his laboratory.

Area D: Secret Laboratory

A well hidden, sliding door in the hallway of the second floor provides access to the secret laboratory. As the door opens, it will become apparent to anyone in the hallway that something moves in the area beyond.

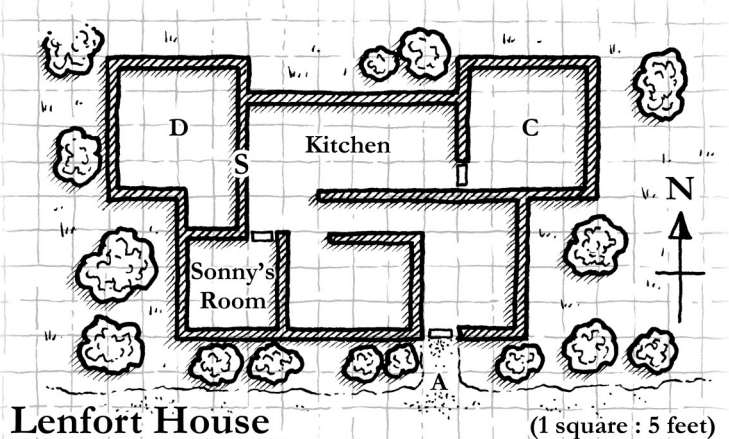
Find Secret Door Check: 1 in 6, or 2 in 6 for elves

Open Secret Door Check: 1 in 6

A large, mutated plant-fungus creature has been quietly digesting the old alchemist but will soon be ready to try to exit the small space. With the door open, it will take its chance to escape, slithering on long root tendrils and oozing fungus pores. If the characters stand in its way, it attacks.

Mutated Plant, statistics: HD 4, AC6 [13], Atk 1d4 roots (1d4 + poison), MV 3, Save 13, AL N, CL/XP 6/400, Special: Fungal Spore Attacks (save vs. Poison)

Once dispatched, a search of the laboratory will reveal several alchemist tools, books and scrolls (very valuable), as well as the partial remains of the mostly eaten grandfather. Several notes on the table will detail a newly created recipe using weeds and the fungus found in Area B. Any well-trained alchemist or knowledgeable herbalist will recognize several flaws in the old man's theories.



Bird Attack!

Adventure Background: An evil druid has sent a massive flock of birds toward a nearby city to cause havoc and mayhem. Although most of the birds are small, common woodland creatures, the sheer number of flying animals can easily overwhelm a whole city street or marketplace.

Konandu, an insane and misguided druid, has chosen the nearby city as his nemesis. Although city residents have never bothered the forest-dwelling druid, he hates the city, its people, and its slow growth. He has decided to wage war against the settlement!

Adventure Summary

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| Adventure Difficulty: | Easy to Moderate |
| Number of Characters: | 2-4 |
| Adventure Locale: | Any Town or City |

Adventure Start: The characters are walking through the settlement or just leaving a shop when the bird “cloud” appears.

At first, the sound of distant thunder seems innocent enough. It isn't until several townsfolk point at a huge cloud in the distance quickly moving toward the settlement. The cloud seems to be accelerating and is on a straight path into the heart of the town.

Characters with enhanced eyesight (or with magical assistance) will be able to see thousands of birds flying together, straight for the town.

When the birds enter the settlement, they will break off into large groups and begin assaulting townsfolk. Birds will peck at eyes, tear out hair with their beaks, and rake skin with their claws and talons. Each individual bird does no real damage, but as several dozen attack, they quickly injure unarmored and unprepared victims. Roll on the table below to see how their attacks affect the characters.

Bird Attacks—Roll 1d6 (roll 1d4 for a low-level group)

| Roll Result | # of Birds | Details |
|-------------|------------|----------------------|
| 1 | 3 x d6 | +3 To-hit, 1 damage |
| 2 | 5 x d6 | +5 To-hit, 2 damage |
| 3 | 10 x d6 | +10 To-hit, 3 damage |
| 4 | 10 x 2d6 | +10 To-hit, 5 damage |
| 5 | 10 x 3d6 | +10 To-hit, 7 damage |
| 6 | 10 x 4d6 | +10 To-hit, 9 damage |

Reroll number of birds each combat round. Birds attack last in round.

Most townsfolk only take 1 point of damage before dying. Guards can withstand two to three times that amount. Birds are easy to hit—characters who attack the swarms of birds deal enough damage to kill 5 birds for each point of damage inflicted.

When 500 birds or more have been slain, the entire flock will gather above the rooftops of the settlement, circling the area as if waiting for something. Within a few minutes, a lone massive bird will be seen heading toward the settlement.

Thousands of birds are circling the town, flying in a repeatable pattern overhead. A cry suddenly goes out—a massive bird is flying toward the town, with a rider on its back!

Konandu is riding a giant vulture and has come to finish off the meddling characters. Seeing many dead birds at the feet of the adventurers, he summons the birds to attack again. He dives at the group on the vulture while casting spells.

Konandu, insane Druid, statistics: HD/LVL 6, AC5 [14], Atk 1 staff (1d6), MV 12, Save 11, AL C, CL/XP 8/800, Special: Spells (*Faerie Fire, Locate Animals, Predict Weather, Cure Light Wounds, Speak with Animals, Call Lightning, Hold Animal*)

Giant Vulture, statistics: HD 6, AC5 [14], Atk 1 bite (2d4), MV 12/24 (flying), Save 11, AL N, CL/XP 7/600, Special: can be ridden, dive attack (double damage)

As Konandu and his vulture attack, the massive flock of birds continues its assault on townsfolk and the characters. If Konandu dies, the vulture and the rest of the smaller birds will leave.

The druid carries a **Staff of Bird Summoning** and a **Wand of Animal Control**. Additionally, he carries several spell components in his leather pouch.

Most of the birds will head back toward the druid's cottage in the nearby forest. The small home, although disorganized, will have several interesting and valuable items hidden within cupboards and wardrobes.

Staff of Bird Summoning: Each charge of the staff summons 1d20 small birds, 1d6 medium birds, or 1 large bird. The summoned birds are not controlled by the staff. The staff has 5 remaining charges.

Wand of Animal Control: Each charge of the wand allows the character to control dozens of small animals, a few medium animals, or one large creature (saving throw permitted). The wand has 2 charges left.

Safekeeping

Adventure Background: A wealthy merchant has a bounty on his head and needs protection over the next 24 hours before his sailing vessel leaves the city. He needs to hire brave heroes to fight off the thugs and assassins of a rival merchant who are using every available chance to eliminate their target.

The silk and gem merchant, Esre Balnuba, has been at odds with his rival, Kras Nonbar, for several years. Their territory and sales war has escalated to the point of each merchant trying to eliminate the other. A recent failed attempt at assassination has resulted in a full blown retribution—Kras Nonbar has hired a ruthless gang of mercenaries to kill his archenemy. Esre Balnuba is offering 25,000 gp for a group of seasoned characters to protect him until he can flee the city.

Adventure Summary

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| Adventure Difficulty: | Moderate to Hard |
| Number of Characters: | 4-8 |
| Adventure Locale: | City (warehouse) |

Adventure Start: The characters are approached by a trusted aide of Esre Balnuba, asking if they are interested in getting a chest of gold for one day's work.

A well-dressed, clean-shaven man approaches your group. He asks if he could speak with the leader of your party.

Once engaged, the man introduces himself as Gharl, an assistant to a wealthy and powerful merchant. He explains his master's situation:

"Well met! I am Gharl, the assistant to a wealthy merchant in this city. I've been assigned the task of hiring a protective detail for my master. This short-term duty requires several seasoned guards to protect my master from assassins! The job is only for the next 24 hours until he can escape the city. It pays 25,000 gp. Are you interested?"

The job payment is non-negotiable. Gharl is only a messenger and cannot change the job payment value.

Assuming the characters are interested, Gharl will escort them to the merchant's current location, a private room at a local, upscale tavern. Once they arrive, they will find the merchant hiding in his room, anxious to leave for his warehouse. He must go to his warehouse to prepare for his trip. He cannot skip this step before he leaves—there are many items and documents he needs to secure before his departure.

Part 1: Moving the Merchant

Esre Balnuba will only hint at his situation, refusing to answer detailed questions about the rivalry with his enemy. He may accidentally reveal his recent assassination plan, but only if he is comfortable with the characters.

The merchant will strongly suggest that they move to his warehouse before dark, using back streets and tunnels if possible. His warehouse is not well known and lies in a district where many building owners ask few questions of their neighbors. Esre has several important documents in his warehouse office that he needs to get before his trip. Since few know of his warehouse, he feels it's a safe place to hide until the next day.

At some point between leaving the tavern and arriving at the warehouse, the group should get attacked by a group of low-level assassins.

(6) Mercenary Thugs, statistics: HD/LVL 2, AC7 [12], Atk 1 short sword (1d6 + poison), MV 12, Save 16, AL C, CL/XP 3/60, Special: Surprise

As you make your way through a dark back street, a group of six ruffians brandishing curved blades emerge from a hidden door. They immediately sprint toward the merchant!

These well-paid assassins will throw themselves at the merchant, ignoring characters in the first round of combat. They are focused on getting in a quick first-round attack on the surprised merchant. If they successfully strike the merchant, there is a 50% chance that the poison will kill him before the end of the encounter.

Esre Balnuba, statistics: HD 1, AC9 [10], Atk 1 dagger (1d4), MV 9, Save 17, AL N, CL/XP 1/15, Special: non-combatant

As a non-combatant, Gharl will jump out of the way, avoiding combat. He will retreat or flee to escape the assassins.

The assassins each have a note with the description and well-drawn facial image of the merchant. The notes also indicate that the elimination of the target results in a reward of 2,500 gp. Additionally, each assassin has three doses of a powerful scorpion poison.

If the merchant dies, the characters will not be paid (Gharl doesn't have access to the money and doesn't know the location of the warehouse). The adventure ends here.

Part 2: The Warehouse

When the characters arrive at the warehouse, Esre will immediately head to this office in the center of the building (Area 1). The raised office has two lockable doors and has a good view of the entire building. Esre will insist that he stays here until the next day. In the morning, Gharl will leave to get the payment for the characters.

Of course, more assassins will attack the warehouse in the dead of night, coming in several waves. Table 1-1 details each attack—it is up to the GM to determine how many waves they will send at the characters.

| Assassin Waves—Table 1-1 | | |
|--------------------------|------|--|
| Wave | Time | Details |
| 1 | 10pm | 2 low-level thugs each door |
| 2 | 12am | 3 low-level thugs each door |
| 3 | 2am | 4 low-level thugs each door |
| 4 | 3am | 2 mid-level assassins each door, 4 assassins from the ceiling |
| 5 | 4am | All out assault: 20 mid-level assassins from all doors and ceiling |

Luckily, the many windows of the warehouse are barred and cannot be accessed. The four doors can be locked but will likely be broken in on the first two waves.

Low-level Thugs, statistics: HD/LVL 2, AC7 [12], Atk 1 short sword (1d6), MV 12, Save 16, AL C, CL/XP 3/60, Special: Surprise

Mid-level Assassins, statistics: HD/LVL 4, AC6 [13], Atk 1 short sword (1d6 + poison) or bow (1d6), MV 12, Save 13, AL C, CL/XP 5/240, Special: Surprise

The waves of attacks will stop once the merchant is dead. After the last wave, no more assassins will attack the warehouse, but one final attempt will be made when the merchant tries to get on his ship (see Part 3).

When the sun rises, Gharl will leave the warehouse to get the chest of gold. The characters should transport Esre to the docks to his waiting ship.

Part 3: Almost There

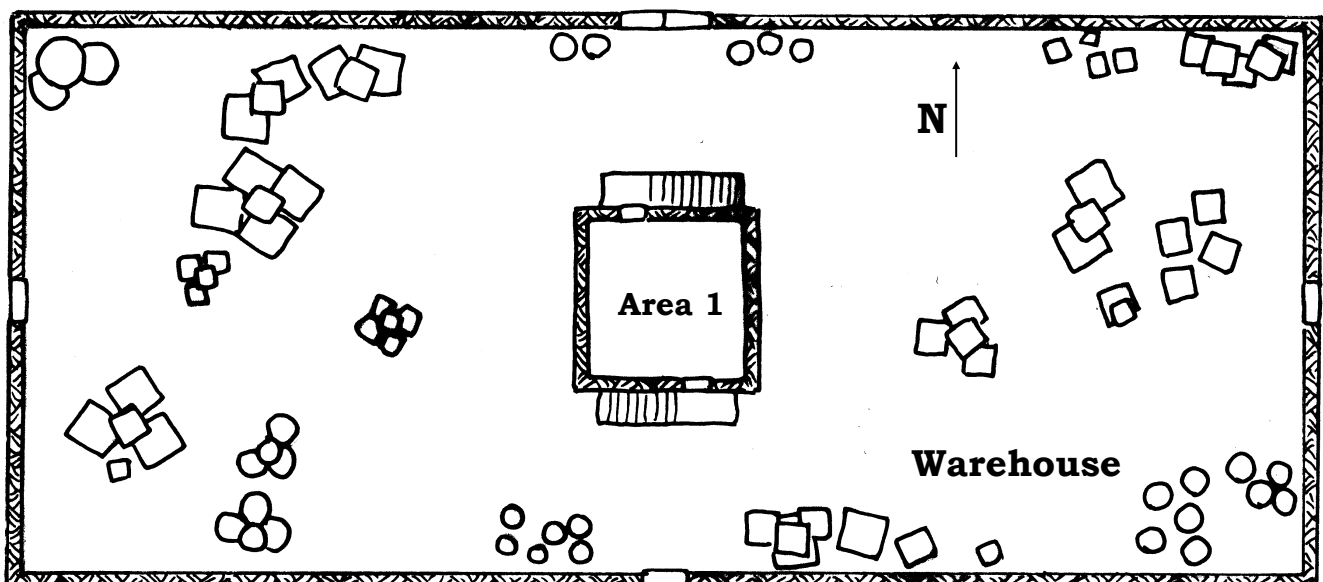
As the characters approach the merchant's waiting ship, a group of high-level mercenaries jump out of hiding, using this last chance to eliminate their target.

(6) High-level Thugs, statistics: HD/LVL 6, AC5 [14], Atk 1 short sword (1d6 + poison), MV 12, Save 11, AL C, CL/XP 6/600, Special: Surprise

(1) High-level Spellcaster, statistics: HD/LVL 6, AC8 [11], Atk 1 dagger (1d4), MV 9, Save 11, AL C, CL/XP 8/800, Special: Spells (*Charm Person, Magic Missile x2, Shield, Mirror Image, Web, Hold Person, Lightning Bolt*)

This final attack should be challenging for the group, especially after a long night of fighting. Once the mercenaries are eliminated, the merchant can be safely transported to his ship. Gharl will arrive with a large chest of gold strapped to a draft horse (the horse is part of the payment) as Esre boards his vessel. Gharl will also board and the ship will put out to sea moments later. Note that the high-level mercenaries are likely to have valuable equipment (use the box below).

Mercenaries, Valuable Items:



The Demon Bard

Adventure Background: Dozens of neighborhood children are missing, disappearing over the last several evenings. Distraught parents recall strange music heard faintly in the distance each night. City guards have several leads but need outside assistance covering a few of the possible areas.

A demon-worshipping bard (Karpicus) has magically led local children to a deserted alley with his evil lute. He is preparing them for mass sacrifice to satisfy his demonic pact. All he needs is a few more children...

Adventure Summary

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| Adventure Difficulty: | Easy to Moderate |
| Number of Characters: | 2-4 |
| Adventure Locale: | Alley (City) |

Adventure Start: One of the tips leads the characters to a deserted alley.

Peering down the shadowy alley, all seems quiet and normal for this part of the old city. Just as you are wondering if this is another false lead, a small face quickly emerges from behind several crates before returning to the darkness.

City Alley

Two dozen possessed children have taken up positions throughout the alley, charmed into believing that adults are coming to take them away from their new protector, Karpicus. They are armed with clubs, knives, and slings and will attack any adults they see. Most are between the ages of 9 and 13 with a couple of older girls helping the youngest children.

Children will try to injure characters if they feel threatened. Adventurers will be faced with a moral dilemma while combating the little enemies – can they subdue them or will they be forced to hurt the charmed foes?

Each area marked A has 1d4 children guarding this part of the alley. They will not move from their post unless overwhelmed or ordered by Karpicus.

(24) Possessed Children, statistics: HD 1d4 hp, AC9 [10], Atk 1 club, knife or sling (1d4), MV 9, Save 18, AL C, CL/XP A/5, Special: possessed

Areas marked B have 1d2 older children instead. Karpicus can be found lounging at Area C. He is never found without his evil lute, “Malanaa”, the source of his power. The lute can charm 5d6 Hit Dice of 1 HD creatures once per day (save allowed each day), or 1 creature of 10HD or less once per day (one save).

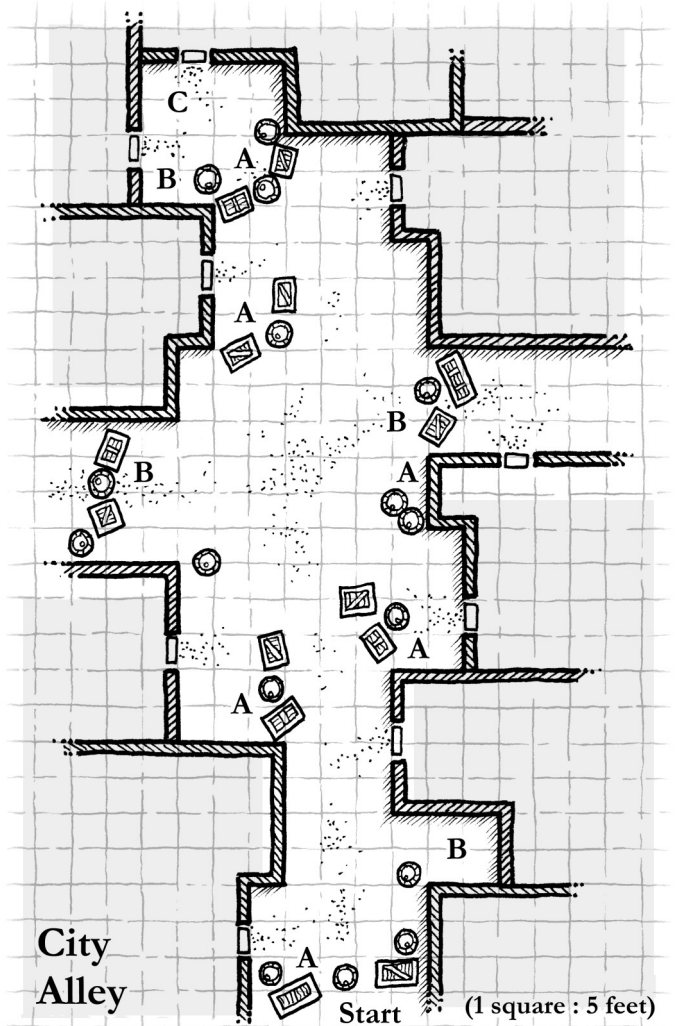
Karpicus, demon-worshipping Bard, statistics: HD/LVL 3, AC7 [12], Atk 1 rapier (1d8), MV 12, Save 14, AL C, CL/XP 4/120, Special: magical lute

Karpicus is a bit of a coward, using the children as shields to avoid getting hurt. If he’s forced into combat, he’ll first use his lute to charm characters, drawing his rapier to fight off enemies as a last resort. He is hoping to possess another six children in the next two nights to begin the sacrifice to his demon-lord.

If Karpicus fails, his demon benefactor will erupt from the ground, taking the bard from the earthly plane in a ghastly show of fire, lightning, and pain. There is a 50% chance that his lute will be destroyed or taken to the demon-lord’s home world.

Once Karpicus is either unconscious or dead, the children will no longer be under his control.

“Malanaa”, Evil Lute: Adds bonus to Bard spells. Charm 5d6 HD of creatures each day (lasts 24 hours, save allowed); 100% chance to charm one 10HD or less creature per day (one save, lasts 4d6 hours). Possessor of lute becomes evil and enters a pact with a demon-lord (GM choice).



Ghost Suitor

Adventure Background: The city library has an unwanted patron—a ghost! For the last several nights, librarians and guests have been accosted by a ghostly image who prevents them from taking any book from one section of the library. What first started as a shimmering image that scared away weak-willed visitors has now escalated to attacks by the shadowy form. Librarians are desperate to rid themselves of the creature before city residents stop visiting the library altogether. They have posted a bounty of 1,000 gp for the removal of the undead being.

Adventure Summary

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| Adventure Difficulty: | Easy to Moderate |
| Number of Characters: | 2-4 |
| Adventure Locale: | Any Town or City |

Adventure Start: Characters will hear of the bounty by normal means; a bounty board or by word of mouth. They can meet with the librarian at the front desk.

Although the quiet nature of the library seems familiar, this silence seems unnatural. The librarian at the front desk seems anxious to leave, and speaks in the slightest of whispers. *“In the history section, there is a... thing... that won’t leave guests alone. Please get rid of it. A purse of 1,000 gp will be yours if you can remove the creature for good.”* She points to the section of the library that you guess is the history section and departs the building. There seems to be no one else in the small library.

There is indeed a ghost haunting the history section of the library. It intercepts any who venture near the end of the aisle (nearest the back wall of the library) about midway through the area. It will not manifest in any other area of the library and doesn’t care about those who stay out of the history section.

The characters will see the form of a young man, his face twisted in rage one minute, contorted in sorrow the next. The ghost is Poseff, once the suitor of a noble family’s daughter. When their daughter went missing, they assumed he was to blame and had him hanged. The poor young man was not to blame. His fiancé was kidnapped by an elderly sage who hid the girl in a secret room in the old library. Two days later, the sage was run down by a carriage, leaving the girl to starve to death in the hidden study closet. In death, Poseff returned to his love, and now stands guard over her body. As a ghost, Poseff mindlessly defends his fiancé’s body, not knowing that her discovery will free his from an eternity of unnatural guardianship.

Poseff (ghost), statistics: HD 3, AC2 [17], Atk 1 strike (paralysis, 1d4 rounds), MV 3, Save 14, AL N, CL/XP 4/120, Special: better defense (AC 0 [19] near fiancé’s body), cannot be turned

Poseff attacks the characters relentlessly, changing his target to whomever is closest to his fiancé’s remains. If killed (reduced to zero or less hit points), Poseff will temporarily disappear, only to reconstitute his form several minutes later. Only when his fiancé’s body is discovered (see below) will he cease his attacks on the group; he becomes an onlooker to the group’s actions as long as they handle the remains justly.

Secret Study Closet

Characters may uncover the secret room if they examine the architecture of the library. A long, narrow office in the back of the library falls short of the building’s full width. The back left corner, where the history section is, seems to be missing depth. A wide tome entitled, *“One Thousand Poems of Monastic Sages”* looks out of place and firmly stuck to the shelf. Pulling on the book does nothing, but if it is tilted backward, it opens a small door at the end of the aisle. Once open, the narrow portal reveals a iron bar door, locked and crackling with destructive magic. Although the iron bar door has a complex lock barring the entry into the area, the evil ward placed upon the portal is much more dire to the characters. If activated, the ward bursts energy outward, targeting any living being within 20’ of the door and within the library.

Energy Ward, Damage: 1d6, half with successful save

Poseff’s fiancé can be seen through the iron bar door, her remains curled upon a crude sleeping mat. Her bony arms are crossed closely upon her torso, depicting a lonely and cold death. Rotted twine is seen around the wrists and ankles of the body, although no clothing is found upon her remains.

A stool, small table, and locked cabinet are visible to one side of the prison cell. Hundreds of scratch marks are found around the edges of the cabinet doors, as if someone failingly tried to use their fingers and nails to open the cabinet. The area was used as a private study chamber by the sage before he turned it into a prison cell.

Several valuable tomes, a purse of coins (**125 gp, 250 sp**), and a **magical ring** are found within the locked cabinet. Additionally, a journal is found with several entries detailing previous captives...

Ring of Wondrous Charm: The wearer gains the benefit of +3 to Charisma and is given the ability to charm three creatures per day (same or lesser level), no save.

The Pesky Sewer-dweller

Adventure Background: Guards from the city have not been able to eliminate a pesky sewer denizen, losing several trained troops in just as many days. No longer wishing to lose valuable guardsmen, the Captain of the Watch has put a bounty on the sewer-dweller: a gigantic alligator! The city residents are in a panic with the rumors of a huge reptile roaming the sewers and streets at night. Something must be done!

| Adventure Summary | |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| Adventure Difficulty: | Moderate |
| Number of Characters: | 3-5 |
| Adventure Locale: | Sewers (City) |

Adventure Start: With the entire city abuzz with the rumors of a giant reptile, the characters are either approached by guards or find the notice of the bounty; 5,000 gp to bring the head of the alligator to the Captain of the Watch.

City Sewers

The GM should tailor the adventure to meet the needs of their locale. A city would have a much larger sewer system than a town, for example. The map provided will detail only one area of the sewers, useful for the combat that will likely take place when the group tracks the alligator to its lair.

When the characters get close the alligator's lair, read the following text:

Slow-moving sewer water, littered with both recognizable and questionable matter, slides by your legs, lapping at your thighs and leaving foul colored stains upon your clothing and armor. The stench is nearly unbearable, as thousands of gallons of waste churn through the narrow sewer pipe. Your eyes suddenly pick up a grotesque yet discernible object; the lower half of a human leg floats past you, bobbing in the filthy liquid.

Close examination of the human leg reveals three interesting details: the leg appears to be torn from its body, it is a male leg, and it lacks footwear. Any characters with Medicine or Healing skills will recognize that the leg was severed recently.

Sewer Junction

Noise from several sewer pipes dumping their contents into a larger area is noticeable within a 50' distance. The alligator has chosen this area of the sewer as its lair for obvious reasons; six access points provide clear paths to its favored hunting grounds.

The alligator prefers to sleep during the day and hunts primarily at night. There is a 25% chance of finding the reptile in its lair in the evening hours, and 100% chance during daylight hours. There is also a 10% chance that a few of the eggs have already hatched, producing "baby" alligators already at the size of the common reptile.

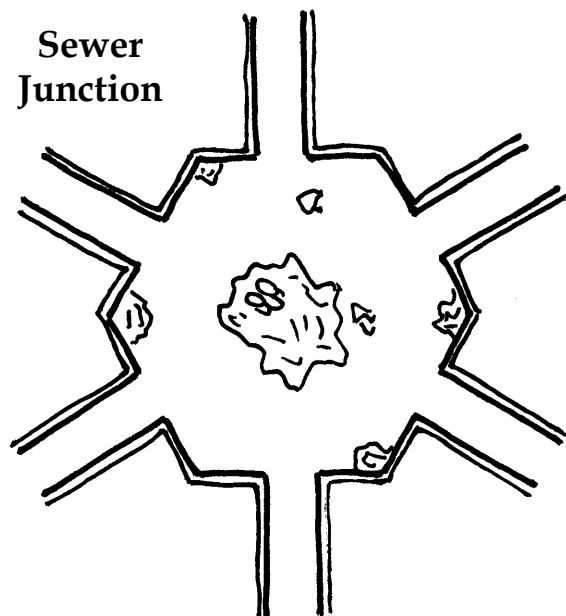
Gigantic Alligator, statistics: HD 6, AC3 [16], Atk 1 bite (3d6), 1 tail whip (1d6), MV 9/12 (swim), Save 11, AL N, CL/XP 6/400, Special: Swallow, tail whip, bonus to attack to defend eggs (add +1 TH near eggs or young)

(1d6) "Baby" Alligators, statistics: HD 1, AC5 [14], Atk 1 bite (1d6), MV 6/9 (swim), Save 17, AL N, CL/XP 1/15

Protecting her young is the alligator's initial focus. She will gain a bonus to attack when defending her eggs from characters. If she returns to her lair after the characters arrive, she will go into a frenzy to protect her young.

Each time the characters dive under the three feet of sewer water, they have a 5% chance to discover an item of value. See the table below for item options. Note that they have an equal chance to contract a disease.

| Sewer Water Dive—roll d12 | | |
|---------------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Roll | Common (odd) | Uncommon (even) |
| 1-2 | Comb | Short sword |
| 3-4 | 10' rope | Wine bottle, full |
| 5-6 | Lantern | 1d4 sp |
| 7-8 | Empty backpack | 1d4 gp |
| 9-10 | Leather boot | Magical potion |
| 11-12 | Dagger | Magical weapon |



Twist of the Knife

Adventure Background: A robbery of a prominent noblewoman in the street has sparked outrage among the wealthy community. However, the husband—a notable jewelry merchant—desires to hire an independent group of adventurers instead of enlisting the local guard. Rather than bringing the thief to justice, the merchant would prefer to have the rogue eliminated... forever. But is there more to the story than a simple robbery? Is the jeweled knife that was stolen an item of personal sentiment or just the exquisite work of a legendary artisan?

Adventure Summary

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| Adventure Difficulty: | Easy |
| Number of Characters: | 2-4 |
| Adventure Locale: | Any Town or City |

Adventure Start: Word of mouth of a private job has reached the character's ears. A talented thief has been tracked down to an abandoned building and needs to be eliminated, his goods returned to a local merchant.

The job seems simple enough. Enter the abandoned building and take down the thief any way possible. Find the jeweled knife, a family heirloom, and return it to the rich merchant for a significant reward. Anything else you find is yours to keep.

The small building has two floors and has only one viable entrance, a door in a back alley. The windows and front door are securely boarded up. Additionally, the main entrance is obstructed by a pile of debris.

Area 1: Back Door

Seven external locks line the edge of the door, each looking fairly complicated. A mat in front of the portal reads, "Beware!"

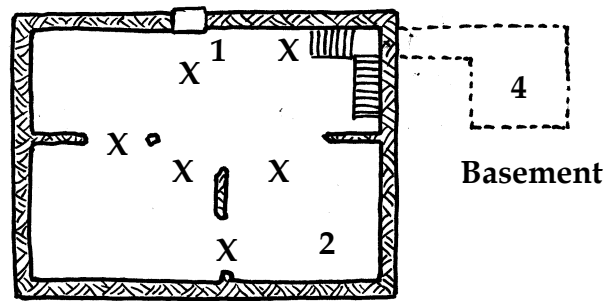
A pressure plate under the mat releases a dozen spikes up through the floor when the slightest of pressure is placed upon the straw and burlap step.

Mat Spike Trap, Damage: 1d4, roll under Dex to avoid

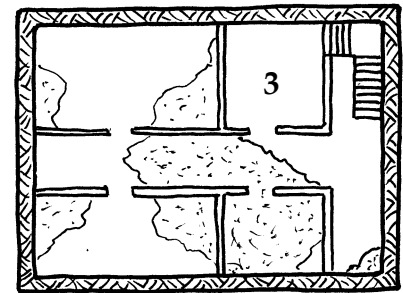
Only the middle lock in the line of devices is real; the other six are complicated structures that do nothing but sound a chime in the house to alert the thief to potential intruders.

Area 2: Decimated First Floor

Most of the walls to the first floor rooms have been torn down, leaving only a few support beams to hold up the second floor. Pieces of plaster and wood litter the area. Each map spot marked 'X' contains a bear trap when stepped upon, snaps around a foot and ankle.



First Floor



Second Floor

Bear Trap, Damage: 1d6, roll under Dex to avoid

Area 3: Empty Second Floor

Only one room of the top floor is accessible, the others having been filled with debris and garbage over many years. There is a sleeping mat and an empty leather bag near a stool holding three lit candles. The thief is hiding in the basement, waiting for the group to leave.

Area 4: Secret Basement

A secret trapdoor in the floor under the bottom two steps of the stairs leads to a small basement. Here, the rogue waits for unwanted guests to depart.

Fasando (rogue), statistics: HD/LVL 2, AC7 [12], Atk 1 dagger (1d4), MV 12, Save 16, AL N, CL/XP 3/60, Special: **potion of invisibility**, exceptional hiding skills

The dashing rogue will hope to avoid conflict, and will beg the group to hear his side of the story. He was given the knife by the noblewoman as a sentiment of her love, as they are having an affair. He claims the merchant, after finding out about the relationship, has made up the story of the robbery to eliminate the rogue. He will claim that the merchant has refused to allow the local guards to investigate the robbery because it was false. Fasando will give his belongings to the group if they let him go, but will not divulge the location of the knife (hidden elsewhere), even if threatened with death. If captured, he continues the ruse of the robbery for the sake of his love's reputation.

In a box in a secret hole in the wall, Fasando has saved **124 sp, 55 gp**, and a large ruby worth 500 gp. He hopes to run away with the noblewoman once things settle down or the merchant believes him dead.

Exterminators

Adventure Background: A grand summer home on the edge of the city has fallen into ruin, its true ownership disputed between two families. The two clans, related only through an unapproved marriage, have both claimed the title of the small yet exquisite retreat. While the dispute raged for nearly a decade, the home became unsuitable for habitation, filled with dirty and foul denizens. Now that the rightful ownership has been proved, the Vinklevoss family needs a group of stalwart heroes to enter and clear the structure of all the creatures who have made it their current home.

Adventure Summary

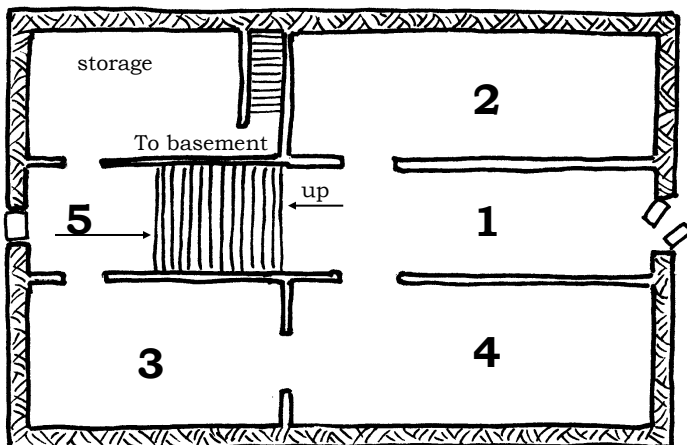
| | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Adventure Difficulty: | Easy |
| Number of Characters: | 3-6 |
| Adventure Locale: | City (summer home) |

Adventure Start: The characters have somehow learned of the job to clear out the two-story summer home at the edge of the city. A total reward of 1,000 gp is theirs if they can clear each room of the house of the vermin that run rampant through the structure. Additionally, a few brave thugs have entered and damaged or stolen several valuable items over the years.

The group is escorted to the home and left with instructions to return to the family when the job is done.

It is clear that this home was once a beautiful place. The years have been unkind to the exterior—paint has peeled, windows are broken, and the roof appears to have several holes. The gods only know what's living in this place now.

The structure can be entered through either the front or back doors. First floor windows are easily accessible as well. The front doors are ajar while the back door is firmly closed (but unlocked).



Area 1: Foyer

A wide entryway once held valuable paintings and marble sculptures created by talented artisans. Most have been ruined by weather or dampness and the sculptures are tipped over and broken upon the tile floors. Six one-foot holes, found where walls meet the floors, lead into the basement of the house. At the first sign of noise in the foyer, a **dozen giant rats** will pour through the tunnels into the area, hoping to find something to feed upon.

Giant Rats, statistics: HD 1d4hp, AC7 [12], Atk 1 bite (1d3), MV 12, Save 18, AL N, CL/XP A/5, Special: disease (10%)

Area 2: Sitting Area

The remains of six chairs and two long couches provide a hint to the room's former purpose. Ratty curtains surround wide windows, providing a view of the city below. A fireplace is filled with gray webs and old kindling. The room is otherwise empty.

A two-foot long **spider** resides in the fireplace. It enters the area only if the webs or firewood are disturbed. If a fire is started, it jumps down in a frenzy, biting any and all within the room.

Large Spider, statistics: HD 2+2, AC6 [13], Atk 1 bite (1d6 + poison), MV 18, Save 16, AL N, CL/XP 5/240, Special: poison

A pearl necklace is found camouflaged within the web. It is worth 500 gp.

Area 3: Kitchen

Shelves and cupboards are filled with decorated plates, glasses, and cutlery. The nearby pantry is filled with rotted food and supplies and is often visited by the giant cockroaches in area 4.

Area 4: Dining Room

With two broken legs, a massive dining table (once likely to sit a dozen or more guests) leans to one side. Several chairs have been knocked over and scattered. Dusty curtains have been pulled across the windows, darkening the area. **Eighteen giant cockroaches** have made a nest in the far corner and will investigate any sounds within the kitchen or this area.

(18) Giant Cockroaches, statistics: HD 1d4hp, AC5 [14], Atk 1 bite (1d2), MV 12, Save 18, AL N, CL/XP A/5 (for 3 creatures), Special: hardened exterior, resistant to fire, poison (better saving throw by 2)

A bag of 250 sp can be found in the insect's nest.

Area 5: Servant's Room (*under stairs*)

The door nearly falls off the hinges as it swings into the small, dark room. Sparse furnishings indicate a servant's bedroom. A skeleton, dressed in old, rotting cotton clothes, lies upon the broken bed. Nearby, an old wardrobe stands open and empty.

Vandals looted this room long ago, leaving the remains of the old servant where he died.

Area 6: Library

The characters can smell wet paper and mildew when they reach the top of the stairs, their senses likely to direct them to this room. Once a treasure trove of literature, history, and art books lined the shelves of the small library; in fact, it was a priceless collection of irreplaceable work. Rain from several holes in the ceiling have destroyed the majority of what remains. A thorough search may reveal a tome or two of some value. More importantly, a hollow book can be found after four hours of searching. Within, a key and small bag of 10 diamonds are found. The key opens the secret wall doors in area 8. The diamonds are all cut to the same size, each worth 100 gp.

Area 7: Guest Bedroom

A small bedroom for guests of the masters of the house lies in ruin. Puddles of water are fed from several holes in the ceiling and several stones from the fireplace have fallen into the room. **Four large vampire bats** live within the fireplace, entering the room when any noise is made here.

(4) Large Vampire Bats, statistics: HD 4, AC7 [12], Atk 1 bite (1d10), MV 4/18 (fly), Save 13, AL N, CL/XP 5/240, Special: drain blood, 10% disease

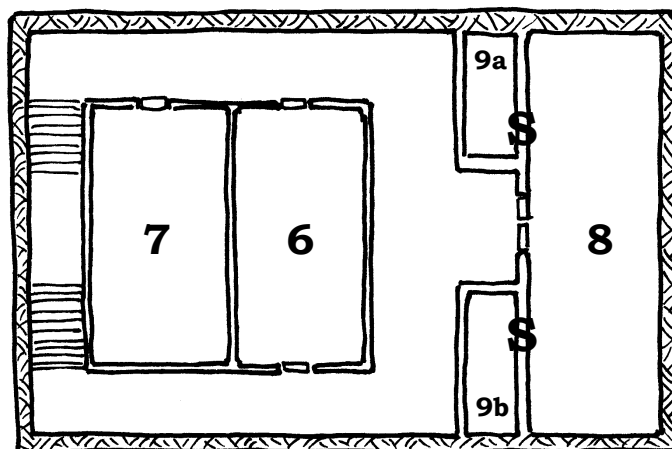
Area 8: Master Suite

Two doors open into a wide room, revealing a large four post bed, two dressers and two small chests. The lids of the chests have been flipped open. A large bulge under the covers of the bed can be seen.

The former owner's house **dog**—now rabid, diseased and deranged—is sleeping under the covers of his master's bed. It attacks once awake.

Rabid Hound Dog, statistics: HD 1, AC7 [12], Atk 1 bite (1d3), MV 15, Save 17, AL N, CL/XP 2/30, Special: 50% diseased bite

Several giant rat skeletons are found near the bed. The chests and dressers are empty. Two secret doors in the wall (shown on the map) lead to the former owner's stash of wealth. The key to open the doors can be found in area 6 in a hollow book.



Secret Door Check: found 1 in 8, 2 in 8 for elves

Area 9a, 9b: Secret Rooms

When the door slides into the wall, characters will see two small chests (9a) and a javelin mounted on the wall (9b). The chests contain most of the wealth of the former house owner. The first chest contains **1,255 sp**. The second chest holds **799 gp**. Magic will emanate from the javelin.

Javelin of Speed: Wielder always attacks first in a round. Can be thrown or used as a melee weapon, both with a +1 bonus to-hit.

The Vinklevoss family is aware of the hidden room and treasure and will suspect the characters if the area is found empty.

Basement

Rickety old stairs lead to the dirt floor basement beneath the summer home. The house servant stored dry goods, wine, and casks of beer at the bottom of the stairs. Nothing suitable for consumption remains.

Giant rats have made their home in the far end of the basement, having built a huge nest and dozens of tunnels within the house and to the surface above. Two dozen are found here, less now if some were encountered in the foyer above.

(24) Giant Rats, statistics: HD 1d4hp, AC7 [12], Atk 1 bite (1d3), MV 12, Save 18, AL N, CL/XP A/5, Special: disease (10%)

Fond of shiny little things, the giant rats have stored many coins, gems, and a few interesting items in their nest. **134 sp**, **49 gp**, and twelve rubies (10gp each) can be found after two hours of searching. Additionally, a **Potion of Heroism** and a **Flask of Exploding Flame** are found after another two hours of investigation.

Crooked Union Boss

Adventure Background: Dock workers have gone without pay for several weeks, their union boss claiming that the city merchants have refused to pay. Sloppy work, missing cargo, and fights with sailors are to blame. However, workers say these are false claims to stiff them of their hard-earned pay and that the union boss himself is holding the money back from them. Several enterprising workers have enlisted the help of the local thieves guild, hoping they'll steal their pay. Guild bosses would rather an outside group do their dirty work and have hired the characters to fetch the workers' pay.

Adventure Summary

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| Adventure Difficulty: | Easy to Moderate |
| Number of Characters: | 2-4 |
| Adventure Locale: | Alley (City) |

Adventure Start: After hiring the characters, the guild tells them that the union boss is moving the chest of money from his office to his home in the middle of the night. Unfortunately, he has hired a contingent of mercenaries to guard the transport. A secret message is delivered to the group as they wait nearby.

"The chest will be transported at midnight under heavy guard. There is only one place where the transport will be in the open, in an alley between two private buildings. Otherwise, the money will move underground, out of sight." [the location is indicated on a crude map]

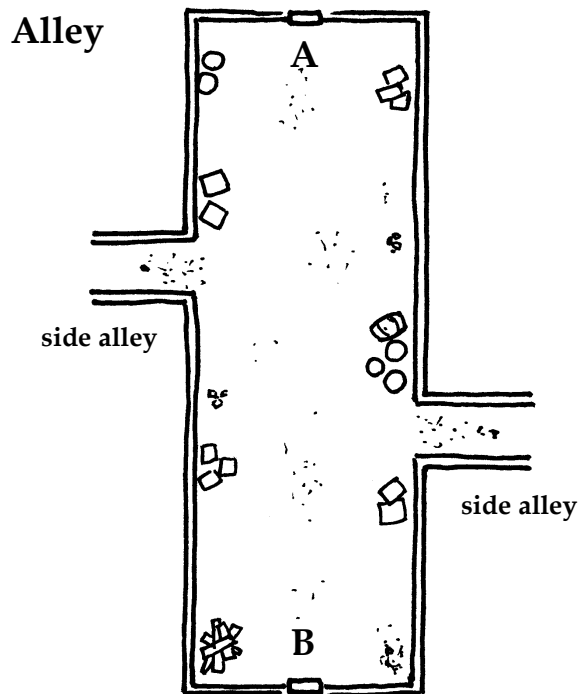
Alley Reconnaissance

A review of the alley will provide a few interesting details: 1) the roof tops above the alley are three stories above the ground, without any external ladders descending to the street; 2) the buildings to either side of the alley have no windows between the entry and exit points; 3) each of the entry and exit points (doors) are heavily locked with magical reinforcement; 4) the alley has several good hiding spots in and amongst trash barrels, piles of rubbish and other debris.

If the characters examine the alley beforehand, there is a chance that they'll run into some of the mercenaries who are also scouting the area.

Alley Meeting

A few minutes after midnight, the door in area A will unlock and open. Four well-armed mercenaries exit into the alley. After a cautious look around (and assuming the characters haven't attacked), the hired guards will motion for the rest of the group to enter the alley. If the characters attack as the door opens, the guards will retreat back to the building and relock the



door. Of course, if the characters manage to get inside, the battle continues within a large warehouse area (the GM to make a map as needed).

If all is clear, the entire group of 10 men and a large chest enter the alley, quickly making their way to area B on the map.

(8) Mercenaries (warriors), statistics: HD 3, AC7 [12], Atk 1 club (1d4) or bow (1d6), MV 12, Save 14, AL C, CL/XP 3/60 Special: 1-2 hired guards have ranged weapons

(2) Union Boss Guards, statistics: HD 4, AC6 [13], Atk 1 short sword (1d6), MV 12, Save 13, AL C, CL/XP 5/240 Special: **scroll of invisibility** (used on chest as last resort), fight to death protecting their boss's money

The chest is carried by four of the men but will be set down on the ground if an attack occurs. If four or more guards fall to the character's attacks, the remaining men will pick up the chest and flee to the nearest door (area A or B). If less than four men remain alive, the hired guards will drop the chest and flee, preferring to save themselves than die protecting wages. The chest is locked and trapped and contains 5,000 sp and 1,000 gp.

Optional Encounter

The Thieves Guild may try to double-cross the characters by planting an ambush to take down the group after they get the chest, steal it for themselves, and blame the characters for the lost money.

Disappearing Act

Adventure Background: During a store robbery, escaping criminals threw a magical brew at the feet of pursuing guards. Unfortunately, the adventurers were nearby as it happened and were affected by the same mysterious spell. The armor and weapons of both the guards and adventurers instantly vanished! As the thieves ran away, one clumsy fool dropped a simple parchment to the street. A crude map on the paper describes the location of the thieves' hideout.

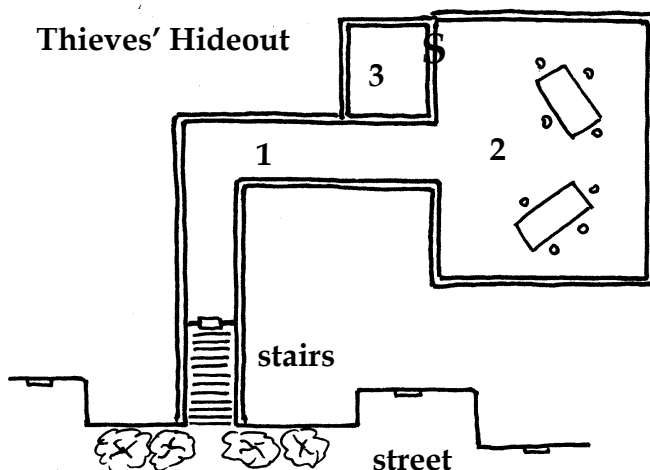
Adventure Summary

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| Adventure Difficulty: | Easy to Moderate |
| Number of Characters: | 3-5 |
| Adventure Locale: | Any Town or City |

Adventure Start: The adventurers are walking down a city street when the robbery spills out into the area.

You are making your way through the busy street when your attention is drawn to a loud commotion near a gem merchant's shop. Six masked men burst out into the lane with four heavily armored guards on their heels. Just as the guards reach your location, one of the masked men throws a small vial at their feet. A cloudy explosion temporarily dazes you and when the smoke clears, you realize that your armor and weapons are gone! The guards also stand perplexed, missing their gear as well!

As the thieves disappear around a corner, the adventurers should see a parchment fall from the trailing rogues' back pocket. If the group tries to follow the thieves through the busy streets, they will lose their trail. However, the dropped parchment has a crude map showing the location of their hideout, obviously drawn by one of the dimwitted fools. It also illustrates the merchant shop location and the escape route to get back to the hideout.



Thieves' Hideout

The map leads you to a set of short steps to a door below ground level, well hidden by shrubbery. The door has but a single handle.

Of course, the door is locked and trapped. Any use of the handle before the trap is disarmed will ring a bell within the hideout. Two pins, one at the top and the other at the bottom of the door, lock the portal in place.

Door Lock check: as Thieves abilities or 1 in 20

Disarm Trap check: as Thieves abilities

Area 1: Guarded Corner

If the door trap was disarmed, then this area will have a dozing guard in a chair just around the corner. Even the slightest of noise awakens the rogue.

Awaken Guard check: as Thieves abilities

The guard's stats are the same as those listed in Area 2. If the alarm was raised, the guard will be in Area 2 waiting with the rest.

Area 2: Main Hideout Chamber

If alerted to intruders, five thieves will have flipped over the two tables in this room and readied their crossbows. They will get first round surprise.

(4 or 5) Thieves, statistics: HD/LVL 2, AC7 [12], Atk 1 crossbow (1d6+1) or dagger (1d4), MV 12, Save 16, AL C, CL/XP 3/60 Special: poison tipped crossbow bolts

The leader of the group will be hidden in Area 3, surprising intruders with a backstab when the opportunity presents itself.

Orvanz, leader of the thieves, statistics: HD/LVL 4+1, AC6 [13], Atk 1 **short sword +1** (1d6+1), MV 12, Save 13, AL C, CL/XP 5/240

If the characters have successfully snuck in, they will find all five thieves (Orvanz and four minions) sitting at the tables counting the gems stolen from the merchant shop. They will engage with daggers and swords.

There are hundreds of diamonds, rubies, and emeralds on the tables, all stolen from the merchant.

Area 3: Secret Chamber

Find Secret Door check: 1 in 6, or 2 in 6 for elves

All of the gear from the characters and guards teleported by the magical potion will be found in this secret area. Additionally, the characters will find **1,100 gp** and **3,750 sp** in several sacks. There is a 50% chance that 1d4 magical items are also found in the area. There are no more magical "disappearing" vials left.

Test of the Warrior

Adventure Background: An ancient, petrified tree stands in the center of a city park with a blue war axe lodged in its hardened trunk. Any warrior that removes the axe summons a powerful Titan to battle the wielder, involving all within 100 feet of the spot. City residents avoid the area, knowing that they may get drawn into the Titan's wrath once summoned. The axe is a powerful artifact, only relinquished to a worthy warrior.

Adventure Summary

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| Adventure Difficulty: | Very Hard |
| Number of Characters: | Any number |
| Adventure Locale: | Park (City) |

Adventure Start: Adventurers hear of the powerful artifact or happen upon it while moving through the city park.

A blue, short-hafted war axe is half sunk into an enormous, petrified tree in the center of the city park. The tree looks to be hundreds of years old, but the axe looks freshly made, clean of any rust or decay.

Detect Magic or like spells will immediately indicate that the axe is both magical and powerful. Any attempt by an adventurer that is not of a warrior class will fail to remove the axe from the tree. However, any character with a warrior class or subclass will be able to remove the axe from the tree with ease.

Once the axe is removed from the tree, the character will feel a rush of power through his or her body, as the axe's effects take hold. As this happens, the tree begins to change shape, twisting into a humanoid figure of gargantuan size.

Your hands pulse with energy and your heart races as you grasp the mighty weapon. Images of a barbarian locked in battle with frost giants flood your mind as your hands tighten around the haft of the heavy axe. The barbarian wields the same weapon as he cleaves through several giants, staining the snowy field red with blood.

The character holding the axe will unlikely see the tree transformation, as they reel in the visions of a barbarian slaying tough foes. However, their companions will clearly see the 50-foot tall Titan forming, looming over their friend.

After two rounds, the tree completes its transformation into a massive Titan and attacks whoever is holding the axe. If the axe has been dropped, the Titan retrieves it and changes back to its original state, a tree with an axe wedged into its side.

Titan, statistics: HD 19, AC0 [19], Atk 2 stomps (4d6), MV 21, Save 3, AL N, CL/XP 21/4700 Special: Spells (*Lightning Bolt, Polymorph Self, Suggestion, Cloudkill, Teleport, Anti-magic Shell, Disintegrate, Power Word Stun, Polymorph Object*), each spell cast once per day

The axe wielder must break free of the war-ravaged hallucinations before the Titan attacks. They will be defenseless until they return to the present situation. Any who oppose the Titan within a 100-foot radius will be subjected to its attacks and spells.

Break Hallucinations: roll under 1/2 Wisdom

If the Titan is defeated (*final blow*) by any other than the axe wielder, the Titan returns to the petrified tree state with the war axe, ripping it from the warrior's hands and embedding it into the trunk as it was before. However, any damage by others before the final blow is dealt by the war axe allows the wielder to keep the axe.

If properly defeated, the Titan will relinquish the artifact to the warrior. The test has been passed and the axe is theirs to keep. The massive creature returns to its petrified tree state and never transforms again.

"Coldcleave", War Axe (artifact): must be used by a warrior; confers a bonus to-hit and damage vs. all creatures, enhanced to-hit bonus for giant and larger creatures; adds additional cold damage to warm-blooded creatures; wielder is resistant to cold damage; wielder takes half damage from giant or larger humanoids; *each time the war axe is handled by a warrior, they must make a check against the hallucinations of the axe's past (the wielder will see hundreds of battles where the axe was used). If they fail, they will be in a defenseless state until their next turn, where they must again try to break free of the hallucinations. Note that if the axe is put down then picked up by the same warrior, they must still pass the check again.*



Coldcleave

To-hit bonus:
+2, +3 vs. giants and larger
Damage:
1d10 + 2, or 1d10 + 2d4 for warm-blooded creatures

Circus of Chaos

Adventure Background: After months of failures, an evil sorcerer has finally mastered the spells to create unique and exotic creatures. He has chosen a nearby town at random and plans to unleash the bizarre creatures upon the townsfolk. His circus enters the town, promising fun and excitement for one and all!

Adventure Summary

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| Adventure Difficulty: | Moderate to Hard |
| Number of Characters: | 4-6 |
| Adventure Locale: | Any Town or City |

Adventure Start: For days, the characters have heard about a circus making its way to the city. When it arrives, they are on the street with the townsfolk, watching the slow procession of bizarre creatures.

Dozens of carts filled with strange creatures, supplies, and workers slowly roll through the main street of the city. Townsfolk squeal with glee and excitement as each new cart enters the gates. After the final wagon enters the town, the circus-master aboard the middle cart momentarily halts the train. After a pause to make sure all are listening, he smiles. "Release them!", he yells and the doors to all the animal carts open!

The characters will see creatures jumping from the six animal carts, attacking the first prey they spot.

Bizarre Circus Creatures

| Creature | Size | Key Features |
|---------------|------|---------------------------------------|
| Llamacorn (2) | M | Llama body, horn on head |
| Spoad (1) | M | Toad body and head, spider legs |
| Dorse (1) | L | Horse body, dragon head |
| Oxbolds (8) | S | Kobold body, oxen heads |
| Gnabbits (8) | S | Rabbit body, hands and head of gnolls |
| Dogilla (1) | M | Dog head on a gorilla body |

The humanoid creatures can wield weapons

The order of the creatures listed in the table above can be used for cart order. Each cart is ten feet in length and is separated by supply and worker wagons (no two animal carts are next to each other).

Most of the animal handlers and circus workers are non-combatants. However they defend themselves if attacked. None of them knew of the sorcerer's plans.

(2) Llamacorns, statistics: HD 3, AC8 [11], Atk 1 bite (1d4) or 1 kick (1d6), MV 15, Save 14, AL N, CL/XP 3/60, Special: cross between llama and unicorn, horn attack (charge for 1d8 damage)

(1) Giant Spoad, statistics: HD 4, AC5 [14], Atk 1 bite (1d6 + poison), MV 6/12 (jump), Save 13, AL C, CL/XP 6/400, Special: cross between spider and toad

(1) Dorse, statistics: HD 6, AC3 [16], Atk 1 bite (1d12), 1 kick (1d6), MV 15, Save 11, AL N, CL/XP 8/600, Special: cross between wingless dragon and horse, breathes fire

(8) Oxbolds, statistics: HD 2, AC7 [12], Atk 1 gore (1d4) or weapon, MV 9, Save 16, AL C, CL/XP 3/60, Special: cross between kobolds and oxen

(8) Gnabbits, statistics: HD 1+1, AC7 [12], Atk 1 bite (1d4) or 1 jump attack (1d4), MV 6/12 (jump), Save 17, AL C, CL/XP 1/15, Special: cross between gnolls and rabbits

(1) Dogilla, statistics: HD 2+2, AC6 [13], Atk 1 strike (1d6), 1 bite (1d4), MV 9, Save 16, AL N, CL/XP 2/30, Special: cross between dog and gorilla, hug attack (successful strike, auto damage next turn)

The creatures will attack easy prey first, targeting unarmored and weaponless townsfolk as they flee. Only the Giant Spoad will stop to consume their prey before finding the next victim. The others will continue to attack new targets as they appear.

None of the creatures fight to the death, preferring to flee into the city or back through the gates if they become severely injured. Jordanis, the evil sorcerer and creator of this madness, cannot control his creatures. He can destroy them with spells if they turn on him.

"Jordanis", evil Sorcerer, statistics: HD/LVL 5, AC8 [11], Atk spells only, MV 12, Save 12, AL C, CL/XP 7/600, Special: Spells (*Charm Person, Magic Missile, Shield, Sleep, Detect Invisibility, Web, Hold Person*)

Jordanis carries a broken artifact that assists him in his creature creation. The details of the **Rod of Mutations** are listed below. The rest of Jordanis' treasure including his spellbook, scrolls, and potions is found back at his lair (10 miles away).

Most of the supply wagons are empty, added to the wagon train purely for show. The workers and handlers have nothing of value.

Rod of Mutations: Each charge of the rod can be used to combine two creatures into a single being. Unfortunately, the artifact is damaged and only has a small chance of success each time used (10% or GM discretion). The rod has five charges left.

Submerged Temple of Atha'al

Adventure Background: An ancient temple lies submerged in the middle of a city park lake, hidden from residents for years. What seems to be a small island in the water is really the base of an inverted monument; the top of the shrine is deep below the surface. As with all the temples of Atha'al (*found in Excursions 17, 39, and 59*), the holy place hides a powerful artifact from non-believers.

Adventure Summary

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| Adventure Difficulty: | Very Hard |
| Number of Characters: | 4-6 |
| Adventure Locale: | City (park) |

Adventure Start: Perhaps the heroes have tracked down the last temple of Atha'al or maybe they have stumbled upon the strange, upside down shrine in the lake. Either way, the adventure starts in the city park by the fresh water pool.

The wide lake in the city park has but a single island at its center, with reeds and tall grass covering it completely. From your vantage point, two things are immediately noticeable: how deep the pool seems and the fact that the lake-island seems rather square.

A merchant nearby rents boats for a few silver an hour to those seeking a quiet row about the lake. Characters may swim the fifty feet from shore to island if they prefer. The pond is over sixty feet deep at its center and is filled with large fish and various aquatic plants. The water stays extremely cold year round, even in the summer months, keeping most residents from swimming its depths. If the sun strikes the water just right, the characters may see the silhouette of the inverted pyramid from the surface of the water.

The Island

Covered in sandy dirt, the thirty-foot wide island is home to many birds; ducks, pheasants, and turkeys make their nests in the tall grass, easily avoiding the natural predators found in the park. Dozens of eggs can be found with just a few minutes of searching.

If the characters dig down two feet in the exact center of the island, they will uncover a trapdoor leading into the shrine. A rusted padlock keeps the door locked, but in its current deteriorating state, is easy to break off the door. Once the trapdoor is opened, some water from below the dirt may seep into the opening.

Break Padlock Check: Open Doors (Strength)
Unlock Padlock Check: as Thieves Abilities

A corroded, iron rung ladder leads down into the temple to Area 1. There is a slight chance that one or more iron rungs pull out of the wall as they are used.

Iron Rung Failure Check: 1 in 12, or 1 in 10 elves

The Lake

Fresh and clear cold water feeds the lake from deep below the ground. Several varieties of fish and plants grow within the clean water source. In times of drought, the lake is used for drinking as it is always replenished from an unknown place deep within the earth.

The exterior of the temple is protected by a massive **serpent** who slumbers below the lake. It only awakens if the temple exterior is touched or manipulated for more than a minute or two. Touching the exterior walls below the surface of the lake once or twice fails to awaken the creature. Walking on the island will not summon the beast but opening the trapdoor will. Burrowing up through the sediment at the bottom of the lake, the serpent emerges to destroy that which disturbs the temple, using its several tentacles to grasp and crush foes.

Lake Serpent, statistics: HD 15, AC6 [13], Atk 1 bite (2d12), MV 0/20 (swim), Save 3, AL N, CL/XP 16/3200, Special: swallow (natural 20 bite attacks)

The lake serpent resembles a sea kraken or giant octopus except that it has but a single, cyclopean eye. It fights to the death to protect the temple.

The Temple

To characters navigating the temple halls, it should feel like the structure was once right side up before being placed in the lake upside down. Doorways, stairs, and furniture are completely inverted within the space within the temple. Its interior is free of lake water until characters open one of the three exterior doors (Area 1, 3 and 5).

Area 1: Base Entry

After the temple was moved to its current location in the lake, the trapdoor was added to the base for access by Atha'al acolytes and priests if needed. The iron rungs descend to the bottom floor of the temple (now its highest point), lowering the characters to the ceiling of the area. Ending at the midway point, characters must jump from the rungs the last seven feet. The area spans the entire width of the temple base, reaching forty feet across near the top but sloping to a smaller size (thirty feet) near what would have been the ceiling. Dozens of sarcophagi are bolted to the upper portion of the room near and around the trapdoor.

If the lids are pried from the coffins, they will fall to the opposite side of the room. The remains of Atha'al high priests are strapped to the bottom of their sarcophagi and will not fall out unless released from their straps. Each high priest has several silver and gold rings, each worth one to two hundred gold pieces.

Broken, inverted stairs begin to descend down into the next area. They end a few feet below the level.

Area 2: Second Level

Characters will find another burial chamber on this level but with only five stone coffins fixed to the ceiling. Exiting the upper level into this area will take some ingenuity as there are no ladders or stairs at the upper exit point. Stairs to the next level below are on the opposite side of the room. Any movement within the room will dimly illuminate ten fixed light globes, reverse suspended from the floor (once the ceiling). Light triggers the current occupants of the five sarcophagi; **five ethereal shades** will slowly emerge from their lengthy slumber. They exit one by one, with the next following 1d10 rounds after the previous shade.

Ethereal Shades, statistics: HD 4+4, AC3 [16], Atk 1 strike (1d8), MV 6, Save 13, AL C, CL/XP 5/240, Special: immune to non-magical weapons, Strength drain

Each former arch-priest of Atha'al was buried with a powerful magical item, found within their stone coffin. The GM can add the items randomly or as desired.

Area 3: External Hatch (also use for Area 5)

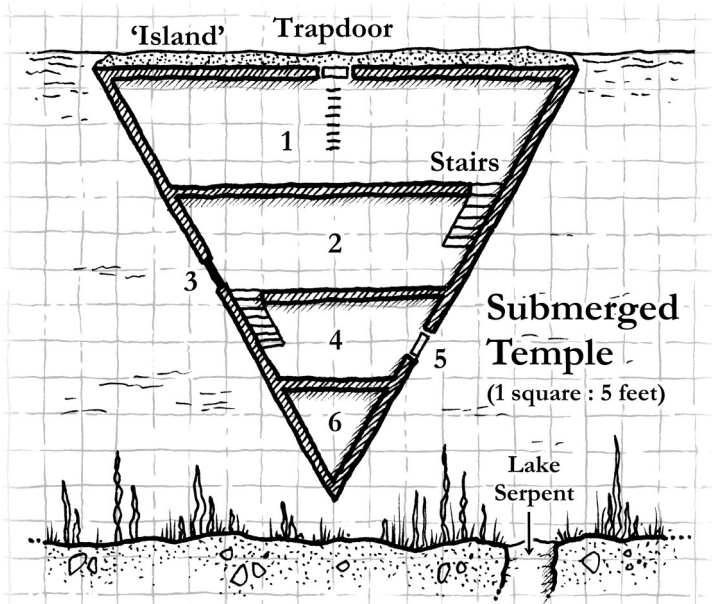
A single window in the wall of this chamber has been magically locked to prevent water from the lake from entering the inverted temple. If opened, water will rush into the temple, immediately draining to its lowest level. If left open, it will fill the temple up to this point in 2 hours. The window is wide enough to allow access.

Unlock Magical Window Check: with magic only

Area 4: Third Level

Several rows of low benches are fixed to the ceiling, all facing an inverted idol of Atha'al, the two-headed god of justice and equality. One face of the idol appears kind, the other cruel. Any who enter this area (even invisibly) will awaken the statue. Its two sets of eyes will burn red and gold as the idol animates. The aspect of Atha'al will not move from its base but can use its heads and arms as needed to attack intruders.

Aspect of Atha'al, statistics: HD 12, AC0 [19], Atk fire (2d6), lightning (2d6), MV 0, Save 3, AL N, CL/XP 15/2900, Special: automatic to-hit fire and lightning attacks, successful saving throw for half damage



With its eyes, it targets intruders with magical fire (red eyes) and lightning (gold eyes). These effects even work under water. From its hands, it can spew two-headed flying snakes at a rate of two per combat round. Neither the snakes or the idol will attack characters wearing any of the Atha'al artifacts. Attacks will cease if characters leave the area.

Flying, Two-headed Snakes, statistics: HD 1, AC7 [12], Atk 2 bites (1d2 + poison), MV 3/15 (fly), Save 17, AL N, CL/XP 2/30, Special: water-breathing, 2 attacks

Area 6: Fourth Level

The small area at the bottom of the submerged temple holds the most powerful of the Atha'al artifacts: *Atha'al's Headpiece*. A glass display case holds the pristine black and white, tall hat, keeping it from the dirt, grime, and water possibly found within the ancient temple. The case is magically sealed and filled with an invisible gas. When the case is opened, it fills the area (unless it is underwater) with a powerful agent that kills any not wearing an Atha'al artifact (save allowed).

Save versus Gas: Saving Throw

If a character is wearing all four Atha'al artifacts, there is a strong chance that the god will appear to them within the next week. The GM should plan an encounter accordingly. Additionally, the GM may want to add more effects from the artifacts when all four are worn.

Atha'al's Headpiece: Tall, black and white priest hat. Split colors down the middle (left side black, right side white). Gives wearer all available reversible Cleric spells as if the wearer was a high-level Cleric. Note that only spells that have a help/harm reversible effect are bestowed upon the wearer. The wearer of the hat may cast one of each spell per day (not one of each reversible type).

Game of Shadows

Adventure Background: A unique board game has changed hands, passing from a hooded traveler to a prominent merchant. Hoping that he could make a tidy profit from the wondrous game, the merchant opened the wooden box to count its pieces. After handling the ornate stone figurines, a terrible thing happened—some of the figurines came to life!

| Adventure Summary | |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| Adventure Difficulty: | Any |
| Number of Characters: | 2-4 |
| Adventure Locale: | City (store) |

Adventure Start: The characters should hear a commotion coming from within the store as they near its location. Patrons will be seen running out of the shop, some bloody or injured.

Your casual walk through the busy street of merchants and shoppers is interrupted as fearful shouts and screams erupt from a nearby oddities store. Several townsfolk burst through the front door of the store, running for their lives! Two or three of the store patrons are stumbling out, with arrows protruding from their shoulders or arms.

The Oddities Store

A set of narrow, swinging doors allows access to the small store. Tall and wide windows on either side of the entrance display several strange and interesting items for sale, ranging from ornate wooden chests to shrunken kobold heads. The interior of the cluttered shop is well-lit with ceiling lanterns and the sunlight that streams through the large windows.

If the characters look in the windows, they will see several shadowy figures with bows jumping around the area, firing at each other and shoppers. A dozen customers are cowering behind casks, displays, and tables as arrows zip through the air. The merchant is hidden from the characters' sight, squatted down below the sales desk at the back of the store. An ornate box and game board are sitting atop the desk with several marble figurines scattered about the wooden playing surface.

A perceptive eye will notice that each of the shadowy figures wears a thin sash of either red or blue. It appears that the two groups are fighting each other.

Spot Color Sash Check: roll under Wisdom

As the characters enter, the merchant will start to attempt to push the board game away from his desk. If the game falls on the floor, the number and type of shadowy figures may change.

Any figurine that lands on the game board comes to life (even if the piece is lying down), entering the store area in relatively the same location as on the board. For example, if a piece lands on the edge of the board, it appears at the edge of the store (same side as the board). Note that the shadowy figures know that other pieces added to the board may increase their numbers. They will try to knock pieces onto the board when they are close to the game.

| Table A—Possible Board Changes—roll 1d20 | | |
|--|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Roll | Event | Outcome—roll on Table B |
| 1-2 | Board Kicked | Pieces removed |
| 3-4 | Board Bumped | Pieces added and removed |
| 5-6 | Board Flipped | Pieces removed x2 |
| 7-8 | Board Stepped On | Pieces removed |
| 9-10 | Pieces Bumped | Pieces added |
| 11-20 | Pieces Put on Board | Pieces added x2 |

| Table B—Game Piece Figurines—roll d20 | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Roll | Game Piece Color | Game Piece Type |
| 1-4 | Red | (1-2) Archers |
| 5-8 | Blue | (1-2) Archers |
| 9-12 | Red | (1-2) Swordsmen |
| 13-16 | Blue | (1-2) Swordsmen |
| 17-18 | Red | (1-2) Axemen |
| 19-20 | Blue | (1-2) Axemen |

Only when all the pieces are removed from the board and returned to their holding trays will the encounter cease. Until then, the shadowy figures will fight with a figure of the opposite sash color or any that intercede. Damage dealt by a shadowy board piece to another appears to be minimal. However characters and townsfolk take real damage.

Archers, statistics: HD 1, AC7 [12], Atk 1 bow (1d6), MV 3, Save 17, AL N, CL/XP 1/15, Special: +2 bonus to-hit at close range

Swordsmen, statistics: HD 1, AC5 [14], Atk 1 longsword (1d8), MV 3, Save 17, AL N, CL/XP 1/15, Special: better armor class

Axemen, statistics: HD 1, AC6 [13], Atk 1 hand axe (6 damage), MV 3, Save 17, AL N, CL/XP 2/30, Special: deals maximum axe damage (6 points)

The magical game has five of each piece in each color for a total of 30 pieces. The board is made of an unknown wood from a distant land. Each figurine is exquisitely cut from beautiful marble.

A Hole in the Floor

Adventure Background: A purple worm and its young have been burrowing deep beneath the city for weeks. Recently, the group of worms detected prey above their location and began hunting the lowest levels of the city. The catacombs, sewers, and abandoned warrens have been scoured for living things. Sensing even more prey, the worms are moving upward to the surface above.

Adventure Summary

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Adventure Difficulty: | Hard |
| Number of Characters: | Any number |
| Adventure Locale: | Any building (City) |

Adventure Start: This adventure can start in any location the characters are currently at. It can be a shop, tavern, or even the street.

The ground begins to tremble as if something below your feet is moving. You are able to spring away just as a five-foot hole erupts in the ground where you were standing seconds ago. Six ten-foot long purplish worms begin to crawl out of the hole, seeking the slowest of scattering prey.

(6) Purple Wormlings, statistics: HD 3, AC6 [13], Atk bite (1d6), 1 sting (1d4 + poison), MV 9, Save 14, AL N, CL/XP 4/120

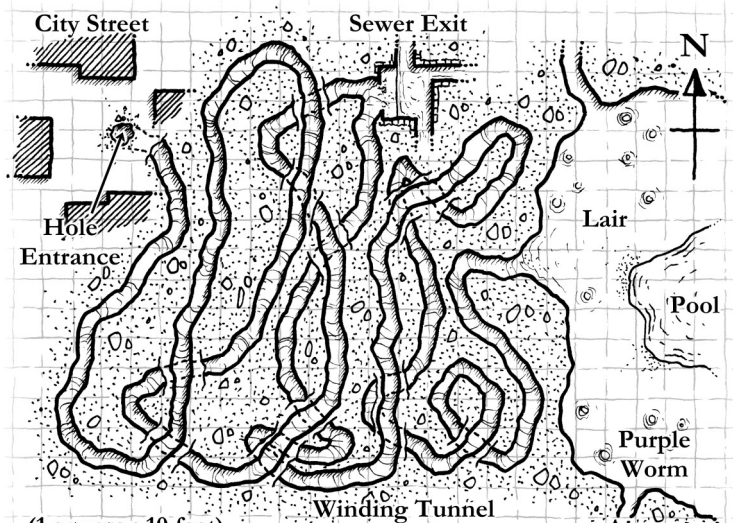
The purple wormlings will attack anything that tries to flee from the hole. Grasping victims in their large mouths, they will drag their prey back into the hole and to their lair to feed in relative safety. Their mother, a full-sized purple worm, rests in their lair. Any wormlings that take more than half their damage will flee back to their mother.

Hole Entrance

Although the hole is wide enough to enter, it is a dangerously steep descent through the winding tunnel made by the wormlings. There is a chance that clumsy characters may slip and fall in the descent unless they have aid (rope, magical means, etc.).

Avoid falling, check: roll under Dexterity
Damage from fall: 1d6 x 1d4 (10-40 feet)

The tunnel winds several hundred feet, changing directions and slopes frequently. About halfway between the surface and the lair below, an opening in the tunnel exits into the city sewer. Characters that exit in this section will find a deserted sewer system, void of all life. Large rats and other foul things that normally populate a sewer system have already been hunted and eaten.



Lair of the Purple Worm Mother

Lair of the Purple Worm Mother

As the tunnel evens out, it opens into a massive cavern far below the surface of the city. Stalactites and stalagmites fill the natural cavern. Dozens of openings to other carved passages can be seen leading in many directions. A large pool of water in the center of the cavern seems naturally made. Water steadily drips from the ceiling into the pool. The wide pool is roughly fifty feet in diameter.

If the characters have been chasing the purple wormlings down the tunnel, they will see them crossing the cavern in front of them as they exit the sloping passage from the surface. The small worms seem to be racing toward to a large rock formation at the far end of the chamber. When the first wormling reaches the other end, the formation moves, revealing it to be a massive purple worm! After the wormling drops its victim, the gargantuan beast swallows the stunned villager in one bite.

Purple Worm Mother, statistics: HD 15, AC6 [13], Atk 1 bite (2d12), 1 tail sting (1d8 + poison), MV 9, Save 3, AL N, CL/XP 17/3500, Special: swallow (on natural 20 to-hit roll), burrowing, tail sting (poison)

The protective mother first targets foes that are trying to hurt her young. Any characters that get in her way will get attacked and swallowed. She is a massive creature that is a challenge for most groups to eliminate.

Dozens of piles of purple worm excrement are found throughout the cavern. A thorough search of all the piles should uncover **5d100 sp**, **5d20 gp**, a few normal weapons, and 2 magical items: a **Belt of Ogre Strength** and a **Rod of Absorption**.

Slum Shakedown

Adventure Background: Businesses within the city slums have grown tired of the “protection” payments demanded by a group of local thugs. Unable to get the attention of the city watch in their unpleasant section of the city, the business owners have put out a request for help from a group of adventurers who may not care about breaking a few laws. The thugs need to be dealt with...permanently.

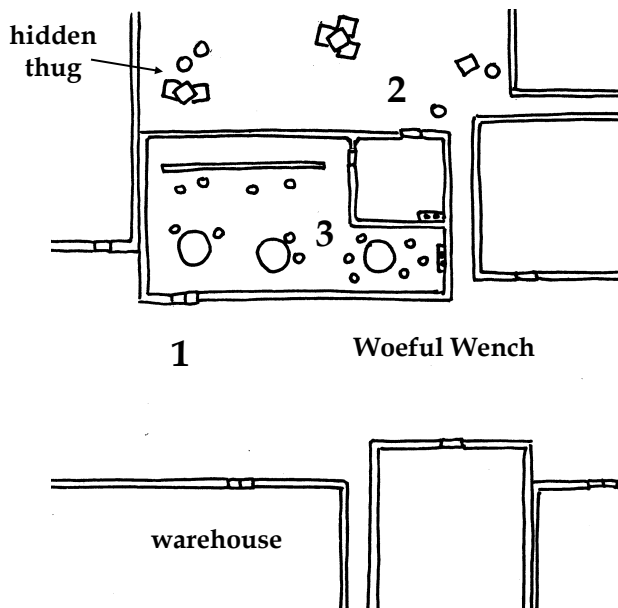
| Adventure Summary | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| Adventure Difficulty: | Easy |
| Number of Characters: | 2-5 |
| Adventure Locale: | Any Town or City |

Adventure Start: Through word of mouth, the group hears about a job to eliminate a group of thugs in the city slums. After a meeting with the businessmen (and agreeing on a fee, somewhere between 500 and 1,000 gp), the group is asked to surprise the thugs as they meet with the business owners at a run-down tavern.

The business owners have requested that you enter the Woeful Wench tavern precisely at 6 pm. By then, all of the thugs should have arrived at the pre-arranged meeting.

Three of the owners will meet with the adventurers the morning of the sit-down, happy to answer any questions they can about the area and thugs. They expect to see all six thugs and their boss, Gorbo the Great at the meeting. A description of the tavern and the surrounding streets can be given to the players on request.

The best way to run this scenario for players is to treat it like an action movie. Have each character engage one or two thugs in various parts of the tavern.



The Woeful Wench Tavern

There are two visible entrances to the tavern. The front door off the main street and the back door through the kitchen leading to the alley. Review the floor plan map to find where each thug is hiding during the encounter.

Area 1: Front Entrance

A burly thug stands at the front entrance, persuading patrons to find another place for a drink. He’s to ensure that no one enters the tavern while the meeting takes place.

Common Thug, statistics (use for all): HD 1+1, AC7 [12], Atk 1 club (1d4+1), MV 12, Save 17, AL C, CL/XP 2/30

He calls out for help if he’s outnumbered or realizes he’s in trouble.

Area 2: Back Entrance

Like the front entrance, a single thug maintains watch on the rear exit, allowing no one entry during the meeting. An additional thug (with two hand crossbows) hides in the shadows (see map), ready to assist as necessary.

Area 3: Tavern Interior

The tavern has been emptied of all non-essential occupants. Only the eight business owners, Gorbo the Great, three thugs, a bartender, and a serving girl are present. If any unknown individual enters the tavern during the meeting, Gorbo has his thugs escort them out to the street, most likely with excessive force.

Gorbo the Great is a savvy crime boss, combining above-average intellect and brawn to propel himself to a position of leadership over other ruthless yet incapable thugs in the slums. His group collects nearly 1,000 gp per month in “protection” money. He has indicated that the cost of protection is going up. He is irritated that the business owners have called for a meeting to discuss the rising costs of his protection. He is indulging their pleas for the moment but has no intention of lessening the fees or leaving them as is.

“Gorbo the Great”, leader of the thugs, statistics: HD 5, AC7 [12], Atk 1 dagger +1 (1d4+1 + poison), MV 9, Save 12, AL C, CL/XP 6/400

Although his thugs will protect him initially, if the situation becomes one-sided (characters prevailing), the thugs will flee, leaving their boss to fight or negotiate for his life (he has money back at his hideout). Unless he is permanently eliminated, he will eventually return to his protection racket and oppression of the city slums.

Mystery at the Mausoleum

Adventure Background: Watchmen swear they can hear the dead move within the city mausoleum at all times of the day and night, but when they enter the large structure, all appears to be quiet. They've hatched a plan to determine once and for all what's making the noise within although none of them are brave enough to undertake the task. They need courageous heroes to help solve the mystery at the mausoleum!

Adventure Summary

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| Adventure Difficulty: | Easy to Moderate |
| Number of Characters: | 2-4 |
| Adventure Locale: | City Mausoleum |

Adventure Start: Characters are likely to hear the rumors of the dead moving about the mausoleum and a reward for solving the mystery at several taverns and inns within the city. A quick meeting with the crypt watchmen will reveal their plan and reward.

Each of the three shift watchmen swears they have heard movement within the aboveground cemetery, but have never actually seen anything within. Their plan is to send you into the mausoleum in caskets and have you wait for noise. You should spring out of the coffins to find what is happening. You will receive 250 gp for solving the mystery. The watchmen ask that you not steal from the dead.

Several **Dust Mephits** have recently made the mausoleum their home while they steal from the caskets and coffins within the structure. At various points during the day, one or more Mephits will emerge from their hiding spots to try to open a sealed tomb or burial drawer to steal the riches of the dead buried within.

The Plan

Each character will get loaded into a casket with an unsealed lid and deposited at various locations within the main chamber. At any time, the characters may exit their casket. However, exiting before the Dust Mephits are out in the open will alert the elemental creatures to the plan. After that, they will be more cautious before appearing again. Some characters may become claustrophobic within their casket—a check should be made for each character to avoid rising panic and a potential early exit from the casket.

Claustrophobia, check: roll under 1/2 Wisdom

If the characters wait and exit when the noises start, they will likely catch one or two Dust Mephits as they attempt to open one of the tombs within the mausoleum. Their ability to reshape as a thin layer of dust

makes it easy for the dust elemental creatures to enter small places and hide from foes. If they are caught trying to break into a tomb, they will summon the rest of their group and attack the characters.

(6) Dust Mephits, statistics: HD 2, AC5 [14], Atk 2 claws (1d2), MV 12/20 (fly), Save 16, AL C, CL/XP 3/60

The Mausoleum

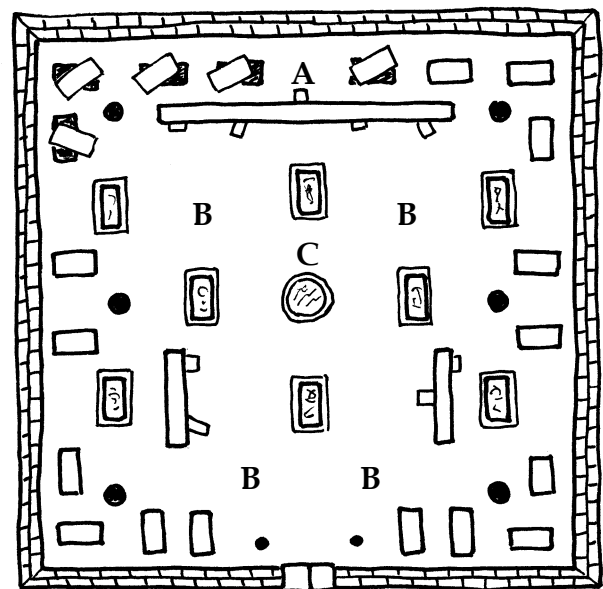
There are over five dozen caskets, coffins, stone tombs, and wall burial slots within the large structure. The watchmen will place the characters in various locations (**areas B** on the map) of the mausoleum floor unless characters ask to be kept together. If together, they will be placed in the middle of the room (**area C**).

The Dust Mephits use **area A** on the map as the hiding spot for their stolen loot. Hundreds of silver and gold coins, rings, necklaces, earrings, bracelets, and other valuable personal items are found in a small pile in the empty burial drawer the Mephits use. It's nearly impossible to tell where each piece of treasure came from. None of the loot found in the Mephit stash will be missed and—if taken—the characters should keep it out of sight to avoid problems with the watchmen.

If more than half their number are captured or killed, the Mephits will flee the mausoleum by sliding through small vents in the ceiling. There is a 50% chance that one or more of the fleeing creatures will try to grab some of the loot as they leave (only if they pass area A as they exit).

Dead Mephits and/or pointing out their hidden stash is proof enough to solve the mystery.

Mausoleum



The Forge of Evil

Adventure Background: The city has a great many blacksmiths but none better than the Golden Griffon Forge. Legendary for its talented craftsmen and elven enchantress, the forge often has a six-month waiting period for first-time customers. Some of the best armor and weapons, including those owned by knights and royalty, were crafted at the Golden Griffon.

Recently, the noisy forge has gone quiet. Doors have been barred from within, its windows shuttered, and its chimneys barren of their usual bursts of smoke and steam. Attempts to gain entry have been thwarted by strong magics on every portal. The guards are hoping that outsiders can help where locals have failed.

Adventure Summary

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| Adventure Difficulty: | Moderate |
| Number of Characters: | 4-6 |
| Adventure Locale: | Balcsmith (City) |

Detailed Background: Demons have entered the forge from the sewers below the structure, capturing the best smiths and killing the rest. The Golden Griffon's talented elven enchantress has also been taken prisoner, forced into labor by the evil demons. Using the craftsmen and their magic, the demons are creating weapons of great and evil power. They will continue to force the captured workers to build artifacts until the last of them drops dead.

Adventure Start: Characters are hired to assist baffled guards and nobles of the city. The three doors to the Golden Griffon Forge are magically sealed and trapped with elemental runes, scaring off soldiers and inexperienced wizards alike.

Read the following section to players when they approach the doors of the forge:

A faint shimmer dances along the polished wood of the door, clearly indicating that some magical effect is present. Additionally, several elemental runes have been etched into the door beneath the dazzling layer, each glowing with bright primary colors.

Characters choosing to enter the forge through the doors will face triple wizard-locked portals reinforced with traditional locks from the inside. No keys to the doors exist outside the forge - all the owners and employees were within the building when the demons attacked. Additionally, each of the elemental runes explode if not dispelled properly.

All three chimneys are magically sealed by a single instance of the same spells and runes found on the doors. Only halfling or smaller-sized creatures can fit in the narrow flues. Once the seals are broken, a thick black smoke will begin to pour out, hinting to activity within the forge.

Area A: Sewers Below the Forge

If the characters choose to enter the structure from below the streets (using the sewers), they will find **two demons** hiding in the water beneath the two vertical tunnels that lead up into the forge.

(2) Demons, statistics: HD 4, AC4 [15], Atk 2 claws (1d4) or weapon, MV 12, Save 13, AL C, CL/XP 5/240, Special: immune to non-magical attacks

Area B: Floor Grates

The floor grates are locked from above but can be picked through the bars by a skilled thief. Whether or not this activity is performed quietly can be determined by the measure of success of the delicate task.

Pick Locks Chance: as Thieves Abilities

Making Noise: as Thieves Abilities

Area C: Forge Interior

Within the forge, the adventurers will find less than a half-dozen remaining smiths, each whipped and beaten into working without rest, food, and water. The elven enchantress is near death, refusing to imbue any additional items until her friends are given food, water and sleep. As such, she has been beaten to near unconsciousness for her insolence.

Six demons are present in the forge, pushing the smiths to create mastercraft quality items.

"Cruelbite": +1 to-hit bonus versus good/law, triple damage on critical strikes.

"Soulache": +1 to-hit bonus versus good/law, penalizes morale and weakens foes (penalty to saving throws).

The demons have forced the weary smiths to make several valuable items, two of which the elven enchantress imbued before discontinuing her aid. "Cruel Bite" and "Soulache", a pair of silvered longswords cursed with twisted magic, will be in the hands of the two strongest demons.

Without receiving first aid or healing, 1d6 smiths will die in 6 hours. There is a 50% chance that the elven enchantress will die without aid.

Several quality items have been created but have yet to be imbued with magical abilities.

Deliverer of Bad News

Adventure Background: Mysterious letters and packages have been delivered to several prestigious townfolk, only to curse the recipients who dare to open their mail. Each curse has been worse than the last. What may have started as a prank has escalated to dangerous and deadly levels. Can anyone solve the mystery of cursed mail?

A wizard's apprentice, left alone with his master's spell books too frequently, has been toying with enchantments far beyond his skill and ability. Thinking that his skills have increased without his feeble master's inconsistent lessons, the young wizard has crafted a plan to both rid himself of his restrictive teacher and increase his skills further. By framing his master for the cursed letters and packages, he can take the old man's place after his arrest and execution. The apprentice has stamped each letter with the initials of his teacher, "HtW" (Horlamund the Wise), hoping that someone will recognize the name and implicate the old wizard as the culprit.

| <i>Adventure Summary</i> | |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| Adventure Difficulty: | Easy |
| Number of Characters: | 1-4 |
| Adventure Locale: | Any Town or City |

Adventure Start: Characters hear about the escalating mystery and by some means accept the task of solving it. They are directed to the homes of several victims.

| Sample Curses from Delivered Mail | | |
|---|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| Home | Curse | Details |
| 1 | Boils | Wet paper wrapper with "W" visible. |
| 2 | Burns | Burned box with smell of wine*. |
| 3 | Madness | Box torn to shreds, "tW" visible. |
| 4 | Death (1 dead) | Box blackened, etching reveals "HtW". |
| * wizard's home atop a wine storehouse. | | |

The GM can add additional curses and victims to lengthen the adventure as desired. Note that the wizard's apprentice is trying to get his master implicated in the crimes.

Guards and government officials can assist with cross-referencing the initials "HtW" in their records. It may take 1-4 days to find the residence of Horlamund the Wise. However, there are additional townfolk with the same initials on record (their professions may be optionally omitted if the GM desires).

| Other Residents with "HtW" Initials | | |
|---|------------------|---------------------|
| Name | Gender/Age | Profession |
| Hekker-Tor Walner | Male, 61 yrs | Retired Gravedigger |
| Hassa Teb-Woknal | Female, 32 years | Serving Wench |
| Hol the Wild | Male, 27 yrs | Hunter |
| Horlamund the Wise | Male, 66 yrs | Wizard * |
| * none of the other townfolk on this list know the wizard | | |

Wizard's Home

When the characters arrive at the wizard's home (apartment above a wine warehouse), they will find a forgetful, old man who seems incapable of hurting innocent people. They will also encounter his apprentice, a smarmy-looking and disrespectful young man. The apprentice, Margalonne, will drop hints about some of the components used in the curse, adding more "clues" to help implicate his master.

The GM should provide clues (stamp with "HtW" initials, paper for letter and twine for packages, etc.) that could hint to the old wizard's possible involvement. However, the apprentice's eagerness to help solve the mystery by hinting at his master's involvement should be uncharacteristic for an apprentice.

If the apprentice is exposed, he tries to kill his master before fleeing to his room and a ladder to the roof.

Margalonne, disenchanting apprentice, statistics: HD/LVL 2, AC8 [11], Atk 1 dagger (1d4) or spells, MV 12, Save 16, AL C, CL/XP 3/60 Special: Spells (*Magic Missile, Sleep*), **Scroll of Invisibility, Potion of Diminution**

Horlamund, old wizard, statistics: HD/LVL 6, AC8 [11], Atk 1 staff 9(1d6) or spells, MV 9, Save 11, AL N, CL/XP 7/600, Special: Spells (*Detect Magic, Light, Hold Portal, Protection from Evil, Knock, Wizard Lock, Dispel Magic, Hold Person*), **Wand of Magic Missiles** (3 charges left), **Ring of Protection +1, Potion of Slipperiness**

A thorough search of the small apartment will reveal enough clues to clearly indicate the old wizard's innocence and the apprentice's guilt.

If Horlamund survives the encounter, he rewards the characters with a minor magic item (either one he has listed above or GM roll).

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Disenchanted Garden

Adventure Background: A nobleman's prize-winning terrace garden has recently become enchanted! He and his wife awoke one morning to find his rose bushes, lilies, and daffodils uprooted and moving about the grounds unassisted. He and his gardeners have been chased out of the garden by the plants, which no longer allow humans in the high-walled area unscathed.

Three dozen plants have been enchanted by a cursed stone brought into the garden by the nobleman's wife, Lady Glorvina. Assuming the ornate and beautifully painted stone was purely decorative, the lady had no idea what her expensive market purchase was going to do to their exquisite garden. Her husband, Escabald the Third, is unaware of her recent purchase.

The stone is imbued with druidic magic that enchants plant life, causing any rooted plant, bush, or small tree within a 100-foot radius to move about independently. If the enchanted plant remains within the stone's influence, it continues to seek out non-plant life forms, attacking any that get too close. When outside the stone's influence, the plant returns to its original state.

Adventure Summary

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Adventure Difficulty: | Easy to Moderate |
| Number of Characters: | 3-5 |
| Adventure Locale: | City (private residence) |

Adventure Start: Characters find out about the enchanted garden through locals, guards, or by passing by the residence. The nobleman will give the group a bag of gold to solve the mystery and halt the plants from causing any more damage on the grounds.

Read the following text when the group approaches the garden:

At first glance, the garden appears to be in disarray. Plants have been uprooted around a buckled stone walkway. Clay pots lie in pieces on the ground. Hastily discarded garden tools lie in the unkempt grass. Something is indeed amiss.

The rectangular garden is 150' deep and is filled with hundreds of varieties of plants. A dozen narrow walkways weave through the garden, connecting at many points throughout. Currently, the stone is twenty feet from the back wall of the garden in the northeast corner. Nearly every plant in the area under the stone's magical influence is either unmoving (non-threatened) or is slowly shifting closer to the stone.

Clues

If asked, Escabald the Third will have absolutely no idea what is causing the strange behavior. He can only say that the enchantment started three days ago and that the plants became increasingly more violent as he walked toward the back of his garden.

Lady Glorvina will have forgotten about her market purchase, instead claiming that a new garden assistant—hired by her husband the week before—is to blame. The young man was promptly dismissed by the lady of the house and has not been seen since.

A trusted gardener attempted to venture into the garden earlier in the morning but has not been seen since. Escabald thinks he has heard the old man's cries from deep within the garden but dares not venture too far within the shifting vegetation.

Helpful Garden Clues for the Characters

Plants at the outer edge of the stone's influence move slowly and seem not to care about anything moving nearby. As characters move closer to the stone, the plants become more agitated, move more quickly, and in some cases attack.

Garden Clues

| Distance * | Details |
|---------------------------|--|
| 100' + | No plants move or appear enchanted |
| 80' to 99' | Plants sway, shift and lean, or uproot and slowly move closer to the location of the stone |
| 50' to 79' | Plants move to block passage, tear up walkways or sculptures, and assist damaged plants |
| 20' to 49' | Plants glow faintly, move quickly, and are aggressive toward non-plants (attempt to trip or bat faces) |
| 0' to 19' | Only thorny bushes, young saplings, and vines in this area, protection the stone in the corner of the garden. They attack any non-plants and glow brightly with a greenish hue |
| * distance from the stone | |

The couple's trusted gardener is trapped in the bough of an apple tree 40' from the stone. Although the tree cannot move (its roots are too deep), it slings apples at approaching humans.

Enchanted Apple Tree, statistics: HD 4, AC3 [16], Atk 1d6+1 apple attacks (1d2), MV 0, Save 13, AL C, CL/XP 4/120, Special: blocks paths with branches

Trusted Gardener, statistics: HD 1, AC9 [10], Atk 1 knife (1d4), MV 12, Save 17, AL N, CL/XP 1/15

The Stone

The ancient artifact was recently discovered in a collapsed cave outside the city. Thought to be purely decorative, merchants tried to sell the colorful stone in the market. Dozens of raised black lines wrap around the one-foot long stone, each band painted on the surface between them a different color. The stone is surprisingly light and sounds hollow.

There is no other way to deactivate the stone besides smashing it to pieces or disenchanting it with magic or a spell. As long as the stone remains enchanted, it will affect all plant life within 100'. If broken open, it will reveal a hollow space with a weathered parchment. The parchment will detail instructions to bring the pieces of the stone back to an ancient temple in an old forest near a dead sea [GM to create the rest of the story here or use optional died-quest box in the next column].

The stone is protected by several plants that will try to prevent the stone's removal. Although not particularly dangerous alone, each plant becomes a formidable foe when working with several others.

Mass of Thorny Rose Bushes, statistics: HD 1+1, AC7 [12], Atk 1 strike (1d3) or "shoot" 1d4 thorns (1d2 each), MV 3, Save 17, AL C, CL/XP 2/30, Special: melee and missile attacks

Cluster of Young Saplings, statistics: HD 2, AC6 [13], Atk 1 branch strike (1d4), MV 3, Save 16, AL C, CL/XP 3/60, Special: whip attack (1d4 simultaneous branch attacks, 1d4 damage each)

Pile of Strong Vines, statistics: HD 1, AC8 [11], Atk strike (trip), MV 3, Save 17, AL C, CL/XP 2/30, Special: entangle (on natural 20 to-hit roll, victim is trapped for 1d4 rounds)

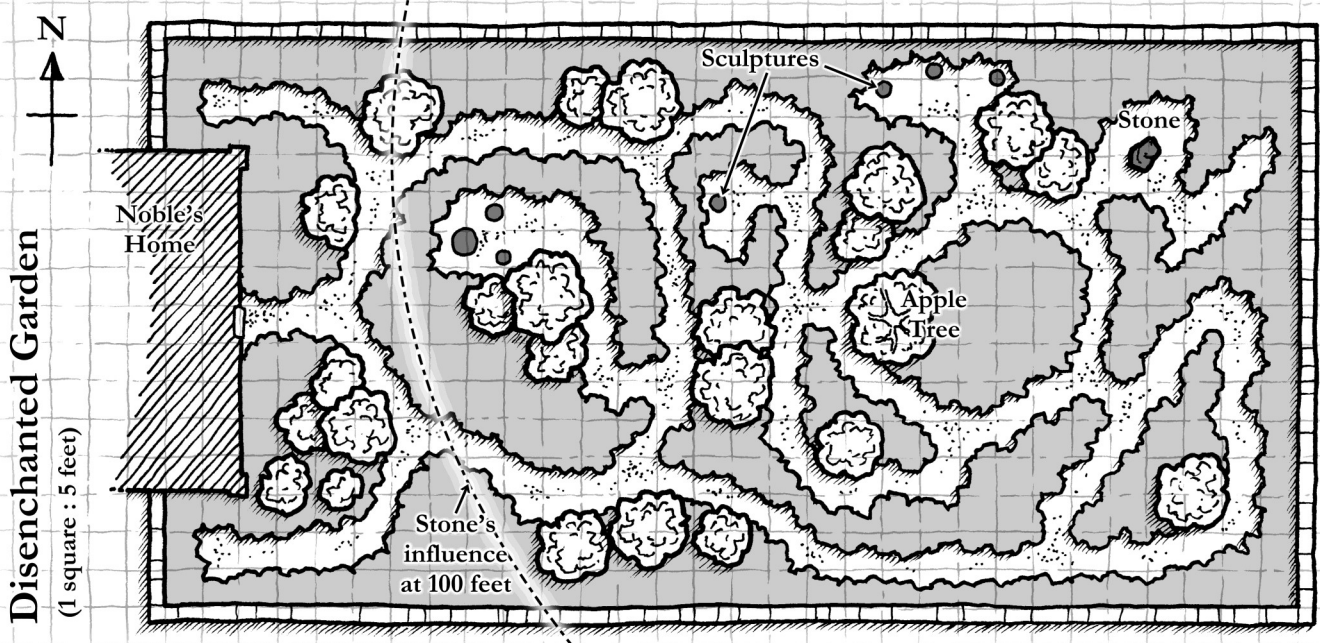
Once the stone is broken or removed from the garden, the plants will cease to move and attack humans. However, they will become rooted to where they were last found – the noble's prize-winning garden is no more.

Stone Origins (Optional)

Evil druids of an ancient cult use a dark wood several leagues from the city as their base of operations. Although few druids remain, there once were several dozen humans in the cult, each bent on the ruination of the civilized world. Large settlements and cities were seen as the enemy of nature and balance. Each druid swore to uphold their first priority: to stop the growth of sinful and corrupt settlements.

A plan was devised to create magical devices that caused plants to fight back against structural advancements. Over one hundred stones were created – although only a few remain intact. Returning the fragments of the stone to the druid temple in the woods will reconstitute its magic, returning it to its pre-broken state. However, bypassing the druid's minions and magic to enter the ancient temple should be a challenging feat. A map of the remaining stone locations will likely be found within the temple complex.

Note that the evil druid Konandu from *City Excursions Adventure #65* found on page 5 of this book could be one of the druids from this ancient order.



Evening at the Museum

Adventure Background: Evening guards and late-night visitors of the city museum are found dead the morning after their shifts. In each instance, not a single precious artifact or priceless treasure has been removed from the building. Curators cannot find anyone willing to work the night shift to protect the museum after the rumors of slain workers have reached the ears of townsfolk. Someone needs to find out what is killing the guards and stop it from happening going forward.

After he was fired for moving sculptures and paintings around the building, the longtime night guard committed suicide during his last shift in the museum. His spirit, unable to rest, returned to the museum to haunt and bother any who tried to replace him. His disgruntled and negative demeanor has also affected once-inanimate objects, causing the museum's sculptures to attack, simple objects to move violently, and ghosts from long-dead tombs to lurk the halls. The museum has become a dangerous place for those within its walls each night. Until the problem is solved, the museum will remain closed at all times.

Adventure Summary

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| Adventure Difficulty: | Easy to Moderate |
| Number of Characters: | 2-4 |
| Adventure Locale: | City (museum) |

Adventure Start: A sign hanging outside 'Artifacts of History' indicates that the museum is closed until further notice. A junior curator notices the group and petitions for help:

"You look like brave, strong-willed adventurers. Would you be interested in a job? Our museum could use some help during this trying time!"

When queried about the work, the junior curator points to the entrance of the museum and tells the adventurers to talk to the senior curator, Madame Flerisha, who can be found just inside the front doors.

The curator's office is just inside the main doors of the museum. Madame Flerishna will offer a reward of a small bag of rubies to the group if they can get rid of the "ghosts and spirits" that roam the two open areas of the museum each night. She will not tell them of the dead guard or any details of his demise. Asking locals about the museum in nearby taverns and inns may reveal further details. If the adventurers agree to the work, she will ask them to return at dusk. When they enter, she will lock and bar the doors...from the outside.

Breaking Doors Open from Inside: Open Doors (STR)

Museum Interior

Both the lower and upper levels of the museum are large, open areas. Six pillars on each floor support the overall weight of the structure. A set of circular stairs in the center of the lower level ascends to the upper level. Dozens of paintings line the outer walls and six sculptures are found on each level. The lower level has two sarcophagi that hold the remains of influential city nobles from years past. There are only a few standing displays that hold smaller artifacts which are permanently sealed.

Strange sounds will begin after a few hours past sunset. Soon thereafter, the shadowy image of a night guard will be seen roaming the upper level. His boots will be heard clicking on the marble tile and a faint whistling will carry to all points of the museum. If confronted, the ghost of the night guard will animate 1d4 sculptures and 1d2 ghosts from the sarcophagi, ordering them to attack intruders.

Animated Sculptures, statistics: HD 4, AC3 [16], Atk 1 strike (1d8), MV 6, Save 13, AL C, CL/XP 4/120, Special: edged/bladed weapons deal 1/2 damage

Dead Noble Ghosts, statistics: HD 3, AC2 [17], Atk 1 strike (paralysis), MV 3, Save 14, AL C, CL/XP 4/120, Special: undead, paralysis (lasts 1d4 rounds)

If the characters remain hidden, they may be able to observe the ghostly guard recreating his last day: taking the news of his termination by the curator's office and hanging himself from the upper level in the stairwell soon after. The dead guard repeats this act several times throughout the evening unless interrupted. At sunrise, the spirit of the guard dissipates, only to return the next night (unless freed or destroyed).

For a brief moment, just before his last breath, characters may be able to "rescue" the guard, sending his spirit to the gods instead of it being bound to the museum. The ghostly guard may also be destroyed as a powerful undead creature.

Ghost of the Night Guard, statistics: HD 5, AC2 [17], Atk 1 strike (1d4 + random attribute drain), MV 6, Save 12, AL C, CL/XP 7/600, Special: cannot be turned, successful strikes temporarily drain 1 random attribute by one point, lasts 2d12 hours)

Once the ghost has been neutralized, the senior curator rewards the group with the rubies as long as nothing has been damaged or stolen from the museum interior.

The Donation

Adventure Background: When characters try to get a room for the night, they find that the busy city inn they've chosen has but a single room available on its first floor. It has two large comfortable beds, no windows, and a door that locks from the inside. A perfectly safe room by all accounts...

A group of thieves work under the inn, using one of the beds as trapdoor to kidnap sleeping victims for their organs. Each night, the thieves drop the sleeping patron down into their lair where they are bound, imprisoned, and prepped for organ removal. The thieves supply cultists, necromancers, and alchemists with human organs for their work. The innkeeper is paid well for his room recommendation and will feign knowing any missing patron if the remaining character asks about disappearances.

Adventure Summary

| | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Adventure Difficulty: | Easy to Moderate |
| Number of Characters: | 2 |
| Adventure Locale: | Any Town or City Inn |

Adventure Start: When characters check into the inn, they are told that only one room is available—a first-floor, windowless double. The room is additionally furnished with a large chest, wardrobe, table, and two stools. The only door has two, sturdy deadbolts. Both beds are equally comfortable, layered with clean sheets, animal pelts, and woven quilts. A small fireplace keeps the room warm in colder months.

One of the beds has a hidden trapdoor built into the frame. When triggered, the entire contents of the bed (including its sleeping occupant) drop into a chute that ends thirty feet below the surface. At the bottom, four thieves wait with clubs to beat the surprised victim unconscious. Once incapacitated, the victim is bound, drugged, and transported to a nearby holding cell. As the needs of the cultists and evil wizards are made known, the thieves withdraw victims and remove the required organ.

Thieves' Lair

The group of thieves is controlled by a particularly brutish brigand, Bhorg Bonebreaker. His band of organ-stealing thieves has grown to a dozen ruthless rogues, each handsomely paid for their dirty work.

1. Chute and Landing

The steep, thirty-foot chute ends in a wide landing, slick with a mixture of damp moisture and urine. Four thieves are here, waiting for their victim in the room above to fall asleep, ready to do their job in subduing the fallen patron. Once they've secured their prize, they leave this area for the night. Anyone descending the chute after trapdoor activation will find the area empty.

2. Prison Cells

Eight cells, four to each side, will be found in this hallway. Each one has 1d4 victims, many already missing one or more organs. Each cell is locked with a key. There are two sets of keys for the cell doors. A thief in area 3 has a set, as does Bhorg in area 5. There is a 50% chance that one of the victims in a cell is already dead.

3. Organ Removal Room

Four bloody tables, a half-dozen tables covered in ghastly instruments, and several small clay pots are found here. Additionally, **1d4 thieves** will be working on one or two victims, removing an organ or two as needed. The victims are too drugged to utter more than a few low moans or sobs while the thieves go about their grisly jobs.

Thieves, statistics: HD/LVL 2, AC7 [12], Atk club (1d4), MV 12, Save 16, AL C, CL/XP 2/30

1d4 clay pots will contain random human organs, freshly removed from one of the victims currently in this room.

4. Thieves' Common Room

The bulk of the thieves will be found in this room, either sleeping or gambling. A dozen bunk beds and lockers line three of the walls and four small tables stand in the center of the grimy sleeping quarters. At least **six thieves** are here, waiting for their next shift of butchery or running organs to clientele.

5. Bhorg Bonebreaker's Room

A single thief guard stands outside the door to the gang's leader's room. Inside, **Bhorg** can be found planning his next venture or resting on a large pile of animal furs. The half-orc bandit boss will not like being disturbed and attacks intruders with incredible ferocity.

Bhorg Bonebreaker, statistics: HD/LVL 3, AC6 [13], Atk 1 axe (1d8), MV 12, Save 14, AL C, CL/XP 4/120

A chest near his bed contains treasure from victims, payment from organ seekers, and loot from various city robberies.

6. Dumping Pit

A deep black hole at the end of the hallway leads to the lair of an **otyugh** who enjoys the harvested carcasses that are tossed down daily. Those brave enough to descend the dark and slippery hole the full one hundred feet will find a nasty surprise at the bottom.

Otyugh, statistics: HD 4, AC5 [14], Atk 1 strike (1d6), MV 6, Save 13, AL C, CL/XP 5/240, Special: disease

7. Hidden Lair Entrance

Bhorg's crew uses this portal to access the city sewers beyond their lair. Although it appears to be a normal door on the inside, the door is extremely well-hidden from the sewer side.



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